Being Human Now

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Fictions and Representations

By
Raili Marling, Sara Bédard-Goulet
and Tanel Lepsoo

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INTRODUCTION

HUMAN AND SOCIETY AFTER THE HUMAN

RAILI MARLING
AND SARA BÉDARD-GOULET

"De nos jours, on ne peut plus penser que dans le vide l'Homme disparu. Car ce vide ne creuse pas un manque; il ne prescrit pas une lacune à combler. Il n'est rien de plus, rien de moins, que le dépli d'un espace où il est enfin à nouveau possible de penser." (Foucault 1966, 353)

Why write about being human today?

There are several reasons why scholars in the humanities feel the need to explore the question of how we should be human today. Humanities, initially called *studia humanitatis* or the study of humanity, are rooted in Renaissance humanism, which sought to shift focus from the spiritual realm to the human. The centrality of the human, however, can no longer be taken for granted in the 21st century.

Never before has there been greater uncertainty about what we mean when we speak about the "human." The foundations of our discipline have been shaken by different social and natural transformations. The language used in public discourse is often apocalyptic: we see talk of the sixth extinction, of technological singularity, of disruption. The humanist notion of the human being as the rational agent at the center and in control of the universe seems naïve at best. We now read those lines from *Hamlet*—"What a piece of work is man, How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty," (Act II, Scene 2)—with irony. The elevated position of the human was challenged by poststructuralist thinkers in the 1960s and 1970s, for its hubris and its blindness. Today we need to go even further. The human has to be rethought, by recognizing intersectional axes of identity and exclusion, and its position in relation to other animals and entities. We live in a world in which posthumanism has presented "a direct challenge, not to the former

human, but what it means corporeally and discursively to be, or more correctly to count as, human" (McCormack 2009, 112).

Let us touch upon some of the developments in the humanities that have impacted thinking about what counts as human. There is a growing awareness of ecological crisis, the depth of which is recognized in the use of the notion of Anthropocene, which sees humans as the dominant force impacting the Earth on a geological level (Fressoz and Bonneuil 2013). It is now an accepted fact that humans affect the Earth system, changing our sense of time (Chakrabarty 2009) and space (Whatmore 2002). This pervasive sense of environmental crises, which "precipitate a sense of the present that disconnects the future from the past by putting such a future beyond the grasp of historical sensibility" (Chakrabarty 2009, 197), has led to different responses. On the one hand, a strong belief in technological solutions (Fressoz 2012) and geoengineering (Hamilton 2014) prolongs the Modern idea of progress as an attempt to "fix" Nature. On the other hand, technocriticism (Jarrige 2016) and eco-initiatives endeavor to find a less damaging relationship with the natural environment, such as degrowth (D'Alisa, Demaria and Kallis 2015) and ecofeminism (Grusin 2017; Haraway 2016; Plumwood 1993). The ecological crisis is announcing an imminent collapse. Some thinkers (Servigne, Stevens and Chapelle 2018) argue that the collapse has already happened. This can be seen in the sixth mass extinction of species (Kolbert 2015). Thus, the current environmental crisis raises questions: How do we decenter the human and locate it in relation to other animals and entities? Is it too late? Is thinking about the human yet another anthropocentric illusion? Should we instead prepare for our end?

Another set of questions emerges from the increasing penetration of technology into our lives. While posthumanist thinkers have been probing the role of humans in relation to other beings, transhumanists have developed theories of human-machine convergence. These imaginaries stretch from maximum enhancement of the human body and mind, with the help of prostheses and supplements, to the fantasies of transcending the human body by uploading the human mind to the web. In the era of wearable technologies and increasingly complex transplants, the idea of the cyborg, launched by science fiction writers and thinkers like Donna Haraway, no longer seems farfetched. N. Katherine Hayles (1999, xii) claims that today "[y]ou are the cyborg, the cyborg is you." We speak about the extended mind (Clark and Chalmers 1998), as our smartphones become indispensable devices for communication, self-creation, commercial transactions, and even citizenship (e.g. COVID-19 passports). This human-machine or human-data convergence has made it harder to say what is "natural" or

"human," and this has created considerable technological anxiety and doomsday scenarios (e.g. warnings about AI and singularity).

These developments have been exacerbated by the acceleration of globalization since the 1990s. Countries and economies across the world have become interdependent on many levels. Raw materials, products and services, as well as garbage and toxic waste, are shipped across the world for assembly, sale or disposal. Globalization has largely happened under the aegis of neoliberal thought that preaches competitiveness, laissez-faire policies and thin state (Stiglitz 2002). The availability of cheaper labor in the Global South, alongside with increasing automatization, has transformed the labor markets in the developed West. There is an increasing gap between skilled and unskilled labor. This has gone in parallel with the debate on what constitutes a good human life and who has the right to it. Globalization has been accompanied not just by the seamless flow of goods, but also of human beings who seek better economic opportunities or escape the effects of climate change or political destabilization. These issues have made "biopolitics" central to both neoliberalism and globalization (Lemm and Vatter 2014). It is worth noting that Michel Foucault's lectures on biopolitics from 1978–1979 also directly address neoliberalism and its technologies of the self (Foucault 2010). Neoliberalism, in this analysis, is not just an economic ideology, but a rationality that molds human subjects into anxious entrepreneurial individualists.

All of these transformations have led to a sense of social and political crisis, with too many changes happening too fast. The sense of crisis has been exacerbated by what has come to be called information disorder (other terms include misinformation, fake news, alternative facts) (Wardle and Derakhshan 2017). The power of global technology companies has ignited the parallel discussion of surveillance capitalism (Zuboff 2018). The Internet and social media have erased the shared perception of reality and eroded the boundary of the public and the private, of factual and fake. People live in filter bubbles, surrounded by information that fits their worldview and consumer choices. This has abolished the traditional sense of a public sphere and public discussion. These are replaced by affective publics (Papacharissi 2015). The gravity of this information disorder has been demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which effective disease response has been hampered by the fracturing of the public and loss of trust in expertise.

This complex set of questions has been the matter of academic debate in different disciplines. The focus of the discussion has been in STEM and social sciences, as the challenges seem to pertain first and foremost to science and technology studies, life sciences, biomedicine and political

science. However, all of the transformations center on human beings, who live in different cultures and value communities. Human beings are making sense of the crises, explaining them or ignoring them. They are creating meaning, in the form of novels, poems, performances or paintings. The humanities can make an important contribution to the discussion of the ongoing transformation of humanity, exploring different philosophical theories and analyzing different cultural representations. Creative meaning-making gives us unique access to human minds, we believe.

Academic discussions have often remained insular, despite globalization; books and articles published in languages other than English enter the discussion with a lag. While English-language theorization and analyses are widely available, they need to be enriched by other intellectual traditions. In the present volume we seek to combine the work of English- and French-language thinkers to create a more comprehensive matrix for diagnosing the present. We will begin with a synthesis of different theoretical approaches to being "human" now. Our aim is to engage with the theories that are topical, especially the ontological theories of posthumanism and new materialism. However, we also want to avoid erasing the root systems of these theories, which go back to the concerns of poststructuralist theorists. In fact, many poststructuralist thinkers—Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Gilles Deleuze—engage with matter and the non-human in a more complex manner than critics assume. Indeed, our aim is to show that we can strengthen posthumanist and new materialist thinking by combining it with poststructuralist theories of power and subjectivity. The language of "turns" in theory prevents us from seeing connections and alliances that could help us develop new approaches.

Anthropocene and posthumanisms

Among theories in the humanities, posthumanism most systematically reflects on what it means to be human at a time when humans have perhaps become redundant. Critical approaches to the Anthropocene, sometimes called the Capitalocene (Moore 2016), Plantationocene (Haraway *et al.* 2016) or Chtulucene (Haraway 2016), also offer a perspective on human activity and its deleterious effects on the planet. These terms have different emphases: while Anthropocene stresses the human impact on a geological level, Capitalocene draws attention to the fact that environmental destruction is rooted in capitalist accumulation. Haraway's Chtulucene seeks to move human hubris from the centre of discussion, replacing it with a compound of two Greek words "that together name a kind of timeplace for learning to stay with the trouble of living and dying in response-ability on a damaged

earth" (Haraway 2016, 2). Although posthumanists are critical of humanism and are sometimes described as antihumanists, they ask questions about what being human now means by highlighting the political structure underlying the environmental crisis.

The first problem to tackle is that of humanism: a normative universalism based on a Eurocentric white able sedentary masculine human perspective with a same-other dialectical view. The techno-optimism of transhumanists leaves the human in the center of their thought and does not provide an appropriate framework to rethink humans in a world after the human. In contrast, posthumanist thinkers like Rosi Braidotti and Donna Haraway have developed a post-anthropocentric critique that views subjectivity as intertwined in an intricate and opened mesh of relations. Generally speaking, posthumanism considers the human being as a social and historical construct rather than as an essence, which allows us to dismantle and rebuild it. Braidotti (2013, 16), specifically, shows that humanism operated with a "restricted notion of what counts as the human" and that it is this limited definition that opens up the possibility of critique and reconstruction. For her, the point is not in mere deconstruction but in the creation of alternatives. Her vision of the subject is "relational," "embodied and embedded," "constituted in and by multiplicity, that is to say a subject that works across differences and is also internally differentiated, but still grounded and accountable" (Braidotti 2013, 49). Haraway's project is rooted in a similar call for a new and ethical cohabitation with other species, a world "in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints" (Haraway 1991, 154). She invites us to make kin, not to create biogenetic families, in order to unlearn and to find new patterns of care and response-ability (Haraway 2016, 105). Haraway goes further in her posthumanism than Braidotti, challenging the human-animal divide and the centrality of the human.

Here it is useful to pause for a moment. The human-animal boundary is also probed, from a different perspective, by Jacques Derrida (2008, 2009, 2011) in what is sometimes called his "animal turn" (Goldman 2018, 161). In fact, for Claire Colebrook (2014) the difference between humans and non-humans is one of the central pillars of Derrida's work. The very title of his book *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (2008) challenges Cartesian thought. Derrida traces the use of the animal to construct the human; thus his thinking has an important, not always acknowledged position in the posthumanist canon (cf Herbrechter 2020). Haraway (2007, 20) does not buy Derrida's curiousness about the animal, but we can imagine a dialogue

between these two thinkers. This volume seeks to create these kinds of bridges between theoretical canons that do not always, regrettably, meet.

The relational more-than-human subjectivity envisaged by posthumanism is often compared to new materialisms, with their grounding in matter and in material practice. While in the 20th century materialisms tended to focus on economic relations, today's materialist thinkers have delved into matter itself and our bodily existence in the world of "stuff." This existence is often described in exuberant terms: "We are ourselves composed of matter. We experience its restlessness and intransigence even as we reconfigure and consume it" (Coole and Frost 2010, 1). What is at times hyperbolically called the "material turn" is often, in simplified approaches, contrasted to the linguistic turn and poststructuralist theory. However, the current new materialism is actually heavily in debt to poststructuralist thinkers like Foucault and Deleuze (cf Lemke 2021; Schleusner 2021). Karen Barad reads Foucault critically and creatively (Barad 2007); others, like Jane Bennett, are drawn to Deleuze's vitalism (while ignoring the Marxist underpinnings of his thought). In this volume we want to bring these strands together, instead of creating rhetorical contrasts. After all, new materialism rejects "oppositional ways of thinking" (Coole and Frost 2010, 8). Thus it is more precise to talk not so much of a new turn, but of a reorientation towards a "post- rather than anti-Cartesian" thinking (Coole and Frost 2010, 8). This has meant increased attention to the entanglement of the human and nonhuman and the matter that bonds them. Opposing itself to the uniform, passive, inert matter described by Descartes, this understanding conceives matter as exhibiting agency. Humans are an integral part of the process of materialization, for they are, just as objects, constantly forming and reforming, their "subjectivities being constituted as an open series of capacities or potencies that emerge ambiguously in a multitude of organic and social processes" (Coole and Frost 2010, 10).

Different authors bring different emphases to the discussion. Jane Bennett (2001, 2) has called her own project "enchanted materialism," experienced through being "struck and shaken by the extraordinary that lives amid the everyday." She has shown the liveliness and agency of seemingly inanimate things, from the electricity grid to trash, that are woven into different assemblages. Bennett (2010, 20, 101) calls our attention to "thing-power" that exists beyond human meanings, advocating for distributive agency and action as "trans-action." She is also interested in how literature can capture this vibrancy. Her latest book, for example, is dedicated to the poetry of Walt Whitman as a means of showing how the human self interacts with materialities around it (Bennett 2020). The book is not just an attempt to develop a non-anthropocentric model of the self,

but also a search for styles that can capture the world of entanglements we live in. This encourages us in our use of fiction to analyze humanity's complex interactions with the surrounding world.

Karen Barad also takes a closer look at agency. Building on Niels Bohr's findings in quantum physics, Barad calls into question the belief that the world is composed of discrete units with determinate properties and boundaries. In her agential realism, phenomena are the elementary ontological units. The "observing subject" and "observed object" are distinguished in each phenomenon, resolving only temporarily their inherent ontological indeterminacy. Distinct agencies do not precede but emerge through the intra-actions that "*signif[y] the mutual constitution of entangled agencies*" (Barad 2007, 33, original emphasis). In that context, humans themselves are no longer rational, free, self-moving agents but partake in the ongoing performativity of the world and the practices of differentiation. As significant elements of phenomena, "apparatuses are specific material reconfigurings of the world that do not merely emerge in time but iteratively reconfigure spacetimematter as part of the ongoing process of becoming" (Barad 2007, 142). In a scientific context, they secure objective knowledge and meanings of embodied concepts; they are the conditions that determine the boundaries and properties of objects. As they enact differences that matter—they literally are the condition of possibility of human and nonhuman materiality—apparatuses point out the ontological inseparability of intra-acting agencies.

Agency is the focus of Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory, where network is a notion "more flexible than the notion of system, more historical than the one of structure, more empirical than the one of complexity" (Latour 1990, 10). In this light, hybrid objects of study are considered as real, discursive and social, and the distinction between passive nonhuman and human with a soul is replaced by the exchange of forms of action through transactions between multiple and diverse agencies (Latour 2015, 80). This focus on the multiplicity of nonhumans and humans, and the mystery of their associations contributes to abandoning the traditional opposition of Nature as the source of the "real" and culture as the impressions that humans have of natural things. In *Politics of Nature*, among other publications on this topic, Latour resolves the Modern alternative between a realist and a constructivist perspective by using the term "representation" in a political sense, where nonhumans and humans compose a collective in an ongoing process that is described notably by the sciences (Latour 2004, 57–60). Representation thus takes a "positive" turn and designates the collective's dynamic that re-presents the questions raised in a common world and continuously tests the reliability of this presentation

(Latour 2004, 360). Latour has experimented with this idea by calling for a "parliament of things," where nonhumans, like rivers and forests, are represented by scientists or other people knowledgeable about them, such as native peoples, alongside human representatives. Focusing on networks also subverts the subject-object opposition. Instead of acting in an independent way within an objective framework, being a subject means sharing agency with other subjects who have also lost their autonomy (Latour 2015, 84). For Latour, this confrontation with other quasi-subjects (a term that he borrows from Michel Serres) should result in humans abandoning their attempt at mastering nature and their fear of being trapped by nature. Although Latour himself does not engage with literary analysis, his concepts have been used experimentally in the ecocritical work of various scholars focusing on French-language corpora (e.g. Posthumus 2017a; McConnell 2020). We are also seeing increasing interest in applying his thinking to literary analysis in the English-speaking world (e.g. in Felski 2020).

When it comes to nonhuman agency, Michel Serres calls for a reconsideration of the "natural contract" based on the idea that the law is intended to counteract injustice and abuse, and that Modern natural law has put humans only in the position of subject and thus abuser (Serres 1992). He builds on his previous work about parasites (Serres 2014), who take without giving, to argue that objects should be considered as subjects as well, to avoid the human parasitism on the natural environment (Serres 1992, 66). Therefore a natural contract based on symbiosis and reciprocity should replace the Modern contract, which implies mastery and possession, since the latter denies the host's (nature's) rights and condemns both the host and the parasite (humans) to death. This new contract establishes new bonds and obligations, and places the human in the web of the natural world perceived as a whole rather than as a separate realm divided into smaller parts, available for consumption.

Poststructuralist theories

The stark opposition between poststructuralism and posthumanism is exaggerated (the late work of Derrida is very perceptive about animals and can be categorized as a posthumanist, as noted above). As the poststructuralists deconstructed the human subject, it is the right time, in the light of posthumanist thinking, to look at their definition of the subject. In addition, their interest in epistemology is as relevant as ever, to help us answer the topical questions of what the human can know and represent.

Michel Foucault is often cited as a key figure in the poststructuralist challenge to the Cartesian subject. Although he does not develop a systematic theory of the subject, he returns to the topic at the beginning and at the end of his career. Instead of an agent in charge of one's fate, Foucault postulates a subject who is shaped by the surrounding society. In Catherine Belsey's (2002, 53) wording, "societies recruit us as subjects, subject us to their values, and incite us to be accountable, responsible citizens, eager, indeed, to give account of ourselves in terms we have learned from the signifying practices of those societies themselves." In other words, the subject is always embedded in and shaped by the surrounding discourses. In many of his works, Foucault stresses subjection, the making of the subject that is also an act of subjugation. As he puts it in Volume II of *The History of Sexuality*, his aim was to "look for the forms and modalities of the relation to self by which the individual constitutes and recognizes himself *qua* subject" (Foucault 1992, 6). This is why Foucault writes so extensively about discourse and the development of what he calls the human sciences as forces that subject the human. Because Foucault does not focus on the living human body but the discourses that shape it, some conclude that he ignores the body. It would be more accurate to say that he does not focus on the body, but this does not mean that embodiment does not matter in Foucault's work or that Foucault's work could not be used to analyze embodiment. Decades of feminist theorizing have shown that this can be done (see e.g., Oksala 2004).

Karen Barad (2003) criticizes Foucault's view of the subject for putting too much emphasis on the social and on the human, without giving sufficient attention to the nonhuman. However, recent work (Lemke 2021) shows that Foucault, in his 1977–1978 lectures, pays explicit attention to the government of things. His earlier work, too, has been attentive to the role of the milieu, a notion that can be reconciled to Actor-Network Theory or new materialist analysis.

Foucault's conclusion that we can never escape discourse does not mean that Foucault denies individual agency. The subjection that he describes, as Judith Butler (1997) argues, is never complete, but requires repeated production, which opens the possibility of resistance or subversion. Subjects constitute themselves through different practices and technologies of the self (for an overview of Foucault's intellectual development on the subject, see Kelly 2013). It is useful to read Foucault's early work in parallel with his late-life lectures, in which he returns to the ethics of conduct. As we live in disciplinary societies, where the state and corporations take great interest in our conduct, we need to explore the modes of responding to this "conduct of conduct" (Foucault 2014, 12) through different practices of the self

(Foucault 2011). For example, parrhesia or speaking truth to power shapes one's subjectivity but also allows for a conceptualization of the care for others (cf Caraus 2021).

The tension between social determination and agency, of the self and the other, can also be seen in Foucault's theorization of biopolitics. Foucault is interested in how power shifts from being repressive to something that seeks to administer and optimize life, through different forms of measurement and control (from censuses to different mortality, health and birth statistics). The aim is to order life, to make human bodies more efficient and thus also better integrated into the productive cycles of economy. Yet biopolitics also has a subjective aspect, related to the care of the self, which can potentially lead to the transformation of the world through the power of one's life (cf Foucault 2011). This relatively little analyzed aspect of biopolitics creates an opening for relationality and vulnerability, ideas that are developed further by Judith Butler (2015, 211) who suggests that vulnerability is an "aspect of the political modality of the body" because we are always and inevitably open to others by the very nature of our bodies and their capacities. This sense of self-dispossession, as she calls it, creates a broader sense of intersubjectivity. This, again, opens up a potential for a dialogue with posthumanist and new materialist thinkers, who are also interested in the porousness of the subject. The thinking of Foucault and Butler allows us to harness this sense of subjecthood more firmly for social critique and social action.

Thus, we can, on a closer look, see affinities between poststructuralism and posthumanism, new materialism, affect theory and other recent theoretical schools, especially when it comes to understanding the leakiness of the human subject in a social and material world.

Today's theoretical insights

When considering the contributions of posthumanism and poststructuralism to our understanding of today's world and to being human in that world, we must attend to context as well as gender, race, class, and other intersectional aspects of identity. The ontological turn that permeates the work of many thinkers in this book needs to remain attentive to the social and epistemological. Several recent theoretical insights remind us of the importance of historical and geographical circumstances in even ontological discussions. Brought together, these two positions allow us to question the humanist notion of agency as a property of a (human) individual and to bring attention to nonhuman agency, reconfiguring the understanding of the human as the only agentic being. When interrogating the concept of the

human, theories attentive to individuals and communities affected by the Modern process of othering provide relevant insights.

Needless to say, this type of thinking is not new. Feminist thinkers have argued for embodied and relational approaches to identity starting from the 1970s. Since most theories of subjectivity have been based on white, male, wealthy, able-bodied heterosexual men from the developed West, feminist theories were instrumental in undermining the idea of the possibility of a unitary subject and in developing more dynamic theories of the self, especially the relational self, dependent on others. One need but name the work of Simone the Beauvoir on the self-other relationship at the core of subject-making, Luce Irigaray's thinking on intersubjectivity or Elizabeth Grosz' analyses of corporeality.

Queer theory has further undermined the idea of stable subjectivity. Judith Butler (1990) famously argued that gender is but compelled performativity of the norms of our society. While her emphasis initially was on the compulsory repetitiveness of the performance, this thinking also unleashed the possibility of failed and subversive performances. She hopes for a politics in which people would not be "ready-made subjects" and she envisions that "cultural configurations of sex and gender might then proliferate or, rather, their present proliferation might become articulable within the discourses that establish intelligible cultural life, confounding the very binarism of sex, and exposing its fundamental unnaturalness" (Butler 1990, 203). Butler's work inspired further thinking on gender as a set of diverse and fluid practices that do not fit the binary discursive construction of gender. Recent decades have seen important work on queer utopias and affirmative community building (e.g. by José Esteban Muñoz). Yet, theorists of queer negativity, such as Jack Halberstam and Lee Edelman, strive to theorize bad feelings and radical passivity as a counterforce to neoliberal discourses of success and homonormativity (Halberstam 2011, Ruti 2017). This apparatus continues to be productive in reading against the grain of neoliberal success narratives in this volume and also in challenging the more optimistic modes of other schools, like critical animal studies (e.g. in Halberstam 2020). This type of friction continues to be generative, even within the broader vogue of affirmative theorizing, helping us find our blind spots and hidden normativities.

Although queer theory is often associated with discursive thinking borrowed from Michel Foucault, there has also been a tradition rooted in ontology. It should come as no surprise that many of the thinkers situated within the ontological and material turn have engaged with issues of gender, most famously Donna Haraway and Rosi Braidotti. We see a similar dynamic in affect theories. On the one hand, their emphasis is on ontology

and vitalism, the empowerment of the embodied and the precognitive, energized by re-reading (although selectively) the work of Gilles Deleuze and Silvan Tomkins, to mention two core figures. On the other hand, an equally important strand of theorizing has sought to reconcile critical theory and affect studies, especially in the contexts of gender. The work of Lauren Berlant, Sara Ahmed and Sianne Ngai is perhaps the best known, but an increasing number of scholars point out that we do not have to choose between affect and critique. Ashley Barnwell (2020) reaches out to a broader network of scholars, like Bruno Latour. Theories, in other words, are moving out of the rhetorical mode of polemic and toward seeing connections, as this book does. Such connections are not, again, new. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, one of the pioneers of poststructuralist queer theory, in her late work, turned to affect and other reparative modes of thinking (Sedgwick 2003).

Feminist angles have been prominent in ecocriticism (e.g. the work of Val Plumwood) and the queer ecology approach in literary and film studies offers insights on environmental issues through a queer understanding of nature (Mortimer-Sandilands and Erickson. 2020; Seymour 2013). Although ecocriticism is concerned with the global environment and the whole of the planet, it is also very attuned to the local and cultural differences when it comes to nature and its representation. Increasing attention has been paid to the culturally specific ways in which "the relationship of the human and the non-human" has been imagined (Garrard 2012, 5). The contemporary French nature-culture context is thoroughly discussed by Stephanie Posthumus, who draws attention to "cultural specificities while also recognizing the need for cross-cultural dialogue." (Posthumus 2017a, 5) While pointing out the traditions that affect French understanding of nature (humanism, Catholicism, republicanism, colonialism, etc.), she warns against the pitfalls of reducing cultural differences to a list of stereotypes, advocating for a critical and comparative examination of discourses and their power dynamics. Regarding the complementarity of global and local approaches when it comes to ecocriticism, the notion of ecocosmopolitanism, defined by Ursula Heise as "an attempt to envision individuals and groups as part planetary 'imagined communities' of both human and nonhuman kinds" (Heise 2008, 61), evaluates the production of ties between the natural world and humans and how they affect human identity. In that respect, the biotropes examined by Christine Marran (2017), which underline the cultural appropriation of the natural world to build various forms of cultural identities throughout history, insist on the contextual relationship between human and nonhuman, while warning against the naturalization of ecological imaginaries that impede ecocritical

thinking. By questioning the place of humans in their environment, ecocritical approaches redefine our understanding of dwelling, which can be based, for instance, on landscape, as "a set of practices that evolve with respect to new socio-historical and material conditions" (Posthumus 2017b, 267). Or they can borrow from the biosemiotic concept of *Umwelt*, which considers how each organism evolves in an individual world formed according to its physiological capacities (von Uexküll 2010). Focusing on the materiality at work in the human-nonhuman relationship, material ecocriticism sheds light on how matter "is a constant process of shared becoming that tells us something about the 'world we inhabit'" (Iovino and Oppermann 2014, 1). Reading the network of agencies at work in material phenomena as narratives, this branch of ecocriticism aims to open an interpretive scope for the activities and properties of this "storied matter" by considering the connections between discourse and matter and paying specific attention to bodies. Not surprisingly, this scholarship finds many connections with feminism. For example, the work of Stacy Alaimo (2008) on transcorporeal feminism probes the contact zone between human bodies and the surrounding environment, and reads it through a feminist lens.

Among eco-centered criticism, critical animal and plant studies create more visibility for other living organisms and encourage us to shift our anthropocentric view of the world. Drawing on different fields in the humanities, animal studies interrogate human-animal relationships and the way that they signify in history, society and thought. While in the Western world, the "animal question" was first raised as a question of ethics in England, it was addressed only later in France, where the main concern was breeding, although a long philosophical tradition discussed the animal as a sentient being and interrogated the continuity between humans and animals (Mackenzie and Posthumus 2015). By paying attention to historical and geographical contexts such as these, animal studies offer a culturally informed conception of animals and describe the place that they have in societies, where they sometimes are considered in their own lived experience, which can be traced in biographies (Burgat 2012). Focusing on the differences and similarities between human and animal underlines the construction of the human and allows one to reconsider the othering of animals, as well as the rejection of the human's own animality. The categorization of the animal inevitably raises ethical issues, which can help to dismantle a normative conception of the human that threatens people who diverge, as well as other species, inevitably considered inferior.

The recent interest in plants within the humanities has furthered interest in the more-than-human and the shared becoming of humans and living organisms. In his account of human-plants studies, John C. Ryan builds on

Val Plumwood's *Environmental Culture* (2002) and its proposal for "a new model for thinking about and studying the non-human world, one which would regard nature as an *agent in*—rather than an *object for*—the production of knowledge and socioecological practices." (Ryan 2012, 103) Philosophers such as Michael Marder underline how plants are often defined in contrast with humans and/or animals, and therefore found to be lacking something (mobility, emotions, etc.), on top of being considered from a utilitarian or symbolic perspective that rarely pays attention to plants as individuals or agents. Even more than animals, plants are inseparable from their environments: their ontological indeterminacy (or what appears so) pairs with a strong interdependence on the surroundings—to which they contribute equally (Coccia 2017), which emphasizes their vulnerability but also their plural modes of subjectivity. Revisiting Western metaphysics, Marder (2013) reminds us that Aristotle conceived three types of life forces (*psyche*): 1) a vegetative life force concerned with growth, nutrition, reproduction and decay, 2) a sensitive life force that engages perception, sensation and locomotion, 3) a rational soul that implies thought and intellect. While those forces and their activities are cumulative, humans being the only ones gifted with all three forces, there is a tendency to focus on the "noblest" force and to forget that they share the first "passive" life force with plants. Reflecting on this, with the help of Foucault's biopolitics (1976), Catriona Sandilands highlights that these "shared biological capacities for living and dying […] can be harnessed directly by forces of power primarily oriented to *bodies* rather than, says, consciences" (Sandilands 2017, 20). Considering the exploitation of plant bodies by humans, Sandilands coins the term *vegetariat*, which insists on the biological likeness between humans and plants (and animals) and their similar abuse in neoliberalism, and questions the vegetal abject otherness that substantiates a conception of plant life as expandable. Contemporary representations contribute to questioning the view of a "passive flora" by queering the nature of identity, deconstructing the fear of being consumed by the other, troubling the assumed separation of humans and plants, insisting on plant agency and shared characteristics with humans and animals. Those representations and their study thus offer valuable insight when it comes to question being human today.

Representations

The question that animates these theories is the broader issue of how to continue to live on the damaged planet, in societies based on profound inequalities, split into different echo chambers. Medical and technological

advances have made many grandmothers cyborgs, owing to their pacemakers, and our minds have been extended to our smartphones, making us comfortable with the blurring of the human-machine boundary. We blend with the non-human animals through artificial hormones or animal organ transplants. It is no longer scientists who tell us about microplastics in our drinking water and fire retardants in breast milk, but daily newsfeeds. Human skin no longer seems air- and water-tight but is being increasingly perceived to be a porous membrane that does not separate us from our surroundings, but rather connects us to them, opening us up to exchange.

In this context, we need to ask what it means to be human. Old utopias seem charming in their techno-utopianism, dystopias equally charming in their failure to imagine the worst. We need new texts that can imagine the impossible that has become not just possible, but ordinary. The world may have ended and we may not even be noticing. This is why, in this volume, we look at not science fiction, utopia and dystopia but at literary fiction and theater. These modes of representation use the tools of language and other modes experimentally, against commercial expectations and thus dare to make us uncomfortable. Thus, we also need to think, on a more abstract level, about the question of representation, a term that has appeared in at least two meanings in the previous pages as well: as political representation and as textual/discursive re-creation of reality.

Understanding how to be human today is not only a theoretical issue but also a political one, as testified by the concrete actions called for by environmental and social crises. In "How to Become Human?" Terike Haapoja argues that art and art-making can contribute to the process of becoming human and challenge the detrimental ways of thinking within a capitalist logic. Referring to Chantal Mouffe (2007, 2013), she contends that "art can also participate in counter-hegemonic struggle from inside institutions" by "disrupting and exposing the mechanisms of capitalism." (Haapoja 2020, 14–15) She relies on Jacques Rancière's (2004) "distribution of the sensible" to claim that art can redistribute the categories and forms used to make sense of the world by revealing the implicit rules that structure what can emerge in the cultural consciousness, what voices can be heard, and what roles are accessible. Mouffe and Rancière consider art's political potential aesthetically, from the perspective of artistic *practice*, while Haapoja discusses the political potential of artistic *being*: "making art requires being emotionally and mentally open to the world" and consequently, "the other no longer appears as an image, as something easily compartmentalized but as multi-dimensional and indefinable" (Haapoja 2020, 16). The artistic "intimate, non-predetermined and vulnerable" (Haapoja

2020, 16) relationship with the world would transform the way we perceive it and participate in the advent of another way of being human.

This attentive relationship to the world echoes Baptiste Morizot's concern about the crisis in our relationship to the living, which is at the root of the ecological crisis (Morizot 2020a, 16). Morizot exposes the crisis of our sensitivity to the living, "an impoverishment of what we can feel, perceive, understand and weave as relationships towards the living." (Morizot 2020a, 17) This crisis of our sensitivity is made visible in our poor knowledge of the "culture of the living" (Morizot 2020b) and requires, for Estelle Zhong Mengual, a transformation of our ability to perceive through practices, since "our eye is relational" (Zhong Mengual 2021, 14). Zhong Mengual argues that, thanks to the artist's attention and ability to see the world outside of the common conceptions of a given period, certain artworks can underline the gap between normative and individual practices and, in the case of the living, reveal each organism as an agent with a point of view. For Zhong Mengual, the renewed attention to living beings that shifts their position from a décor for humans to cohabitants goes together with a different type of enunciation, one based on human experience, which entails using the first pronoun, to share memories, situations, encounters, etc. and to truly identify as a living being among the living. Knowing the living becomes an ethical practice that takes place through the body, whose schema is transformed by this practice (Zhong Mengual 2021, 124), since it "activates in one self the powers of a different body" (Viveiros de Castro 2012, 132). Artworks would then rely on the specificities of their media and the resources of representation, like enunciation, to propose another way of looking at and considering the natural world, based on an interacting bodily materiality. By questioning normative categories of knowledge and potentially proposing a more intimate knowledge of the others, representations multiply points of view of matters and matter.

The transformative potential of representations goes hand in hand with a questioning of representation itself, which would otherwise confine itself to a form of belief that naturalizes the connection between the world and its mimesis, which becomes a transparent rendering of the world. A representationalist understanding of representation stages the world as a container of inert matter onto which human meaning is applied. Instead, representations can challenge representationalism and its asymmetrical conception of a definite pre-existing "mononature" being converted through "multicultures" belonging to a separate ontological realm (Latour 2004). Representations can reveal the deception of a unique environment opposed to its multiple human understandings by pointing out how the inherent and ongoing composition of a common world, which is precisely dependant on

practices of representing. As such, representations can underline a performative knowledge of the world that involves "a direct material engagement with the world" (Barad 2007, 49) and take into account "the practices through which representations are produced" (Barad 2007, 53), which are "about *intra-acting* from within, and as a part of, the phenomena produced" (Barad 2007, 56, original emphasis). Practices of knowing that lead to representations can involve apparatuses, such as scientific ones, that "are productive of (and part of) phenomena" (Barad 2007, 142) and help determine differences, properties and meanings of a given phenomenon. For Barad, by producing subjects and objects of knowledge in given sociohistorical material conditions, discursive practices become similar to apparatuses, whose material arrangements give meaning to some elements and exclude others, thus differentiating and drawing boundaries. Representations themselves can be considered as apparatuses: they act as "a *matrix of potential interactions*" (Ortel 2008a, 6, original emphasis) for readers/viewers and produce differences, and thus meaning, "once actualized by usage, that is embodied in particular situations" (Ortel 2008b, 35). In French, the term "apparatus" (*dispositif*) suggests, with its prefix *"dis*", the separation that the apparatus involves: as apparatuses, representations engage a material separation that distinguishes objects from others, a pragmatic separation that supposes a distance between agents, and a symbolic separation that defines values by opposition (Ortel 2008b, 40–41). In representations, just like in other types of apparatuses, matter, materiality, the real that is often repressed, excluded or forgotten by structures and norms reminds its presence, along with the necessity to engage with it.

Literature and theatre represent the contradictory demands on humans today and the modes in which we respond to disasters as well as to our diminished lives. Theatre, especially, requires that the authors respond to the socio-political world and its problems while also engaging with the dominance of the visual spectacle that characterizes the contemporary. Theories of reading are also increasingly moving towards reparative modes that are willing to listen. Toril Moi reminds us to ask ourselves, "What good does it do to know that something we love is contingent, or socially constructed? Is that really all we can say about the objects of our affection and admiration?" (Moi 2011, 32). Yet we believe that this attentive mode of reading benefits from some critical attention. Hence we are trying to read with care and, to echo Rita Felski (2020, 42), in attunement and "feeling-with", while being at the same time informed by the critical thought of past fifty years. This, we believe, will help us capture the complexity of being alive and being human in today's complex world.

Structure of the book

The book's six chapters engage with different facets of being human now in contemporary American and French fiction, and French theater, illuminated by the above theoretical reflection.

In her chapter "Human without Society: American Neoliberal Promises and Failures" Raili Marling discusses neolibealism's effect on subjectivity. Neoliberal rationality has invaded most spheres of public and increasingly private life (Brown 2015). We are invited to become entrepreneurs of our selves (Foucault 2008, 226) in a context where social mobility is limited. This creates conflicting feelings—discourses of successes and happiness clash with pervasive sense of fear, anxiety, and resentment. The chapter covers the complex terminological challenges related to both neoliberalism and affect, but above all builds on the work of Michel Foucault (2007, 2008, 2014) and Lauren Berlant (2011, 2016). The chapter begins by investigating the affects of neoliberalism and ends with an investigation of how literature can respond to the present socio-economic context of precarity. The theoretical discussion is illustrated with a reading of two novels on today's academic precariat, Jenny Offill's *Weather* (2020) and Christine Smallwood's *The Life of the Mind* (2021).

In her second chapter, "Human without Human Contact: Elusiveness of Intimacy in Contemporary American Fiction," Marling focuses on intimate life in the age of social media, following the work of Lauren Berlant (2008). The chapter explores how contemporary novels show the illusory nature of "our collective fantasy that intimacy has the capacity to unite us" (Shelden 2017, 1). This idea will be situated within the discussion of how love and interpersonal intimacy can be represented in the context of neoliberal technologies of the self and the performative space of social media. The analysis will look at two contemporary American women authors' representations of intimacy: Lauren Oyler's *False Accounts* (2021) and Patricia Lockwood's *No One Is Talking About This* (2021).

In the third chapter, "Human Without Nature: Extinction and Posthuman Biot(r)opes," Sara Bédard-Goulet deals with the sixth mass extinction and its repercussions on humans and human culture. She addresses the cultural impact of animal extinction from a posthumanist perspective, where the conception of natural shifts due to the disappearance of the natural environment. Since the material world has produced a number of biotropes that serve human interests and constitute human identity, its loss is likely to affect these biotropes and how humans perceive themselves. Therefore, this chapter traces the biotropes in the contemporary novel *Sans l'orang-outan* (2007) (*Without the Orangutan*, untranslated) by French author Éric

Chevillard, which features a near future where the last orangutan couple (in captivity) dies and brings about the collapse of the world. With the extinction of the apes, the natural environment is reduced to a postapocalyptic swamp that offers limited resources to humans, who are waiting for their own deaths. The loss of the material world and of the animal other offers an opportunity to reflect on ecological issues and to point out the importance of a less anthropocentric vision of the world. This novel provides a striking example of human incapability to live without the very nature that they destroy, underlining, in an anthropocentric way, that humans cannot exist without nature.

In the fourth chapter, "Human Without a Planet B: Dwelling the Anthropocene," Bédard-Goulet approaches the posthuman condition from a planetary perspective that considers the shift to the Anthropocene, which insists on the human impact on the Earth. The planet emerges as a character in various ways and challenges the image of a distant globe as a background for human culture. This material and posthumanist return of/to the planet involves a performativity that challenges the Modern split between nature and culture, and it underlines the need to develop a different relationship to the natural environment. This growing awareness is made visible in cultural productions such as the novel *Nous trois* (1992) (translated into English as *We Three*) by French author Jean Echenoz, which features space travel during which five astronauts orbit the Earth. The planet is an object of attention on other occasions, when two characters experience an earthquake followed by a tsunami in Marseille. The novel's title may refer not only to the love triangle of the three main characters but also indicate that Earth is the third party, both to the two successive couples in the story and to the narrator and the reader or to humanity—an "it" to the "you" and "I." The planet is depicted playfully through monitoring and surveillance apparatuses, which mediate the human relationship to it while being identified as obsolete. *Nous trois* also shows instances of human-nonhuman intermingling, where humans are connected, although sometimes reluctantly, to their environment. The novel makes the most of the opposition between distanced and intimate perspectives on the planet through the idea of familiarity, pointing out the significance of everyday experience in connecting with the environment and the genuine interest in banal elements. It provides an example of the tight connection between the local and global when it comes to the planet, and of the double meaning of habit when considering how to be human in the Anthropocene.

In chapters five and six Tanel Lepsoo turns to contemporary French theater's engagement with myths. Differently from fiction, theater is ceremonial and contingent in nature. Each theater performance is unique

and creates a unique encounter between the audience and the actors. Previous chapters have shown that the search for new modes of being human in fiction stumbles on the all-too human and traditional form of the novel. The art and artificiality of theater allows playwrights and directors to delve into the extremes of human experience, without becoming mere entertainment or titillation. The two theater pieces analyzed here probe these extremes through a re-inscription of myths. In chapter five, "Human Without Desire," Lepsoo turns to the transfictional treatment of the Don Juan myth in the work of Didier-Georges Gabily. Gabily's play can be read as a sequel of Molière's *Don Juan.* It asks what how we are to interpret desire today when it is no longer an impious act but a norm of our secularized hedonistic society. The play shows a tension between fear and disappointment, and the yearning for a new, more responsible world. Chapter six, "Human Without a Future," focuses on the reworking of the Antigone myth in the work of Lebanese-born Québec-French playwright and director Wajdi Mouawad's tetralogy *The Blood of Promises* (*Le Sang des promesses*), with main attention on the fourth, final part *Heavens* (*Ciels*).

CHAPTER 1

HUMAN WITHOUT SOCIETY: AMERICAN NEOLIBERAL PROMISES AND FAILURES

RAILI MARLING

"May You Be Among the Survivors" (Offill 2021, 85).

What constitutes a good life has been one of the central questions of philosophy. Today, such questions run into the social formations within which this life is to be lived. In the triumphant mood of the 1990s, it seemed that globalized capital, unfettered by government controls, could lift all boats. Margaret Thatcher boldly claimed that there was no alternative to what has come to be called neoliberalism. Today, we can see that many boats actually sank: inequality has dramatically increased in developed Western countries and welfare state has been eroded. In the context of our broader project, we thus need to ask how to be human within neoliberalism. This might seem like a question of economic theory, but the present chapter will show how the ideas have trickled into subject formation. We today have internalized many neoliberal tenets and have become entrepreneurial subjects: investing in ourselves and in our social relations, relishing instability or realizing ourselves through competition. We are surrounded by exhortations to be successful and happy while suppressing the attendant fear, anxiety and resentment. These tensions find their way into fiction. Today we, indeed, have novels dedicated to finance, risk, and debt (e.g. Kennedy and Shapiro 2019; McClanahan 2017). There are authors, like de Boever (2018), who believe that such fiction helps us understand the new financial realities. I argue that they help us take a look into the human psyche negotiating the tension between neoliberalism's promises and failures. Fiction is a place where we can capture what Lauren Berlant (2011, 196) has described as "a recession grimace," "somewhere between a frown, a smile, and a tight lip," created by the understanding that dreams have crashed, before the subject

and society fully recognize the fantasmic nature of the dreams. Fiction helps us find a language for talking about this instability and, perhaps, sort out the messy relationship between fantasy and reality. Perhaps it also helps us figure out how to be human, when many old human contacts have frayed.

Because neoliberalism is a recent problem for literary scholarship, this chapter will first discuss the meaning of neoliberalism as rationality and its impact of subject formation, building on the work of Michel Foucault (2007, 2008, 2014). The chapter argues that neoliberalism exists affectively and will explain the contradictory nature of neoliberal affect, following the ideas of Lauren Berlant (2011, 2016). Specifically, I am interested in what happens when the neoliberal promises have failed. The theoretical discussion is illustrated with a reading of two contemporary novels that focus on precarious subjects in the context of today's neoliberal academia, Jenny Offill's *Weather* (2020) and Christine Smallwood's *The Life of the Mind* (2021). Both novels deal with young academics who are the losers of today's world, but whose experiences also model modes of coping and adjusting.

What do we talk about when we talk about neoliberalism?

Neoliberalism is argued, in social science literature, to be *the* hegemonic force in the 20th and 21st centuries. It provides the common sense of contemporary mainstream life in which, to reiterate Fredric Jameson, "it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism" (quoted in e.g., Fisher 2009, 2).[1] Some commentators, like Wendy Brown (2019), believe that the triumphs of populisms, right and left, testify to the bankruptcy of neoliberal thinking. For her, its celebration of technocratic elites and globalization left behind the many that now constitute the electorates of various populist politicians and memberships of different anti-elite protest movements. However, others (e.g., Pühringer and Ötsch 2018) see a considerable overlap in the dualistic thinking of both neoliberalism and populism and hence predict the possible rise of an authoritarian neoliberalism. I also believe that it is too early to mourn (or celebrate) the end of neoliberal thinking, as it has this far shown its ability to mutate to fit new circumstances. This has been documented in the aftermath of the Great

[1] Jameson (1994, xii) uses a slightly different wording himself. The labels attached to the phenomenon vary. Critics have also used the term "market populism" to describe what is called neoliberalism in the present chapter. This term was coined by Thomas Frank in his 2000 essay "The Rise of Market Populism" in *The Nation*. He developed the idea further in the book *One Nation Under God*, published the same year.

Recession of 2007–2009 by, for example, Philip Mirowski (2013). Despite numerous obituaries for neoliberalism that appeared in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis and the populist revolt of 2016, it has refused to disappear. Instead of a death of neoliberalism, we have seen the strengthening of the market rationality under what Reijer Hendrikse and James Sidaway (2010) have designated neoliberalism 3.0.

However, what the label "neoliberalism" designates is far from clear. The term is reiterated in scholarly literature so extensively that it has become too vague, because it is "everywhere, but at the same time, nowhere" (Venugopal 2015, 165). Venugopal (2015, 165−166) notes that "there were just 103 Google Scholar entries in English for the term 'neoliberal' or 'neliberalism' in the title between 1980 and 1989. This had multiplied to 1,324 for 1990−9, and 7,138 for 2000−9." Aihwa Ong (2006), Carolyn Hardin (2014) and many others agree that neoliberalism as a term has lost its precision. Jamie Peck (2010, 15), in contrast, has argued that the expansive and heterogeneous use of the term is inevitable because neoliberalism itself is a "tangled mess." The present chapter aligns itself with Peck's interpretation, believing that the very instability of the term can help us diagnose the present in its contradictory complexity.

The problems—and also potentially the strengths—of this over-determined term begin from heterogeneous opinions about what kind of a phenomenon neoliberalism is: an ideology, a set of specific policies, a form of governing? Citing the extensive literature on all of these usages could swallow up the whole book, without adding much clarity. This chapter often goes back to the work of Michel Foucault (2008, 318) who, in his often misread late-life lectures, views neoliberalism as a practice, rather than as an ideology. In this vein, Jeremy Gilbert (2013, 8) suggests that neoliberalism might be viewed as a Foucauldian discursive formation and, as such, be analyzed "as a coherent object" even if it "does not have the absolute uniformity of a pure doctrine." A similar idea can be found in the work of Simon Springer (2012, 2016).

Let us start by noting that the people called neoliberals in critical analyses do not identify themselves as such. As representatives of what has been largely viewed as "common sense" for the past forty years, they do not see themselves as aligned with a particular worldview but as experts and managers who concern themselves with the practical side of running the world (Gilbert 2013, 11). This is one of the reasons why neoliberalism has been missing as a term of public debate in countries where the neoliberal ethos has been dominant (the English-speaking world but also Estonia). The language and critique of neoliberalism has been more visible in geopolitical

locations with vigorous left-wing social movements.[2] In fact, some scholars, like Venugopal (2015, 183), believe that neoliberalism "frames" resistance, instead of being a clearly delineated term usable for academic research. Yet, I believe in its continued usefulness if we think of neoliberalism as a discourse and a rationality.

So what exactly does neoliberalism as a discourse cover? Typically, neoliberalism is used to indicate the shrinking of the state and the dominance of market rationality in social life after the 1980s, derived from the radical free-market thinking of Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises, Freiburg Ordoliberalism and the work of the Chicago School (see Peck 2010 for a full history). Joseph Stiglitz, in his influential critique, has called this approach market fanaticism (Dardot and Laval 2013, 2).[3] Other emphases attributed to neoliberalism are a focus on deregulation, technocratic solutions, and the economization of rights (see Brown 2017).

I think that we need to pay greater attention to the dominance of neoliberal discourse in our value systems. It is in this light that Clive Barnett (2010, 271) defines neoliberalism as a shift away from collective interests to "private, individualistic self-interest." Neoliberal values are geared towards individualism and competition. The virtues extolled in neoliberal rhetoric are enterprise and self-responsibility. Abundant scholarship demonstrates their migration to different areas of public life (including universities (see Aavik & Marling 2017), but also to the private sphere and interpersonal relationships, in which we also seek to maximize our market value and profits.

This chapter develops the ideas expressed by Michel Foucault (2008) who was interested in how the contexts in which we live (milieus, in Foucault's terminology) can be shaped so as to achieve desired behaviors.[4] It is important to remember that Foucault does not believe that we can escape power, only develop different practices of resistance to it (Foucault 1997, 282−283). The perceived freedom from government intervention in neoliberalism becomes the means through which individuals are controlled

[2] For a critical reassessment of the traditional left-wing critique of neoliberal expertise, see Collier (2017).

[3] It is interesting that Stiglitz's book *Making Globalization Work: The Next Steps to Global Justice* (2006) was translated into French as *Un autre monde. Contre le fanatisme du marché* (2006).

[4] Foucault himself formulated this as follows: "Finally, the milieu appears as a field of interventions in which, instead of affecting individuals as a set of legal subjects capable of voluntary actions—which would be called sovereignty—and instead affecting them as a multipilicity of organisms, of bodies capable of performances, and of required performances—as in discipline—one tries to affect, precisely, a population" (Foucault 2007, 21).