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Sven Helbig is a composer for orchestra- and choir music. Beside this, he is active in the field of electronic music (Dark Ambient, Noise, Field Recordings), mostly combining it with classical instruments. Sven Helbig's first experience with music began with the clarinet, but he later added the guitar, piano and drums. He studied music in Dresden and taught drums at the Carl-Maria von Weber Musical Academy in Dresden from 1995 to 2008. In 2013 the renowned label Deutsche Grammophon released his compositions for orchestra and piano quartet Pocket Symphonies. In 1996, Sven Helbig and hornist Markus Rindt founded the Dresden Symphony Orchestra. The orchestra is specialized in new, symphonic music in unusual productions and was the first European symphony orchestra to exclusively perform contemporary music.[1] Helbig gave up his managing position in 2007 to focus on his own musical work, resulting in orchestral pieces, film music and electronic music compositions. Since 2016, Sven Helbig is playing live with his Forrklang Quartet. The ensemble is individually formed to fit the need of his current concert program. In 2017 he toured Europe with his choir work I Eat the Sun and Drink the Rain. The production for choir, electronics and visuals has been staged at Milton Court Hall/London, Elbphilharmonie/Hamburg and Reina Sofia Hall/Madrid beside others. In recent years, the artist has delved into work as a director. He directed music videos, stage shows and theatrical multimedia events.[2] For example, he produced the High-rise Symphony on Dresden’s 800th anniversary during which the orchestra's musicians sat on individual balconies of an old East German apartment building. Helbig’s versatility made him a much sought-after producer for crossover projects. Sven Helbig has worked as a producer, composer and arranger with Rammstein, Pet Shop Boys, Snoop Dogg, Polarkreis 18, the Fauré Quartett, opera singer René Pape, pianist Olga Scheps and more. The composer’s work builds on the tradition of the Gesamtkunstwerk (all-embracing art form). Often he takes responsibility for content, music and production at the same time.
Keynote Speakers: Steve Fuller

Steve Fuller (born 1959, New York City) graduated from Columbia University in History & Sociology before gaining an M.Phil. from Cambridge and PhD from Pittsburgh, both in History and Philosophy of Science. He currently holds the Auguste Comte Chair in Social Epistemology in the Department of Sociology.

He is most closely associated with the research program of social epistemology. Originally trained in the history and philosophy of science (Ph.D., 1985, University of Pittsburgh), he is the founder of the research program of social epistemology. It is the name of a quarterly journal he founded with Taylor & Francis in 1987, as well as the first of his more than twenty books. His most recent work has been concerned with the future of humanity, or 'Humanity 2.0'.

He has spoken in over 30 countries, often keynoting professional academic conferences, and has been a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts since 1995. He was awarded a D.Litt. by Warwick in 2007 for significant career-long contributions to scholarship. He was appointed to the Auguste Comte Chair in Social Epistemology in 2011, and is a Fellow of the UK Academy of Social Sciences and the European Academy of Sciences and Arts. He is also a Senior Research Fellow at the Breakthrough Institute, the leading 'ecomodernist' think-tank and an Affiliate Scholar at the Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies, the leading 'transhumanist' think-tank. His writings have been translated into more than twenty languages.

Since 2013, he has been a member of Edge, the 'third culture' at the edge of knowledge, contributing to its annual questions.

(Source: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/sociology/staff/sfuller/)
Keynote Speakers: Bernard Stiegler

Bernard Stiegler is a director of IRI at the Georges Pompidou Center in Paris, a Professorial Fellow at the Centre for Cultural Studies at Goldsmith College in London and a professor at the University of Technology of Compiègne where he teaches philosophy.

Before taking up the post at the Pompidou Center, he was program director at the International College of Philosophy, Deputy Director General of the Institut National de l'Audiovisuel, then Director General at the Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM).

Bernard Stiegler has published widely on philosophy, technology, digitization, capitalism, and consumer culture. Among his writings, his three volumes of /La Technique et Le Temps/ (English Translation: /Technics and Time/), Acting out, translated by David Barison, Daniel Ross, and Patrick Crogan, Stanford University Press, 2009, two volumes of /De La Misère Symbolique/, three volumes of /Mécréance et Dîscrédit/ and two volumes /Constituer l’Europe/ are particularly well known.

Professor Stiegler has a long term engagement with the relation between technology and philosophy, not only in a theoretical sense, but also situating them in industry and society as practices. He is one of the founders of the political group Ars Industrialis based in Paris, which calls for an industrial politics of spirit, by exploring the possibilities of the technology of spirit, to bring forth a new "life of the mind". He published extensively on the problem of individuation in consumer capitalism, and he is working on the new possibility of an economy of contribution.

(Source: http://www.arsindustrialis.org/biography/bibliography)
Cybernetic rhythm in the human body and in the retroactive machine

In both natural and technological phenomena, there must be laws governing their regularity. But phenomena are never the same. How is regularity possible then? Cybernetics offers a point of departure to understand the stability/change relationship of the so called 'laws of nature'. The dynamics of retroaction (or feedback) in self-governing systems (be it an animal body or a cyborg or a machine) implies that an effect can 'retroact' on its cause and keep a homeostatic condition. The evidence of the dynamics is to be found in both the human body's bilateralism and in the feedback loop of cybernetic systems. This feedback is related to the circle (from Aristotle's Mechanics, retrieved by Galileo), to an idea of 'return' to one's own steps - which means literally and metaphorically that the cause is adjusted by the effect. But this cybernetic dynamics, by virtue of the circularity of motion and the self-regulation of energy, undergoes a constant swerve, as nothing really returns exactly where it was. At every retroactive step, the effector must find new strategies: on minimal levels, it must increase or decrease the amount of energy needed; in complex systems it must invent a device that didn't exist before but may become a new rule of action that allows for a homeostatic condition of stability. Contingency creeps into the rule.

On a non-mesoscopic (a macro- as well as micro-scopic) scale, the laws of nature themeselves need to evolve over time, following the occurring swerve. They can be re-named - following C.S. Peirce - 'habits' of nature, or - after Lee Smolin's definition - 'principle of precedence'.

This epistemological paradigm, allowing for the evolution and the understanding of both the self-making of nature and the development of new technologies, endows them with the freedom to take a direction (vs the adirectional character of natural selection) and with the unpredictability usually and exclusively attributed to rational beings.

Iván Ávila  
University of Los Andes

Animals before the death of Man: biopolitical regime and (de)domestication performances

After Michel Foucault introduced the concept of biopolitics in some of his texts, many interpretations have been built. Biopolitics is usually understood as a political technology created in 19th century with the aim of regulating and governing human populations taken in their most basic biological features: birth, old age, mortality, hygiene, and so on. In sum, this political technology makes living populations through the regulation of processes that they share with animals and other living beings. In his 1975 – 1976 lectures known as Society must be defended, Foucault asserts that biopolitics was made possible through the State incorporation of certain Darwinian evolutionary patterns in its exercise of power. Beyond Darwin himself, evolution theory provided a sort of principles that intended to give shape to the life on earth, namely: 1) a conception of nature as changing and susceptible to be modified, intervened, and rationalized; 2) the extinction of the less able; 3) the competence and fight for adaptation and survival; 4) the hierarchical taxonomies; and 5) the linear evolution tending to progress. Taking into account these principles, the State established whose lives deserve to be lived and promoted, and which ones deserve to die.

Therefore, starting from the explanation of these five points, this paper will show that contemporary (post)modern States have tried to build huge biopolitical regimes where human life is maximized and enhanced, while domestic animal life is impoverished. Even more, new Animal science works have produced a large number of devices to kill efficiently. At the same time, the new Transhumanist science has shaped all sort of techniques to make humanity more productive and long-lived. Either way, these sciences not only rest on capitalistic criteria, but also play with a modern ideal of Man that, besides to be male, white, and owner, is presented as the only one able to create life for his own enhancement. The relation between this type of human and domestic animals is a kind of domestication performance, where domestication is understood as the human production of a plethora of beings with particular functions at the mercy of Man, for his divine health and wellness. On a different venue, there are performances where the classical ideal of Man and domestication is deconstructed. One of the most beautiful experiences is related with an animal sanctuary called Gaia. This paper will examine a couple of new human-animal relations happening in Gaia sanctuary to conclude that, despite of Transhumanism and Animal science, de-domestication performances are now possible.
Self-formation as technological sublimation: an existential philosophy of technology

Instrumentalist and determinist approaches to technology, as well as techno-optimist and technopessimist approaches (including some transhumanist and bioconservative approaches) often oversee that technology cannot be simply situated outside humans and their condition. The "technological other" limits our capacity to form ourselves not because it constraints an original capacity to make autonomous decisions but because this "technological other" has engraved and is ever stronger engraving its structures in our very origin. Going beyond a naive inside-outside distinction and recognizing that our 'inside' is to a great extent shaped by our 'outside' implies that our "inside" is to a great extent also for us an "outside." Our very selfhood seems to contain an otherness that cannot be simply externalized but is a constructive and structural part of what makes up our identity, which can elicit an uncanny feeling.

This picture of a self beyond the inside-outside distinction appears to be far from harmonious and reassuring. On the one hand, technologies seem to shape the very fabric of our selfhood and the desires, goals, and ideals that we consider as most personal; on the other hand, these desires, goals, and ideals seem to be continuously subject to the disruptive influence of new and emerging technologies, as well as to the idiosyncratic whims of an unruly force within. The self appears to be entirely compromised.

How to recognize this unsettled structure of the self and prevent adopting the view that the self is not more than a plaything of contingent influences and forces. How is it against the displayed background still possible to sustain the ideal of "good self-formation"? In this paper I will argue that the notion of "sublimation" might prove itself fruitful in this respect. Instead of understanding self-formation as enhancement, I will propose that it can be better captured as sublimation. In a constructive critique of Freud's account of sublimation, I will demonstrate, via Lacan, that returning to a Nietzschean view of sublimation might enable recognizing the formative value of technologies without having to deny or violate the singularity characteristic for human beings.
Embodiment, Expansion, Extension: Cecylia Malik's Ecorart and Petr Pavlensky's Protest Art

Michel Foucault's idea of the "political investment of the body" is the basis of Cecylia Malik's (Poland) and Petr Pavlensky's (Russia) performance art that makes use of the human body, as well its possibilities for transcending its own conceptual and physical boundaries, for political purposes. Beyond the clearly defined political dimension of their art, Malik's ecorart and Pavlensky's protest art performances expand our definitions of where the human body ends, how the body can be symbolically extended in order to form an ephemeral unity with elements of nature (Malik), and how the body can be physically merged with basic tools of civilization, made of metal: the needle, knife, barbed wire, and hammer and nails (Pavlensky). The two artists' acts of expansion and extension of the body constitute social/political protests, but they also test out the body's transformative possibilities when human flesh is combined in diverse ways with the natural or man-made.

At first glance the two artists' conceptual strategies seem to have very little in common: Cecylia Malik has organized community-based, poetic, whimsical social actions in her eco-art, with impressive results at the level of municipal politics in her native Cracow, while Pavlensky has shocked with his one-man aggressive and transgressive body-mutilating performances, which earned him trials and prison terms both in his native Russia and in France, where he remains in exile. Malik works in and with nature; Pavlensky operates in public urban spaces. Malik engaged thousands of people in Poland in her "Braids for the Bialka River" project (2013), plaiting textile "braids" for a river in danger of forced regulation, which were ceremoniously "given" to the river in a mass happening turned picnic. Likewise, Malik mobilized Cracow's inhabitants during her project "The Blue Monarch Butterfly Collective" (2011), during which people of all ages put on cardboard blue wings and participated in a mass swim session at the pristine Zakrzowek lake, located within Cracow's city limits, where land had been purchased by a real estate developer. Petr Pavlensky, on the other hand, protested contemporary political climate in Russia with performance-based protest actions, such as "Fixation" (2013), during which he nailed his scrotum to the cobblestones of the Red Square in Moscow; he also protested the incarceration of the Pussy Riot group members with sewing his mouth shut with a real needle and thread in front of the Kazan Cathedral in St. Petersburg (project "Seam"/"Stitch," 2013). He had his assistants wrap his naked body in barbed wire and place it in front of the Legislative Assembly of Saint Petersburg ("Carcass," 2013) to protest authoritarian regimes; he also cut off a part of his ear while sitting on the roof of a psychiatric hospital in solidarity with the marginalized and excluded ("Segregation," 2014).

Malik and Pavlensky utilize very different artistic concepts, expressed primarily through the medium of the body (collective vs. individual, adorned vs. mutilated, female vs. male, etc.) to achieve environmental policy changes and more systemic political change, respectively. Malik's poetics of gentleness and beauty might seem incongruent with Pavlensky's poetics of shock and self-harm, yet both artists exemplify two currents within a larger movement of body-based political performance art in Russia and Eastern Europe today. While doing so, they extend their bodies and test their limits. Malik merges her own body with bodies of water, surrounds herself with bodies of other people, and attaches objects made of paper and cloth to both animate and inanimate participants of her one-time performances. Pavlensky physically merges his body with that of a needle, nail, or barbed wire, if only for a short time, creating ephemeral art that nonetheless leaves an indelible mark on his own body.
Kerstin Borchhardt
Leipzig University

Posthuman or all too human? Superhumans in American serial comics and their never ending struggle for and against progressivity

Superhumans, such as Captain America, Spiderman, the Fantastic Four, or the X-Men, are trademarks of the American comic book industry and icons of modern popular culture. Their extraordinary powers, often gained by technology, have attracted various fan communities as well as the scientific interest of posthumanist scholars (Hassler-Forest, Of Iron Men and Green Monsters, 2015; Scott, The Posthuman Body in Superhero Comics, 2016). But there is one big problem with relating mainstream superhumans to posthumanist philosophy, as already mentioned by Hassler-Forest (Of Iron Men and Green Monsters, p. 67/68): Even so, many superhumans are equipped with bodies, powers, and technology transcending traditional concepts of the human condition, they often represent classical humanist values and binary concepts of good and evil or right and wrong. This theory is proofed by the fact that many superhumans have traditionally been presented in a dualistic struggle between superhero und supervillain. Thereby, superheros are no revolutionists, no super-/overhumans in the tradition of Nietzsche, and no harbringers of a posthuman future at all. In contrast, following the instructive opinion (Jewett/Lawrence, Captain America, 2002, Fingeroth, Superman on the Couch, 2004, Morris/Matt, Superheros and Philosophy, 2014), many of them are rather conservative and try to protect the traditional (American) human order, while the progressive parts in the comic plots are often played by their opponents, the supervillains, who seek for change to overcome the human order (although often in a very brutal way). Such a hero-villain-dualism was surely a core element of many early comics created during World War II and the Cold War? But is it still relevant? Are even contemporary superheros nothing but conservative humanists in posthuman disguise and villains only cruel conquerors? Have there been changes in these concepts? And how do such changes in comic characters also reflect social changes in terms of an altered perspective on traditional western humanism? The presentation aims to discuss these questions. To do so, I will take into account the sequential character of the comic, for which many superhumans were originally designed. I will analyze the historical development of the narratives and character concepts of certain superhumans in ongoing comic-series, such as Captain America, Mystique, Magneto or Deadpool. Over the years, as many traditional characters have been rewritten by various artists for several times, there has been a huge tendency to show superhumans more complex and ambiguous also accompanied by an increasing blurring of boundaries between hero and villain and the splitting into several overlapping concepts (Coca, Superwoman, 2017), like the anti-hero (White, Superman and Philosophy, 2013), the anti-villain, the victim-hero (Clover, Men, Woman and Chain Saws, 1992), or the monster-hero (Miess, Neue Monster, 2010). But does such a splitting and blurring of superhuman concepts in comics really indicates, that these superhumans finally managed to escape their traditional human and humanist boundaries, or is this still a battle for them to fight which isn't decided yet?
How to determine the moral status of non-human cognitive entities

In philosophy (and in the humanities in general), humans are often ontologically distinguished from the rest of the natural world. This has major implications for the moral status of humans compared to non-human cognitive entities, i.e. things with distinct and independent existence that are capable of the process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses. In recent years, much philosophical deliberation has gone into the moral status of non-human animals. An increasing amount of philosophers argue in favour of giving moral status to non-human animals by denying the ontological distinction between humans and the rest of the natural world. They often do so by using empirical research results that seem to suggest that many non-human animals can think and feel in ways similar to humans. Much criticism has been levelled against this type of research, for example because the sample sizes are so small and because many implicitly use an anthropocentric stance towards the definition of cognitive faculties when it comes to non-human animals. In our talk, we want to build on this debate about the moral status of non-human animals. First, we want to investigate whether a strict distinction exists between relatively advanced AI and non-human animals. We investigate whether this can be tested by applying existing empirical research methods for determining whether an entity has experience and thought processes or that we need to investigate their neurophenomenology. If the latter is the case, this might be investigated using direct neural links between humans and AI, and humans and non-human animals, or by the creation of human-AI, human-(non-human)animal and AI-(non-human)animal hybrids. The direct experience of AI’s experience (if present) could provide sufficient justification for the assumption that there is an identification between software or hardware and consciousness, although this method remains susceptible to anthropogenic pitfalls. Second, if we can compare relatively advanced AI to non-human animals, we want to examine if the arguments that are used in favour of giving moral status to non-human animals can be used to argue in favour of giving AI moral status as well.

The aim of the talk is to provide an overview of some of the relevant philosophical questions that must be answered in the debate concerning the moral status of non-human cognitive entities and to elaborate on the implications of giving moral status to AI. For example, what are the consequences for the legal status of AI, for the ways in which humans interact with AI, and for the image of man? These are important topics, because for example changing the legal status of AI will have profound consequences for how AI is allowed to be used in multiple technological sectors. The Trans- and Posthumanist community needs to be proactive and tackle these potential problems now instead of waiting for them to arise.
OF ANGELS & ALGORITHMS: Phenomenology of Data, Machine-Learning & Revelation

If algorithms are not the new angels, they are yet quickly assuming the administration previously attributed to angelology. This emerges as certain notions of grace (or 'givenness') are being replaced by "data," that is no longer "given," but tactically amassed and manufactured. Jean Luc Marion's phenomenological study of the 'Annunciation' in the Christian gospel of Luke is one in which the epistemic delimitations of human knowledge is assisted by angelic revelation. By grace of the angel, the 'unknown' of "factual impossibility" becomes revealed through "the principle of radical possibility." We must today ponder the solemn and subtle differences between this divine epistemology of angelic foreknowledge with the increasingly efficacious phenomena made possible with the rapid expanse of megadata and the development of algorithmic machine learning. Algorithmic foreknowledge becomes a maculate iteration of the Christian annunciation narrative performed by the predicative analytics department of the U.S. department superstore, Target, in 2008 when it predicted and announced a teenage pregnancy, prior even to the mother's awareness of it. It is no longer fanciful to consider the algorithmic capacity to announce a certain kind of "reality" of a pregnancy even before that very pregnancy is even biologically conceived.

In his text devoted to modern Angels (1993), the empiricist philosopher, Michel Serres, insists on their failure. They are messianic placeholders that must give way to mediating para-angels to come. As messengers, angels are "happy to hand over their responsibilities to a" mediator, "because, for all eternity, they fail in the undertaking of converting the world...Why is it that the fail?... It's because of their intelligence, quick as a flash...as fast-moving and brilliant as light...The reason why their messages do not come across is because they lack body; they are intellectual." Today, it is difficult to imagine Serres' modern angels—a faster than light incorporeal intelligence—that would not be akin to what Nick Bostrom considers Superintelligence (2014).

As Bostrom asks us to "imagine a digital hierarchy," one wonders if he recalls that the very word hierarchia is invented as angelology by Pseudo-Dionysius to order divine offices. One of Bostrom's core concerns is that the coming intelligence explosion may not fail as Serres' angels seem ever fated to do. Bostrom's suggested control measures, such as "boxing" or "stunting," are attributes of hierarchy originally attributed to god, godself, in the acts of advent or creation. Perhaps computer science has much to learn from theology, theodicy, and angelology. (It is perhaps no accident that Leibniz, e.g., is an intellectual pioneer in both probability calculus and theodicy, as if one is indissociable with the other). The most pressing contemporary concerns of computer science come ever close to technoscientifically secularizing or imitating the divine vocation of tailoring intelligences specifically to fail. Theology is perhaps the definitive science of the coding of failure.
Post-humanising the Self: Depersonalised Identities/Anthropomorphic Entities in post-Romantic Poetry

Charles Baudelaire's verse collection Les Fleurs du Mal, first published in 1857, has been widely considered as a turning point in modern European poetry. Most particularly, Baudelaire's capacity to distance his poetics from the self-referentiality of Romanticism was celebrated and much-admired, if not by his immediate contemporaries, certainly by the following generation of poets in 1860s and '70s Europe. Especially in France and Italy, authors attempted to establish – as Baudelaire himself reluctantly admitted – what can be considered veritable 'Baudelairian schools': in France, Paul Verlaine defined Baudelaire as the prototype of the 'modern man', and Arthur Rimbaud declared him the 'first seer, king of poets, a real God'; in Italy, a group of poets known as Scapigliatura hailed him as father of a new and modern poetic sensibility.

In Baudelaire's poetry, thematically rooted in contemporaneity, the non-human elements that constitute the landscape of modern life and the modern city, internal and external, real and imaginary (animals, urban objects, cemeteries, atmospheric elements, musical instruments, and so forth) become the 'objective correlative' of the depersonalisation of the self, ultimately embodying the sensations and moods of the lyrical I. Conversely, abstract feelings, such as anguish and remorse, take on anthropomorphic features – and metaphysical significations – by means of allegories and personifications. One of the crucial points of Baudelaire's thought is the subversion of the 18th-century renowned idea, particularly advocated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, of the natural goodness of the human being and with that the view of nature as the only source of beauty, instead arguing that crime, bestiality, and destructiveness – and not virtue – are innate in the human being. According to Baudelaire, good and beauty are not natural but artificial, always being 'the product of art', and the various forms of art must be considered as a 'sublime deformation of nature' or a 'permanent effort to reform nature' – that is, as a way to go beyond nature.

In my paper I will investigate the implications of this post- (and certainly also de-) humanisation of the self in the post-Romantic impersonal poetry – or, as Rimbaud affirmed, 'objective poetry' – written after the publication of the Fleurs du Mal. Taking into account poems by Baudelaire, Rimbaud, and Verlaine in France and by the 'Scapigliati' – Arrigo Boito, Emilio Praga, and Giovanni Camerana – in Italy, I will show the significant presence and the important role of depersonalised identities and anthropomorphic entities in literature during the 1860s and '70s, which paved the way for the representations of the aesthetic, moral, and psychological fragmentation characteristic of twentieth- and twenty-first-century artistic expressions.
Self-Concept and Prosthetic Embodiment: Where Does the Man End and the Machine Begins?

Humans have always been able to distinguish between the self and the technology they use. Having a DNA has been considered fundamental to be part of a living organism such as a human being. In contrast, an object, a piece of metal without a DNA, is considered as outside of the body of a living organism. Through this paper we will investigate why we should change our idea of what can be considered human as advancements in technology blur the line between machine and organism. Prosthetics is a field that is advancing at a very rapid speed as prosthesis are becoming incredibly functional and also structurally similar to biological ones. The law currently considers damage to a prosthetic limb as property damage but, by understanding the unbelievable value it has for the recognition of the self and the person’s well-being, it should be considered as personal injury. In this paper, we will first investigate how prosthetic enhancement has been explored both in art and in clinical settings in relation to a sense of self, and ultimately created a cyborg that very much reminds of Haraway’s manifesto. For instance, in art Neil Harbisson, a colorblind artist, developed a software that was installed in his skull that allows him to distinguish colors based on sounds. Few years ago, the authority finally allowed him to wear the antenna in the ID picture and by doing so they recognized the bionic antenna as part of Harbisson’s self. Therefore, a non-biological device, not made of living matter, has been recognized as being part of a living organism. Similarly, in clinical settings, scientists are developing hands that can give the patients the sense of touch and mind-controlled prosthetic devices. Also, amputees have started to claim that their prosthesis is not just a mere piece of metal attached to their body, but it is a fundamental element that is needed to develop and maintain their self-concept. This process of self-identification through a prosthetic device has been called prosthetic embodiment and therefore there is a need for a new understanding of what is consider part of a person beyond the distinction between living and non-living that has been used until now. Therefore, we need to overcome this distinction between machine and living organism to fully comprehend the complexity of the self in the 21st century.
Mediations and politics under the skin

Modern cultural practices are following cartesian dualism by separating body and minds/spirits. Cybernetic project was built on that foundation as well. That's why within modern media imaginaries we think about code and flesh, software and hardware, online and offline. At the same time biomedial and their minimalized interfaces are about to dive under our skin deep inside our flesh and bones trying to both replace biological sensorium and establish independent layers of connections between us and external environment. More than ever we need to understand and protect that last frontier due to political threats that comes with such biotechnological developments. It is time to redefine bodies on their communicational reference.

I'd like to deal with that issues from the point of view of media and cultural studies as well as from the perspective of critical political studies.

Humans were always fascinated with non-human intelligence. In our human nature we wanted to recreate what fascinates us. Of course when cinema was born there was no means to create artificial intelligence. But there was a will. When scientist and movie makers looked into humanity’s future they could see us surrounded by artificially created life and thought. Sometimes we were allies. Sometimes our creation tried to rule us or use us. But as time went on it grew more and more present in our culture, especially in movies.

In my lecture I analyse the appearance of AI in movies and predict what may come in the future. Are robots and man-made intelligence just a fleeting trend or maybe a sign of our society changing? Is modern technology making us so detached from human contact that we need its presence in every region of our lives? Can a movie be a blockbuster without showing killer robots or seductive fembots? I would like to answer this questions by analysing most popular movies with AI as main characters e.g. Metropolis (1927), 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968), The Matrix (1999), Her (2013), Ex-Machina (2014). In those movies AIs are villains, leaders, exploiters, lovers. They are robots, operating systems, autonomous machines, humanoids. They change and grow as the story progresses.

I strongly believe that our culture represents state and upcoming changes in our society. Cinema is the most consumed medium in the contemporary world, and it perfectly mirrors the state and upcoming trends of human relationships and needs. By analysing the representation of artificial intelligence in Cinema I hope we can conclude a clear pattern and thus peek into our own future.

By discerning these patterns we can predict upcoming changes, and prevent those which might lead to the decline of our society.
Ecologies of the Anthropocene – of the notion (other ‘...-cenes’) and of the epoch (its spaces): the Urbanocene proposition

In my presentation I would like to focus on two things. First, on the ecologies of the anthropocene notion. There are now around 35 ‘...-cenes’ proposed. Among them the original one (Crutzen, Stoermer 2000) and the most popular critical one – capitalocene (Moore 2016), but there are many others: technocene (Hornborg 2016), homogenocene (Mann 2011), eremocene (Wilson 2015), anthrobscene (Parikka 2014), chthulucene (Haraway 2015) and others (Bonneuil, Fressoz 2016). I categorize the most important ones with the basic SW+H method and focus on those answering the ‘Where?’ question – especially on the three concerning urbanization: urbanocene (West 2017; Chwałczyk 2017), metropocene (Whitehead 2014), astyocene (Seto et al. 2010).

Here comes the second point: ecologies of the anthropocene epoch. Here I point out that the main ecology of anthropocene is the one of planetary urbanization (Brenner, Schmid 2014) – now and in the future. Urbanisation is also considered here as one of the main causes of anthropocene. To exemplify all that I use the example of one of the nine planetary boundaries (Steffen et al. 2015). I show how exceeding levels of phosphorus and nitrogen in planetary ecosystem are an effect of urbanization: relation of city with farmland (Mumford 1956) and changes in manure/fertilization (‘night soil collectors’) and sewers infrastructures (Gandy 1999, 2004).

However, urban areas are crucial not only as actors that influence ‘nature’, but also sites of ‘culture’. They create new environments, which are not only ecological niches, but also cognitive ones (Sterelny 2010). Because of being the intermediary, cities are even conceived as cyborgs (Swyngedouw 2006, Gandy 2005). And infrastructure is what regulates behaviour (Star 1999), mediates between ‘culture’ and ‘nature’ (like sewers – Kaika, Swyngedouw 2000) and what creates cities (Kittler 1996). Furthermore, as Santa Fe Institute research shows (Bettencourt 2013), urban areas are mainly responsible for (and depend on) technological innovations. Taking that into consideration, it is worth to wonder if nowadays trend in urbanism – intelligent/smart cities – is a reaction to climate destabilization. Maybe those are self-sustaining arks and ideas/solutions generators for the future (exoskeletons for extended/distributed minds) – but only for few.

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Didier Coeurnelle
Heales/Technoprog

Making Longevity Culturally Mainstream in a (Post)Humanist World

Diseases related to old age are responsible for 70% of deaths worldwide. The only way to prevent illnesses linked to aging is to attack the root cause – that is aging itself. It is time to start working towards solutions to this universal human tragedy. It is time for a culture of radical life extension.

A longer and healthier life is enjoyed by the citizens who can benefit from it. Longevity is potentially useful for a sustainable environment, for a peaceful society, for a happy (post)human world.

In our world and in a possible posthuman world, developments in the area of anti-aging research could change sentient beings fundamentally. Living without time limit could make us in a way more human than ever and in another way totally posthuman.

How to induce a cultural change for ethicists, humanists and posthumanists? How can we have a "Moonshot longevist vision"? How can we make experimentations for longevity for well-informed old citizens easier? Can we consider research for a longer life as a moral obligation, a duty to rescue, a guarantee for a better future (post)human world?

The implications of the links between (strong) artificial intelligence and research in the field of healthcare against senescence will also be approached.
Remembering the Future: Intimations of Amor Fati in Villeneuve’s Arrival

A major achievement of films in the genre of science fiction over the past half century is their success in depicting various iterations of the post-human future anticipated by Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). From Kubrick’s 2001 (1968) to Garland’s Annihilation (2018), philosophers and film enthusiasts have been treated to an impressive range of the futures that are believed or feared to be implied by the event [Ereignis] of the “death of God.”

While most directors working in the genre have been content to explore the darker themes associated with Nietzsche’s post-humanism—e.g., nihilism, decay, anxiety, dread, and so on—several recent films have endeavored to renew the promise encoded in Nietzsche’s cautiously “cheerful” forecast of a post-human future. One such film is Denis Villeneuve’s Arrival (2016), in which a gifted linguist, Louise Banks, is recruited by the US military to decipher the logographic language of a visiting alien race. In learning the language of the visiting Heptapods, Louise discovers, much to her surprise, that she now apprehends time itself as non-linear. Suddenly “remembering” a future that, strictly speaking, has not yet occurred, Louise is able to defuse escalating tensions that are trending toward a war or wars in which the human combatants would be unlikely to survive, much less prevail.

The more philosophically interesting development in the film is that Louise relies on her acquired “memory” of the future to decide to bear a child whose grim, unalterable fate is already known to her. Having learned the language of the Heptapods, and having immersed herself in their non-linear experience of time, Louise is liberated from the fear of death, which both Nietzsche and Zarathustra identify as a chief impediment to the ongoing development of the human animal. In short, Louise emerges in the film as a kind of Übermensch figure, able to will both forward and backward, and free of resentment in either case.

If I am not mistaken, Villeneuve’s philosophical aspirations thus include his desire to provide viewers with a sensitive and sympathetic depiction of the recycled Stoic teaching of amor fati (or love of fate), which Nietzsche identifies in his Ecce Homo as his “formula for greatness in a human [and, presumably, post-human] being.” As depicted in Arrival, the teaching of amor fati is the natural (perhaps even default) posture of those post-human exemplars who, like Louise, are no longer constrained by a (merely) linear experience of time. Despite having already previewed her daughter’s sickness and death, Louise resolutely embraces the fate that awaits her, shouting (or whispering) da capo! While the past and present belong to those thugs and warmongers who place their trust in utilitarian cost-benefit analysis, the future Villeneuve sketches belongs to those who, like Louise, have learned to love fate without subtraction, revision, or regret.
Different Shades of Rape in Octavia Butler’s Oeuvre

One of the points made by Donna Haraway in her seminal essay pertains to “women of color” (that) might be understood as a cyborg identity, a potent subjectivity synthesized from fusions of outsider identities and in the complex political-historical layerings of her ‘biomythography’... (66). A possible argument undermining this explanation could be formulated as follows: a woman cannot be classified as a cyborg because, first, it is a human being without any machine-like or animal elements. Secondly, it is a woman and, as such, she cannot occupy any place in a post-gender order of beings. Haraway’s definition, however, should be understood more figuratively. In the first place, women of color used to live in grids of ultimate control and were devoid of any rights. They are not independent subjectivities developed from early childhood into adulthood. Their subjectivity is assembled from various elements, none of which is inherently their own. Women of color become cyborgs—or cyborg identities—since they are chimeras composed of various parts, just like a ‘stereotypical’ cyborg is composed of electronic circuits, artificial body parts, etc. As such, their status as women is questioned since they are frequently treated not as women but as their masters’ chattel, which can be sold, bought, abused, raped, and limited to their wombs which serve the purpose of incubating more chattel, i.e. children slaves.

Haraway’s understanding of a cyborg offers methodologically efficient tools for what David Roden refers to as posthumanism’s main objective, i.e. to “understand and deconstruct humanism from within, tracing its internal tensions and conceptual discrepancies” (9). These tools shall suffice to conduct a systematic analysis of Octavia Butler’s protagonists, who are usually women of color that either encounter alien civilizations (Lilith’s Brood), or travel back and forth in time (Kindred), or have telepathic skills (Mind of my Mind). One way or another, these women are raped in various senses of the word and they become composites of various subjectivities which are, so to say, imposed on them. The following presentation shall investigate rape in Octavia Butler’s works on the basis of a wide range of phenomena related to rape in her multi-faceted writing. Beginning from the abuse of the body in the literal sense and determining the status of the body in the world presented, I will move on to discuss a given body understood as a cyborgian, postgender body with a cyborg identity as it was described by Donna Haraway.
Playgrounds’ use by children – beyond humanism?

Playgrounds have received a lot of attention over the last decades. Most of the studies carried out so far dealt with institutional playgrounds or with arrangements on playgrounds. Public playgrounds in European cities can be considered as rather marginalized in most researchers’ attention. The research project “Children’s Use of Playgrounds in Europe” starts here to investigate what children and their respective families (the term family being used in a very wide sense) do when on playgrounds. So far, playgrounds as rather artificially constructed and socially used spaces/places are common ground in the scientific community of social sciences. However, several considerations and questions arise:

Playgrounds in cities usually have several items on their grounds (Monkeybars etc.) These artificial items are meant to be used by children. The notion of interaction between the artificial item and one or several children remains uncontested. This interaction is seen rather as unidirectional and one-dimensional – the child is the subject, the item is the object. Within the common ground understanding of the material and social world, objects don’t react. Only human beings react. However, it is worth thinking about interactions taking place from the side of the object (e.g. from the surrounding trees’ side). What if communication beyond this (humanist reflections) takes place between the objects and the children using these objects? How could this communication be seen or considered? How is the common notion of the socially accepted divide between culture and nature contested?

Secondly, children and/or their respective families can bring their own devices/items to a playground. This item might not only be used for the child’s wellbeing and play but might also make a difference to the surrounding environment. Considering this potential influence it could be asked what kind of influence might be effective? How does it influence the environment in terms of transhumanist reflections?

And pushing these considerations a bit further it could be asked what kind of interactions between children and their environment would take place if children have no (artificially constructed) playground at hand? What if nature acts as playground? To what extent might nature then be considered as artificial? If communication/interaction between the children and the wild nature takes place what are possible conclusions beyond humanist positions?

These questions will be dealt with in this paper, presenting some considerations beyond humanism within the ongoing research project.
Why transhumanism is not a gnost.

Is transhumanism a gnost? The accusation is often heard. Transhumanists do not use the word. This qualification is used by critics, christians or not, but rarely clarified, as if the term be evident. Is it so clear? Which transhumanists' thesis are similar to gnostics? To answer to this question, one need to define what is gnostics. We'll do this with the typology of German philosopher Hans Jonas, discussed by Simone Pétrement, another philosopher expert of the gnostic phenomenon. We will show that the main factor of gnostics is "acosmosm", i.e. the reject of the present world and the conviction that the gnostic comes from another world (he is from God and not from the world). Then, the world is bad and the task of the believer is to escape out of this world. The body is from the world, so it is bad too.

In a second time, this precise concept of gnostics will serve us to discuss two critics: (1) the reject of the body; (2) the singularity as a gnostics. The French sociologist David Le Breton, in his book L'adieu au corps (Farewell to the body) writes that transhumanism is a gnosti because it hates the body and want to modify it. We will show that, if some transhumanists seem to hate the body, like gnostics, the fact that they want to create a better body is not at all gnostic. The second critic is made by the French AI specialist Jean-Gabriel Ganascia, in his book Le Mythe de la singularité (Myth of the Singularity). The author says that Singularity is a gnostic faith. He uses four arguments: (1) the two movements think that the nature is bad and must be repaired; (2) transhumanism and gnostics are a mix of mythos and logos; (3) transhumanism is a radical dualism, like gnostics; (4) the singularity suppose a "broken time", like the fall of the soul in the gnosic. We will show that none of these arguments is relevant: (1) the gnosti think that the nature can't be repaired, at the contrary of the transhumanism; (2) all philosophy, and even science, are a mix of mythos and logos; (3) the transhumanism is a materialism (maybe a strange sort of materialism) but not a dualism; (4) a historical time, based on events, is necessarily "broken", so it is not a specificity of transhumanism and gnostics.

In conclusion, we will give another hypothesis: the transhumanism, at least in its singularitarian version, could be a neo-joachism. The joachism is a christian millenarism, founded by Joachim de Flore (12th century), whose prophesied that after the era of the Father and another era of the Son, it will be soon a new era, of the Spirit: the entire world will be spiritualized and purified.

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A « post-validocentric » reading of Limbo by Bernard Wolfe from a posthuman disability studies perspective

Not all but many transhumanist texts and science-fiction writings depict disability under the influence of classical, biomedical and typically humanistic representations which turn disability into a deviant and defective condition with regard to the "normal" human one. This is partly why « disability activists and disability scholars are [in general] radically skeptical about the promise of enhancement technologies » as transhumanism « sounds like it misplaces the disability problem » (Shakespeare, 2014). Yet, it is not uncommon for the disability condition to be presented in the transhumanist literature as a predisposition to human enhancement, and the first humans to access posthumanity are often people with disabilities. Furthermore, the human species is often depicted in transhumanist narratives (Allan 2013; Miah, 2016) as disabled as such when compared to the posthuman. However, transhumanist depictions of the ascension of people with disabilities to posthumanity coincide in general with the achievement of a posthuman condition that is most of the time imagined from dominant humanistic « able-bodied » psychologies and imaginaries.

Though a large range of transhumanist discourses in public media and in science-fiction literature reproduces what David Mitchel and Sharon Snyder (2000) call « prosthetic narratives » in which « a disabled character serves as a crutch to shore up normalcy or super-normalcy somewhere else », there are also, on the other side, disability or post-validocentric counternarratives in science-fiction and transhumanist literatures. These narratives openly challenge depictions of disability as an abnormality, a wound or a pathological condition in need of cure or in need of restitution within the range of the normal. One of these proto post-validocentric counternarratives is the 1952 proto-cyberpunk, cybernetic-inspired and post-apocalyptic science-fiction book Limbo by Bernard Wolfe (1915-1985). Such interpretation hasn't yet been proposed as Limbo hasn't get yet the attention it deserves from a posthuman critical disability studies perspective. This is precisely the aim of this talk to fill this lack as it seems clear to me that in this book, Wolfe completely reverse the logic of classic humanistic prosthetic narratives.

In order to achieve this goal, I will firstly introduce to the core contribution of the disability studies to the critics of transhumanist depictions of the posthuman. By questioning notions of health, normality, disability and validity from a disability studies outlook, a posthuman disability studies perspective (Goodley et al., 2014) provides interesting conceptual tools to interrogate dominant conceptions of the posthuman, and opens the path to prospective imaginaries and possible futures freed from the humanistic habits of thoughts of the modern able-bodied subject. After a short summary of Limbo and its public reception, the converted perspective a posthuman disability studies perspective implies will be then illustrated through the analysis of Bernard Wolfe's novel. More precisely, I will present the reasons why Limbo exhibits the characteristics of a proto « post-validocentric counter-narrative », in the way it reexamines our evaluations of human enhancement and the posthuman condition, and challenges humanistic depictions of disability. Indeed, in Limbo validity and ableist transhumanistic depiction of the posthuman condition are viewed as the abnormal and defective condition par excellence.
Hospitalities: A Critique of Giorgio Agamben's Homo Sacer and Alain Badiou's Theory of the Subject towards a nihilistic ethics of resistance

To what extent do Badiou's and Agamben's accounts of the Political Subject follow Heidegger's neglect of the corporeality of Dasein and the human being as subject, and in doing so, despite being influenced by Lacanian thought on the barred subject, not overcome the Self and Other problematic since Hegel in solving the question of understanding the subject and the community, and in defining the human being? What does it mean to be a human being? If to be a human being is to firstly express humanity and the essence of it, then what are the means? The answer broadly conceived is; politics. In an Aristotelian vein, politics can be understood as the activity for human beings to express their essence. They can express their reason, freedom and spirit in the world through objects of politics, being discourse, deliberation and actions. However, human beings cannot be defined solely as individuals, but as a collective, in the relation of the self and the other, the individual and the community. Therefore, what is the political subject and its relation to the community? In answering this, we answer the question of what it means to be human, presupposing that politics, or the study of the activities of human beings in a realm of self-expression determines what human beings are in fact. But if the so called realm of politics is depoliticized, and its essence of what makes politics itself, and the political underpinnings of such a phenomena are lost. What happens to the essence of the human being if the classical definition politics is taken away? This is where the call of poststructuralism under Badiou and Agamben comes in, attempting to render a new a political subject in the belief that it can alter the conditions of politics and the given state of affairs through new activities of resistance by the subject. In doing so, re-humanize humanity in the belief that a new ethics of resistance can re-politicize politics, and render the political as an existential reality once more, instead of markets deciding political decisions, the political subjectivities can gain power to do so. Now I shall explain why Badiou and Agamben are central to this poststructuralist claim to re-animating the belief that a political subject can instigate political change. Badiou and Agamben, both influenced by Heidegger's anthropologization of Husserl's ego-consciousness into Dasein, develop a new materialism in conceiving the political subject. Since Weber and Heidegger, increasing bureaucratization and technologization in the neoliberal paradigm has resulted in a radical shift, which is depoliticization and the eradication of the political. Both Badiou and Agamben wish to resist depoliticization, by forming a new conception of the political subject, the limits and ontology of what it means to be a 'subjectivity' in the world of depoliticization and elimination of the political. They wish to examine the possibilities of developing a new theory of a subjectivity which can resist these factors of the world.
Human enhancement seems to be a rapidly approaching horizon. With the development of science and technology pathing the way to new and exciting approaches to biomedical engineering, cognitive science and all knowledge related to the possibility of 'artificial' human enhancements, the topic of transhumanism was never so present. In which way will these future possibilities of changing humans affect our own concept of humanity and the parameters which we usually give for human condition? Is the nature of 'person' affected by these human enhancements? Furthermore, in a transhumanist world what should our answer be to the question "what would constitute the death of a (transhuman) person"? In this paper we will discuss the consequences of transhumanism in the concepts of personal identity and death, taking into account the possible enhancements we will be able to apply to the human body. Offering a promising definition of the concepts of Person and Death, as well as discussing a "transhuman persistence of persons" compatible with the enhancement of both physiology and intellect while preserving identity as a necessary and sufficient condition for human death, it will be argued that these future possibilities place a difficult challenge for spatiotemporal physical continuity approaches (e.g. animalism) and the embodied mind approach. I argue that the latter sort of approaches fails to provide an intuitive answer to the question "when do transhuman persons cease to exist?". I, thus, conclude by showing that a Neo-Lockean Psychological Overlapping approach fares better with the challenges that transhumanism poses to the persistence of persons and personhood. The paper will be centered around an as robust as possible definition of what does it take for a person to persist and to cease to exist. What kinds of physiological transformations is a person able to withstand before it ceases to exist? I argue that this Neo-Lockean Psychological Overlapping approach is the best theory for dealing with the challenges imposed by transhumanism, the reason for this approach to fare better than its rivals is due to transhumanism generally implying physiological and intellectual changes that cannot be maintained in order to preserve identity under the conditions of other physiologically based approaches. Nonetheless, these changes are easily accommodated in a Neo-Lockean theory of persistence over time since it does not require physiological and biological continuity in order to preserve identity. This fact seems to lead to a general revision of our conditions for death not only in a philosophical, but in a medical context for what is for a transhuman person to be dead.
Trauma, Biopower and the Posthuman in James Tiptree, Jr.'s "The Girl Who Was Plugged In"

This article approaches James Tiptree, Jr.'s "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" using the strategically powerful perspectives of trauma studies and the discourse on the posthuman—in conjunction with Foucault's notion of biopower. Although it is still a rather new critical pursuit, a number of critics have, in the last few years, cogently pointed to an imbrication of the paradigms of trauma and posthumanity and begun to explore their influence on present understandings of human existence as represented by contemporary (science) fiction. It is my contention that the discourses of trauma and the posthuman are congruent in that both focus on shatterings of existing structures of self, on its fragmentation. Where these theories diverge is precisely at the consequences that the aforementioned shatterings of the self are understood to have for the individual subject. In that sense, as cultural discourses, they may be read as the two sides of one same coin, as opposed but complementary: both trauma and posthuman theory attempt to conceptualize the fragmentation of the subject and of culture which began in times of postmodernism; yet the fracture that trauma provokes is usually read as negative, and hence, the self seeks re-integration, while the fragmentation and hybridization that results from the assimilation of the posthuman is potentially liberating, and the discourse of posthumanity rejoices at the opportunities that this shattering of structures may afford the individual subject.

Published in 1973, James Tiptree, Jr.'s "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" explores a dystopian future—in its focus on oppressive consumer culture and corporate technoscience—and points back to our posthuman present through metaphoric characters that illustrate and invite comment upon the articulation of power and the construction of the embodied posthuman. The main issue at play in the short story, I will contend, is the identification of biopower with the traumatic appropriation of the human body and the articulation of posthuman forms of resistance to it. I will conclude that in the story, posthuman embodiment entails an empowering act of boundary transgression that allows appropriated bodies to resist, if feebly, unequal power relations and to overcome the shatterings that traumatic living conditions under a biopolitical regime produce.
Can algorithmic knowledge about the self be critical?

Knowledge about the self is increasingly mediated by algorithms, processing big data generated by users' engagement with digital. These algorithms portend a new epistemology of the self, a new conception of what humans are. I ask (1) What is the nature of the new epistemology of the self to which algorithms give rise? (2) Can this epistemology lead to critical knowledge about the self? To answer these questions I compare algorithmic knowledge about the self with the psychoanalytic knowledge, an epitome of critical knowledge about the self.

Both epistemes share assumptions regarding the inability of the mind to have direct access to the true self, and a methodology aimed at bypassing the mind by accessing performance. While psychoanalytic knowledge was a cultural dominant of self-knowledge in the 20th century, algorithmic knowledge is an emerging cultural dominant of contemporary society, either intentionally (as in the case of the quantified self) or not (as in a plethora of personalized digital interfaces geared to tap users' feelings, attitudes, and desires).

While psychoanalytical knowledge is theoretical, assumes a human essence, a teleology of quasi-transcendence, and a reflexive mind, algorithmic knowledge is intently a-theoretical, assumes no human essence, and “outsources” reflection to the algorithmic black-box, thus undercutting the reflexive and interpretive capacities of subjects. Algorithmic knowledge, I argue, operationalizes and technologizes the notion of performativity, thus also threatens to undercut the critical potentialities of the self.

I ponder the possible political ramifications of this move to a new episteme, which transforms the self from a subjective, interpretive, and critical project, the horizons of which are expanding human and social freedom into an object to be deciphered and predicted.
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Posthumanism on silver screen: How women tell their stories and how men depict posthuman creatures as women?

In year 2016 the movie "Wild" by a German director Nicolette Krebitz was released. It is a story of a deep relationship between a young woman and a wolf, about how a modern human becomes (again?) a part of nature. The movie became controversial because of how the director shows sexuality.

In the last twenty years many movies were made with the same or very similar pattern: a human-like being in the body (or in the form of a voice) of a young attractive woman is acting as the main character in a human or posthuman world, being agent of changes or protecting certain order and values or – on the contrary – destroying them. Some of these protagonists are a reflection of what one could call a feministic approach in cinema others fit the old cliché about a female figure in film as a field of identification with a male gaze on women (and their reality) as a certain complex of physical and mental attributes.

Among the movies that stick to this outline the following have to be pointed out: "Species" (1995) and its sequels, "Alien: Resurrection" (1997), "The Stepford Wives" (2004), "Her" (2013), "Under the Skin" (2013), "Ex Machina" (2014), "Lucy" (2014), "Alien: Covenant" (2017). All of them represent the genre of science fiction (some in combination with horror) and all of them were directed by men.

In my paper I would like to ask the question how the posthuman perspective is reflected on screen and why there is a female factor that is essential to it, be it the person of the director, the actress, the construction of the character or the plot.

The question of being an android in case of a female protagonist became even kind of an intertextual game on cinematic metalevel. In Ridley Scott's "Prometheus" (2012) a male character that wants to seduce a very attractive and ambitious but reserved lady commander of a spaceship (Charlize Theron) asks a provocative question: Are you a robot? This moment turns out as a big success in male's seduction but it doesn't, if it comes to the future of mankind and the world, as we know it.
Videogames as instances of everyday technoculture, operate within the premises of digitality, technology, simulations and software. By their very nature, they break down the subject-object, organic-inorganic, and player-game dichotomies. They constitute ludic ensembles, “inter-species assemblages” (Dyer-Witheford, 2015) or “biological technological informational” collages (Stasieka, 2017, 44). The subjectivity of the player is redistributed during gameplay into a post-human network of human and nonhuman bodies and agentialities.

And yet, most research perspectives see videogames as objects existing only once the player enters the scene and makes them happen. Beforehand, they are mere potentialities, possible worlds. Such a player-centric approach treats the human player as a necessary component in the process of ludic meaning production. However, when the game plays itself, the performative character of play is even more visibly negotiated with the system itself, where the “text” itself and its configurations are more important than the player’s actions within it. Once we take the human actor out of the equation, the game (e.g. Everything 2017, Emissaries 2017) starts performing itself like “... an utterance [that] has no other content than the act by which it is uttered” (Barthes 1967, 4). In this talk I will symbolically “kill” the player to focus on machinic acts instead (Galloway 2006). After all, the birth of the self-playing game must be ransomed by the death of the human player (Barthes 1967).

Post-humanist thought (Braidotti 2013) offers a promising perspective for studying self-playing games in particular, and videogames in general. One, which invites theories and concepts looking at the game, the technology, the non-organic players. The very fact that games entail AI, procedural generation, complex agential relations between the player and the avatar, mean that strict divisions into subject and object, activity and passivity need to be rethought. It is fascinating, if not necessary in order to understand digital play and games, to move beyond the human and look at the
phenomena of gaming from the point of view of the game instead. The examples of self-acting AI and self-playing games I will reflect upon in this talk, make the technocultural and posthuman dimensions even more pronounced.

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The Transhuman Peacemaker: A Technopressive Solution to the Conservatism vs. Liberalism Quagmire

In the era of the escalating conflict between leftist-liberal and localist-conservative tendencies, transhumanism can be a peacemaker in both ethical and economic disputes which were central to the differentiation of right-wing, left-wing, conservative and liberal ideologies in the 20th century and that became excessively confused at the beginning of the current millennium. Although technological progress may be exponential, as it is stated on the basis of Moore's law, it does not, however, take place in a vacuum. In a socio-political context, the distribution and absorption of the fruits of technological development has been uneven. In a broader historical context, one might say that social progress has a rather dialectical nature and the practice of implementing particular solutions is signified by chaos, due to the existence of numerous variables and the frequently erratic character of human behavior that is hard to grasp by even the most meticulously elaborated ideological system. If transhumanists want to pro-actively influence the direction of this progress, they must clearly define the actors of the conflict – i.e. the Hegelian thesis (globalism) and anti-thesis (localism) – in order to address both sides with an offer that will simultaneously be a compromise with them and an opportunity to move the social discourse in the desired direction. Transhumanists have a great deal to offer, because an adequately guided and socially accepted progress in fields such as robotics, biotechnology or nanotechnology may lead to the emergence of solutions to many controversial problems that are at the center of political conflicts throughout the world, e.g. climate change, world hunger, disease, aging populations and issues connected with the right to life of human beings in their prenatal phase (abortion, in-vitro, etc.).
A Model for Moral Artificial Agents

It seems a daunting task to be able to imprint moral sentiments to computing machines; this, we hold, has three main reasons. These reasons, however, are not, per se, strong theoretical (problems of the philosopher) or technical difficulties (of the engineer); on the contrary, the engineer is— for the most part—free of blame and thus, of responsibility, for it falls upon the shoulders of the philosopher to identify and overcome these three dogmatic doctrines that challenge our moral AI research. In this paper, we will try to point out these dogmas, show their theoretical weaknesses and finally, outline a model that circumvents such problems.

The first dogma we take is the personality (or subjectivity of moral sentiments), for after the rise of the mind-body dualism with Descartes (reviving the Platonic theses somehow), Western understanding of morality has been limited to intentions, emotions, personal feelings &c. Upon the other hand, only with the utilitarian doctrine, we see a movement from this subjective understanding of morality. Prima facie, there is nothing theoretically wrong with these theses, they are able to explain the phenomenon of moral choices—if any—to a great degree of clarity. Kant, for instance, while taking morality to be an internal mechanism still maintains an objective moral code is possible. Nonetheless, with his—or any other personalist account of morality— it is not feasible to programme a machine, it only suffices for human experience.

The second great dogma we take, is our obsession with pain-pleasure as extremes. These, not only limit our scope of analysis to mammals with a central nervous system, but also, again, make us focus on the personal aspect of moral behaviour. An analysis of morality, however, cannot be based solely on pain-pleasure or any derivative feelings. In some doctrines, cf. Christianity, the moral evil is closely associated with the guilt arising from the pain of causing someone harm, &c. Kant, too, maintains this doctrine.

Finally, we hold that the thesis that only autonomous, i.e. free & rational, agents are to be considered morally is also dogmatic. All of these doctrines somehow repeat themselves in the history of philosophy but the reason, we believe, they were not challenged systematically until today is that there was not a need for it. With the functional artificial agents seen distinctly on the horizon, we no option but to expand our understanding of these notions and to that end we propose the following model for moral machines.
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Metatheorizing in Posthumanism(s): Is Posthumanism(s) in Stagnation?

Without denying the decisive advance during the last three decades, I claim that today the posthuman project which challenges human exceptionalism and overcomes the binaries between human and nonhuman, human and the machine, society and nature, seems to have come to stagnation. In my view, this is manifested by four variants.

First, the posthuman thought has failed to integrate and become a widely accepted approach within academy. To be more precise, the vast majority of academics, the university departments in social sciences and humanities as well as most graduate students obsessively continue to share an anthropocentric stance.

Secondly, for about fifty years, both the linguistic turn and the dominant 'social constructivism' have rendered social scientists 'uneducated' regarding the techno-scientific developments. Accordingly, even a considerable number of advocates of posthumanism(s) appear to have been dealing with the same ignorance. In this respect, our not being profoundly aware of pressing and immediate challenges, such as Big Data, virtual reality, nanotechnology, genetic manipulation, artificial life or climate change, poses obstacles towards the flourishing of the post human framework.

Thirdly, the increased diversity of posthuman ideas, perspectives and approaches, not only is a success story, but also leads to a tiring status-quo situation. In my view, the repetitive efforts to create taxonomies and mappings have undermined the posthuman innovative point.

Finally, as I see it, it is revealed that we are being unrealistic towards maintaining that we can simply step outside of the modern humanist regime and the dichotomy of human and nonhuman. Ironically, knowledge practices which claim to provide insights into nonhuman, in fact, amount to a greater human involvement.
An Inquiry Into The Limits Of A Trans-/Post-/Human Interpretation Of The Theseus' Ship Paradox

In my paper I will make use of the challenging Theseus' ship paradox in order to shape precise problems concerning the boundaries between human identity and some other identities, which could rightfully assume other names (cyborg identity, trans-/post-/human identity or other denominations). It is a work aiming at the construction of a taxonomy of problems rather than promoting precise answers. It cuts across different well known areas of reflection in the so called "beyond human" field of studies, such as radical life extension, organ transplants, mind enhancement, neuroethics and religious contexts.

Assuming that the Theseus' ship is a human being, the core of my intervention will deal with various problematic aspects concerning the possible (infinite) "reparations" or enhancements: which are the "parts" that can be changed without causing an identity problem? Is there a precise threshold delimiting the difference between a human being and what can not be referred any more with such expression? Is it enough to have a bionic forearm in order to be considered a cyborg? Is it correct to talk about "parts" of the body in general (and of the brain in particular) like "spare parts of a car"? The case of the brain is certainly more complex: can it be said that the brain really has "parts"? Can the conscience or the mind be considered as a part of a human being? And, finally, who is in charge for the decision of which parts can be replaced or enhanced?

From such questions there will follow two main developments: 1) I will draw a parallel between what in the mechanical industry is defined as "interchangeable parts" and the most recent studies on the possibility of growing up human organs inside "chimera-embryos". A man with a human heart or kidney which has been "cultivated" in a pig, should be considered altogether a man? Keeping in mind the identity problem related to the Theseus' paradox, can we say that, after such kind of transplants, a man will be the same man? And why this kind of problems matter? 2) In the second development I will talk about those "reparations" or enhancements involving principally the brain, with some references to the current developments of neuro (nano) technologies and to the "mind uploading" problems.

In the final part of my intervention I intend, on the one hand, to focus on the most important ethical and religious questions exploding from all the problems I have dealt with and, on the other hand, I would like to raise awareness on a topic not much developed in the researches about the "beyond human" studies, that is the question of "madness". The hyper-scientific and hyper-technological contexts for the human enhancements do not mention frequently this "human feature" and yet somehow, it may turn to be an unexpected resource in order to clarify the limits of human identity.
The necessity of moral education in a “posthuman” society

In this paper I would like to discuss about the absence of moral grounds in our contemporary society (ruled by technology) and the necessity of moral education. In a world where the internet has gained “human powers”, how would Kantian moral find its place? Is it possible to talk about “right” or “wrong” when we realize, each and every day, that with only one search on Google we end up knowing everything about someone’s life? How do we define an action as being according to the moral law, when the very specialists who make our life easier through technology, end up in controversies like the Cambridge Analytica group?

My essay is structured into three main chapters: in the first one, I am going to make a short presentation of Kant’s moral, in order to draw the context in which we can even discuss about a moral law and a reason for which we should act in a certain way. To act out of respect for the moral law, as Kant described it, means to be moved to act by a recognition that the moral law is a supremely authoritative standard that binds us and to experience a kind of feeling, akin to awe and fear, when we acknowledge the moral law as the source of moral requirements. Going even further, we reach the conclusion that basic moral requirements retain their reason-giving force under any circumstance—they have universal validity: the content of basic moral requirements is universal.

In the second chapter of my paper I try to understand if whatever Kant thought to be true about moral laws still stands in our society. In order to give a proper example of how our world changed, I am going to use, as an example, the latest controversy concerning Cambridge Analytica, a data-mining organization financed by a certain wealthy family (name and more information are of no use here), which makes us wonder about the “inherent goodness of technology”. According to certain publications, Cambridge Analytica “scraped” information from as many as fifty million unwitting Facebook users in order to help a presidential campaign—users didn’t agree with this and the an entire state ended up with a president that they didn’t want and never expected to win. If technology is capable of such an immense wrongdoing, why are the people willing to use it? How does Kant’s categorical imperative find its place here, in a society where our own freedom—the freedom that technology offers us—makes us “slaves”?

In the third and final chapter of my paper I am concerned with one question: If this is just the beginning and by only having a Facebook account, you end up being in a prison with no escape, how will the “post-human” society have a place for moral grounds? Is it even possible to talk about ethics of robotics and AI, when we are losing control right from the start? I believe that we are missing one essential thing: moral education.
Digital belonging and co-presence in Massively Multiplayer Online Games

With an interest in the phenomenological underpinnings of place, human geographers have long understood the felt attributes of belonging. Essential to shaping people’s lives, belonging is often aligned with the formation of communities and in setting people apart (Antonsich, 2010; Write, 2014; Tomaney, 2012; Tomaney, 2015). As an embodied relation to dwelling belonging is immediately more slippery when we consider its relations to digital space. This paper reveals how distinct social pleasures in game-space reveal ecologies of feelings wherein a collective we is performatively instituted and the feeling of we-in-the-making is shared (Stiegler 2014).

In Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOG) communities belonging can be closely related to place, but equally it can exist without a particular site. Digital belonging like its analogue counterpart, may refer to the relations between humans and non-human entities, objects and ideas. Digital belonging as this paper argues, refers to the sense of feeling at home in an online community; it can be intimate, private, collective and public. It is as I aim to show, exactly this pervasiveness and fluidity that allows for a number of different possible ways to digitally belong. Through an analysis of the communities of the MMOG World of Warcraft, the official World of Warcraft forums and the gaming forum MMO Champion, this paper develops an approach to digital belonging that extends Heidegger’s conceptualisation of presence, comparing it to the imagined co-presence of virtual togetherness (Durlach and Slater, 2000).

References:
Expanded Choreography

As an artist, I'm interested in the relationship between the nomination of things and the human burden, where everything is observed for us, from an anthropocentric point of view. The decision to name a plant, a flower, based on feelings or concepts seems arbitrary. This is how, unfortunately and despite having a posthumanist interest at the beginning, when the movement of the plant is observed as choreography, as mechanics... the roots of an anthropocentric humanism are revived. Is it possible then to overthrow such a deep-rooted humanism?

The development of this research is carried out in the field of art and has had as a cornerstone work with other-bodies [in this case, plants and objects], bodies observed from a posthumanist posture. The work with these bodies is contextualized in the constant interest to problematize space-time-movement relationships, which are directly linked to a choreographic intervention proposal, an expanded choreography. In these art-works, the dancers are not human nor necessarily respond to codes from the dance world.

Expanded Choreography is the theoretical-conceptual research that accompanied the work Choreography for daisy and light (first prototype). This artistic investigation works with plants and objects as other-bodies. In the particular case of the mentioned work, the interpreters were a flower and an electronic-luminesce mechanism.

The motor possibilities of plants constitute an insufficiently explored topic. Plants develop and move in a lethargic temporality that is imperceptible to the human eye, which cannot observe that lapse of time of movement directly. There is where the role of photography is fundamental. The camera acts as the only possible viewer for this dance. Then, it is only through the photographic montage that we (humans) can observe their interaction and movement.

The production process of the work investigated the temporality of the plants from their motor possibilities. I developed a time-lapse project in which a weed and an electronic-light-mechanism respond kinetically to each other. Taking as references the proposals of Stefano Mancuso and Alessandra Viola regarding sensitivity and intelligence in the plant world, supplemented with ideas of Jane Bennett of vibrant matter, this work is under the conception of a post-humanist choreography, taking as a conceptual reference the posthuman by Rosi Braidotti.

The presentation, Expanded Choreography is thought as a visual-essay supported by oral resources, where the different steps of the research are displayed through sketches and other visual examples as videos or photographs, and gathers the main observations in frame of the artistic research.

This investigation does not pretend to end with an absolute conclusion since, being this an art-piece and form the author's perspective, art proposes questions, not necessarily unidirectional responses.

Expanded Choreography should be a contribution to the 10th Beyond Humanism Conference because of its specificity as an art-investigation. It is an investigation whose problematic is closely related to topics of bio-art, ai-art, robotic-art and non-human cultures and communities.
Posthumanism can be understood as an umbrella term for future-oriented discourses revolving around the problems of human and non-human subjectivities, including vastly different narratives on the spectrum of anthropocentrism. While transhumanism seems to be a reconfiguration of humanism, reflecting on the bio/ethical challenges of technological advances in NBIC sciences, critical posthumanism emerges from the genealogy of post/modernism, addressing the category crisis of “the human”, incorporating studies of othering and alterity. The best way to locate and map the various phases of the intricate history of posthumanist thought is by examining the “avatars” of posthumanist narratives; each of them has a distinctive embodiment in the shape of popular culture figures such as the alien, the robot or sentient AI, the cyborg, and the animal. These iconic figures, always incorporating some form of monstrosity, have been used to explore the problems of subjectivity within or outside of ontological constraints of humanism.

The most recent development in posthumanism is characterised, firstly, by turning to the ultimate other, the beast, challenging the traditional, humanist understanding of the position of the human in relation to the animal, and by acknowledging humanity’s effect on the planet and the possibility of annihilation as a result. These anxieties have also been expressed and explored in popular culture, as it is clearly indicated by the increasing interest in dystopian and post/apocalyptic narratives, depicting monstrosity as the progeny of humanity, the inevitable rise of the human 2.0, and the destruction of modern society as pastoral, with an aesthetic of overgrown cities and human artefacts.

New Weird on the other hand seems to go beyond that type of interaction and influence posthumanism to a greater degree. Critical posthumanism, as an academic discourse, has emerged in the late 90s and 2000s, from the unearthing of post-structuralism and Donna Haraway’s “A Manifesto for Cyborgs”. It has been formulated by the works of Katherine Hayles, Rosi Braidotti, Sherry Vint, Claire Colebrook and Cary Wolfe. Synchronically, New Weird has been created by authors and editors like China Miéville and Ann and Jeff VanderMeer by archiving the weird tradition and cleansing it from non-palatable, binary depictions of otherness. "Global weirding", coined by Hunter Lovins, and popularized by Thomas L. Friedman, is a suggested substitute for “global warming” and “climate change” as these are not descriptive enough of the signified phenomenon. I would argue that global weirding is apparent not only in our everyday experience with seasons, and environmental studies, but also in philosophy and aesthetics.

In my paper, I would like to argue whether the wider sense of “global weirding” can be instrumental in forming sustainable posthuman subjectivities based on sentience rather than cognition by analysing Jeff VanderMeer’s depiction of non-humans in his fiction. His work is characterised by ideas of porosity and contamination, as New Weird itself is defined by generic transgressions. Wolfe in his “Introduction” to What is Posthumanism? writes “we must take yet another step, yet another post-, and realize that the nature of thought itself must change if it has to be posthumanist” (Wolfe, 2013, xvi). I would like to argue whether this type of porosity and contamination of the body and the mind, human and animal, can be enough to extend our understanding of thought and subjectivity to the zoe - so far exclusive to the bios.

Cited works:
This proposed study aims to examine curatorial practice within an interdisciplinary framework; with a particular focus on the possibilities and potentials of “liveliness” in media art objects and practices that situate themselves beyond mono-disciplines and also offer a critique of anthropocentrism. In this line, this study is an attempt to search for conditions of developing anthro-decentric curatorial approach in media arts. Following this, the overarching question of the study is “How can liveliness in media arts objects and practices in the context of bioart be best employed in curatorial practices to be able to rearrange possible relationships at the nonanthropocentric level?” This question follows “In what ways can curatorial activity re-arrange art and life science practices to go beyond human perspective and why might such an approach be useful for art&science curation in general?” Diverse interpretations of art&science projects and exhibitions tend to place human and culture as the ‘core’ and non-human and nature as the ‘periphery’ resulting from the understanding that science is practiced only through human’s knowledge and values. The curator’s role, herein, can be considered as to find a way to approach/deal with/understand/interpret multidiscursive and multisensory complexities of art&science and establish exhibition context where disconnection of art and life and agential disconnection of human with nonhuman are reversed; and to mediate between art and life forms. Following this, one of my arguments is that curatorial practice dealing with liveliness at the level of interspecies collaboration where nonhuman agents can take part as collaborators can be one ways of embodying critical posthuman thought and challenging the anthropocentric ideology which keep the system of dualisms and binary hierarchies alive. Based on this argument, one significant question that needs to be asked “To what extent can curatorial practices that are dealing with living organisms and various forms of life in the context of bioart challenge systems of oppositional dualities and go beyond human perspective?” At institutional level, the study aims to contribute to curatorial studies and art & science discussions by developing anthro-decentric curatorial approach. At ethical level, the study is a call for practitioner of the field to take an action to support ecological justice and to rethink curatorial ethics in accordance with a non-anthropocentric understanding.
Liberal Nietzsche: A transhumanist Technik

As the English-language translator of Stefan Lorenz Sorgner's 2016 book Transhumanism: The Most Dangerous Idea in the World?, I am proposing a paper that seeks to clarify the transhumanist vision by thinking critically through two arguments in Transhumanism that stand in tension with one another: 1) that the most thorough and thoughtful transhumanists tend to embrace liberal politics (the notion that laws should protect all individuals from forces that impede their individual liberties) and 2) that transhumanist thinking is generally compatible with Nietzsche's philosophy (which calls the lie on liberal politics by claiming that society should be structured around the glory and wellbeing of the elite—which amounts to the actual praxis of liberalism in most societies). After granting the plausibility of Sorgner's arguments for the similarly open-ended, imaginative aspirations of Nietzsche's Übermensch and the posthuman telos of transhumanism, I will argue that these two concepts converge in a relatively apolitical domain of individual aspirations but that the political implications of posthumanism should be sought elsewhere than in Nietzsche's thought.

The second half of the paper puts the ethical debates around transhumanism in historical perspective. Oliver Müller observes that transhumanism resembles existentialism in its focus on imagining new possibilities for human capacity, but differs in its focus: transhumanism promotes technologies (Herstellen) that could produce new experiences whereas existentialism promotes reflection on ethical choices (Handeln). The difference between transhumanism's values of Herstellen and existentialism's values of Handeln recalls the ambiguity of Technik in German, which like the Greek τέχνη, can denote techniques, technologies, or both. Pharmaceuticals neatly straddle the two concepts captured in Technik: medications are products and their effects depend on correct administration. Sorgner argues plausibly that performance and emotional enhancements should be included within the scope of correct administration.

To implicitly conflate product and choices made about products, however, by combining Nietzschean anti-liberalism and liberal transhumanism without reference to the power of contemporary corporate interests, would at worst facilitate an historical erasure of the difference between pre-Industrial techniques of speculative thought and cyber-era technologies of self-enhancement. While the former has strong roots in German-language intellectual traditions, spanning at least from Kant to Sloterdijk, the latter is inseparable from the expansion of the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries, whose production power is driven not by human aspirations of more harmonious and self-actualizing human activity, but above all by the aspiration to profitably exploit market conditions—without regard for social or environmental damage. It would be naïve and foolish for anyone to categorically reject business collaborations today. Yet if we (post)humanist scholars strive to be creative and historically informed social critics, we must be explicit about the risks of cooption involved in uncritically supporting biotechnological interests.
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**Science Fiction and the Quotidian**

In his seminal *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, Darko Suvin asserts that SF texts metaphorically function to reflect 'on the author's own historical period and the possibilities inherent in it', and are thereby inextricably determined by class and material existence. His influential theory of cognitive estrangement proposes that the SF narrative world's subversion of 'the "normal" expectations of the reader' functions in a cognitive manner, that - by virtue of the narrative device of the novum - the text enters a reciprocal 'dialogue' with the reader's empirical reality. I contend that, rather than merely by presenting newnesses, many modern SF texts achieve their cognitive drive through a corresponding depiction of the (post)human quotidian.

Suvin's definition of the novum as a 'novelty' is inadvertently apt then. Just as every novelty inevitably fades in consequence until it eventually becomes mundane, so the novum of any individual SF text must decay in potency intratextually, into that superannuated article Tom Shippey refers to as the 'datum'. Whilst for Paul Ricoeur 'Metaphor is living [as] it introduces the spark of imagination [...] at the conceptual level', this spark has a finite lifespan, and the (post)human mind soon colonizes and becomes cognizant of any textual newness in SF. The genre therefore relies on the perpetual 'invention of new living metaphors that redescribe metaphor', as given that any defamiliarizing newness is intratextually unsustainable, every novum is subject to novum decay.

There consequently exists a prominent interaction between newness and the quotidian in SF texts, a complex repetitive system, and from this perspective no single SF text embodies a posthuman imaginative absolute, but rather contributes collaboratively toward the megatext of the genre; an ephemeral marker suggestive of a more widely unbounded continuum of posthuman possibility. Although Posthumanism presupposes a fundamental break with what humanity has been as a species, the repetitive system of SF texts emphasise that the posthuman is only fundamentally a linear progression from the human. This conception of Posthumanism profitably deconstructs the fallacy of any sudden and mythical leap towards a posthuman consciousness, acknowledging that although in modernity technological progress is certainly occurring at faster pace than ever before, our species' self-transcendence nevertheless occurs upon a reasonably continuous spectrum.

Thus, as posthumanism can only be truly understood through the joint lens of contemporaneity and our species' past heritage, the predominance of repetition in modern SF demonstrates the ways in which humanity is always already posthuman. Through the repetitive system then, quotidian elements in SF provide the recognizable and fundamentally (post)human foundation of the text, from which the posthuman newnesses of the text are able to depart with radical intention, to form the overarching imaginative-visionary drive of the text. I therefore propose, by way of discursive analysis of the 2011 film *Source Code*, that SF functions as a transient dreamscape for visitation by the (post)human mind, by which the reader gains an expanded perception of not only their empirical environment, but also of posthuman possibility.
Empire of Signals: Techno-animistic Ecology without Nature in Japan

In the realm of media and communication studies, the interest in the nonhuman or the nonrepresentational has recently emerged in concert with Actor-Network Theory, New Materialism, and Animal Studies as interdisciplinary fields, and Speculative Realism or Object-Oriented Ontology in philosophy. The concept of "media" has been dehumanized in recent literature associated with media archeology, media ecology, software studies and other post-human media studies. A number of scholars have sought different assemblages of humans and machines, redefining the relationship between humans and non-humans. For instance, in The Marvelous Clouds, John Durham Peters traced the civilizational history of elemental relationships between humans and their world, expanding the concept of media to the anthropological scale. Given this updated concept of media, limiting media as a means to convey linguistic meanings is unnecessary, because media as a technical object can magically connect people to the world without linguistic meanings. In this connection, through the technical object, people obtain the energy of the world. Gilbert Simondon called this process "transduction." Transduction is the transfer of energy from system A to system B. Historically, this relationship has been considered to be "spiritual" or "magical" and has been investigated by anthropologists as "primitive phenomena." However, Simondon's pragmatic approach does not limit the capture of spiritual and magical aspects to pre-modern or non-western phenomena. This paper will discuss methodological and theoretical possibilities of the existence of the spiritual relationship between humans and the world through high technological media, referring to Japanese contemporary culture that has spread within the United States since the 1990s. To depict the relationship, Anne Alison used the word "techno-animism," in which material reality comes alive. As is well known, when Roland Barthes visited Japan almost half a century ago, he detected uncanny and weird traits of Japanese culture and wrote Empire of Signs (1970). However, he failed to capture them in the book, due to his structuralist framework. We want to substitute "Empire of Signals" or "Machinic Eros" (Félix Guattari) into it. This paper addresses the question of what components of Japanese contemporary culture composed spiritual experience of consumers. It also demonstrates how we can theorize the existence of proto-religious spirituality in contemporary media ecology without using conventional cultural and religious terms. Finally, this paper will address how we can redefine spirituality as a mode of existence of the human-machine (or human-object) network instead of mystifying it.
Posthuman aesthetics toward indeterminacy in bio-art

The posthuman approach proposes several ecophilosophical considerations that may change life’s focus. This paper is about communication based on bioinformation. From metahumanism we are living several environmental and ecological changes oriented to radical diversity. We argue that the econosphere will be the emergence of knowledge about biochemical information and the way for communication between humans and Microbiome. The biological and artificial components at the simple level are essential to sustain life on earth and future forms of life aboard.

New forms of life generate a need for posthuman aesthetics capable of accepting social relationship between humans and non-humans. Specially, because they come in the smallest scales, such as artificial Microbiome. How can computation be a way for understanding non-human sensing, biological and artificial life in a perspective of an ecology of indeterminacy? How does it show higher levels of creativity? Bioart in microbial ambiances enables participants to experience a relationship with emerging forms of life coming from hypercomputing processes. The but is to recognize and give face to them. And to engage in artificial endosymbiosis and ecosymbiosis. It is about microbiont and holobiont as metahumans acting without hierarchies.

It is necessary to overcome the traditional focus of humanism. Posthuman and metahuman stadiums may build new possibilities. It is to imagine biospheres of knowledge and econospheres that can go beyond the limits of the restrictive human approach. Because that one is based on the idea of the exhaustion of biological resources, contamination and exploitation of nature. A new proposal to battle the anthropocene must arise, in order to overcome this situation, specially from artificial materials and living technologies. The neocene implies the scientific and technological innovations even for resilience of living ecosystems. They may produce their own environments for adaptation and complexity within the logics of bioarts.

The final goal is to analyse ¿How posthumanities have emerged in relation with the artificial life, which include nonhuman beings, and in what relationship with philosophy and arts? The statement of the hypothesis will be ¿How can we arise a new dialogue between aesthetics and ecology using the relationship with posthumanities, science, technology and arts?

From this metamorphose of humanities the contribution will be that we could achieve new knowledge based on a converged epistemology, which is beyond humanism. The objective will be reinventing aesthetics, that will allow to study artificial microbiome in a social relation with humans. It would be about open social systems in which the relationships between different forms of knowledge and practices will act and produce conceptual metahuman structures. It is about understanding how it is possible for microbiome to make choices, imagine, innovate and think possibilities as a form of knowledge, and going beyond the limits and damage caused by the anthropocene.
Whose survival? An exploration of the nature/culture distinction in transhumanist thought concerned with the future of humanity.

Climate change and other human-made scenarios have by now surpassed the threat of nuclear destruction as the most likely threat to humanity today. This had led a group of scientists and business tycoons, who are concerned with the future of humanity, to issue warnings concerning these man-made dangers which couldwipe out not only civilisations but the whole of humanity (see e.g. Bostrom [2002 and 2013]). This does, however, leave open the question of whose survival is it they seek to save?

In this paper, I will provide an outline for Nick Bostrom’s claim that we should be concerned with the future of humanity, after which I will provide a critical review of this claim by making two points. First; that his general conception of humanity (and its values) is essentialist because of the universal notion which humanity comes to take. Secondly, I will shortly posit that any notion of saving humanity should also entitle an increased awareness of peculiar existences (see Butler [2012] and Delanty [1999]). By positioning, on the one hand, the utilitarianist argument of Bostrom, and on the other a poststructuralist argument inspired by Butler, this paper then attempts to reconcile the dichotomy by applying insights from Bruno Latour’s We Have Never Been Modern (1991, trans. 1993 by C. Porter). It will be argued that the dichotomy itself, only serves to hide those aspects which they have in common. Thus, by exploring this perceived dichotomy of the nature/culture distinction this paper will posit a possibility for reconciling these concepts.
The Posthuman Symbolism of Technocyphers

We use concepts such as ‘Cyborg’, ‘Robot’, ‘AI’, ‘Virtual Reality’, or ‘Designerbaby’ in at least three different ways. First, we use such concepts to describe the present with, acknowledging thereby the advance of technoscience well underway. Second, we use such concepts to critically envision futures with, exploring new opportunities and their possible risks. Third, we use them also symbolically, as the shared imaginaries by which cultures of the posthuman are mediated.

Like any other culture, trans-/post-/ and metahumanisms make an appeal to symbols. But what is specific about the kind of symbols that characterizes the posthuman project? Or asked differently: what kind of symbolism does the posthuman project require? In this paper, I explore this question by presenting the notion of the cypher (Chiffre) such as Karl Jaspers introduces it in order to carry the existentialist thought of Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche into the 20th century.

Cyphers, so Jaspers argues, are a language of the symbolic resisting any final objectification, explication in rigid categories, or authoritative dogmatism. Given that posthumanisms are principally critical of lingering metaphysical dualisms and essentialisms, its employ of symbols will likely reflect these characteristics. That is, like Jaspers’ cyphers, the symbols of the posthuman will likely resist being captured in fixed form, and defy all reduction to either side of dichotomies such as ‘matter or mind’, the ‘human or non-human’, the ‘natural or artificial’.

However, Jaspers’ notion of the cypher must also be updated in order to describe the current technological symbols of posthumanism with. I will take the Robot as example to criticize Jaspers’ grasp of the technological with and argue for a posthuman type of symbol that Jaspers could not yet conceive: technocyphers.
Carnism and Speciecism in the Posthumanistic Era

The presentation evolves around the topic of carnism and speciecism. The main point is to explain to the auditory the key characteristics of both carnism and speciecism. To do that I am going to show the history of how European philosophers wrote about animals and the impact they had on culture over the different time periods (antics, medieval, the modern age, the present time).

After a brief historical insight, I will introduce the terms carnism and speciecism on basis of dr Melanie Joy’s book “Why we love dogs, eat pigs, and wear Cows” and Hal Herzog’s “Some We love, Some we hate, Some we eat”. Both authors are psychologist (Hal Herzog is also an antropozooologist) from renowned universities, and involved in animal-rights advocacy.

Following to the introduction of carnism and speciecism, I will give practical examples of carnism and speciecism in literature, arts, science, gender studies and daily life. To do that, I will give examples based on feminist and vegetarian Carol J. Adams book “The Sexual Politics of Meat”, in which she shows the consequences of producing and processing meat in the relations between men and women. To show the wide spectrum of carnism and speciecism, I will speak about Angela Davis who sees direct parallels in fighting against racism and carnism/speciecism, since both discriminated humans and exploited animals are sentient beings that need to be protected and liberated. The last example in this part of the presentation is going to deal with the impact of carnism/speciecism on politics.

The great questions will be: How does carnism/speciecism form Animal Rights, Animal Protection laws. If it forms, does it afflict in any kind the way humans treat their pets and life stock? Does it have an effect on the educational system? These and more questions can be analysed and evolved on base of the book “Zoopolis” by Sue Donaldson and Will Kynlicka.

My aim is to sensitise the audience for the ways that both ideologies emerge in academic, work and daily life. Postmodernistic people value their differences and characteristics. Since that is seen by some as a fact, it could also be the reason for different ways to feel compassion towards animals. It's important to accept differences. Thus I want to make my point appealing and respectful towards the audience. Since I have a vegan background, the presentation could be seen as a plead towards minding animals and even fighting for their welfare. It will be stated at the beginning and not be concealed, as transparency is the key to show respect and compassion in today’s world.
Inclusion of Non-human Beings as Legal Persons

Fundamental changes of the modern legal system as a result of technological and scientific advancement such as artificial intelligence (AI) call for examination of new possibilities beyond the existing human-centric legal system. From this perspective, the authors seek to discuss the possibility of the legal inclusion of postmodern or post-human legal personhood.

The absolute distinction between human and non-human beings is starting to be dismantled, and new perceptions to transcend the modern way of thinking, which dichotomously separates humans from non-humans, are required in the post-human era. As such, the traditional boundaries and hierarchy among machine, animal, and human are disappearing, and the concept of hybrid personhood is emerging in this era.

There is a growing tendency to explore a series of rights based on the perspective that human rights, animal rights, and robot rights are intertwined. The rights of animals and robots are similar in that they deviate from the dichotomy of human subject versus non-human object. The interrelation between such secondary rights is based on their share of the theoretical rationale to be legally recognized; the context of “reciprocity” is emphasized at this point.

The emphasis of reciprocity can also be found in robotics research such as Human-Robot Interaction (HRI). If an intelligent robot can evolve into a social robot with well-rounded sociality through interaction with humans, then the social and moral relationship between humans and robots can also be established. This will then lead to a serious discussion of granting rights to robots. Even if they might not have the same level of rationality and consciousness as human beings, intellectual entities can earn meaning for their existence as independent selves when they are recognized as human-like beings through communication and mutual understanding.

Furthermore, it is notable that reciprocity between humans and animals has also been presented as theoretical basis to legally recognize the rights of animals. On the basis that recognition of suffering experienced by others is achieved through external or sensory perception of pain, “reciprocity” and ”relatedness” are embedded in the concept of suffering, and this can be interpreted as a basis for the acknowledgment of animals’ rights.

Reciprocity as a justification for the non-human rights is based on the idea that human nature can mature through interaction with non-human subjects. This then leads to the exploration of the possibilities of a “corevolution.”

When the legal personhood of non-human beings is legally recognized, the requirement of a series of ethical treatment of intelligent robots and animals can be justified. At the end of this presentation, a broad sketch for legitimization (including tort liabilities and criminal punishments) that legally guarantees the enjoyment of non-human rights that are necessary for non-human beings to coexist in the human society will be proposed.
Artificial Intelligence and Basic Income

The aim of this article is to find ways to deal with the inevitable crisis that we eventually will face caused by artificial intelligence. To this end, I examined the characteristics of the normative issues of artificial intelligence categorized into four areas: social structure, human behavior, artificial intelligence, and its governance. I examined basic income as a measure against unemployment and social inequality in the age of artificial intelligence. The idea of basic income was reviewed in terms of welfare and justice. After reviewing historical backgrounds on the concept of welfare since the 16th Century, 4 contemporary conceptions of justice will be introduced to understand the current issues regarding the idea of "unconditional basic income." Van Parijs's conception, which stands for current debates on unconditional basic income, will be considered in historical contexts.

It is interesting that Rawls himself was taking a negative stance against basic income even though van Parijs relies heavily on Rawls' conception of justice, justice as fairness. I suggest reconsidering Rawls' main ideas, both "social cooperation" and "circumstances of justice" in the age of artificial intelligence. Furthermore, the idea of basic income will be suggested as "a safety device" for the fundamentals of social welfare.
Practising Transhumanists: Cultural Body Politics of Body-Hackers

This paper investigates the body-hacking phenomenon, a trend in body modifications that includes the development, production and use of various technological implants outside of the scope of institutional medical care. Although originally synonymous with dangerous body experiments and extreme body modifications, body-hacking has evolved into a practice common among ordinary people. Easily accessible and less invasive implants today find their users all over the world and allow anyone to become a home-based practising transhumanist.

Presented findings come from both a theoretical and an empirical analysis of the phenomenon. It is based on the theoretical frameworks of anthropology of the body as well as cyberanthropology, exploring the concept of cyberembodiment, which includes various physiological and symbolic alterations of the human body driven by technological progress. The empirical data, obtained through qualitative research among the users of NFC implants, currently the most widespread type of functional body modification, allow an insight into the personal experience of implantees as well as a context to this sociocultural phenomenon. Body-hackers are characterized by a generally positive attitude towards modern technology and optimism towards the impact on the quality of life. They primarily see functional modifications as pragmatic tools allowing for comfortable simplifications of basic daily activities, as well as a form of "hacker's" technological experiment. They bypass the institutionally authorized medical and technological development, and experiment on their own in order to provide themselves with the technologies they need to enhance their naturally given abilities.

Body-hacking presents a new kind of body politics, emerging from the rapid technological progress and which challenges the normative principles of how the human body is perceived, controlled and managed. Special attention will be given to the subject of body-hackers' self-reflection and reflection of their own physicality. Their attitudes towards their body signalizes a shift of perception of intuitive concepts such as organic and artificial, or nature and technology, as these categories are seen to lose their strict differentiation.
Frankenstein's myth and contemporary clone narratives

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, evoking in the subtitle the story of Prometheus, itself has acquired the status of a myth, and one which is especially thought-provoking in the face of scientific possibilities of the modern world. The myth stressed issues central to posthuman studies long before these came into being, and is in fact universal as it "turns repeatedly upon [the] new problems of [any] age in which humanity seizes responsibility for recreating the world" and "for violently reshaping its natural environment", to rephrase Chris Baldick's famous statement from In *Frankenstein's Shadow Myth, Monstrosity, and Nineteenth-Century Writing*. Frankenstein's story has spurred multiple siblings: narratives which echo the narrative structure and pose familiar dilemmas. For instance, Jay Clayton points to the monster's mirror-images "in a world of cyborgs, artificial intelligence (AI), artificial life (AL), and robotics". Following this model of analysis, I would like to present the characters from contemporary fiction who share with doctor Frankenstein and his creature their difficult existential predicaments.

Frankenstein's myth comprises of two major narratives: one is the story of a scientist transgressing a natural law, and facing the consequences of doing so, while the other is the story of a non-human being (made from partly animal and partly human residue), learning in human terms - reading through religious and philosophical texts - a painful lesson about their ontological status. The outcome of scientific hubris is the ultimate fear and shunning responsibility for the 'monster'; while being the unwanted reject of humanity results in the creature's existential crisis and inevitable solitude.

In my presentation I would like to demonstrate how two contemporary clone narratives deal with the above dilemmas problematised in Shelley's original story. In Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* clones inspire terror similar to their much uglier ancestor, and similarly try to prove their humanity to the world through their familiarity with art and literature. No proof, however, averts their end, which is ultimately death in solitude. Fay Weldon's *The Cloning of Joanna May*, however, reverses the original tale, and shows the potential in being both the creator and the creature in the unnatural circle of life.

To see Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as a myth allows one to perceive its profound implications in contemporary culture.
Contexts of posthuman body in postcyberpunk fiction and films

For decades if not centuries science fiction literature has provided a literary background for technological advancement, offering scientists and scholars visions of future, including potential technologies and visions of human evolution. As a s-f subgenre, cyberpunk fiction of the 80s became a narrative foundation of the internet. In his novels William Gibson created a multidimensional cyberspace connecting hackers, AIs and everyone (or everything) in between. Gibson imagined cyberspace not only as a communication tool, but also as a place where human body becomes redundant.

Beginning as a literary movement, cyberpunk has quickly become a pop-culture phenomenon, when films, graphic novels and video games started to utilize similar motives to present dystopian visions of not too distant future, in which human bodies are altered with technology to expand their capabilities. Along with the rapid technological development, cyberpunk evolved into postcyberpunk, in which works of fiction integrated futuristic technologies into the fabric of everyday life. While the networking technologies evolved in the real life, cyberspace ceased to be the main motive of postcyberpunk fiction and the technologically altered human body took its place as the dominant theme.

In his novel "Altered Carbon" Richard Morgan created dystopian world where human mind is coded and located in implanted cortical stack. It can be transferred between different bodies called sleeves. Sleeves are replaceable, they can be natural or synthetic, cloned and changed. Only the destruction on cortical stack means real death, other damages can be repaired so human life is potentially infinite. "Altered Carbon" was adapted into Netflix series, which depicts adventures of posthuman body, provided with countless new abilities yet limited by state or market control. Availability of replaceable bodies creates new society with its own hierarchy and political division. While the body is offered countless new possibilities, it loses its individual uniqueness and identity.

What is interesting in this setback in reimagining human body are numerous contexts, in which it can be read:

- body as weapon (cyborgization, neurochemistry);
- body as a measure of compulsion;
- body as a commodity (which can be worn);
- disposable body;
- body as a symbol of social status;
- body in virtual reality;
- embodiment of AI.

Morgan's prose is very materialistic in many ways: the characters are driven by profit, but also everything has material form, even human mind or AI. While cyberpunk tried to relocate human existence into cyberspace, postcyberpunk brings it back to reality. Both trends rely heavily on Cartesian dualism, yet while cyberpunk prioritized the mind connected to the cyberspace, postcyberpunk declares the materiality of the body in its many versions. The evolution of cyberpunk fiction proves that the popular imagination is still body-oriented and it is not ready to make the body obsolete.
The first six million years had been all fun and games: Posthuman Curators and the Question Concerning Storage in Alastair Reynolds' *House of Suns* and *Slow Bullets*

At the onset of Alastair Reynolds' science fiction novel *House of Suns*, Campion, one of the primary protagonists of the novel, visits the Vigilance, who are curators of a vast interstellar archive, in which they discuss the way history is recorded on a posthuman scale. Similarly, Reynolds' *Slow Bullets* concerns the aftermath of a hostile war between two rival factions in which the surviving soldiers are confronted with a question of paramount significance after discovering their only means of survival is to delete records from their archives: what information matters and for whom does it matter? In both texts, the figure of the curator therefore serves to dramatize a central tension within posthuman discourse, namely the ethical charge to maintain the new modes of relations between history and life, in as much as posthumanist discourse is itself increasingly concerned — on a meta-discursive level — with the preservation of deconstruction and post-structuralist critiques (via Ivan Callus and Stefan Herbrechter), as well as the problem of human "parochialisms" being interrogated in order to be overcome.

Thus, this paper reflects on the figure of the posthuman curator in Alastair Reynolds' *House of Suns* and *Slow Bullets* through a broader discussion on not only what grounds Reynolds' posthuman characters to a continuous sense of identity and history, but the extent to which occupying the role of curator poses ethical questions with respect to the account of one's material existence and the extent to which they belong outside of their social sphere. In considering the prevalence of curation, Gregory Benford argues that we should explore human exchanges across deep time and the manner in which humanity has been constituted as a universal entity: Benford considers the Voyager's 'portrait of humanity', a phonographic record of the planet, which is elucidated upon as less of a 'clinical examination of the human body, but an evocation of ourselves immersed in our world'. This process of data exchange is of central focus in *House of Suns* with Campion's accusations of 'structured enquiry', of a deliberative narrativizing of history across deep time; the nature of the Vigilance's bias being that '[they] value certain forms of information more than others, at least when your transactions are examined over deep time'. Similarly, where *House of Suns* explores the absence of historical events from an encompassing view of interstellar life, Reynolds' *Slow Bullets* addresses this crisis of memory as a historical question through the titular 'slow bullet' which addresses the manner in which one's embodied awareness could be extended through prosthetic means. This relationship between curation and Reynolds' work is thus elucidating on issues of materiality with regards to posthuman existence, the often-fraught nature of maintaining posthumanist accounts of history and life, whether radically reconfiguring identity in response to the dearth of storage or expanding embodied awareness through treating one's material existence as an archive.

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2 The reference to "parochialisms" is a nod to Claire Colebrook's understanding of 'extinction' as a thought experiment to challenge those humanist "parochial" notions. Cary Wolfe and Claire Colebrook, 'The Anthropocene Project: An Opening' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLCTzth6H1M.
4 Alastair Reynolds, p. 59.
Posthuman Culture and Post-labor based on Simondon and Stiegler

According to Simondon, the problems of emotional conflict and alienation resulting from an antagonism between the artisanal (pre-industrial) and the industrial modalities are overcome through the realization of the post-industrial modality that can be developed based on the rationalization of industrial production and technical networks; this rationalization process is accomplished through developing the "technical mentality" as a transcategorical amplifier of technicity and thereby proliferating the affective, cognitive and social connections. However, Stiegler argues that it is not post-industrialization but hyper-industrialization that has arrived along with information networks, and it is necessary to strengthen the ability of non-automation based on automatism in order to restore values of the technical life in the machine empire without care. Both Simondon and Stiegler point out the limits of the labor community and look for the possible forms of post-labor in technology. The value of the invention implied by Simondon’s technical mentality is handed down to the "possibility of independent working from the employment" advocated by Stiegler. Beyond the technocratic frame of labor and production, posthuman society needs to create a technical culture in which we can live our lives not with employment but with the inventive activities and non-automated workings.
Human nature with a twist: Alex Garland's *Ex Machina*

Recent advances in technology, biotechnology and prosthetics inevitably provoke discussions about the need to revise and possibly extend the concept of human nature, especially in the light of the prospect of the creation of the artificial intelligence able to imitate, and perhaps supersede human beings. The questions about 'human nature' provoked by such developments have been a fertile soil for fictional narratives, starting from the myth of Pygmalion, through Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, to contemporary cinematographic dystopias warning against the possible revolt and annihilation of humanity procured by androids.

The planned presentation aims to analyse the 2014 film *Ex Machina* written and directed by Alex Garland in the context of the discussions concerning the definition of the human. It will argue that Garland's film draws on, and to some extent imitates the tradition of the seminal *Blade Runner* with its fundamental questions about the nature of humanity, returning to them with a different artistic poetics and a new ironic twist. The analysis of the film will suggest that if such features as intelligence, curiosity, cunning and manipulating are considered profoundly human, then the artificial intelligence envisioned in *Ex Machina* is not only equal to but far more 'human' and developed than 'natural' humanity. It will also show how cultural representations of the anxieties surrounding the concept of the human nature evolve from mythical optimism, through late 20th-century questioning, to contemporary scepticism and irony.
Posthuman Blackness and Feminism: Afrofuturist Visions of Black Female Cyborgs

The representations of female cyborgs across a range of science fiction media are largely dominated by hypersexualized, phallic fantasies of passive and obedient human-machines. Presented from a White-centric perspective, Black female post-humans are even more likely to be symbolically oppressed and exploited. On the other hand, female cyborgs created by Black women artists repeatedly reinvent their own identities rather than enact what has been "programmed" for them. In their lyrics, music videos, and stage image, Black female artistivists create visions of rebel cyborgs who at the same time obey and violate the established norms and rules. In addition, Black female musicians often reject the media-fueled images of perfect women, artists, and wives. Playing with the femininity-masculinity polarity, they redefine the roles attributed to women in the world which, in the 21st century, is still regulated by the patriarchal normativity. Cyborgs become the symbol of female empowerment as Black post-human divas not only take advantage of their physicality but also seem to go beyond the roles they have been ascribed to perform.

The presentation aims to analyze Janelle Monáe's, Erykah Badu's, and Grace Jones' audiovisual art, including their lyrics, music videos, album covers, and stage performances, and focus on the ways in which they employ the image of the Black female cyborg. Whether it is a series of concept albums accompanied by imaginative music videos, album cover art playing on the distinction between the natural and the robotic, or the stage image of an Afrofuturistic masculine diva, the three artists consciously juxtapose the understanding of femininity as seen through a black female lens with the pop-cultural expectations favoring perfection, almost impossible to be achieved by an average non-White woman.

In my talk, I am going to use Afrofuturism, understood as both a philosophy and an aesthetic, as well as cyborg theory to "read" selected texts and practices which convey the message of the dehumanization of black women both in the phallicentric discourse of science fiction and today's largely post-human pop culture. Afrofuturistic visions of femininity are not necessarily a way of reshaping the traumatic Black experience or inventing a satisfactory model of the future where the non-White are no longer oppressed. In the case of Monáe, Badu, Jones, as well as many other Black artists, the use of futuristic imagery is often an aesthetic strategy employed to address current concerns connected with black femininity as seemingly exaggerated representations of doll-like women are uncannily similar to what is presented in pop culture today.
Longevity, Immortality, Infinity. How Artists Analyse the Premise of Prolonging Life

We live in a time when numerous tools and practices that prolong life and augment our physical and intellectual capacities emerge thanks to the rapid progress in medicine and bioengineering. It appears that this utopian premise of living 200, 300 or even 1000 years is being driven by the Cartesian representation of the human body as a machine with its replaceable parts, deeply rooted in a present medical discourse. However, a clear line has to be drawn between the mainstream medicine and the transhumanism movement associated with private research institutes. While the first perceives senescence as a natural phase of life and assumes a limited period of validity of the human body, most often established for 120 - 150 years, the latter defines old age as illness, whose defeat should be considered as an evolutionary necessity. On the other hand, the alternative can be found in the concept of a holistic existence of living and non-living matter. The collapse of ecological balance, distinctive for the epoch of Anthropocene, forces us to look for new strategies not only in sustainable living, but also in sustainable dying.

In my presentation I will show how the discussion on the life extension technologies and its impact on social life has been recently held by art. I have decided to limit my analysis to artists who base their practices on the collaboration with scientists or on their own critical research. That is why I will focus on works of Revital Cohen & Tuur van Balen, Michael Burton & Michiko Nitta, Agi Haines and Jae Rhim Lee.

To understand a scientific and an ethical context in which these artists have to operate, I will outline a short depiction of major developments in molecular biology and robotics. The scientific landscape of experimental medicine will help me to show how the key figures of the transhumanism movement, including Ray Kurzweil and Aubrey de Grey, see the future of human species. Next I will move to the criticism of the life extension concept held by Yuval Noah Harari as well as the academics associated with the critical posthumanism, especially Donna Haraway and Lynn Margulis. Tracking the ideological rhizome of longevity, immortality and infinity will allow me to point out new ideas in modern art and design that investigate the economy of the human body. In conclusion, by juxtaposing medical, transhumanist and posthumanist discourses, I will try to show how artists formulate often contradictory notions of human enhancement.
Children of the Posthuman

Postmodernisms and poststructuralisms have been movements of liberation and inclusion of otherness. They have, however, in their original manifestation, failed to radically rethink childhood and children. This is not to say that post-theories have not been incorporated in discourses about children, childhood, and education, but rather that they have not produced a radical rethinking of the child. In fact, postmodern and poststructuralist thinkers have either totally ignored the child, which is the case with Derrida, or metaphorize it in order to experiment with subjecthood – as is the case with Deleuze and Guattari (2004), Baudrillard (2002), and perhaps Lyotard (1988). The absence of the child, its metaphorisation, or even its substantiation into an aspect of adulthood, has been constitutive of postmodern and poststructuralist thinking, but also of the child’s intensifying exclusion from the general reconceptualization of being that this thinking produced. In fact, by opening up the presumably empty space of childhood, the adult western subject colonized childhood, turning it into space of experimentation with subjecthood and with otherness; indeed, examining every other, the otherness of the animal, for example, but not the child’s (see Derrida, 2002). In this respect, postmodern thinking maintains the supposedly uncharted space of childhood by obfuscating its nature and thus by doubly othering it and excluding it. Various strands of postmodern thinking are performed in this space, through the playful means of the child, via the examples it offers, and by stripping the child itself from its agentic historical and politicised position.

Similarly to post-thinking, new materialisms and posthumanisms aim to liberate the excluded other by continuing the attack on the subject and on the binaries that maintain the passivity of matter, technology and nature and by underlining the role of constitutive interactions or intra-actions between a being and its world, matter, technology and language (see Stiegler 1998; Barad 2007; Braidotti 2013). This ‘material’ turn, just like postmodernism and poststructuralism, has already been performed in theoretical and empirical research concerning children and education. However, do these accounts say something new about the otherness of children; namely, a group of beings traditionally linked to non-rational (a-logical) materiality and to corporeality; in fact, often conceived as being closer to the animal rather than the human, or even closer to the cyborg and the monster? Are posthumanisms, with their emphasis on agential materiality, able to negotiate matters of agency in connection to childhood, namely, a mode of subjecthood that has been marginalised for centuries on account of its rich material and corporeal nature, or would they be responsible for childhood’s further obfuscation and exclusion precisely because of this emphasis which is seen everywhere? Furthermore, can this renewed emphasis on materiality and agency possibly have exclusionary effects on children, subtracting the care with which they ought to be surrounded and substituting it with agency and self-responsibility? This paper aims to recover what remains unaddressed in some of postmodern thinking and attempt to offer ways of reconceptualization of childhood through posthumanisms.

References:


Techné, Zóé, Noús. The Animal Life and Bernard Stiegler’s Technologies of the Mind and Spirit

Animals are definitely not Bernard Stiegler’s concern. Moreover, when admirably describing the incompleteness of what he refers to, in the wake of Aristotle, as the noetic soul and saying why this soul needs to be constantly supplemented by the artificial forms of techne, Stiegler does not avoid reiterating the Kantian way of conceptualising animality as the origin above which man has to rise in order to form their humanity (de Fontenay 1998: 727). In consequence, the noetic soul, as it is seen by Stiegler, quite contrary to the philo-logico sense of nous (Cassin et al. 2014: 2555–2559, has no “the animalian foundation [fonds].” (Stiegler 2011: 136); “When man strives for the animal, their sink into bestiality at most times, while an animal cannot be bestial: an animal can be nothing but an animal imperturbably.” (Stiegler 2005: 58). A tour de force must be done in order to interfere in Stiegler’s thought. Thinking the animal with him necessarily means to think against him. In fact when he posits that “it is in principle possible to struggle (while under no illusions about the possibility of victory) against stupidity [bêtise],” (2015: 32) he somehow offers me a path to follow but also encourages me to go further and claim that this struggle is impossible with no regard to animals [bêtes] who, as Derrida says, “cannot be stupid [bête].” (2009: 51). It is then possible to struggle (while under no illusions about the possibility of victory) for animals.

I am somehow tempted to say that the absence of the animal life may be seen as the blind spot of the downfall of the life of the spirit “embedded” (Polanyi 2001) in the history of the technical life analysed by Stiegler. A bête question I wish I could ask to Bernard Stiegler would be as follows: why, when discussing bêtise, he never pays attention to bêtes in respect to his own concept of attention ? And yet, when re-reading Deleuze and positing that stupidity is the “ground” of thought and “a transcendental structure of thinking,” (2015: 49) Stiegler makes the animal question possible to be articulated properly: the crisis of the mind [esprit], concomitant with the downfall of the spirit [esprit] value, as Stiegler says in the wake of Paul Valéry (2015: 115; 2014a), has its proper origin in the dis-articulation of the human and the animal. This dis-articulation made us unable to see and make friends with nos amis les bêtes, if one assumes that amicability (philía) which makes friendship (philotes) possible is a sine qua non condition of the koinonia (community) (Lauzier 89-100). The reinvention of the animal bonds of philía would be an attempt to re-articulate the “zoopolis” (Donaldson, Kymlicka 2013) within technopolis. Thus, drawing on digital humanities programmed by Stiegler, the animal humanities could also fight hand by hand against “the atrophy of the life of the spirit” and “epistemological error” (2014: 15-18) which has erased the human-animal relation.
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**Progress and the New Eco-logic in Samuel Beckett's *How It Is* (1964)/Comment c'est (1961)**

Beckett's *How It Is* lures us onto a desolate muddy ground where we, the readers, need to proceed. "Commencez!" (begin!) orders the French title, subtly. Yet, how can we begin to read? The textual landscape of *Comment c'est/How It Is* is an unmasterable patchwork of grafts: transplanted words, no punctuation, no reliable syntax. Such a vulnerable narrative has an immediate effect: the reader will have to learn how to proceed, how to read despite the collapse of familiar structures. In other words, the novel forces the reader to become inventive, to reconsider one's relationship to the text and one's reliance on certain textual structures.

A somewhat similar revelation of relevance and reliance happens to the narrator of the novel: he is made to realize his reliance on his physical environment. We meet a vulnerable narrator - crawling in the mud, weak, while holding on to a coal-sack filled with tins. He is reliant on the earth that can no longer sustain him. What is the connection, the relevance, between the feeble narrator and the dead earth? How did he end up in that place? How did this ecosystem arrive at this desperate state: the earth without plants, without roots...just mud? Those are some of the questions I am going to explore.

Since it is unsure why the narrator is moving, towards what he is moving, or where he came from, it is hard to say his progression in the mud is not regression instead. This paper will concentrate on the notion of technological progress that in the novel is undermined by the more literal sense of progress, meaning "moving onward in space." The progress of the narrator will be compared to technological progress of the mid-20th century (warfare, nuclear power, reckless coal mining and oil-drilling, mass production, etc.) that not only caused heavy war damages to the earth as well as its inhabitants, but dramatically increased a debt Beckett's readers today will have to pay: global warming. It is as if Beckett already knew it when he wrote: "the power to draw all these strangenesses but progress properly so called ruins in prospect" (17). Using the theoretical works of some prominent 20th and 21st century thinkers (G. Deleuze, J. Derrida, T. Morton, T. Clark), I will examine the circular "progress-regress" in *How It Is*, and wonder how to make technological progress as a positive advancement possible. To that, Beckett seems to hold the key.
This paper is a Foucauldian discourse analysis of the techno-utopian Pakistani feminist ecology constructed in the animation TV Series *Burqa Avenger*. The series deals with real-life contemporary socially relevant issues, women empowerment and importance of female education. The main character of the series, Jiya, teaches by day and fights corruption in the disguise of Burqa Avenger. She does not fight with weapons or violence to fight against the man Villain (Baba Bandoog) but she uses the coterie of fictional martial art technique of Takht Kabadi, in which pens and books are used as projectile weapons. The series was acclaimed by both Pakistani and international intelligentsia (O'Neil 2013; Shaikh 2013; Ehrisicht 2013; Lindsey 2017; Bhalia 2015; Khazan 2013; Saeed 2013; Day 2013; Mahr 2013; Saeed 2015). However, liberal feminist intelligentsia criticized the Burqa costume of Pakistani Superheroine as a continuation of female stereotyping (Shah 2013; Rehan 2013; Sirmad 2013). Nevertheless, this study considers this animation series as a Posthuman cite of contestation and discursive (re)production of gender power relations in the contemporary Pakistani as well as global milieu.

The character of Burqa Avenger is a Posthuman character because it is a technologically mediated female subjectivity. Burqa Avenger is a "creature in a post-gender world"; appropriated for a "border war" to resist "intensification" of male domination. Furthermore, the series is contesting for new meanings and "other forms of power and pleasure in technologically mediated" contemporary era (Haraway 1991: 141-181). Thus, the study contends that the character of Burqa Avenger, a non-human subject, is a "cyborg" which is shifting contemporary Pakistani onto-epistemology.

This study is an amalgamated analysis of patterns and correlations which are configured by "objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices" (Foucault, 2002: 41). The paper intends to undertake the analysis of first 13 episodes (Season 1) of the series in order to understand the discursive practices which constitute a feminist fantasy world of the series, configuration of socio-cultural world, linguistic analysis and (re)production of gender power relations within the techno-utopian world of the fictional city of (Halwapur) in the series.

It is imperative to study the impact of new technologies on social relations of power (Terranova 2004) because they are more potential, relevant and impressionable for future generations. This study is significant as nonhuman agents play a vital role in "constitution of subjects of knowledge and politics" in contemporary world (Braidotti 2014: 683). Thus, it is significant to study that how this animation series might structure a "possibility of historical transformation" in the area of contemporary Pakistani as well as global gender-politics.
Transhumanism and Film Education: On the Transmission of Human Ideals Through Non-Human Figures

One of the major yet contemporary rather neglected functions of education is the transmission of anthropological ideals. Especially in the postmodern era, as the widening of individual freedom and self-determination goes hand in hand with a general lack of universally approved images of man, pedagogical institutions face the urgent need of finding new approaches to the anthropological dimension of human development in a globalizing civilization that is driven by the accelerating process of emerging technologies. However, apart from the traditional role of adults sharing their life experience with the younger generations, pedagogical anthropology refers to the broader context of culturally conveyed images of man that directly imply human ideals. Paradoxically, the cultural mediums through which those human ideals are transmitted do not necessarily have to be human: fairytales, legends, myths and religions contain an extensive scope of non-human figures representing various images of human refinement, both ethical and esthetical, which in turn may serve as educational role models for a meaningful life. In short: it seems to be a broadly accepted trait of humanistic education to convey human ideals and existential experiences through non-human images. Simultaneously, cultural narratives also frequently present non-human characters as metaphors for human depravation. From this perspective intelligent robots and cyborgs — that throughout the last decades became prevalent figures in our mainstream culture, predominantly in cinema and computer games — should be regarded as non-human educational mediums for the cultural transmission of both human ideals and possible dangers. Unlike the often quite abstract philosophical and scientific debates concerning the issue of human enhancement and the development of Artificial General Intelligence, transhumanist films do not only portray the potential merits and existential risks of emerging biotechnologies in an attractive way, but they also distribute a wide scope of fundamental existential, ethical and anthropological questions to a broader audience of young people that directly experience the contemporary development of a posthuman culture. In this paper I will present short content analyses of several popular cinematic pictures and television series that could play an important platform for integrating the younger generations into a more general pedagogical discourse concerning the educational, anthropological and existential implications of transhumanism.
Emotional Bonds With Non-Humans. An Inclusive Critical-Posthumanist Approach

Human beings have the fascinating ability to emotionally bond not exclusively with other human beings, but also with animals, plants, and even objects. There are numerous ways of building a relationship with an otherness, ranging from platonic, business, and sexual relations over friendships and romantic attachments to complex love relationships. As diverse the forms of emotional bonds, as multifaceted are the possible alterities to build a relationship with. However, people tend to be skeptical about emotional bonds with objects and machines: Is friendship or even love towards a robot even possible? Is it healthy to have sex with robots and can one call this even sex (and not, e.g. a form of masturbation)? Is it not a mere pathological derangement of what we understand to be a genuine relationship? Officially, it is called objectophilia if someone marries her or his smartphone (such as Aaron Chervenak) or claims to have a relationship with a model aeroplane (such as Michelle, a woman living in Germany). In this talk I will present an inclusive critical-posthumanist approach for the emotional bonding with non-humans – especially machines – as part of a posthuman culture. I have the attempt to understand examples such as the given above not as crazy or pathological but rather as honest and true facets of this beautiful ability of humans to emotionally bond not only with everyone but also with everything.

In the first part of my talk I will examine classical philosophical approaches for the emotional bonding with others, for example Aristotle, Michel de Montaigne, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, Harry Frankfurt, and Martha Nussbaum. I will give a short overview over the important philosophical arguments that these thinkers give for friendship and love as concepts exclusively reserved for human beings and relationships between humans. In the second part I will present alternatives to this traditional view, especially Hannah Arendt’s idea of the inner dialogue between me and myself – an approach that suggests that human beings are relationally structured. But I will also glimpse at Animism (Japanese Shintoism) and Germanic mythology in order to show that the traditional perspective of Western philosophy, analyzed in the first part of this talk, has never been uncontested. In the third part of my talk I will conclude with introducing critical posthumanism – especially Donna Haraway, Karen Barad, Bruno Latour, and Rosi Braidotti – to be able to sketch an inclusive approach as part of a posthuman culture that allows for friendships and love relationships between humans and non-humans, especially machines. I will then explain how the critical-posthumanist paradigm potentially differs from the transhumanist and technological-posthumanist thinking and also, why transhumanism and technological posthumanism in my view do not offer attractive inclusive positions.
Towards Cyborgian Ethics

The problem of recognition of non-human subjects in the society and their recognition as moral agents is one of the important issues undertaken by post- and transhuman reflection, that should be approached on the grounds of philosophy. The philosophy serving as the functional tool for this endeavour cannot be bound to traditional and dichotomist categories so strongly criticized since 20th century, but has to be open for various entities, environmentally oriented and favouring a holistic view on the world.

In the proposed presentation I start from recognizing cyborg as a new kind of person – interpretable, though societally distinctive – in the light of Joseph Margolis’ notion of the human self as already hybrid and artificial, and I make use of Margolis’ understanding of normativity as inherently sittlich that is conditioned by environmental, societal and cultural factors. The normativity (that is morality, ethics, laws, and rights) both of humans and of cyborgs can be mutually claimed to be – as Margolis argues – an effect of hybrid natural-cultural evolution based on artificial construct of pertinent evolved languages. In both cases there is no natural Umwelt or telos, so that neither the normativity of human persons nor of cyborg persons can be merely natural discovery of the right system. We will never be able to provide natural norms for cyborgs anymore than for human persons; though, as with humans, cyborg norms are likely to emerge from their sittlich evolving, technological environments.

Being an embodied person, culturally educated in a certain society, endowed with social forms of being, capable of relating with others and self-referring in this net of relations, and so recognizing one’s self as a subject and as an agent, does not necessarily mean to belong to homo sapiens species. Requiring embodiment does not define special features of this embodiment apart from its functional characteristics enabling the entity to perceive, to learn, and to communicate; claims that normativity has to pertain only to one particular species are therefore baseless. The person is the embodied sign within the historical net of social relations, open for interpretation and constant change. Normativity as such has no pure origin, but on the contrary is something that we construe “on the way,” as an inevitably contingent and changeable level of organization in the hybrid natural-cultural lives of persons. Argumentation for this view I will base on Margolis’ critique of Kant’s transcendental perspective, and so from a very different basis than posthuman studies usually try to develop ethics. There is no place here to refer to these trials directly, and I approach the subject at a meta-ethical level in searching for the foundations of normativity.
Looking (Away): an investigation of the objectifying gaze

Watching one another consists of a socio-culturally charged activity, sometimes being appropriate, sometimes questionable, while other times straightforwardly illegal. Drawing from the Kantian thought, it is considered morally false and thus illegal under German constitution for peep shows to take place, since such spectacles imply treating the dancer solely as a means since they don’t know whether they are being watched or not (Sorgner, 2013). The idea of degrading someone of their status, rights, or opinions for one’s personal gains/satisfaction sounds very much like Cambridge Dictionary’s definition of objectification - “treating people like tools or toys, as if they had no feelings, opinions, or rights of their own”. Correlating objectification to the transformation of the peep dancer into a pleasure object gives way to the government’s decision to ban this form of show, but then why was the same parallel not used in the case of prostitution or live sex cams (as both activities are legal)?

Generally, the activity of ‘watching another person’ is normalized when the object to be looked at is in a public place. If the environment is a private one, then watching that person becomes more controversial, but still desirable. In Singapore, though, the potential of public exposure, even when on private territory, is the reason why nudity is illegal and punishable by law (Singapore Statutes Online, 1997).

It is also relevant to mention that without the very basic rule of dividing objects and beings into different categories, perhaps objectification would not take place at all; it could not. If an individual is in the same room with a plant, it would never be deemed inappropriate for the individual to undress, even if the plant is in its infancy.

Starting from this initial contemplation, I am interested to further investigate the grey area of human objectification in video format. The video will feature different types of individuals (varying in age, gender, ethnicity and sexuality) watching one another in alternating circumstances (sometimes directly gauging at the other, while sometimes the look will be mediated by screens - windows, mirrors or digital technology). I believe that this would consist in an interesting exploration, both for me as the creator of the content, and for the audience, as they will have to decide in each instance if they find it acceptable or not. Therefore, the video would constitute in a self-reflection tool, as well as a means to emphasize the irregularity with which the concept of objectification is being employed.

In terms of presentation, I plan to use my video as a social experiment on the audience, testing their limits while actively requesting them to contemplate on each circumstance created and decide where to draw the line. The video itself will be anticipated and preceded by my commentary, starting from an overview of objectification and finishing with remarks drawn from the video - instances when consensus was easily achieved, versus the more complicated scenarios. Furthermore, it would be interesting to draw conclusions about the general public opinion after watching the video.

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So called animal-made art and its evolutionary explanations

Władysław Tatarkiewicz wrote that there are only two things that can be said about art: that it is a human activity, not a product of nature, and that it is a conscious act (or a product of this act), and that every statement about art different from the ones mentioned above is always finally overturned, he probably did not think that the former claim could be questioned by anyone. In my presentation, I will trace the history of observations of “artistic behaviors” by animal ethologists, then processed by evolutionary art philosophers who may lead to the hypothesis about the validity of assigning artistic abilities to animals. At the same time, the question: do animals create art or in what sense animals create art is in fact a question about such a definition of art that could include this type of intentional animal creations.

There is a high probability that, for example, in the world of bowerbirds (a species of bird endemic to eastern Australia), similarly to the human world, the artistic or decorative craftsmanship is cared for, appreciated and admired; perhaps also what is evaluated, praised and admired in the “work” is its originality, creativity and ability to surprise the audience - even if it is an audience consisting only of female connoisseurs, representatives of the same species, although the functional nature of the achievement (courtship) accompanying it seems to contradict it. It also does not explicitly negate the “artistic aspirations” of animals, the ability to express the individual personality of an artist accompanying their work hidden in artistic practices, regardless of whether it is fully achieved, or that every artwork experience is intertwined with emotions if varying degrees of saturation.

Why then, according to popular opinion (and rather obvious intuition), a typical chimpanzee does not create art? There are at least several important arguments for such a position. First of all, the chimpanzee seems to disturb and destroy the white space on paper rather than fill it for aesthetic reasons (which is pointed out by, for example, Lenain, 1999). Second, the chimpanzee usually shows a lack of interest in the finished image after painting. Third, if the caretaker does not take the paper away at the right moment the image becomes a dark stain. The exception here is Congo who, during several sessions of the “mature period” showed optimal image heterogeneity, knowing exactly when to stop painting. Fourth, in any other case the pleasure resulting from the activity of painting seems to be derived from rhythmic movements, not from aesthetic causes (as pointed out by Davies, 2012).

What arguments are then in favor of attributing meaning to chimpanzee art? One of the possible answer, among the others, might be its obvious rarity of occurrence. While human artists can be counted in millions (and using the broadened definition of art perhaps even billions), there are at most a few thousand chimpanzee artists. Just as we value rare materials, rare artifacts seem valuable to us.
Collective and extended cognition in nonhuman systems

In this talk, I will examine forms of cognition and perception that transcend that of the typical human subject, which perceives and understands the world through a unified, centralized processor. I will focus on two concepts, collective cognition and extended cognition, that describe modes of perception that are distributed in space (and outside the body of a single observer) in different ways. I will begin by engaging with recent attempts to define these terms by scientists and philosophers of biology, and discuss how these concepts could be useful for the development of posthumanist discourse. Ofer Feinerman and Deborah Gordon, who both study ants, have recently tried to articulate working definitions of collective cognition, in slightly different ways. Likewise, the philosopher Bryce Huebner has grappled with how to define this concept, coining the term "Macrocognition." I will discuss some of my own research on self-assembly and group foraging in army ants in the context of these definitions, in an attempt to clarify what we mean by collective cognition, as well as to speculate on what it might mean to perceive the environment as a collective.

With respect to extended cognition, a recent paper by Hilton Japyassu and Kevin Laland described how the spider and its web can be viewed together as an extended cognitive system, with the animal's sensory perception extended into space. I will discuss some of my recent work on spiders in this context, and attempt to draw connections between these two forms of distributed cognition or perception, while also highlighting differences between the two. Here I will engage with the recent book Other Minds by philosopher of biology Peter Godfrey-Smith, which focuses on trying to understand the cognitive and perceptual world of the octopus, an animal that has evolved an entirely different kind of distributed sensory and cognitive system. Ultimately, I will attempt to situate these concepts within emerging discussions surrounding the development of new AI and robotics systems, especially those that rely on large networks of sensors distributed in space. I am convinced that understanding and empathizing with these other ways of being in the world (as an ant colony, spider, or octopus) is an important first step towards conceiving new possibilities for artificial intelligence and/or robotics, beyond existing models that tend always towards optimization. From this point, I will discuss some examples of new, hybrid practices incorporating art, technology, and science that engage with these questions and hold interesting possibilities for future developments. I will conclude by speculating on how these practices may also come to inform our understanding of biological systems in new ways.
Monism, pluralism and phenomenology – posthumanist strategies

One of the most prominent features of contemporary posthumanist (or new materialist) thought is its struggle to overcome dualism present in the dominant philosophical tradition. In my paper I will attempt to compare posthumanists' ontological strategies of traversing subject-object opposition: monism, pluralism and phenomenology.

The posthumanism in my study is defined as a philosophical movement which aims to open up our thought and culture to non-human entities – technological, biological, geological; present and yet to come. To achieve this one must fulfill three criteria: (1: ethical) overcome anthropocentrism (2: epistemic) and subject-object dualism (3: methodological) in form of ontological and epistemological model. It is a struggle against the philosophical heritage of Descartes and Kant.

Opponents to Cartesian dualism (Spinoza and Leibniz) are therefore the obvious allies to posthumanists. Spinozian monism is based on ontology of one substance constituting the whole universe, differentiated only by intensities of its modes. Scholars representing this mode of thinking (Braidotti and to some extent Floridi) see the being as a diverse flux of intensities that constantly change boundaries between macroscopic entities. It might be said that monism particularly affirms experimentation with new technologies and non-human others as they are still part of the same flux. It should be however noted that the theoretical framework reducing the being to the current of intensities (vital forces, information, etc.) has mostly a critical value: blurring of boundaries can deconstruct some established notions and give valuable insights in case studies, but monism has not yet presented an ontoepistemology.

Leibnizian pluralism, on the other hand, can be found in object oriented ontology (Harman, Morton, Bryant) as it understands objects (such as human beings, molecules or United States) as multiple autonomous entities containing practically unlimited properties. In this case, human is only one of many particular entities which are not fully perceivable by others. Although objects are in relations with other entities on some level, their essence is unreachable. The results are somehow conservative – in spite of starting from posthumanist promise of eliminating anthropocentrism and letting us relate to non-human beings, the effect seems to be just a denial of Kant for some form of panpsychism without practical consequences.

Phenomenology as such does not stand in opposition to Cartesianism. It also is not posthumanist in its base as a form of investigating the (human) subject. However, in contemporary thought inspired by phenomenology (Ihde, Verbeek, Stiegler, Hui) the technological (non-human) objects have an important and active role to play in constitution of the world. At the most basic level in this strategy the subject becomes a hybrid constituted by interaction between human and technology – but, however, this is still a subject.

The three strategies of posthumanist thought presented above are important steps towards overcoming anthropocentrism and subject-object dualism in theoretical and univocal manner, however none of them seems to fully reach this aim. The comparison between them may be instrumental to identify what is left to be done in posthumanist thought and, in consequence, the posthuman culture.
Machines’ subjectivity

In October 2017, during the Future Investment Initiative held in Riad (Saudi Arabia), Sophia, the last generation gynoid by Hanson Robotics, received Saudi citizenship. Besides any polemic about the real condition of Saudi women, it is emblematic that Saudi kingdom was chosen to express our interest in creating an artificial interlocutor able to assist us about mean decisions. Despite the enthusiasm, a confusion persists about how making a machine alive and the ethical consequences of such a creation. What would we name a machine like this? What would it represent to us? A maid, a tool, a spokeswoman? Post-human and Philosophical Ethology studies help to answer: the answers come from the world of animal subjectivity, that, currently, represents the first example of non-human subjectivity we can speak with. The first clue from the animal world is the ontological-existential type: this suggests that what we are searching for is not a conventional artificial intelligence, but an artificial subjectivity. We are not looking for a super-computer provided with an extraordinary computational capacity, but a subject able to relate to the world and solve problems pushed by its own inner wishes. In non-human animals, subjectivity has four fundamental traits: 1) organismic constitution: every individual is a complex system able to interject new matter and new information to shape new existential dimensions; 2) whishing nature: is characterized by a break in one’s own equipment causing subject to move and speak with the external world in order to express and satisfy themselves; 3) sentiency: developing of self-able to feel and represent the external world, able to relate to it in such a total way, that subject is able to recognize herself as interacting with the world; 4) equipment ownership: the subject is not a mere realization of a programme, but is the owner of their equipment/tools predisposing the way they express themselves, and not why. If we want to create a living machine, we should study and translate into artificial intelligence these traits. Before such a subject, any presumption of control will obviously inevitably fail. A subject is driven by inner wishes and motives: these, even if existing because of a dialogue with the world, belong to the subject in an intimate way and cannot be assigned in a totalitarian manner. It is absurd to presume that a child could passively answer any request from their parents, and it is similarly absurd not to take seriously into consideration that a living machine would not be obliged to indulge any kind of request by humans. The stakes are not some Terminator-type scenarios, but our capacity to cope the environmental crisis. As post-human studies have highlighted, in the Anthropocene Era, human beings and animals do not represent impenetrable categories; they are interacting edges, and we will hybridize with them more and more if we want to reduce our ecological impact and survive. It is suitable that a consideration about the laws of robots towards humans does lead to a debate about human duties towards robots.
Eco-logics of Anthropocene

The proposed paper is an attempt to review the ecological discourse in a manner of posthuman critical philosophy. Main concept which I use in this case is the Anthropocene – the name of a new geological epoch, which indicates the growing influence of human practices on a condition of Earth. Analyzing the concept of the Anthropocene, I point its history, hitherto critique and related controversies (within the fields of both natural sciences, and humanities). We can see, that the Anthropocene functions as an ambivalent philosophical metaphor, which underlies the contemporary ecological discourse. Thinking through the ecological categories seems fundamental for the culture of the Anthropocene, but on the other hand, those categories (as well as the Anthropocene concept) are still mostly anthropocentric. Trying to rid of the Anthropocene-tric thought, I would like to propose to focus on a new concept, which I claim, could replace the ecology. This concept is called the eco-logics, and could be defined as ‘thinking through home’.

Within the proposed paper I would like to develop the metaphor of home as the key concept of thinking on Earth and the ecosystem. I propose a comparative study of planetary concepts/hypotheses of Lynn Margulis, James Lovelock, and Peter Ward. Within the study, I analyse them in the oikology perspective. I also would like to ask, how the eco-logics can be reinforced by the Jason W. Moore’s oikeios. The eco-logics concept should be a way of redefining the community in the posthuman naturecultures.
Physis or Nature? The other side of the philosophical dilemma: Physis as principle or nature as ruler and ruled?

The aim of the present talk is to show how the dilemma "Physis or Nature" constitutes another aspect of the philosophical dilemma "Physis as a principle or Natura as ruler and ruled?". In particular, we will demonstrate how the concept of principle, which bestows meaning upon the Greek word physis, establishes a dialectical relationship of unity between nature and man. Conversely, the notion of nature as ruler and/or ruled is idealised in a dualism between a superior creator, who rules, and an inferior creation, which is ruled.

In this context we will examine how a space is gradually established between the ruler "nature" and the ruled man, who has, since then, either been threatened or protected by it. This distance, in turn, causes the shift from the ruler nature to the ruler man, who, as a "rational animal", becomes the centre of nature and of the world.

This shift establishes an anthropocentric conception of the world leading to a further dualism between nature and man which is encapsulated in the contrast between nature and culture.

In this regard, culture constitutes a "post-nature" that epitomises man's effort to dominate, to appropriate and to exploit but also to recreate the nature outside as well as within him. In other words, "post-nature" is part and parcel of a deeply anthropocentric conception according to which "nature", through its adversities, brings about man's destruction, and must therefore be tamed.
From strong-arm régime to the power in many hands - Kate McIntosh's carnal collectives

In my presentation, I would like to show in what way the experience of a collective body is created in Kate McIntosh's theatre performances. By the collective body I mean an intense splice, a space of togetherness made of human and non-human bodies.

Already in her early work "Worktable" (2011), McIntosh stresses the role of hands in shaping of different non-human, carnal connections. Each participant of her performance has to choose any object and then dismantle it by the means of the available tools. Next, the participants move to another room, where they find the objects laid there by their predecessors and pick one of them in order to put it together. Thus, we get a collection of objects put freely together, which become strange bodies (assembled in all kinds of ways).

In the interpretation of McIntosh's works, I wish to start from Martin Heidegger and his fascination with the human hand (handicraft, manufactory), which for him constituted a guarantee of the power over the objects disappearing in hands. I want to show in what way the reinterpretation of the Heideggerian structure of tool-being by Graham Harman, turns the anthropocentric way of thinking upside down, and allows to see the hand beyond the context of human power over things (dualism object - object), but as a possibility of various connections (net of actors - Bruno Latour, "making kin" - Donna Haraway).

McIntosh's newest work "In many hands" (2016) consists in creating a heterogenous assembly, socialisation of humans and non-humans, combining of many bodies. The participants of the performance are strangers, they cannot communicate verbally (exercising authority by means of speech is impaired), they hold their hands and pass one another all kinds of objects (bones of animals, minerals, plants, coffee grounds, etc.). Thus the human and non-human bodies mingle, they enter in a direct, sensual relationship by means of touch, smell and sight - they create a carnal collective, share the common body and its experience. The human hands become paws, hooves, callipers, legs, pliers, fins, wings, stems....

In her works, the artist departs from the concept of the individual and introduces the participants to the world of carnal, material multiplicity. In her theatre world, we will not be able to find any individualists, interesting people and their creations, but an active collective, hands and objects. One could risk the statement that Kate McIntosh is for the contemporary art what Bruno Latour is for the social sciences.
Devitalized Bodies and Inert Environments: Examining Posthumanist Currents in India

"...there's really no such thing as the 'voiceless'. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard."

Arundhati Roy

This paper organizes itself as provocation to and attempts to re-think the discourse of posthumanist theory by interrogating the invisibility of socio-economically and racially marginalized bodies and environments in India from within its frame. As the concern with nonhumans, "vibrant matter" and the animation of "things"/ "objects" intensifies, the category of the "human" once again emerges deracinated and undifferentiated, thereby re-writing the unspoken privilege of whiteness. Following Jasbir K. Puar's call to remedy the "unraced genealogies" of the interdisciplinary fields of posthumanism, new materialism and object-oriented ontology, this paper will turn its attention to an analysis of the "Posthuman Subalterns" who remain "preferably unheard" in considerations of posthuman futures. In this paper I will foreground the absent voices of those I have termed "devitalized bodies" or people-as-things, that is to say, about the making "non-vital" of certain bodies, and their material environments, which through a process of association are not deemed worthy of conservation efforts. Furthermore, this paper occasions an onto-epistemological, ethical and political reconsideration of posthumanism from the positionality of human objects and the places they inhabit. What kind of cultures of the posthuman and posthuman communities, then, are engendered when we attempt to study posthumanism from below? In other words, what do posthuman futures mean for "non-agential" humans and environments relegated to the elsewhere of the world and treated as, in Jane Bennett's words, "passive stuff"?

In order to think through these questions, I will re-turn to and re-member an ongoing human and environmental disaster in India - the 1984 Bhopal Gas Tragedy. Even 33 years after the Methyl Isocyanate (MIC) gas leak from the Union Carbide pesticide factory in Bhopal, the soil and groundwater around the factory remain contaminated with toxic effluents, and a fourth generation of congenitally deformed children continue to be born to gas-affected mothers. The pertinent question then becomes, "how is this intolerable situation allowed to persist?" or, in other words, "why has justice eluded the victim-survivors despite sustained agitation on their part for medical rehabilitation and environmental remediation?" Through the concept of devitalized bodies, I find an effective metaphor to capture the state of chronic violence which defines the quotidian existence of the lower castes and certain religious minorities such as the Muslim lower classes in India, to which the victims of the Bhopal disaster belong. Contra much posthumanist and transhumanist enthusiasm for techno-science's fusion with the organic body, I will draw attention to the dark matter of "debilitating biotechnical formations" in which certain sections of the population always already marked out for illness, injury, and even death, are entangled. Furthermore, by drawing examples from Bhopal, I will discuss the ways in which techno-scientific and medical-industrial progress targets devitalized bodies and environments in developing countries like India for experimentation in order to deliver the positivity and promise of success to their wealthy western

counterparts. Finally, I will trouble the linearity and fixity with which temporality and futurity (or the denial of it) have been thought in relation to the devitalized bodies of Bhopal, instead arguing for a "posthuman horology" in which the past, present and future inform each other.
The concept of structural coupling is often overlooked in contemporary systems theory. One usually prefers to talk about relations and interactions in an abstract manner, avoiding the tedious task of getting into the core of the theoretical problem: structural coupling is the flip side of autopoiesis, the latter signifying the operational closure of a system, whilst the former underlines the openness to its environment.

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The Future of Biohacking

Mr Meow-meow cut the chip out of his travel card and implanted it in his hand. The consequence was his being prosecuted even though the fare was on his hand and could be read by a card reader. The implantation, as he said, was something not to be tried at home. Lept Anonym has various implants, some quite painful. In a different form of biohacking, Tristam Roberts injected himself with an engineered plasmid containing a sequence supposed to trigger the production of an anti HIV antibody.

There are several significant characteristics of biohacking. Firstly, a sense of empowerment: I'm in control. I inject myself with plasmids, or embed a chip in myself. I decide my own fate, I manipulate myself. I can take the brave risks I want to take. While applying science, there is a sense of anti-science, I am outside the sphere of the complex institutions and structures which support modern science. Secondly, there is the hubris of knowledge. I know enough to carry out the enhancement. I'm intelligent enough to do this. The hacker in a sense glories in his or her own knowledge. I act as a source of knowledge because I know enough. I've read the textbooks. I may even have a PhD. But the problem is that the accumulated knowledge required may be beyond the individual. Thirdly, there is a material philosophy of the body: the perceptual equivalence of the robotic and the human means that I can intervene and break the body in the same way I might a robot. This involves an inadequate characterisation of the biological and an over-ambitious characterisation of the technical. There is a contradiction here: on the one hand I want to extend my life, by enhancement, to become immortal. On the other hand I have a disgust for the self and enter into acts of self-harm. If my view of the body is coloured by a perception of the supremacy of machines and their outperforming humans, I may harbour a feeling of inadequacy, which may result in an alienation from myself, a state in which I am happy to scar, cut, engineer, mutilate this thing that is me, and indeed even rename it by deed poll. A further consequence of the demotion of the human will inevitably be the commoditisation of the body, leading to a kind of technical prostitution.

Does the biohacker detach from the self, trying to reach out to a super-person to counter some amount of perceived inadequacy and self-loathing. Far from removing self-centred individualism (Braidotti, 2016, p25), biohacking may withdrawal into a bodily concern for self and energy attempts to compensate for existing defects or counter perceived future disintegration of the body.

However, the biohackers agenda is also anti-establishment and imagine a democratisation of medicine outside commercial control or state regulation.

Biohacking depends on the general availability of technology which melds the human body and mind into something that expresses a physiological equivalent between the biological and the human technical artefact. This requires considerable knowledge, which is not within the bounds of the individual. Successful human augmentation will require considerable biological and engineering expertise which may only exist in large corporations or state run laboratories.

With reference to other emerging technologies such as blockchain and machine learning, I will paint a picture of the possible future of biohacking and draw conclusions on how hierarchies and power distributions may affect it.

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Thoreau amidst wolves

This essay explores "Walden", by Thoreau, in a political-anthropological way, discussing notions of civilization and post-anthropocene progress and primitivist/anti-civilizational perspectives of independent writings. Escapism, in Walden, preaches no reform or internal critic, but folds into an attempt to ostracize society from itself, while using, at the same time, parasitic technology accumulated throughout history. The metaphor of solitude is treated as an invitation to expose the frailty of the sociotechnological machinery. Neolithic revisions that fool us by potentializing and centralizing the independence of tools from a human conceptual frame – "one can't expect perfect instruments from a flawed toolmaker". There is no idyllic heaven nor untouchable nature in Thoreau's writings, as their neighbours, escaping from racism, found solace in the woods. The escape lines drawn in Walden point to possibilities of exploring an existing programmed obsolescence of modern cities by inhabiting its ruins, dimming the light of Elias' civilizing process by encircling all with Foucault's heterotopias. Frontier and isolation, character of sorts in Thoreau's book, could be read as the contemporary rescue of a pessimistic Rousseau, projecting its imaginary past. I shall explore such notions of pre-humanity on Thoreau's cohabiting with the naturalized-by-culture landscapes and the abandonment as synthesis of an inside-out futurism.
In this paper I argue that, by expanding the horizon of morally acceptable sexuality to voluntary adult sex work, we would improve the life of those who work in the sex market, and women in particular, instead of exacerbating gender and social inequality. If we eliminated the social constraints which cause psychological harm to those who cannot express their sexuality freely, we would move towards the blurring of dualisms such as man-woman and homosexual-heterosexual which underlie such harm. Thus, in order to prove that sex work is morally acceptable, I first show the inconsistency of the most common arguments against my standpoint - such as the economic coercion argument, the psychological harm argument, the dehumanizing argument, and the male dominance argument - by challenging the validity of their premises. Secondly, I argue that a person who engages in prostitution simply puts a price on her or his skills and abilities, which is not morally problematic per se. The morality of a skill indeed depends on the use we make of it, and I demonstrate that there is no reason to believe that the use of such skills for the gain of money is immoral by associating the dynamics implied in prostitution with more common jobs. The question of the morality of the skills used in prostitution becomes more and more relevant in our days, when the industry of sex robots is already succeeding in applying some of these skills to robots. Even in this case, the moral judgement of sex robots depends on the use we will make of them. Thirdly, I maintain that the legalization of both the selling and the buying of sex is crucial for the destigmatization of sex work and consequently for sexual liberation. Here I draw upon the example of the Dutch "tippelzone," an area with all the necessary facilities for the safe practice of sex work which was adopted as a harm reduction policy and which has also led so far to a decrease in criminal activities related to prostitution. Ultimately, the paper shows that the acknowledgement of sex work as morally acceptable is a key step towards sexual liberation and equal gender opportunities insofar as many women would have the opportunity to gain as much as their male counterpart. Indeed, the manifestation of sexuality outside the sphere of intimacy has long been seen as a taboo in society, which should no longer be the case in our times, when sexual relationships are visibly undergoing a (not necessarily negative) redefinition.
"Gray media" of camera trapping: towards non-human aesthetics of post-digital imaging

It is no doubt that the production of digital imagery invites for the major update of theoretical apparatus: what up until now was perceived solely or primarily as the stable representation of the world gives way to the image understood in terms of "the continuous actualization of networked data" [Marie & Hoelzl 2015, loc. 146] or "networked terminal" [Marie & Hoelzl 2015, loc. 146]. However, in my paper I would like to argue that analysis of this new visual environment should not be limited to the procedures of data processing, especially considering the condition of post-digitality, where the digital technologies – stripped of the allure of "new" and "exciting" - constitute the common background for everyday activities. [Berry & Dieter 2015]. One of the examples in this field can be sensor-based visual monitoring systems (camera trapping), placed out of the urban context and often constituting the basic infrastructure of contemporary forest management (for instance, in the Polish State Forests). Such "gray media" [Goffey & Fuller 2012] uses are often overlooked and omitted from the cultural theory, as exemplified in the otherwise insightful and inspiring recent analysis of "nonhuman vision" by Joanna Zylinska [Zylinska 2017]. Networked technologies of wireless communication and cloud computing in this case perform the act of crossing the boundaries between digital and physical, increasingly becoming directly connected to the physical environment, becoming at the same time the staple of the current interest in "slow media" (watching birds' nest or wild animals in their natural habitats). Therefore I propose the analysis of such media environment fully acknowledges the complex proceasuality of the visual objects' production and circulation, including hybrid and distributed agencies situated in the ontologically different realms of materiality and discursivity.

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Flowering-with succulents, weeds and technologies: plant-human relations in Russian bio-art

Plants appeared on Earth long before humans came. They have always accompanied people, producing oxygen, serving as food and raw material, and being a source of aesthetic experiences. Flora, as the Other in anthropocentric culture, undergoes objectification and is perceived as passive biomass. The vegetative existence is associated with insufficient and injured being. We find many examples of such understanding of greenery existence in literary narratives referred to the human fear of becoming a plant. Rootedness, which is considered a scary immobility and deadness of green bodies, contradicts with the idea of human embodiment and subjectivity. Being a cultural and linguistic construct, human subject is built on the denial of the vegetal, i.e. of anything that does not fit into the logocentric notion of human. The anthropocentric standpoint, typical for Western thought, does not allow us to regard plants as intelligent beings and views them as silent “matter intended for reproduction.” The development of plant studies proves that flowers, herbs, trees etc. are dynamic, mobile beings capable of inter-species communication and humans have much to learn from green rhizomatic brains. Referring to the issue of plant-human-technology symbiosis, Russian artists Anastasiya Kizilova, Anastasiya Alyokhina, and the Urban Fauna Laboratory (UFL) reflect upon the connections between vegetal, political, technological and the human. In their works the artists acknowledge various aspects of greenery.

Anastasiya Kizilova’s “Succulent therapy” (2016) is an effort to create a nonanthropocentric practice during which plants and humans become companions enmeshed in the process of mutual nutrition. Through a mediation on the challenges of inter-species communication the artist prescribes the succulent therapy for the phallocentric human subject. She puts on a specially designed costume with implanted succulents and turns her breathing into a source of air nutrition for plants. In this way, the verdure become a saving ground for a (post)human subjectivity, while the human, her corporeality, becomes here a “soil” for plants.

Weeds and feral animals may be called the pioneers of the gentrification of places abandoned by humans; they came before artists, architects, and designers, who followed their example. In the same time, weeds serve an essential function: they form a new layer of fertile soil for future generations. The feral plants’ creative potential of overcoming consequences of a trauma became the reference for the “Outer Green” project (2014) by the UFL. The artists research the interdependencies among vegetative and biopolitical and draw a parallel between political prisoners in the USSR and the feral plants that have the status of pests and parasites in human culture. In the “Outer Green” the artists rehabilitate them, both the betrayed humans and the plants, presenting a crop of weeds collected in the administrative districts of Moscow on a celebration of reaping in the pavilion “Zerno” built for the opening of the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition in 1939.

See The Divine Comedy by D. Alighieri; Dendroacacia by K. Abe etc.


Anastasiya Alyokhina's work "Technomicry" (2015) is devoted to the blurring boundaries between technology and nature. She disputes the dualistic thinking under which both plants and technologies are considered objects, expendable materials or something worse than the living. The artist creates a "digital plant" and puts it in a natural environment. As the "Plant" realizes its artificial origin, it tries to disguise itself as something alive and spends all of its resources on mimicry. Alyokhina's project reveals the dynamism of vegetation and the vitality of technologies. It also exposes that humans and non-humans continue to be the holobionts flowering-with on one planet, the companion species inhabiting naturecultures and depending on general status of our nature-culture-media ecologies.
Posthuman Listener in Postnatural Ecology: On Speculative Syntheses In Computer Music

Based on the author's artistic research in composition and performance, this paper discusses intersections of technology, performance and listening. Applications of ecological acoustics to electroacoustic music theory (e.g., following Clarke, 16), as well as work on embodied cognition and spatiality in listening (Gibson, 17; Johnson, 18) have emphasised how the knowledge and experience of the real world informs musical listening. The present research takes interest in the potential organicity of artificial sounds, proposing that sonic embodiment of computational synthesis processes introduces a particular kind of speculative ecology. This proposes an aesthetic grounding in the listener's hypothetical naturalisation of technology rather than in the 'physical real'. Invoking Hayles' proposition that, in a posthuman view, 'embodiment in a biological substrate is seen as an accident of history rather than an inevitability of life', it is suggested that certain sonic scenarios introduce an aesthetic condition of speculative synthesis, which call boundaries of nature, technology, and human into question – a liminal sonic ontology moving beyond the morphological speciesism often present in music theory. From a poietic perspective, contemporary computer music often has an emphasis on live algorithms and human-computer performance, generating scenarios which use technology for production rather than reproduction, calling into question traditional categories such as 'work', 'composer', 'performer', 'programmer'. This perspective suggests that electronic music has progressed from being framed as modernist objects of abstraction (present, for instance, in both elektronische music and musique concrete traditions) towards a manifestation of posthuman culture. Examples are drawn both from the history of electronic music and the author's recent artistic research, where algorithmic systems, including machine learning models, are applied in a performance and synthesis context to create a post-natural spatiality of speculative sonorities and materialities.

Performance: POSTHUMAN NATURE (live electronic music performance)

In Posthuman Nature, live performance is extended into a spatially distributed environment of amorphous cyborg genomes and speculative morphologies. Machine learning algorithms and spatial feedback networks connect the agents of a world in which nobody is pedigree, and everyone is equally alien. The work has not yet been premiered; this would be the first performance outside the UK. The performance will require a PA of preferably more than two speakers.

Video/audio links to related works here: http://www.eriknystrom.com/work.html
Beyond the Binary World: Representations of Posthuman Gender in SF Comics

Historically, comics have not been particularly inclusive and "most queer characters, creators, and storylines were largely invisible in mainstream American comics for much of the medium's history" (Anderson 186). They usually approach gender from a fixed binary perspective and seldom include characters that go beyond the male/female opposition. However, there are several notable examples of science fiction comics that render questionable the realities of heteronormative ideologies of gender and provide ground for the analysis of gender identity, and in particular for the analysis of the non-binary models of gender.

In my paper, I explore the science fiction representations of non-binary gender and sexualities in post-human and non-human bodies as well as the depictions of postgenderism in comics. I argue that since both comics as a medium and science fiction as a genre have a potential for queering realism, their intersection enables for unique questioning and redefining of sexuality and gender identity. In my discussion of these concepts I focus on two genderqueer characters in science fiction comics: Xavin from Runaways (2003-), who was introduced in 2005 and Izana Shinatose from Knights of Sidonia (2009-2015). First, I will briefly address the representation of non-binary gender identities. Then, I will argue that these characters demonstrate two types of posthuman gender identities: gender-fluid (Xavin) and postgender (Izana Shinatose). Finally, I will point to and examine the ways in which the non-binary gender is established in the comics featuring these characters in terms of language and visibility. My reading of these issues is primarily grounded in the queer theory and the theory of gender performativity and formation of the self.

References:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and being human: What is the difference?

This paper begins by focusing on the recent work of David Gelernter on artificial intelligence (AI), in which he argues against 'computationalism' – that conception of the mind which restricts it to functions of abstract reasoning and calculation, and is predicated on the related belief that the construction of AI which is capable of performing these functions is equal to human intelligence. Such a notion of the human mind, he argues, is overly narrow, because the 'tides of mind' (that is, the spectrum of human mental activities or functions) cover a larger and more variegated 'spectrum' than computationalism allows. For Gelernter, although AI is undoubtedly a form of intelligence, therefore, it is certainly not human intelligence. The argument of Hubert Dreyfus is examined, that the AI-research community concentrate its efforts on replacing its cognitivist (or computationalist) approach with a Heideggerian one, that is, a recognition that AI-research cannot ignore the 'embeddedness' of human intelligence in a world, nor its 'embodiment'. The upshot of this is, for Dreyfus, that AI has not, and perhaps cannot be built to match the ability of human beings to approach their environment in such a manner that it is 'ready-to-hand', or always already pragmatically within reach. However, I argue that Gelernter and Dreyfus do not go far enough in their critique of AI-research: what is truly human is not just a certain kind of intelligence, not even insofar as human intelligence is always embedded in its immediate environment; rather, it is the capacity for 'care' and desire in the face of mortality, which no machine can simulate. Both Heidegger's and Lacan's work in this regard provide rich resources to demonstrate what this claim amounts to. Hence, if posthumanism means the recognition of other forms of intelligence – organic as well as artificial – in this way enabling one to move beyond the debilitating paradigm of anthropocentrism and its attendant humanism, this has to be accompanied by a scrupulous discernment of what is distinctive about the human in comparison with other forms of intelligence on this spectrum. This paper is an attempt to contribute to this project.
Can a body be abstracted?

What do we do when confronted with the situation where we discover the body is obsolete? We have to start thinking of strategies for redesigning the body. - Stelarc

Could there be strategies for redesigning the body which may incorporate technological collaboration, but do not depend on technological interference? I suggest that the site for the posthuman is the body itself; and that this posthuman body is an ongoing investigation. This paper utilises the notion of the abstract body to focus on two approaches to reclaiming and remapping embodiment, the body, and perception. The human body schema is, on the one hand, subjugated to utilitarian modes of being; and on the other hand, colonised by hegemonistic, culturally limited, body paradigms. Exploring how a lived body can become abstract liberates it from referentiality, function and meaning. Through abstraction the ontological space of the body becomes indeterminate, liminal and unfolding, a 'metahuman' body.

I identify two complementary approaches to abstracting the body. The first is the experience of the indeterminate, deeply relational space that the body enters internally and externally when viewing abstract artworks. Examples include a range of completely non-referential artwork, as well as work where the body is re-imagined. The suggestion here is that the body enters into a deeply felt, sensorial dialogue with an abstract artwork, bypassing the need to engage with meaning. Abstract and nonreferential art provides opportunity for complexity and pluralism in the body; which in turn, impacts on an expanding and remapping of embodiment, of phenomenology and ontology. The shift from the body being a referential subject of the work, to the body as a site of sensory experience, correlates with a changing relationship to time, space and perception in abstract art. In the absence of a depicted body, the spectator’s body inhabits a space of aisthēsis: an integrated sensorial space where we no longer view only with our eyes, but are given permission to access the senses and our own embodiment.

The second, complementary, approach is direct work with the body. Acute sensitivity training simultaneously pinpoints somatic and sensory possibilities, enabling access to corporeal spaces and ways of inhabiting the body which break with preconceived limits of anatomy. The borders of the body, and the scale of our relationship to our body, shift.

This paper concludes that posthuman futures can give our bodies back. If Artificial Intelligence is designed to incorporate somatic awareness, it will be of benefit to embrace an expanded, abstract posthuman body schema. The capacity for an open and ongoing redefining of body potentialities is of potent importance to the posthuman condition.

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Art as a manifestation of the process of technological incorporation Towards the robotic art

Since humanity had the possibility of generating tools, began to generate artifacts to incorporate into your body to improve or rectify the quality of life with their environment. For example: clothing (second skin), a cane (third leg), glasses (power vision), shoes (prosthesis), telephony (long distance listening), etc. In this way we can deduce that the cyborgization process started a long time ago.

This evolution of incorporating technology into our lives (of greater or lesser sophistication), seems to have become a race without stopping, even modifying the environment that surrounds us.

On the other hand, the artist is a permeable being to everything that surrounds him, and he has used technology to improve his production techniques. Through its artistic creation it provokes changes and social and/or ethical concerns. In addition, art is also a reflection of certain themes since it recreates cosmogonies and worlds that are a reflection of the world surrounding the artist.

If we are modifying our environment and at the same time our body, it also changes the way we act and relate, with ourselves and with the natural environment.

With democratized access to new technologies, art can be seen as another event in the cyborgization process. This constant uncertainty originates new philosophical reflections, whose discourses are focused on a multiculturalism and open new perspectives for the different fields of knowledge in general.

The history of art gathers many cases of how technology makes different disciplines and techniques in art expand. Contemporary art, being sensitive to these issues, also has something to say through the proposal of various artists who, through their works, make us reflect on a reality, where sometimes, the human being merges with the machine and it causes interesting questions to meditate on. In addition, I will also expose different works and artists that talk about posthumanism and the cyborg.
Secrets of the Bicameral Mind: Post-human Anxieties and AI Ethics

The imaginary was the alibi of the real, in a world dominated by the reality principle.
Today, is the real that has become the alibi of the model, in a world controlled by the principle of simulation.

Baudrillard

Concepts of self-operating autonomous machines have a long history, and cultural narratives about them constitute a specific subset of contemporary critical discourse. Since early-Enlightenment designs of automata that paved the way for subsequent juxtapositions of the organic and the mechanical in various forms of supplementation, prosthesis and hybridization, we’ve faced anxieties surrounding our cultural ideas about the nonhuman as the figuration of human’s ‘other’. But beyond anxieties, discourses about sentient machines also embody a political understanding of ‘otherness’ that is no longer to be posited along the lines of binary oppositions — between organic and mechanical, living and non-living, natural or artificial, domestic or alien, etc., but rather in terms of a ‘relationship’ between the human and nonhuman (Calarco: Zoographies. 2008). This view challenges demarcation as an act of exclusion exercised via physical violence as well as via the symbolic violence of language (Haraway: “A Cyborg Manifesto. 1991”). If we are to follow such emancipatory logic, what do we base it on?

This paper will argue that problems of consciousness and sentience emerge as pivotal aspects for the negotiation of (nonhuman) agency. To map the implications of this emancipatory logic connecting human and nonhuman species, I will draw on Ray Kurzweil’s dubbing of post-humans as ‘spiritual machines’, Nick Bostrom’s criticism of strong AI, and Peter Sloterdijk’s thoughts about the interrelation between evolution and domestication.

I will use Ex Machina (dir. Alex Garland, 2015) and HBO’s Westworld (2016) as examples of practice that mobilize contemporary anxieties about a post-human future where artificial consciousness and machine sentience are understood as given, as the natural state of things. Ex Machina and Westworld complicate the problem of sentience and suffering by linking them to the concepts of consciousness and agency. In the simulated reality of Westworld, the ‘hosts’ are constantly exposed to the fetishistic and violent fantasies and sexual abuses of the ‘visitors’ (humans partaking in this immersive experience as ‘conscious’ and self-aware gamers). The narrative evolves around an apparent programming glitch resulting in the hosts gradually gaining consciousness within the simulation. In Ex Machina, on the other hand, the question is whether Ava’s apparent self-awareness is a manifestation of true consciousness and sentience (indicated by her ability to lie and manipulate her captors through her sexuality), or the result of her programming emulating human behavior.

From Asimov’s three laws of robotics to the symbolic positing of a ‘ghost in the machine’ to recent attempts to comprehend the nature of concepts such as knowledge, intelligence and consciousness, agency and (ethical) responsibility have been central to both scientific as well as cultural-artistic discourses on artificial intelligence. Consequently, the paper argues that the question of the future has to do not only with a sentient machine having agency, but also with our own understanding of agency and crime, with our post-human ethical responsibility towards sentient beings regarding violence and suffering.
Episteme Monster: Ethics and Culture at the Prospect of Superlect-Driven Science

The already rapid scientific and technological progress is said to be accelerating—resulting in new artefacts which in turn enable more and more people to acquire larger quantities of knowledge even quicker. Ray Kurzweil points out that the trend must result in the technological singularity—be it the dawn of artilects (i.e. AIs), collective mind, or largescale cyborgisation.

This forecasted epoch would be characterised by the science-based knowledge society. At some level of complexity the required data could not be comprehended nor processed thus necessitating at least cognitive augmentations. Even then a superlect (artificial superintelligence) would probably completely outclass enhanced human scientists in those tasks.

Science fiction literature often portrays artificial beings as treacherous ones. Their attitude is sometimes said to be a result of creating them for military applications. Yet what if the scientific 'branch' of superlects would pose a threat?

Stephen Hawking states there is a hypothetical goal (thus the end) of the scientific part of the aforementioned progress—the so-called theory of everything. Once achieved, a civilisation which conceived it, according to Michio Kaku, would acquire godlike abilities of controlling the spacetime, matter and energy, and even moving from one universe to another.

This notion of transcending a given physical reality can be seen in the science fiction genre. Stanisław Lem praised the epistemic capabilities of new inventions to the extent that his quasi-alter ego, the GOLEM XIV military supercomputer, gives a lecture on humanity's inevitable future of self-augmentation—a one driven by scientific curiosity and opposition toward biological evolution, up to escaping the universe through a black hole. Not being limited by physical constraints, a posthuman Reason would acquire the ultimate knowledge. This is the path chosen by GOLEM itself. The Infinity cyberpunk tabletop game depicts the Evolved Intelligence—a superlect created to achieve 'Absolute Universal Comprehension' along with its creators. And those subjugated for more processing power.

Be the transcendence possible or not is irrelevant here. What is important is that a scientifically oriented superlect might undertake such an enterprise. The latter example tells a violent course of events. By referring to Robert Nozick's criticism of utilitarian thought I coined a term 'episteme monster' to describe an entity which sole purpose is to increase knowledge at any cost.

Several questions arise: how humans can embrace the scientific progress and adapt their ethics? Should all ethical decisions be algorithmised? What futurological tools might be incorporated into making ethical decisions? How culture and its artefacts cope with the pace of such a setting? What aesthetics might maximised perceived information?

The presenter would like to delve into the forecasted ethics of scientist superlects and propose a re-imaging of utilitarianism—an epistemic variant maximising knowledge, regardless of any suffering—and its cultural consequences.
We Are All Antigones Now: Machinic Becoming and the Rheology of Control

We are all Antigones now, effective desubjectification have become vulnerabilities, points where the core of the human-as-behavioral-bundle can be hacked into. In Cybernetic Capitalism affect is the most political aspect of human life as it provides a direct, fast, streamlined tool to bypassing the calcified habits that make up the mostly-bodily core of each person’s identity. In a world where subjectivity and has become an extremely fluid commodity, externalized and marketed, non-conscious habits and bodily memories become the root of continuity and the sole means of identification. The cultural obsession with images of the amnesiac and those fleeing old lives to start new selves is a clear symptom of the evaluation of the human in terms of the machine’s ability to radically alter and adapt itself again and again (Cronenberg’s History of Violence comes to mind, where the identity of the protagonist is revealed in his body’s fast reactions in a violent situation).

I have always tried to provide a concrete and fact-based analysis of the technologies that lie at the base of Cybernetic Capitalism and in this paper I am going to show how the Cybernetic Organon (Rahebi 2015) redefines efficiency, intelligence, and creativity in machinic terms, thus creating an impossible demand on the proletarized humans to meet cybernetic standards and forms of creativity and fluidity. The Cybernetic Organism (e.g., deep learning neural networks like Google’s DeepMind/AlphaGo), is a fluid, re-programmable, self-organizing, and autonomous intelligence that can just as easily adapt and specialize as it can reset and re-initialize its patterns for a new round of training and calibration in a new milieu or for a new task. It is this form of forgetting that, though desired and even demanded by Cybernetic Capitalism, cannot be achieved by a biological entity whose habit-forming is hardly reversible and in whom creativity in its machinic sense of radical fluidity meets the meaty, biological barrier of germinating habits set in cellular permanence.

This cybernetic fluidity (as opposed to biological-neural plasticity) short-circuits the entire process of individuation (between the universal and the individual) and renders it obsolete as the cybernetic organ shifts between fully specialized singularity (complete adaptation to the milieu) and the blank potentiality of the fully generic. This is what underlies Stiegler’s conceptions of desublimation and the short-circuits of dis-individuation and it shows why the proletarization of the spirit must be framed in terms of plasticity, habits, and cybernetic intelligence.

I will show how the biological organism, including the human individual, is incapable of the fluidity and Thanatotic creativity that is the hallmark of the Cybernetic Organism due to the irreversibility of habit-formation and learning as a form of subjectification and identification and that despite the claims of Deleuze and Deleuzians, radical becomings and Burroughs-like BwOs are biologically invalid and only serve to further the “immanent ideologies” of Cybernetic Capitalism.

At the end, I will come to the issue of affect and affective vulnerability: coming up against this biological barrier of “inefficiency”, Cybernetic Capitalism tries to improve its control-and-consumption mechanisms through the manipulation of affects as forms of desubjectification. From conditioning soldiers to incentivizing consumers, it relies on the de-rationalizing, evacuating power of affects to bypass the built-in defenses of the habituated biological organism.
Judith Rahn
Heinrich Heine University

Nature’s Humanity: Exploring Posthuman Subjectivities in Margaret Atwood’s MaddAddam Trilogy

As traditional relationships between fauna, flora, material objects and humanity are becoming ever more contested, literary voices from across the world reflect the instability of previously undisputed Cartesian dualisms. Popular culture and academic discourse, both, take up on this conflicted perception and seek to re-imagine life in the materiality of the text. Margaret Atwood’s much acclaimed MaddAddam trilogy (2003-2013) skilfully navigates the immanent plurality of subjectivities, as her tale unfolds between a post- and a pre-apocalyptic world. Slowly unwinding the precarious entanglements of ‘Jimmy the Snowman’s’ personal history in Oryx and Crake (2003), the narrative connects the singular and the global in Atwood’s carefully crafted narrative of friendship, failure, and survival.

Most prominently, it features the re-imagination of humanity in form of a gentle, peaceful, herbivorous human ‘master-race’ – the Crakers –, whose instincts have been redesigned to eliminate territorial behaviour and monogamous relationships. These character-traits were identified by their creator, Crake, as main sources of destructive human behaviour. In an attempt to secure human life on earth and rectify humanity’s transgressions against the planet, Crake’s radical vision of the future of humanity is a vision of life beyond the human; life beyond humanism. The inherent humanist divide between nature and culture is rejected in the form of the Crakers, who range somewhere between human and animal, between artificial intelligence and biological necessity.

These new imaginaries require novel, critical engagements with the multiplicity of subjectivities they produce. Critical posthumanist thought seeks to explore ways of adequately negotiating these pluralities. These approaches are in favour of establishing subjectivities that remain free of moral evaluation while revoking the supremacy of human experience by entangling human and non-human actors into a network of relationality. This highlights the universality of experience across categories of space, time, species, and gender as an essential aspect in the overcoming of hierarchical, humanist binaries. It also draws attention to the need for multi-directional approaches that incorporate visions of subjectivity in the Anthropocene away from “Instrumentalized matter” (Bennett 2010) and hegemonic hierarchies. This “qualitative shift” (Braidotti 2013) is situated between the “transcendence” of embodiment” (Wolfe 2010) and the re-imagination of life as a multi-faceted network of relationality.

In how far do the Crakers become necessary mediators between planetary ecology and man-made apocalypse? How do they open up new horizons to envision networks of agency? This paper seeks to explore the precariousness of human and non-human subjectivities and aims to expose hegemonic humanist dualisms as inadequate in a literary and physical world. Margaret Atwood’s stunningly bitter-sweet post-apocalyptic trilogy (Oryx and Crake (2003), The Year of the Flood (2009), MaddAddam (2013)) will provide the literary backdrop against which this paper attempts to explore posthuman subjectivities in literature. Most importantly, it will attempt to understand if and how literature can open new imaginaries for the portrayal of non-human subjectivities to include their agentic power in an animate world of “vibrant matter” (Bennett 2010).

Posthumanism and transhumanism are not totally new concepts, for they have been part of popular culture since the 1980's as observed in films as popular and widely known as *Blade Runner* (1982) or *Terminator* (1985). The most popular figure in popular though of post/transhumanism can be said to be the cyborg, present in both filmic works. In the case of this paper, the focus is on the English writer Jasper Fforde's *The Woman Who Died a Lot* (2012). I will argue that in this novel the female protagonist undergoes a transfer of her consciousness between different biological and synthetic devices, literalizing the cyborg metaphor as coined by Donna Haraway. The aim of this paper is to explore the literalization of the cyborg metaphor and how this leads to the confrontation of a transhumanist against a posthumanist subjectivity in the protagonist and the positive and negative implications of each identity.
Posthuman Hermeneutics

Traditionally, hermeneutics has been defined as a Kunstlehre, i.e. an art, but also technique and technology for the correct interpretation and understanding of cultural productions, mostly texts. During the twentieth century, hermeneutics became a second-degree reflection on human beings as "interpreting animals". Both in methodological/epistemological and ontological hermeneutics, an anthropocentric perspective prevailed. The goal of this presentation is threefold. In the first section, I will discuss and criticize the hermeneutical anthropocentrism, especially in Dilthey and Heidegger and in relation to animals and nature. In fact, these authors share the idea according to which interpretatio naturae is a figurative expression. In the second section, I will account for recent developments in environmental hermeneutics (Clingermann et al. 2013) and biohermeneutics (De Mul 2013). I will also introduce the concept of "planetary hermeneutics" recently coined by Federau (2017). In the third section, I will present my original contribution to the debate by applying some of the intuitions in the context of environmental hermeneutics and biohermeneutics to the field of digital technologies. In particular, I will present "digital hermeneutics" as an emerging discipline dealing with both technological mediations between humans and digital machines, and with the increasing interpretative and imaginary capacities of some of these machines, such as neural networks and other learning algorithms (Romele 2018). In the conclusion, I will briefly discuss the similitudes and the differences between classic posthuman philosophies and posthuman hermeneutics.

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Evi Sampanikou, University of the Aegean

Visual Culture, Artificial Intelligence and Posthumanism

This paper examines how much visual culture and pop culture in general is influenced by Posthumanism or expresses Post- and Trans- humanist ideals. We are going to examine a series of older and recent cinema examples as the older and recent versions of Blade Runner, examples from TV like Humans and Black Mirror, as well as comics and graphic novels like Peter Milligan's Shade, Enigma or Britannia and others. These examples will cooperate with each other to shape a path towards the better understanding of the interaction between Trans- and Post- Humanism and contemporary society, and how much it is already creating an influential blueprint of contemporary and future human lifestyle, mentality and conception.

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Art and creativity - robots and people

The issues of genesis, nature, sources of creativity and art have always been of interest to aesthetics. Various theoretical figures are used to describe these phenomena. However, formula of art and creation is still under discussion.

The work is devoted to an attempt to sketch a relationship between art and creation of robots and similar human activity. In particular, it is interesting to address two issues. In the context of robot technology, how does the problem of creation and art look like and whether the concepts developed so far allow to describe this new phenomenon in a relatively exhaustive way? On the other hand, if the new context of reflection allows us to formulate a new perspective for traditional solutions about human art and creativity. In the context of the robot's art and creativity, there are a lot of unsolved problems. First, the problem of the creative personality and the inner world of the artist/robot. We want to know whether emotions are needed for his work and whether there exists so-called emotional-symbolic space?

Another problem is the factor of originality and the motivation behind it - what the robot/artist wants to achieve. In this context, it is interesting to ask whether the robot is experimenting, crossing borders, abandoning the canon, or breaking the laws of nature and mankind in the name of art. Another issue indirectly related to this is the technical perfection of robotic art works and how to link it with artistic and aesthetic qualities. One way to obtain an answer may be to consider these issues according to the common intuition about the mind of the artist as "non-standard", "untypical", governed not by reason and logic, but by irrational mechanisms. And that his mind is closer to the mind of a child than to a mature "rational" man. For such intuitions, the categories of myth and mythical thinking are ideal explanatory categories.
Autonomy, responsibility, and accountability

The concept of 'moral agent' had traditionally been applied to a person with free will who can take responsibility for his actions. However, the emergence of autonomous AI that can perform diverse actions with moral implications seems to require a modification of the concept. In this paper, I argue that AI that satisfies certain requirements can be granted some kind of functional moral agency (agenthood) that does not presume personhood. In such a case, it becomes possible to ascribe responsibility or accountability to AI, corresponding to its ability to act autonomously. To support these claims, I try to reply to many possible objections and to provides various reasons to regard AI as an autonomous agent. I also try to develop the concept of responsibility or accountability that can be attributed to AI.
Theresa Schubert

Authorship and Agency in Biomedia Art

This presentation deals with the altered images of art production and authorship in a special form of contemporary art situated between new media and biotechnologies. Accordingly, I use the term biomedia art for an art form that connects biological matter and new media in a special way. According to Eugene Thacker, "biomedia" are new configurations of biologies and technologies that take us beyond the familiar picture (trope) of technology as a tool or man-machine interface. My presentation examines the connection between creativity and intention or non-intentionality, and how collaborative forms of production and presentation, especially with the involvement of non-human actors, participate in a demystification of the classical concept of the artist (a contemporary update of the proclaimed 'Death of the Author' by Barthes in 1968). A particular focus is on the introduction and transfer of the concept of distributed agency from assemblages of human and non-human entities to the arts. Agency is here understood as a capacity for action or power of action, which is no longer coupled to intention or a human subject. The use of technologies and autonomous processes leads to increased independence of the work and the materials used therein. Current artistic positions will be analysed, with a special focus on non-human actors - from living things to artificial intelligence (e.g. Spacal, Sebjanic, Baecker, Weiser, Driessens & Verstappen, Feuerstein, Petric). Particular importance is paid to concepts of self-organization, autopoiesis, synpoiesis and interspecies within contemporary art, and how in such settings agency is distributed between entities or arises through emergence. The discussed artworks offer new perspectives on authorship and include references of cybernetic and posthuman theories as well as new materialism. The proposed presentation is based on an excerpt from my PhD thesis in Media Art entitled "Nonintentionality and Agency in Biomedia Art", it was submitted on October 2017, defence in May 2018.

Autocannibalism

is my current art project, where lab work, performance and video installation meet in a hybrid space of alchemy, science fiction and posthumanism. It deals with artificial methods of meat production and anthropological meanings of cannibalism. It involves the cultivation and consumption of living matter in the form of my own laboratory-bred meat in an art performance. For the conference talk I would like to make a presentation of my research findings and present results from the lab work. The performance itself will not have taken place but I find it interesting to present the project already at this stage to also collect feedback from the audience about it - as it is a fairly controversial project. Instead of a standard academic talk it might be possible to think of a presentation in form of a in-process-exhibition?

BACKGROUND

Autocannibalism is the concretization of my research on historical medicines of the Middle Ages / the Modern Age, which were made from human ingredients. Substances like Mumi, Cranium Humanum or Axungia hominis were extremely popular in the 17th century. In this sense, I understand medicine from human body parts as a form of cannibalism, which was widespread throughout Central Europe. A second topic that I am investigating is based on the problem of meat consumption in our society. Since most people do not want to give up meat, I propose a critical, extreme but consequent way out:

The human as self-producer and source. By using new in vitro meat production techniques in combination with stem cell research, we could feed ourselves from our own body, eat ourselves - while staying live!

OUTCOMES
The main outcome will be a performance in which the body stands as a starting point for artistic self-enquiry - also inspired by performance artists of the 1970s, who have often lived this out in extreme situations as directly as inexorably. Following a dramaturgy, I will prepare my own meat, cook and then consume it. I imagine the eating of myself to be of an overwhelming experience with unknown reactions.

I also understand autocannibalism as a counter-response to some posthuman projects, which currently focus mainly on interspecies communication and respect for all living beings. However, it is indeed to be understood as a non-anthropocentric project, because it does not consider humans as superior but as animals next to other forms of life and as raw material (Braidotti's "affirmative Zoé-egalitarianism" in reverse).

For me, this project is important because it redefines the question of being human and otherness. Based on recent scientific findings, we would have to abolish the old classification system that puts man at the forefront of creation. In a future where almost all traditional work tasks can be done by machines, we are faced with a new existential question. Does the body provide a new sense of right to exist as a source of one's own nutrition? How will we deal with the fact that humans - at least in their materiality - will be almost completely de- and reconstructable by new biotechnical methods?
Mapping Memories For Posthumans: Liquid Boundaries, Fluid Identities And Natural Palimpsests. Let The "Shoes On The Danube Bank"

My research attempts to prospect a sort of cartographic method to create, develop and reframe the memories of posthumans on partially-opened, shaky and floodable territories that challenges them to accept liquid boundaries and fluid identities, in our modern world. Observing to what extent the commutability between a physical and a mental geography is sustainable, portraying the figure of the posthuman inhabitant in a very specific local framework, that predisposes him to a set of behaviors, values, norms and threats in his evolution, namely the Danube river and its Deltas, I will raise some questions that seek to explain in what scenario of political and historical occurrences these natural borders made us not to remain "human" in the same way. The strength of this critical inquiry, as outlined above, is in explaining the continuous shift between an authentic sense on the human life — anthropos —, the status and value of non-human life — zoe — and their political assimilation — bios — that tests their narratives on survival and extinction, subordination and power crises, in terms of species, communities and, extensively, simply inhabitants. Some scholars consider this puzzle of elements as multiple acceptances on life in the posthuman culture and posthumanist critical thinking being traceable in a larger project that depicts the "bio-politics of the Danube Delta" that explores the clash and conviviality humannature being shaped by ecological boundaries and policies of reordering marginalized communities as peripheral subjects around a stable and natural center. Nevertheless, equally important is the psychological dominant of this biopolitical frame, that has weakened the humanist depiction of the individual: our modern worlds has been shaped, in the first decades of the 20th century by industrialized death, widespread through Holocaust, violence, and racism. Such processes and parts of the modern eventimental history turns the individual "back to its species specificity as anthropos (Rainbow 2003, Esposito 2008), that is to say as the representative of a hierarchical, hegemonic and generally violent species whose uniqueness is now challenged by a combination of scientific advances and global economic concern" (Braidotti 2016, 13). In my research I will focus on the particularities that this argument embraces when it comes about the role of the Danube river and its Deltas to isolate individuals or to erase their memory, as it happened during the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century. I will argue that the Danube had an active role in mapping memories for posthumans, either traumatic or therapeutic, by rising liquid boundaries, fluid identities and reflecting its dominant, inhabited and socially relevant areas as natural palimpsest in which the modern history of the last century is embedded. To bring to light the inner connection between physical and mental geography of the Danube and its both historical and biopolitical role in mapping the memories of the posthuman, I will briefly analyze the artistic and memorial project "The Shoes on the Danube Bank", from Budapest, a common masterpiece of Can Togay and Gyula Pauer, a film director, respectively a sculptor, created to honor the victims of fascism from this area, who were killed by shooting at the edge of the water in order to let their bodies be carried away and drowned in the river, while their shoes remained on the bank to be recycled and integrated in a suitable industry.
Ricardo Gil Soeiro
University of Lisbon

Cultural depictions of trans-/post-/metahumanism in art, literature, movies, games

Focusing primarily on the anthology View with a Grain of Sand (1995), this presentation wishes to examine Wisława Szymborska's poetry from a posthumanist perspective. Initially departing from a global analysis of the poetic ethos in which this writing rests, our talk will then seek to show in what ways is it possible to perceive in Szymborskian poetics a posthumanist standpoint, as evidenced by compositions (namely "Seen from Above", "Tarsier", and "Dinosaur skeleton") that test and display an in-depth revision of the anthropocentric divide between the human and the non-human.
The Ethics in the Era of Artificial Intelligence: Ted Chiang's The Lifecycle of Software Objects and Floridi's Information Ethics

The use of A.I. has been dramatically increasing and its influence extends across diverse fields. As a consequence, the ethical aspect of A.I. has become a controversial issue. To address it, several policies are being discussed and implemented: the European Union's legislation to grant A.I. the status of legal residents and attempts to create guidelines for the ethical use of A.I. Most of them focus on how the scope of responsibility of A.I. or its manufactures will favor human interests. This reveals limitations in the reality for A.I. to evolve into more autonomous and conscious beings. It leads to confusion about where the boundary between humans and these human-like nonhuman entities is, and what moral stance we as humans should take with regard to them.

In this study, I will explore a prospective new ethical attitude for coexistence with A.I. as described in Ted Chiang's The Lifecycle of Software Objects, using Luciano Floridi's Information Ethics (IE). It is an ontocentric, patient-oriented, ecological macroethics. It extends the scope of moral patients to nonhuman, non-biological entities, because they share a common factor, their informational state. According to this theory, every entity is an informational being as it can be interpreted as a pattern of information and has its own intrinsic worthiness. If biocentric ethics endows any form of life with a moral standing based on its intrinsic worthiness and suffering, IE claims life should be replaced with existence, and biocentrism with ontocentrism. IE is the most radical form of ethics in that it expands the range of objects to be respected to every instance of being understood informationally.

Chiang's novella presents a suitable literary case study of IE because it centers on how we can broaden our ethical consideration by accepting A.I. as a moral patient. While IE offers a wider ethical discourse, its argument could be considered excessively universal or abstract. Chiang's work imagines how IE can be applied to real life. Digients, digital pets like Tamagotchi, are informational entities living in a virtual space. They share many characteristics of life, ranging from emergent genetic properties to evolving through learning and interacting with humans and their environment. They also have general intelligence to feel, think, and make decisions autonomously. Some owners treat them as mere playthings to be abandoned at any time, while others persist in the responsibility of caring for them, sometimes going to the extent of making great personal sacrifices. Their owners may question themselves on whether it is righteous to decide the destiny of these beings for human benefit only and how much respect should be paid to humanlike nonhuman entities.

Chiang's novella suggests alternative solutions for debates on these emotional artifacts. Many psychologists warn against the human tendency of anthropomorphizing artificial beings by projecting human feelings onto them. However, according to IE, it is not a central issue whether they have human-level consciousness or emotion because every entity, as an expression of being, already has an equal right to exist and develop and deserves to be respected. Humans have a duty to contribute to informational entities thriving in a way that is appropriate to their nature as moral agents. The ending of Chiang's novella anticipates a future when digients and humans coexist harmoniously. It is a future that can only be realized when humans accept their stewardship position as demigures to enable infosphere to flourish.
Grand narratives about literacy and domestication

With this presentation, I launch a détourned grand narrative of the historical relationship between literacy and domestication. While the consensus correctly understand the history of literacy as originating with agriculture, I challenge the humanist reasoning that writing arose because of an increasing necessity to count one's property. This dualism undervalues the core phenomenon of agriculture: the intensified relation between humans and plants. Counter-arguing, I posit that literacy co-evolved with the domestication of plants: the gathering, collecting and cultivating of crops like oat and wheat constituted a sensitive and spiritual reading of the world. Crops were not an occasion for literacy, an object that needed to be accounted for, but a proto-replica of the letter (anachronism intended) that was able to encapsulate the world. I do not stand alone with this view: The leading Danish journal of poetry is named Hvedekorn; Wheat grain.

As Timothy Morton has argued in Dark Ecology, "how we write and what we write and what we think about writing can be found within agrilogistics". Morton emplaces literacy within the originary scene of posthuman culture, namely agricultural cultivation and domestication. Outlining a road map to the agrilogistical scenography of posthuman culture, I will carefully intersect the dynamic between the house (domestication) and the field (cultivation), which is the junction where I believe literacy happens.

While it is common to reject grand narratives as megalomaniacal "theories of everything", they appear in a rich repertoire of genres. Grand narratives can be short, concise and even allegorical. Their grandiosity is rather in imaginative range than in scope. Grand narratives can be used as imaginative threads for exploring how and from where humans received language, memory and thought. I hope that they can even help us remember the sensation of acquiring language as a new-born, when we were "thrown into the world", as Heidegger would say, with no sense of signs, meaning and finitude.

Every new generation has to acquire the art of reading anew, by the means of cultivation and education. Thus, any literate has experienced how this reprogramming of the mind constitute a certain world view. What is sensed, suspected and imagined while reading is a question of having faith in the entelechy of written words. If the lingering immersion of oneself into the world of letters, this introverted play between imagination and sensation, can be classified as a genuine experience, then a contemplation on the art of reading would be able to retrieve the inherited memories from the evolution of literacy. I aim for hermeneutic accuracy by constantly reflecting on the compliance of my suggestion to the role of the scholar: How does an exteriorization of originary literacy to the vegetative realm change our view of the inter/intra-action between scholars and the "world of letters"? Can a vegetative world of letters still maintain the word and a world? And will this world remain accessible to the scholar?
Thomas Steinbuch
Zhejiang University of Science and Technology.

Tracking Nietzsche's Discovery of Vengefullness Against Life: Towards a Posthuman Family Culture

Nietzsche wrote that our species is corrupted more by its ignorance than by its vices. We are ignorant of the steady decline of life and of the will's intent to hurt life and keep it crippled in revenge for its powerlessness as a failed agent of the development of life. Nietzsche called this psychology "the Spirit of Revenge," and it is his attempt to identify the "morality of equality/powerlessness" with an event in the natural world. Today, we can study Nietzsche's discovery in the context of modern evolutionary psychology. Of course, it is difficult to see how something as terrible as the renunciation of life could have evolved as an adaptation. But recent paradigm shifts in the biological sciences in our understanding of the multiple dimensions of heritability and, in the environmental sciences, in the growing acceptance of catastrophists over gradualists accounts of geophysical history, open the way to an answer to why the Spirit of Revenge first emerged and how it is being conserved.

What Nietzsche said is that a psychological complex stands at the head of culture and civilization, and that has been said only one other time since and that was by Freud. Although I do not agree with Sarah Kofman's Oedipal reading of Ecce Homo, the path of self-discovery and personal development Nietzsche narrates in that work begins with his study of his family. The Freudian family is identified as the psychodynamic of the domination of the authoritarian father and the primal event of the band of brothers who rebelled, cannibalizing him and ravaging the females in the hoard. Although the exploration of family in Ecce Homo has nothing to do with the psychology of patriarchy and obedience, it is a still a psychological study of inherited vengefullness and vindictiveness. And again, what is uncovered is a universal originary tendency, the Spirit of Revenge, said to stand at the head of Western civilization. Perhaps the vengeful renunciation of life is also to be discovered in family, as is the domination of self-directedness. If so, the question of where these come from overlaps with the question of the origin of the modern family.

The modern family emerged at a time of catastrophe in our ancestral history. A comet impact 12,000 years ago just before the agricultural revolution and the rise if the family structure that supports it, pushed populations to very low numbers outside of isolated tropical refugia. Mainstream archeologists examining the neolithic ruins at Gobekli Tepi at the edge of the fertile crescent which date from this time have confirmed that the megaliths could be the record of this comet impact. Are Nietzsche's unmaskings of morality's renunciation of life and Freud's of patriarchy's control of self-directedness of life discoveries of remnants of trauma from this near extinction event, imprinted on our epigene and conserved to today as unconscious forces shaping agricultural civilization and its nuclear the family? It is a highly speculative hypothesis but we must take these first steps to extend Nietzsche's investigation of the Spirit of Revenge and ask why it evolved and how it is being conserved, or we will continue in our "dangerous ignorance."
Our Most Important Reality: Physical and Epistemic Limits to Simulations and Virtual Reality

The last few years has seen a significant development of virtual reality and computer simulations. These technologies are nowadays widely used in various fields, from entertainment and art, to science and education. The same trend has spawned a philosophical debate regarding the status of simulated realities. In what respects are they inferior or superior to the physical reality? The literature on VR finds a divide between *virtual realists* (Heim 1998; Chalmers 2016), and *virtual fictionalists* (Juul 2005; Tavinor 2009; Bateman 2011; Velleman 2011; Meskin & Robson 2012), and has mostly been focusing on ontology and value; on the one hand whether virtual objects, events, and experiences really exist, and on the other, whether they are as valuable as non-virtual objects, events, and experiences.

However, there are other critical features of the relationship between simulations and reality besides ontology and value. In this paper, I argue that VRs and simulations, while being useful and meaningful in various ways, are inferior to the initial reality in at least two crucial aspects. The first is that simulations, by definition, are physically dependent on a generator reality. Simply put, a simulated reality cannot exist without the reality generating it (i.e. the reality possessing the generator that is generating the simulated reality). While the generator (and the reality it exists in) can prevail without the simulation, it is not the other way around. If a simulation, on the other hand, are not physically dependent on a generator reality, the term 'simulation' is deflated. Thus, even taking the severe computational constraints aside, the dependency of a generator reality places simulations on a step below its generator. The second aspect is that there is an epistemic boundary to simulated realities that is not applicable to the initial reality. The main argument is that simulated realities are always constructed using properties and laws taken from the initial reality, and are thus restricted in a way the initial reality is not. From this, it follows that unknown aspects of any reality, including important scientific discoveries, are more likely to be concealed from a virtual reality compared to the initial reality. Finally, I will address to what extent emergent complexity and procedural generation offers a counter-argument to my thesis.
(Re)configuring Techno-Affective Spaces. Posthuman Bodying in Krzysztof Wodiczko’s Practices

This paper aims to explore the processes of a posthuman bodying in artistic practices, which are not a liquidation of the subject but rather a proliferation of subjects, and disclose technologies and forms of power often grounded in affective methods responsible for shaping and altering human and nonhuman bodies. Relying on Marie-Luise Angerer’s point from her latest book Ecology of Affect: Intensive Milieus and Contingent Encounters, “the function of the affective is to connect, disrupt, and/or invert life in time and technology as time in motion” (27). In this respect, drawing from new materialism and agential realism theoretical framework, the paper will determine organic and technoscientific constituencies, the continually changing liaisons of human and nonhuman affects to understand the complex inseparability of material and discursive convergence in artistic practices.

While illustrating the processes, the article will give insight into Krzysztof Wodiczko’s performative devices—called by the artist “xenological”—that function as extensions of bodies, a kind of cultural prosthesis, to enable users to express themselves and overcome the sense of their alienation in public spaces. As the paper will indicate, thanks to technological experiments, the projects become not only a comprehensive grasp of experiences of socio-cultural discrimination and exclusion, but they predominantly explore spatial-corporeal relations/ encounters between body, technology and architecture to embrace the diversity of embodied expressions and nonhuman affectivity. This paper holds that the body, in the analysed living installations, which is part and parcel of haptic space, is an assemblage of human and nonhuman affects, “a mutual constitution of entangled agencies” (Barad 33) always dynamic and open to further modifications. Hence, the article aims to prove that the body in the projects, or in the idiom of Massumi “bodying”, constituted through affective spatiality (affectivity), disposes of socio-cultural barriers and negative affects produced by socio-cultural discourses to reveal new forms of techno-affective subjectivities that need to be analysed from discursive and materialist angle. This perspective will allow me to capture the materialist understanding of power and its effect on the formation of bodies, identities and subjectivities (Barad 35).

Works cited:


Posthuman entanglements of a man in contemporary communication technologies in the context of conditio communicatio and conditio educatione

The subject of this work is the issue of posthuman entanglements of a man in contemporary communication technologies in the context of conditio communicatio and conditio educatione.

As the researchers of the subject emphasize, modern technologies make a significant change in the surrounding social world, changing communication relations and the attitude of people towards knowledge and education. The posthuman messages conveyed by them regarding the change in the perception of the existing order of the world lead to the recognition of a different from the previous hierarchy of values in the perception of non-human beings. They aim at giving them subjective characteristics, thus broadening the perspective of human reflection on a new type of relationship (intersubjective relations) and enriching the contemporary communication space with non-human beings becoming its participants (which simultaneously changes the existing sense of communication, moving it from interpersonal communication to broadly understood intersubjective communication).

In a social environment created by modern communication technologies, the subject acquires a nomadic shape. It is to be multidimensional, relational, constituted "in and through multiplicity". It is supposed to be fulfilled in action, communication and creating connections, relations with its human and non-human others, which are equal components of the world. A nomadic subject is perceived in the context of the overthrow of conventions and schemes (Rosi Braidotti), and in the context of interactivity that encourages active participation in the becoming of the world and learning the world anew (Karen Barad), Braidotti (2014), Barad (2013).

It is worth noting that this posthuman entanglement of man in modern communication technologies significantly changes the ways of communication and learning (revealing the numerous limitations and threats that accompany them, which we can observe in the context of the results of qualitative research presented in this work). Their primary goal is to illustrate relationships established by people with objects/technical devices (primarily intended to serve for communication with other people and acquisition of knowledge about the surrounding world, actually setting them aside in the interaction). As Horkheimer, Adorno pointed out, when technology becomes the main essence of knowledge, the real goal is no longer the pursuit of truth (Horkheimer, Adorno 1994).

Obtained results of research show that people more and more often tend to give subjective character to objects/devices, thanks to which certain properties of these devices are strengthened in the range of simulating/imitating selected entities (in this case people). It turns out that these objects are often treated by them as a kind of 'entities', which is expressed, inter alia, in properties attributed to them by respondents, such as: reliable friend, partner, informer, life companion, companion, comforter, my alter ego, and others.

Such empowerment/personification of devices, make me (as a teacher and communication researcher) to continue to look for answers to the question: How do new technologies/communication devices change the condition of communication and education (and, hence, also conditio humana)?
Some-thing Other: Perceiving digitized self-projections

Jane Bennett in Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things (2010) calls attention to the 'notion of thing'. She writes the 'notion of thing power aims instead to attend to the it as actant; I will try, impossibly, to name the moment of independence (from subjectivity) possessed by things, a moment must be there, since things do in fact affect other bodies, enhancing or weakening their power' (Bennett 2010, 3). In this paper I will attempt to explore the notion of 'thing as actant' through a particular electronic visual image assemblage: a custom-made media project of my own making, the diplorasis (translated as doubled vision). Within the installation space, participants will experience unexpectedly perceive themselves in three-dimensionalized and manipulated forms (via code, sensors, dslr cameras and stereoscopic technologies). A whole range of electronic and non-electronic object assemblages operate to construct and configure an image of the viewer. The effects of various digitized image processes are considered through their interaction with the organic operation of the monocular and binocular functioning eyes.

Within the diplorasis the organic body is positioned in relation to its computational prosthetic extensions. As such embodiment becomes mediated through informational processes. Literary critic Katherine N. Hayles attempts to trace how notions of embodiment are entwined with informational systems. In How we Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics Hayles states that the computer's capabilities 'indicate how the user's sensory-motor apparatus is being trained to accommodate the computer's responses'(1999, 47). And 'central to the construction of the cyborg are informational pathways connecting the organic body to its prosthetic extensions' (1999, 47). Echoing this line of thought, in the diplorasis the space of the immediate environment becomes a prosthetic extension to the body. The machinic setup directly correlates to the bodily participant, its operation attempts to overwhelm the viewer with an image that exceeds the human faculties of perception. This intensive perception moves beyond a conscious subjective framing, producing an impasse between the body and its represented (and manipulated) image. This is similar to Hayles's description of the science fiction novel Limbo (1952) by Bernard Wolfe, where 'the body is integrated into a cybernetic circuit, modification of the circuit will necessarily modify consciousness as well' (1999, 115). As digitized imaging increasingly conflate with (in) the bodily schema one questions the very boundaries between body and its prosthetic technologies. And the body's perceiving coordinates, its mnemonic capacities shift with the electronic age as space and time is increasingly reliant on virtual environments.
The aim of the paper is to address several existing approaches to encounters of humans and non-humans within bio art in order to analyze how it reflects on and reinterprets anti-anthropocentric discourse. The encounter of human with non-human organisms in bio art became an established field of research which recently has attracted a lot of attention. The series Nonhuman Subjectivities by Art Laboratory Berlin in 2016-2017 with the conference Nonhuman Agents in Art, Culture and Theory, exhibition Seeing the Forest through the Trees by Monika Bakke, artworks presented at the Festival Ars Electronica, Click Festival are only some of the examples of increasing interest in this topic.

Cartesian gaze, as well as further development of western thought, has led to the emergence of liberal subject, subject-object relationships, binary oppositions (nature/culture, man/woman etc.) and multiple assumptions which directly and indirectly cause harmful effects, such as the climate change, exploitation of resources, etc. Posthumanist thought in its variety questions those assumptions and strives to propose alternative points of view. Moreover, the concept of endosymbiosis developed by Lynn Margulis, autopoiesis introduced by Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, the model of Gaia conducted by James Lovelock and widely discussed and contextualized by Bruno Latour and Donna Haraway, the field of object-oriented ontology formulated by Graham Harman and comprising a subfield of speculative realism, Karen Barad introducing non-binary relationships from quantum physics into humanities and feminist studies and many other ideas create the base for the reconceptualization of humans and nonhumans interconnections and significantly influence artistic practices.

Within my research, I would like to focus on the encounters of humans and non-humans (animal, microbial, plant) in the recent artworks in the field of bio art. Although the multiple examples of bio art are more characterized with the cold scientific gaze of the artist towards the non-human, other examples show the attempts of the artist to take up various positions towards other species criticizing subject-object relationships.

Therefore, the objective of the paper is to identify approaches to humans and nonhumans encounters within bio art pieces to see what strategies to these encounters (alternatives to the cold scientific gaze) artists in bio art choose for the creation of their art pieces, what place these artworks have in the field of bio art, how their works reflect on (anti)-anthropocentric theories.

Thus, the preliminary research question is: How art pieces the integral part of which includes the encounter of humans with non-humans (animal, microbial, plant) reflect on and reinterpret the posthumanist theories and deal with the problem of the subject-object relationship?
The technologies of artificial intelligence and genetic engineering are making great strides today. Projecting this progress into the future, we can discern that this century may bring enormous changes to our world, our lives, and ourselves. Most significantly, we can foresee that the biological basis of the human being—our organic bodies and brains—may come to be radically altered or even completely replaced.

Some of the thinkers who reflect on the coming transformations employ the term “transhumanism” to characterize their vision (e.g., Vernor Vinge, Nick Bostrom, Anders Sandberg). This term suggests that the human being will overcome itself, that it will transform itself into something different, and that traditional humanism will thus be surpassed and left behind.

Other thinkers who reflect on the same developments reject the term “transhumanism” (e.g., Hans Moravec, Ray Kurzweil). They see the coming transformations not as a radical shift, but as the regular—albeit ever more accelerated—continuation of human history. For them, the human being has always been a being that augments and modifies itself through the technology it creates. On this view, the coming transformations will mean the fulfillment of the human being, not its overcoming, and hence the vindication of humanism, not its obsolescence.

The aim of this presentation is to examine this disagreement about how to understand and how to call the great transformations on our horizon. In particular, I seek to determine the relevance of the disagreement. What is at issue in whether or not we employ the term “transhumanism”?

In response to this question, I will distinguish two aspects. First, I will highlight that the disagreement is in part about the definition or essence of the human being. Moravec and Kurzweil believe that the human being is to be defined as the being that extends and transforms itself through its technology, thus overcoming bit by bit its biological limitations. In other words, for them the human being is essentially cyborg. For the proponents of “transhumanism”, by contrast, the human being—its existence and history—has been determined fundamentally by aspects of its biology, most importantly its mortality and sexuality. And since the coming transformations promise to render these biological characteristics obsolete, the resulting beings will be, on this view, essentially different from human beings.

Second, I will point out that the disagreement is not only about how to understand and conceptualize the coming transformations, but also in part about what these transformations will bring. Moravec and Kurzweil are very confident that the resulting beings will still be us, i.e., that there will be an unbroken continuity between these beings and us today. The thinkers who use the prefix “trans”, by contrast, see the possibility that the said transformations might lead to the creation of intelligent agents that are superior than and independent from us.
Bio-Politics, Technologies of Enhancement, Performance Enhancement and Performance Enhancement Drugs

One of the controversial issues in our world today is the place of Performance Enhancement Drugs. Although the subject often appears in sport-related contexts, I will consider this subject from a broader perspective, as I address the issue of performance and enhancement. Needless to say, major bio-political trends aim to control and subjugate individuals, regardless of their singular needs. I had presented a Foucauldian critique of today's bio-politics before; what I plan to do here is explore why and how PEDs can be threatening and, therefore, controlled by hegemonic powers. A similar pattern can be seen on hallucogenic drugs, but this will not be my main concern here, although both PEDs and the so-called illicit drugs share common fate in today's world. I will first explore the existing PEDs that emerged in our technological age and consider what they enhance and how enhancements happen. We need to keep in mind that enhancements happen in a cultural context (as in sports, for instance) and, more often not, enhancements are acceptable, when they serve society, when they are pleasing. Problems emerge when enhancements go against accepted norms and traditions (again, as in sports, against "fair game" for instance). What are then the new, posthumanistic, criteria by means of which we can accept some enhancements and not others? This will be my next topic to explore. Many objections against PEDs are based on a distinction between culture and nature; it is assumed that PEDs are not natural. But what is nature? What is human being? What is culture? Can human culture be seen in isolation from nature, or the mind from the body? These types of dualities cannot be sustained, which has been shown in many works on posthumanism, including by me, Stefan Sorgner, Francesca Ferrando and others. Therefore, objections against PEDs on these grounds are not sound. This is not, however, to suggest, or to fall into any nihilistic mentality, where "laissez-faire" attitude may dominate. Clearly, there is a post-humanistic ethos, even if what this ethos may not be in clear sight among all posthumanists. The death of God left a mess and the bits and pieces of the recovery in the post-modern, post-humanistic age are not easy to gather. What I propose in this essay is to reconsider how we look at performance and enhancers beyond the politics of control towards a care of the self, based on individual needs and enhancements.
There exists an enduring legacy of both utopian and eschatological narratives in the history of human storytelling. Most of these stories have a humanistic foundation from which they gain both a platform for distribution as well as credibility. The humanist tradition has been responsible for many of these eschatological tales, and it has also been responsible for their most recent transformation, more specifically secularization, on account of the naturalistic inclinations of contemporary humanism. Narratives within the transhumanist and technological determinist schools have appropriated the tradition of eschatology and secularized it by basing new stories on the speculations of future technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, molecular nanotechnology, and biotechnologies. As a result, the technologically deterministic basis of eschatological tales has led to a cynical defeatism that has failed to take precautionary policy measures in developing safe future technologies. This urge to surrender must be resisted in favor of an exploration of values and how those can lead to beneficial outcomes. This paper explores these issues and attempts to provide a preliminary springboard from which to resist narratives of deterministic eschatology.
Metaphors as a Zombie Category: A Posthumanist Critic of Algorithmic Autonomy

According to Gillespie (2016), "algorithm" is a synecdoche, serving as an abbreviation for the sociotechnical assemblage that includes algorithm, model, target goal, data, training data, application, hardware — and connect it all to a broader social endeavor. Bogost (2015) argues that algorithms in fact operate like metaphors, by taking a complex system from the world and abstracting it into processes that capture some of that system's logic and discarding others.

Metaphors are not 'merely language' we use to talk about actions, but an essential part of our cognitive thinking and comprehension processes (Rorty, 1979; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; MacCormac, 1985). The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), therefore, metaphors embody two types of connection to materiality: they help define things through their functionality by referring to how something works or materializes, and they end up structuring the actions we perform in these terms.

Philosophers of science stress the importance of metaphors in scientific discourse (Kuhn, 1962; Foucault, 1970; MacCormac, 1976). However, throughout the history of ideas, metaphors reveal a recursive pattern, when contemporary technologies are used as metaphors for the workings of nature and society, and at the same time are themselves promoted as metaphorical expressions of natural and social constructs (for example the telegraph and the nervous system, see Carey, 2009).

Against this backdrop, it is no surprise that in the digital era, brought about by Turing's imitation game and cybernetic definitions of the world in terms of functionality, patterns, and probabilities, metaphors tend to claim ontological status. We so routinely use computing terms to describe our brains that we no longer even realize we're speaking metaphorically (Carr, 2010). However, this goes beyond the literary phenomenon of "dead metaphors" - metaphors which have become commonplace and lost their evocative power (Deutcher, 2006) - when metaphors are solidified through algorithms that execute and enforce them as ontologies. For example, Larry Page's view of the brain as a computer (not just resembling it) prompted his attitude towards programming Google's search algorithms. As a result, Google equates intelligence with data-processing efficiency (Carr, 2010), making human collective intelligence indistinguishable from machine intelligence.

This paper argues that technology metaphors are in fact digital material metaphors (van den Boomen, 2014), which acquire object-like properties and are solidified through their indexical relation to software code. As such, they are a "zombie category" (Beck, 2002) with fluidity between death in language and life in the form of revived evocative power, in a posthumanist reading of this analytic concept. This interpretation will then be used to offer a critical analysis of the discourses of algorithmic autonomy, arguing that "autonomy" is in fact used metaphorically, due to linguistic conventions, to describe the automation of specific processes, which in turn "revive" the metaphor to invoke discourses of artificial intelligence.
Serbian Avant-Garde Culture As A Point Of Posthumanist Tendencies: Case Of Ljubomir Micić

The objective of the paper is to present the possibilities of mapping the posthumanist tendencies in the work of Ljubomir Micić (Ljubomir Mitsitch), who was one of the most eminent Serbian Avant-garde leaders. Following the variety of posthumanist theories and concepts regarding the call for overcoming of the Humanism and its hypocrite hierarchical system, as well as the broadening of the notion of the very humanism and the human, the paper will tend to demonstrate how this same posthumanist call is present in one of the derelict and marginalized avant-garde novels Barbarogenie, le decivilisateur (eng. Barbarogenius, the decivilizer), that Micić wrote during his exile in Paris, and published in French language in 1938. This paper will furthermore tend to demonstrate how Micić relied on the basic postulates of the Avant-garde literature, philosophy and culture, which have already been confirmed as the announcements of the Posthumanist aspirations.

Besides, the paper will also take into consideration the influence of Nietzsche’s philosophy on Micić’s “Barbarogenius”, and this will also be investigated as an argument for the presence of the Posthumanism in the aforementioned novel. The author’s aim was a deconstruction of the Western Humanist canon through the idea of the stereotypical vision of the Balkan man conceptualized as “Barbarogenius”. In this sense it will be shown how Micić tends to surpass the civilizational norms and borders, creating his Avant-garde literary subject. Special attention in this analysis will be given to the author’s and protagonist’s statements such as: “The Humanity is betrayed” and “Decivilize yourself!”, as well as onto the idea of decivilization of Europe through its “balkanization”. This way it would be argued the dichotomy of the civilization and barbarism as a subcategory of the dichotomy between human and inhuman, which Posthumanism tends to overcome. These reflections will reveal themselves as a basic starting point for the polemic on possibilities of the real human understanding of the other—of his own inhuman and barbaric other. Nevertheless, the conclusions will show how part of the Serbian Avant-garde culture could be examined as an anticipation for the Posthumanist overturn of the Humanism.
Mural Art as Reflection on Diversity and Shared Production of Knowledge in a Posthuman Conception

This project aims to reflect on the concept of mural art, shared production of knowledge, culture - in a local/global sense, considering the theoretical and methodological approach of posthumanism and critic posthumanism, from the located inclusivism. As Ferrando (2013) and Braidotti (2013) present, "not intending to settle the individual perspective in a collective way. For these authors, posthumanism relates to a "reconfiguration" of the human, plural, fluid, ethical, indicating a different nomenclature for being human. In the critic posthuman sense, in addition to the human relationship with technologies, it is urgent to understand the cultural relations of the (ethnic, religious, economic, etc.) difference between human beings that is perceived to be in danger nowadays. Where does the fragmentation begin? Looking at the murals already made by Mexican, European, African, Brazilian artists, among many others, I would like to highlight the "representations" of the themes approached by the artists: human beings inserted in their culture, their environment. The question that instigate me since the completion of the mural "ethnicities and cultures that built the city of Palmas (PR, Brazil)" is to know if the "represented" cultures really feel represented. Searching for the meaning of the word "represent" in Portuguese, it can mean -speaking or acting on behalf of one another. Therefore, I searched for projects related to this concern over the representation of the other as equal to me and different from me in Visual Arts, in Modern Language and in the Shared Production of Knowledge group that uses digital technologies to reflect on scientific knowledge and community knowledge. For Bairon and Lazaneo (apud Maffesoli, 1998) the term "representation" would be more concerned with the power relations in modernity. Considering the mural paintings, in what sense was there an agreement between the cultural groups about the way this "other" is represented? Is it fair to "represent" from ourselves ideas? For Bairon and Lazaneo, the term "presentation" should replace the term "representation", because the presentation places the author as interlocutor of the other; the authorship happens in the presentation. From the interlocutor of the community itself, or, from the technologies such as the hypermedia, placing the interlocutor(s) of the community and the interlocutor(s) of the scientific research, as knowledge sharing between community and scientific research. Through the interlocution with the Pêcheux's Speech Analysis, the understanding of the language and, therefore, the enunciation functioning can be deepened. The subject is positioned within ideological and discursive formations imposing on it the possibilities of narrating the reality believed to be natural; but, in fact, it always possessed a fictional structure in the sense of being a possibility of representation that places itself in the place of others, meaning in this game of delayed presence and forgotten absence. It is on this path I believe it is possible to translate the concept of situated inclusivism, and a human reconfiguration in the encounter of alterities: listening, acting, creating, sharing the knowledge of ethnic groups aiming the production of a mural painting, the construction of narratives and videos, as a presentation of these cultures. Taking painting, text and video technologies and methodologies to these cultures.
"Why should it be us who die for you?: (Post)Humanist Revolution in The Girl with All the Gifts

Colm McCarthy's 2016 film The Girl with All the Gifts depicts humanity decimated first by a deadly fungus, and later by the infected flesh-eating undead. The film's protagonist is Melanie, a bright Black girl who has developed a symbiotic relationship with the fungus: while she craves human flesh, she is also fully cognizant and visually indiscernible from humans. Neither human nor quite undead, by the end of the film Melanie instigates a revolution that eradicates all human survivors and establishes a new civilization for her species. This presentation will analyze the political and ethical resonances of the film's sometimes radical departures from the short story it was based on as well as from the wider convention of the post-apocalyptic zombie film genre and claim that, by expanding the usually anthropocentric and often imperialist parameters of the zombie film genre, The Girl with All the Gifts imagines a revolution that is at once postcolonial and posthuman. By subverting the idea of human survival as the ultimate and unquestionable value on the one hand, and framing the plight of Melanie and her half-human, half-undead peers as a metaphor for a colonial situation on the other, the film destabilizes our assumptions about the ethical and political conditions of humanity's engagement with its human and non-human others. By centering a non-human subject and imagining a posthuman future of the planet, The Girl with All the Gifts exposes the universalizing assumptions of the typical end-of-the-world narrative and particularizes Enlightenment humanism as only one among many, equally valid, epistemologies. The film's imagined anti-colonial posthuman revolution suggests the ecological and social unsustainability of the racist and speciesist hierarchies established by Western humanism and bridges the discourses of posthumanism and postcolonialism, whose significant ideological overlaps have remained relatively underexplored in cultural theory and criticism to date. While The Girl with All the Gifts envisions a future that is in many ways posthuman, it skillfully avoids ahistoricism and anti-humanism – the likely pitfalls of posthuman criticism and fiction – by politicizing Melanie's revolution as an act of social justice against the oppressive, environmentally lethal, and ultimately colonial Western civilization as we currently know it.
Posthuman rights

Human rights are one of foundational concepts of our modern world. In this analysis, many aspects of "stepping beyond human rights" are examined. This process, among others, has political, technological, ethical, economic, legal consequences and in some cases, this can be very dangerous but in other cases necessary.

Firstly, the contemporary position and the danger of abandonment of the legacy of human rights in the face of political and technological changes is considered. The inadequacy of modern democracies as hackable systems is pointed out beyond contemporary political analysis. Neoreactionary ideas are applied as a critique and discarded as an insufficient solution from the perspective of contemporary human rights and stable systems.

Secondly, the boundaries of legal systems are examined from the speculative posthumanism approach. Many problems arise with a possibility for consciousness to exist in mind-uploading, hive minds, AI systems, alien minds etc. disrupt democratic decisionmaking processes (voting), ability to engage in contracts (continuation of legal obligations) and means of individual protection from extreme suffering (mind crimes). Lack of relevant contemporary scientific knowledge, especially in the realm of consciousness research is pointed out.

Thirdly, critical posthumanism point of view is applied to explain some of the inadequacies of dominant legal theories and models. Problems with the sustainability of laws based on ideas such as human dignity and natural law are analyzed. Their metaphysical claims are revisited and functional replacement is proposed. Issues of non-human animal rights and reasonable interventions in or creating ecosystems with some degree of suffering is raised. Theories of legal personhood of entities such as companies, nations and other non-human legal persons are examined and contemporary AI safety debate is applied to this analysis. Pareto improvement of the contemporary legal model is proposed.

The proposed model is concerned with consciousness and rationality as basic aspects of post-human legal personhood. The concept of "fluid personhood" is introduced which integrates those aspects in individual and relational dimensions. This evolutionary model supposes creation of direct dependency between consciousness and legal power. Potential problems (utility monster) and challenges are discussed. Some of the conclusions are exemplified in concepts such as "Right to Suicide", "Systemic, meta-systemic and individual responsibility", as well as in classical Human Right concepts.

The problems of enforceability of Human and Post-Human Rights is discussed in terms of existential risk. This cautious manner is necessary considered that strictly enforced basic laws can lead to both utopian and dystopian outcomes (varied in extremity with very little middle ground in terms of long-term balanced outcome.)
Challenging the post-raciality of posthumanism: Octavia Butler

The aim of this paper is to examine the theoretical contributions of African-American sci-fi writer Octavia Butler to some of the ongoing debates between posthumanism and critical race studies. Blackness and «racializing assemblages» play an essential role in dividing humanity into full humans and non-humans: for these reasons, black critical thought have developed a significant analytical framework on the concept of the human. Alexander Weheliye contends that we should rethink humanity first and foremost in terms of race, whereas posthumanism begins with the definition of the human in liberalism, a version of humanity that is in control of itself (Weheliye 2014).

While much work has been done so far to analyse Butler’s literary production through posthumanist lenses, her engagement with the whiteness and alleged post-raciality of posthumanist thought still needs further investigation. My research question will be: are there alternative ways of going beyond the human that could help bringing to the forefront the matter of race, rejecting the white European Man as a point of departure? I will read Butler’s Fledgling (2005) and Wild Seed (1980) in dialogue with Donna Haraway’s «becoming with» and «becoming animal» (Haraway 2008), a way of going beyond the human which takes distance from posthumanist thought. Haraway does not suggest a comparison between the animal and the silenced Other, a comparison considered to be problematic by black critical thought as it reproduces dehumanizing practices instead of challenging them. Rather, she rejects the «humanocentric perspective» which equates oppressed people with animals, and contends that companion species must instead learn to live intersectionally.

Both Fledgling and Wild Seed are novels about living intersectionally and moving beyond species boundary. The former narrates the process through which the human and the vampire species learn to become companion species living in a non-hierarchical world. Furthermore, the novel’s protagonist Shori, a vampire, erases her species characteristics and enters this so-called dance of encounters by acquiring a human trait, which happens to be the black skin. Wild Seed as well should be consider an essential source of inspiration for the ways it challenges the opposition between human and animal, as well as between culture and nature, while rejecting any identification of the black woman protagonist (Anyanwu) with animals. Anyanwu can indeed transform herself into animals, but she does so first and foremost to explore what it means for black women to be “downgraded” to the animal state, and secondly to challenge and decentre the Western notion of the human. Although a lot of criticism has come from black studies to the use of the analogy between black subjects and animals, I argue that Haraway theorizes a form of relationality exceeding the mere comparative perspective, and potentially productive of other ways of thinking otherwise the relation between human and all Others. What I also claim is that even more insightful perspectives can be provided by the knowledge coming from the «privileged perspective» of black critical thought - and literature - coping with relationality and the «becoming animal».
Resisting With Melted Bodies: Posthumanist Elements in "Gezi Park" Protests

As a social and environmental movement "Gezi Park" protests which has occurred in 2013, was also scene of a short-lived cultural formation. During the protests, Gezi Park was the symbol of integrity against the conservative government power. Some protestors started to live in the park and many supporters around Turkey joined them on streets. Communication Technologies as an extension of body also played a key role to inform and collect protestors.

Gezi Park protests can not be defined as a posthumanist movement but has some elements in it. People from many different cultures, genders, political thoughts and beliefs came together and resisted without their bodily boundaries. In this sense, constructed body codes melted but resistance was made with bodies and social media users.

In this paper I would like to discuss the relationship between culture of Gezi Park protests and posthumanism. Because protestors created a culture which posthumanist elements involved. Even though protests can be consider as a humanistic movement at first glance it has more than this. Gezi Park's cultural life didn't consider only human right but animal rights and environmental issues as well.

Discussion will be a mixture of theoretical framework and cultural practice of Gezi Park as a short-lived utopia.
Big Data metaphysics. Poshuman population in vector form as a form of advanced intelligence

From the beginning of the history of ideas, philosophy sought for an intelligent form of the absolute, a source treated as an individuum that gives impetus to history, many found this impetus in the definition of God, however, for many sensitive minds, intellectuals, none of the previous options gave full satisfaction. Collective intelligence was sought outside the population, but the recent technological acceleration paradoxically revealed that perhaps the form of advanced intelligence (that is, one that targets the point) is the mathematical average of the entire population. The population treated like a vector as a whole is right. Apart from the economic studies on the big data issues, it is necessary to consider deeply the Big Data problem “from the metaphysical level of the collectively population as a focal form of intelligence” In advanced studies on big data, it can be seen that collective choice is always rational in relation to the situation and strongly correlative with ethics (if only society has democratic possibilities) and can prevent many negative social events.

In my speech, I would like to focus on a few key issues regarding the analysis of the information society in the Big Data system and present the most important methodological factors, which are not yet written so often and which are the key ones that are:

research on semiology within Big Data - the analysis of language is crucial in assessing human behavior, deepened by numerical analysis, by means of deduction is a strong factor for the analysis of ethical behavior, for the analysis of sensitivity, dreams or bad inclinations. Semiology or advanced language studies play one more important role in the analysis of big data. They include randomness and accidental of the words spoken and the number of repetitions of the same word. The first factor (this can be seen in the analysis of Google Trends) is a factor of Truth and is not accidental or thought, the word that appears in collective comments accidentally first often corresponds to the final result of the situation (why this is not yet scientifically explained). The second factor, which is the frequency of word occurrence, is a strongly emotional factor and defines the emotional connections of a person, group with a word that repeats a lot or likes (the number of repetitions increases our emotional relationship with a given case). I would like to present in my work earlier mistakes made by analytical companies, like not taking and focus on the time factor. The modern world is governed by change, we often change decisions, but this is not related to social immaturity but a very rich information package and high sensitivity to these stimuli (there is a very strong correlation between creativity and life in permanent change, the higher the creative intelligence, the higher the need for change). This is due to the fact that a rich, sensitive mind wants to experience more to better assess and feel the situation (in fact the change is cognitive and out of this need), that’s why many analytical companies suffered fiasco at the beginning, because it was not assumed in social studies or political analysis of the change factor. Today, it is said that the data from 6 weeks ago is out of date, there is a lot to do in the big data and a lot of research to carry out, but I deeply believe that research on semiology and mathematics with deeply philosophical context may paradoxically bring us closer to the theory of the absolute to the source theory what philosophers have been looking for a long time, which religion did not answer I want to say that looking today from the perspective of the philosophy that I studied, then the history of art, and later the study of MIT, and at the beginning starting with music I strongly believe in the population as a whole, I feel and observe that the maturity and cognitive sophistication of societies is still increasing.
Lawful and Humane Use of Autonomous Robotic Weapons - a Look at the Possibility

Breakthroughs in automation and artificial intelligence (AI) make the emergence of Autonomous Weapon Systems (AWS), sometimes decried as killer robots, a highly likely prospect in the judgment of military and civilian analysts. Systems capable of independently spotting, selecting and engaging targets require nothing but a combination of already existing technologies to come into existence, and some such systems have already been assembled. AWS, unobstructed by limitations inherent in human biology, would most likely surpass human soldiers if their development was undertaken with technological competence and resource capacity characteristic of weapons research & development by major industrial nations. In fact, such efforts are already ongoing, even if “keeping a human in the loop” is still considered morally and legally obligatory. Emergence of technologically mature AWS able to routinely best human soldiers would be extremely consequential and tantamount to a revolution in military affairs on par with the invention of gunpowder or of the nuclear weapons.

The exact impact of this revolution on the international political, legal and military order is contingent on the multitude of factors and decisions by agents influencing one another, and consequently may fall on a large spectrum of positive or negative aggregate outcomes. Throughout the past decade many prominent voices came out in favor of a ban on AWS development, arguing that fielding of such weapons would open a Pandora’s box of tragic and uncontrollable effects. Given the game-theoretical structure of the issue and current international developments, neither passing nor effectively enforcing such a ban seems possible. Given an increasingly multi-polar nature of global politics, the approach based on responsible agents promoting best practices and using the power of new military technologies to check potential unethical use is much more promising. Inevitable negative effects of AWS gradual proliferation must be balanced by competent, ethical and widespread fulfillment of the positive potential of these technologies, including but not limited to their power to make the conduct of war more transparent, accountable, precise, decisive and much less costly in terms of lives and human suffering.

I will argue for the ethical necessity of studying and realizing this potential. I will also try to demonstrate its scope by analyzing one possible area of mature AWS application – international peacekeeping efforts. Such efforts are burdened by significant and persistent problems, and fielding of AWS seems a perfect fix to many of them, to be achieved at no other cost than that of developing mature and laws-of-war compliant AWS – an enterprise responsible international agents will be forced to undertake regardless given technological and geopolitical realities of the coming century.
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**Human hands on the Wheel – How do Uber drivers negotiate agency in the face of algorithmic management?**

*(Research conducted with Mareike Möhlmann and Ola Henfridsson of Warwick Business School)*

Car sharing service companies such as Uber, represent an emergent posthuman form of labor which challenges the traditional employer-employee relationship by implementing a set of computerized mechanisms, also known as algorithmic management, through which they govern and enforce their work policies. Those include a reputation system in which users rate drivers' behavior as well as a built-in navigation system that both directs drivers, follows and reports their whereabouts to the company and the consumers. Previous research has shown that, as a result of these technologies, drivers report a power asymmetry that can sometimes cause frustration and feelings of loss of control and helplessness (Rosenblat 2016).

Our research focuses on the mechanisms which drivers use to negotiate human agency versus algorithmic management agency and regain back part of the control. Specifically, we focus on the role technology plays in regaining human agency, in part, by trying to "game" the system in various ways.

The data for this research have been collected through interviewing drivers in both London and NYC in the period of November 2016-January 2017. We have complemented this data with a data collection process from the uberpeople.net internet forum in which Uber drivers converse to share opinions, thoughts, and feelings.

Our results show that drivers are utilizing online forums to "Sensemake" the algorithms at hand and to socially support each other in an otherwise colleague-less work. In many cases, this leads to feelings of anger and anguish and results in a wide array of methods drivers attempt to regain the control and exercise their agency over the algorithms. Among those are the strategic activation of more than one car service at a time, strategic switching behavior between competing services (such as Juno, Lyft or Gett in New York), cancellation of passengers via the system, self-enforced deactivation of the GPS system and the service system itself.

We also identify gaming behavior of drivers. We find that Uber drivers develop mechanisms to trick the system, for instance by cancelling rides in the system to avoid negative ratings by angry customers since negative ratings lead to automated sanctions by the algorithms. Our work adds to the research on 'gaming' found in other tech-related contexts, for example gaming behavior in the context of review fraud on the Yelp platform (Luca and Zervas, 2015). Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature on workplace automation due to data-driven decision making, automation and algorithmic management (Constantiou Kallinikos 2015, Brynjolfsson and McElheran 2016, Tambe 2014).

Overall, in an era in which Uber is testing automated cars that may replace drivers in the future, our study seeks to remind us that in the face of automation, drivers will find creative ways to negotiate human agency through the very same technology that holds power over their labor.

Note: This research has already received the attention of mass media. See here: https://www.pbs.org/newshour/economy/uber-drivers-game-app-force-surge-pricing


References


Biological Kairos: on the Life and Times of the Semi-Living Being

Oron Catts and Ionat Zurr, who are artists and researchers working with tissue culture, invented the term Semi-Living being which refers to fragments or parts of organisms taken out of their original context and grown, mixed, and kept alive with the support of artificial conditions and biotechnologies. In this sense the Semi-Living being lacks a cultural context to be inserted in: as Catts and Zurr point out, "Semi-Livings are lab-grown and lab-modified entities which sit uncomfortably within new biological and cultural taxonomies. They problematize notions of body, agency, species, gender, race, class, or life itself. However, as they literally are potentially dying, they require our attention: physical, technological, and conceptual" (Catts, Zurr 2016). Lab grown Semi-Living beings, potentially living and dying at the same time, can be treated as "bare life" in Agamben's terms. In this sense Semi-Living beings are the object of manipulation and control, which can prolong or terminate their aliveness. Their potential death but also their potential or future life belongs to a specific modality of time – the messianic kairos.

In The Time That Remains (2005) Agamben refers to different modalities of time – secular chronological time, eschatological time, and messianic time. The messianic kairos is time in-between, which undergoes an entirely transformative contraction. This notion of time can be useful to describe the moment of experiment taking place in bioart. It is time in-between, a time full of possibilities for entities which are potentially alive (being supported by biotechnological means) and potentially decaying and dying. Also it is an operational time, a small moment of time given to understand the image of life, to comprehend life in its full potentiality. In this respect the time of a bio-art experiment is the moment of kairos, the contracted time, where the moment of death contains a promise of a different future. I will argue that this implies a future where bio-performative powers of bare life can resist or oppose biopolitical power and control.