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OVERCOMING (HYPER)MODERNITY

Abstract

Sketching the contours of a possible posthumanist alliance – integrating insights from poststructuralism, critical posthumanism, new materialism and the anthropological turn compatible with the organological-pharmacological framework proposed by Bernard Stiegler – this article aims to contrast modern dualisms and their instrumental conception of nature (as a resource) and technology (as a tool) which are symptomatically embodied today by the solutionist, anthropo- and technocentric approach of transhumanists. It is here argued that posthumanism, as outlined by Francesca Ferrando, offers a viable path for overcoming hypermodernity (Bernard Stiegler) towards a normative – rather than descriptive – conception of postmodernity thanks to a coherent conceptual ensemble that is both epistemologically and politically needed for bifurcating from the present crisis. This drastic shift requires, on the one hand, a theoretical rethinking of the relations between the "human" (understood in its indivisibility and its co-evolutionary relations with the technological, social and ecological systems in which it lives) and the more-than-human; and, on the other hand, the imagination of practical ways for implementing the ecological and the technological transitions, emphasizing the importance of developing politics of technologies that promotes the search for trans-local ecological (in the triple meaning given by Felix Guattari) therapies.

Keywords: Hypermodernity, Philosophy of Technology, Posthumanism, Postmodernity, Transhumanism

1. *Introduction: the "end" of the world seen from the end of the "world"*

> Bien entendu, nous ne sommes qu'un fétu de paille dans cet océan déchaîné, mais Messieurs, tout n'est pas pour autant perdu, il n'y a qu'à tâcher de gagner le centre de la tempête.
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> A. Césaire, *Une tempête*

Our present epoch is ever more profoundly characterized by the perpetual crisis of – but nonetheless never fully closed relation with – the modes of thinking that characterized modernity. The latter is to be understood as a very specific *weltanschauung* pivoting around a humanist, essentialist, and anthropocentric conception embodied by the modern subject: the archetypical figure of the White Man, naturally endowed with reason and free will, and who is dualistically opposed to nature and to technology – both *means* to be used, as a resource or as a tool, for its own teleological ends. And it is precisely because of this double instrumental understanding of nature and technology – grounded on the subject/object, nature/culture, and culture/technic dualisms – that our (more or

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less flawed) democracies are today confronted with two intertwined political challenges. On the one hand, there is the *ecological crisis*: from institutional inaction to climate denialism, via the flimsiest and most hollow promises of implementation of any measure at the height of contemporary issues to prevent or to act against the depletion of natural resources and the sixth mass extinction. And, on the other, what can be defined as a *techno-logical crisis*, that is to say a crisis of orientation of the technological development model orchestrated by tech-giants driven by a transhumanist, techno- and geno-centric[1], reductionist and solutionist ideology from Silicon Valley – the geographical end of the Western world[2] – not to mention the socio-ecological consequences of the implementation of neoliberal algorithmic governance through the encoding within digital infrastructures of the extractivist logics that have led to contemporary crises.

This article aims to contrast the double instrumental conception of nature as resource and of technology as tool through a political and philosophical alliance of convergent lines of thought regrouped within the still vague category of *posthumanism*. Here it is argued that this alliance, compatible[3] with the *organologico-pharmacological* framework proposed by Bernard Stiegler, could offer a coherent conceptual ensemble that is politically needed for overcoming (hyper)modernity[4] – hence, overcoming the multiple crises we have inherited from it – thanks to an *eco-logical*[5] and *techno-logical*[6] understanding of the "human" in its non-separateness and its co-evolutionary relations with the technological, the social, and the ecological systems in which it lives. For doing so it is not only fundamental to change the modern *forma mentis*, diversifying, multiplying and finding paths of convergence for different critical standpoints and new

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1   G. Longo, *Le cauchemar de Prométhée. Les sciences et leurs limites*, Puf, Paris 2023. In this book Longo cast a light onto the technoscientific ideology underpinning AI and contemporary molecular biology research and applications. Both share the same informational-computational paradigm which, following Longo, is a cultural deformation or distortion which has an enormous economic interest and a specific political vision that is exemplified in the narratives of many technocrats and transhumanists.

2   That is comically and kitschy represented by a big and silver Hollywood-sign-style letters (see: https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/ end-of-the-world-sign) in Twentynine Palms, California. As a perfect example of the euro-american-centrism, the "artist" nicknamed the artwork as "a place known for those who drop off the *edge of civilization*" (my emphasis).

3   Which means, for the scope of this article and generally of my research, *politically convergent* – even if they present some incommensurable differences and incompatibilities from an exquisitely philosophical perspective.

4   The concepts of *hypermodernity* and *hyperindustrial* were proposed by Bernard Stiegler in the two tomes of the *Symbolic Misery* series (published in 2004 and 2005 by Galilée) to stress the continuation and the acceleration of the modern process of computation beyond the productive sphere alone. My use of parenthesis in the whole paragraph is justified by the Stieglerian attempt to underline the continuum between modernity and hypermodernity while directly replying to the main questions rose by the issue of this journal.

5   In the Guattarian triple sense of *mental, social and environmental ecologies*, as well as through the relationality of the concept of Simondon of *psico-social individuation* (or the Stieglerian *transindividuation*).

6   In the double sense given by Stiegler, as "human" and technics form a complex: they are inseparable. The "human" is invented in the technique, and the technique is invented in the "human". See B. Stiegler, *Leroi-Gourhan: l'inorganique organisé*, in «Les cahiers de médiologie», 2, n. 6, 1998, pp. 187-194. URL: https://www.cairn.info/revue-les-cahiers-de-mediologie-1998-2-page-187.htm.

(or renewed[7]) theoretical paradigms. In fact, it is also necessary to draw the path for practically cultivate and implement the ecological and the technological transitions (or *green* and *blue transitions*) through the creation of new local relationships between "humans" and more-than-human (that is to say, in Stieglerian terms, with the inorganic, the organic, and the organized inorganic – i.e. technology – matter) as it stems out from specific posthumanist[8] theoretical frameworks. There is an existential need to move away from modernity towards a normative – and not descriptive – reconceptualization of *post*-modernity[9] (if we still must stick to this concept) that needs to be collectively deliberated. The question, here, is how to overcome (hyper)modernity and transhumanism. And the answe*r*s need to be, at the same time, theoretical and practical, epistemological and economico-political. As Francesca Ferrando writes, «[p]osthumanism is a praxis. The ways the futures are being conceived and imagined are not disconnected from their actual enactments: in the posthuman post-dualistic approach, the "what" is the "how"»[10]. And it is for this reason that this heterogeneous current of thought can represent, in the tragic present in which we live, an answer at once theoretical and practical for bifurcations.

2. *From modernity to hypermodernity: from humanism to transhumanism*

> We have not left modernity because more than ever we are experiencing the *industrialization of all things*.
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> B. Stiegler, *Symbolic Misery 1*

In the last century, the crisis of modernity opened a new space for the critique of Western philosophical tradition – a space which revealed itself to be proper for forging new methods (as well as new disciplines) for producing knowledge. One of them is exemplified by the different intellectual endeavors often regrouped within the heterogeneous

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7   The historical and philosophical gesture made by David Bates in his last book (*An Artificial History of Natural Intelligence*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2024) is an example of how to offer an *internal critique of modernity* for grounding a critique of contemporary technocratic, mechanistic, and reductionist approach that characterize transhumanism (here understood as the ideological feature of hypermodernity), troubling the very same base on which technosciences are grounded.

8   I stick here to the definitions of humanism, transhumanism and posthumanism given by F. Ferrando, *Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Antihumanism, Metahumanism, and New Materialisms: Differences and Relations*, «Existenz», 8, 2, 2013, (*infra*, p. 9); and Ead., *Philosophical Posthumanism*, Bloomsbury, London-New York 2019.

9   Framed within a Stieglerian vocabulary, this passage could be framed as from the Anthropocene – epoch in which modernity has shown all its toxic features – to the Neganthropocene, a new era where a negentropic model of development is embodied in trans-local therapeutics of the biosphere. See B. Stiegler, *The Neganthropocene*, Open Humanities Press, London 2019.

10   F. Ferrando, *Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Antihumanism, Metahumanism, and New Materialisms: Differences and Relations*, cit., p. 29.

movement of post-structuralism. For listing some of the most renowned exponents and their contributions: Deleuze's intensive and differential thinking, Foucault's genealogy and antihumanism[11], Derrida's deconstruction – and its influence on posthumanism. And yet, even if these process-ontological perspectives have played a fundamental role in shaping new philosophical and political horizons (e.g. within the de/postcolonial, gender, feminist, queer, racial, animal, and environmental *studies* rose in the second part of the past century) their critical counterpoint to humanism and modernity has been often perceived, especially across the Atlantic, as an infertile ground for the refoundation of an affirmative – and not just deconstructive – political, ecological, technological and ontological project for overcoming modernity.

And it is precisely within this context deeply influenced by the rapid advancements of cybernetics that Lyotard pointed out the crisis of the *grands récits*, that is the crisis – manifested through incredulity – of the «metanarrative apparatus (*dispositif*) of legitimation»[12] that sustained modern philosophies of history, from the teleological ideal of "progress" (whether liberal or socialist) to the Kantian cosmopolitan and universal peace. Inspired by Turaine's analysis[13], Lyotard described this new that condition of crisis of metanarratives and its epistemological consequences through the concept of *postmodern*[14]. Analyzing the state of knowledge within information societies (*sociétés informatisées*), Lyotard brilliantly noted that the only criteria of legitimation for measuring the validity of any kind of collective enterprise, from social justice to the production of scientific truth, seemed to have become *efficacity* – an "objective" economical and naturalized[15] value beyond any political faction. As he writes:

> The application of this criterion to all of our [language] games necessarily entails a
> certain level of terror, whether soft or hard: be operational (that is, commensurable) or

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11   «If modern rationality, progress and free will are at the core of the transhumanist debate, a radical critique of these same presuppositions is the kernel of antihumanism, a philosophical position which shares with posthumanism its roots in postmodernity but differs in other aspects. The deconstruction of the notion of the human is central to antihumanism: this is one of its main points in common with posthumanism. However, a major distinction between the two movements is already embedded in their morphologies, specifically in their denotation of "post-" and "anti-." Antihumanism fully acknowledges the consequences of the "death of Man," as already asserted by some post-structuralist theorists, in particular by Michel Foucault. In contrast, posthumanism does not rely on any symbolic death […]. Posthumanism, after all, is aware of the fact that hierarchical humanistic presumptions cannot be easily dismissed or erased. In this respect, it is more in tune with Derrida's deconstructive approach rather than with Foucault's death of Man»; ivi, pp. 31-32.

12   J.-F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979), tr. G. Bennington and B. Massumi, Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1984, p. XXIV.

13   A. Touraine, *The post-industrial society. Tomorrow's social history: classes, conflicts and culture in the programmed society* (1969), Random House, New York 1971.

14   This term, adopted philosophically by Lyotard, was already in use on the American continent by sociologists and critics. It was designating the state of culture at the time, after the transformations that affected the rules of the games of science, literature, and the arts from the end of the 19th century onwards.

15   «Rarely was the function of ideology described in clearer terms – to defend the existing system against any serious critique, legitimizing it as a direct expression of human nature». See S. Žižek, *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce*, Verso, London-New York 2009, p. 27.

disappear. The logic of maximum performance is no doubt inconsistent in many ways […]. *But our incredulity is now such that we no longer expect salvation to rise from these inconsistencies*, as did Marx[16].

Nevertheless, the critique to this economistic and reductionist tendency towards the subordination of all values to the one of efficiency could be traced back – though, from different perspectives and in different terms – to other intellectuals of his century: Weber described this as the consequence of a long process of disenchantment inherent to the process of secularization[17]; Adorno and Horkheimer pointed out the dialectical process of becoming *ratio* of the Enlightenment reason[18]; and Heidegger shed a light on the process of *mathesis universalis*[19] leading to the total *Enframing* (*Gestell*) of the world through technical domination of nature, the latter being reduced to a *standing-reserve* (*Bestand*). By pointing out the positivistic *ethos* of his period, Lyotard inscribed himself within this critical *phylum* at a time in which neoliberalism – with its worldview of dire competition and calculation, its economization of everything and its will to cybernetically govern societies through mechanisms of inputs and outputs – was springing up. But instead of insisting on the continuities with the analysis mentioned here above, Lyotard affirmed that his contemporary technological condition inaugurated the opening of, what he called, the *postmodern condition*.

Twenty-five years later, a still-young philosopher named Bernard Stiegler[20] published the *Symbolic Misery*. Here, Derrida's pupil reproposed his theses contained in *Cinematic Time and the Question of Malaise*[21] which were now framed «in absolutely primary, direct, visible, and legible relation to questions of political economy»[22], and deeply connected to ecological questions[23]. However, in the first of the two tomes of the *Symbolic Misery. 1. The Hyperindustrial Epoch*, Stiegler criticised Lyotard's proposition whilst offering a new concept for describing our epoch – hence, our condition. Taking up three topical definitions of modernity given by Marx (the advent of the bourgeoisie and consequent industrialization of society), Heidegger (the process of technical domination of nature) and Deleuze (the advent of the society of control), Stiegler showed how they respectively highlighted three complementary aspects of the modern process of «be-

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16 J.-F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, cit., p. XXIV (my emphasis).
17 See M. Weber, originally a speech at Munich University, 1918, published in 1919 by Duncker & Humblodt, Munich, then published and translated by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, Oxford University Press, New York 1946, pp. 129-156.
18 M. Horkheimer, T. Adorno, *Dialectic of the Enlightenment*, 1944.
19 M. Heidegger, *Being and Time* (1927), as well as M. Foucault, *The Order of Things* (1966).
20 Stiegler studied in prison under the distant supervision of Gérard Granel, then obtained his PhD with Jacques Derrida at the EHESS. He knew personally Lyotard himself. See Y. Hui, *The Question Concerning Technology in China. An Essay in Cosmotechnics*, Urbanomic, Falmouth 2016, p. 44.
21 B. Stiegler, *Technics and Time. 1. The Fault of Epimetheus* and *2. Disorientation*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1998 and 2008. The third tome (*3. Cinematic Times and the Question of Malaise,* originally published in French in 1998) was published by Stanford University Press in 2010.
22 Id., *Dans la disruption : comment ne pas devenir fou*, Les Liens qui Libèrent, Paris 2016, p. 120.
23 In the specific case of *The Symbolic Misery*, Stiegler already highlights the need for reflection on the industrial *ecology of consciousness and spirit*. See B. Stiegler, *The Symbolic Misery 1.*, cit., p. 45.

coming-industrial of societies»[24] that started with the Industrial Revolution but whose preconditions rooted back to the beginning of modern Western civilizational enterprise.

In short terms: the process of technical domination of nature, which began with the Scientific Revolution, laid the groundwork for the advent of the bourgeoisie, a revolutionary class that was able to concretize its worldview through the establishment of a new economic rationality (capitalist and industrial). From the end of the 18th century to the beginning of the 21st century, such rationality has imposed itself globally, firstly, through the military *colonization of space*, and then, after an accelerated process of technical innovation, through the development of information and communication technologies – whose consequent embedding within every kind of industrialized processes and every aspect of life created the conditions for a technical (and then political) transition from *disciplinary societies*[25] to *control societies*[26].

Extending Deleuze's analysis, Stiegler affirms that in today's control societies, *cultural industries* are the *aesthetic weapons* who play a fundamental role in the economic war that has marked (and still marks) the process of globalization, especially after the fall of bipolarism. Through the *colonization of time* (that is of consciousness' affections and attention) cultural industries have become one of the most essential engines for the contemporary production of subjectivity: controlling the technologies of *aisthesis* means «controlling the conscious and unconscious rhythms of bodies and souls; modulating through the control of flows these rhythms of consciousness and life»[27].

This historical process, far from being ended, is in constant evolution: therefore, the contemporary era is characterized precisely by the intensification, increased complexity and extension of those very processes that defined modernity: «we have not left modernity because more than ever we are experiencing the *industrialization of all things*»[28]. Thus, in antithesis to Lyotard's concept of *postmodern*, Stiegler defines the current era as *hypermodern* precisely because of its being – or rather, constant becoming – *hyperindustrial* and not *postindustrial* as Turaine proposed.

> The hyperindustrial age can be characterized as an extension of calculation beyond the sphere of production along with a correlative extension of industrial domains. This is what is now commonly called the third industrial revolution, and we will see that this generalized computation brings calculation fully into the characteristic mechanisms of what Simondon calls psychic and collective individuation[29].

It is no coincidence if it is precisely the *allegory of the anthill* – that is the ghost that haunts the *hyperindustrial becoming of (dis)societies*, a metaphor for describing a perfect technologically synchronized society – was revisited in *The Automatic Society*. It is

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24   Ivi, p. 47.
25   Analyzed by M. Foucault in *Surveillance and Punishment* (1975).
26   Described – also as *modulation societies* – by G. Deleuze in *Post-scriptum on Control Societies* (1990).
27   B. Stiegler, *The Symbolic Misery 1.*, cit., p. 2.
28   Ivi, p. 47.
29   Id., *Symbolic Misery*, cit., pp. 47-48.

here that Stiegler, in the light of latest developments of contemporary technologies and in front of the enormous challenges posed by the "Anthropocene", re-systematized and re-actualised his theses at the time of digital platforms, hence of digital *hypercontrol*[30] – or, if one prefers, at the time of cognitive, 24/7, surveillance, or extractivist capitalism[31].

It must be noted that the development of the technologies which makes this new stage of capitalism possible is ideologically driven by what has been called *The Californian Ideology*[32], a hybrid of technophilia and technological determinism with highly individualistic and libertarian political values. The supporters of this ideology optimistically perceive and predict (by dint of tweets and ads combined with the global media-exposure and attentional capital they benefit from: the contemporary hi-tech version of *self-fulfilment prophecies*) the technological enhancement of the human and the geo-engineerization of nature as the only possible answers to the risky and fragile 21st century human condition. This entrepreneurial ideology shares its origin and has been directly influenced by the strands of thought relatable to the *transhumanist* ideology, a form of hyperhumanism[33] which prolongs uncritically the modern worldview. As Francesca Ferrando writes:

> transhumanism problematizes the current understanding of the human […] through the possibilities inscribed within its possible biological and technological evolutions. Human enhancement is a crucial notion to the transhumanist reflection; the main keys to access such a goal are identified in science and technology. […] [T]ranshumanism roots itself in the Enlightenment, and so it does not expropriate rational humanism. By taking humanism further, transhumanism can be defined as "ultra-humanism"[34].

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30   «In the age of reticulated digital tertiary retention, it is possible to reach in quasi-simultaneity the connected brains of more than two billion earthlings [...]. Such a digital society, which we call automatic here, cannot, however, make society and overcome the immeasurably aggravated stage of dissociation in which algorithmic governmentality and 24/7 capitalism consist *except on the condition of greater economic and political change*» (my emphasis); B. Stiegler, *The Automatic Society*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2016, p. 237.

31   See Y. Moulier Boutang, *Le Capitalisme Cognitif. La nouvelle grande transformation*, Ed. Amsterdam, Paris 2007; Y. Citton, *Pour une écologie de l'attention*, Éd. du Seuil, Paris 2014; S. Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, Public Affairs, London 2019. See S. Baranzoni, P. Vignola, *Para acabar con la imagen extractivista del pensamiento. Una ficción filosófica*, in C.O. Celis Bueno, R. Rodríguez Freire (eds.), *Antropoficciones*, in «Culture Machine», 21, 2022, https://culturemachine.net/archives/vol-21-antropoficciones/.

32   R. Barbrook, A. Cameron, *The Californian Ideology*, in «MuteMagazine», 1, n. 3 (Sept. 1995). URL: https://monoskop.org/images/d/dc/Barbrook_Richard_Cameron_Andy_1996_The_Californian_Ideology.pdf (last access: 15-05-2024).

33   Or ultra-humanism, see next footnote. I prefer here the suffix 'hyper' to highlight the links between this ideology and the hypermodern and hyperindustrial era described by Stiegler.

34   F. Ferrando, *Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Antihumanism, Metahumanism, and New Materialisms: Differences and Relations*, cit., p. 27: «Transhumanist reflections, in their 'ultra-humanistic' endeavors, do not fully engage with a critical and historical account of the human, which is often presented in a generic and 'fit-for-all' way». See also F. Ferrando, T*he Body*, in Robert Ranisch, Stefan L. Sorgner (eds.), *Post- and Transhumanism: An Introduction*, Vol. 1 of *Beyond Humanism: Trans- and Posthumanism*, Peter Lang Publisher, Frankfurt a.M. 2015.

Therefore, instead of breaking with the Western modern ontology[35], this "new" conception of the human carries on even further the toxic features of modernity: as a matter of fact, this thriving ideology is deeply influencing *a certain kind of* technological, economic, and political developments from the very pulsing heart of the 21st century colonial and extractivist empire. Thereby, transhumanism seems to fit perfectly for the very troubled hypermodern and hyperindustrial condition brilliantly diagnosed by Stiegler, and nowadays epitomized by Silicon Valley tech giants' industrial strategy:

> Transhumanism is an industrial strategy, and the most astounding, stupefying consequence of what we are calling disruption, a disruption that commenced in 1993 [with the popularization of internet]. […] [D]isruption […] [is] an epoch of innovation in which exo-somatization [technology and its development] is now completely controlled by economic powers and subject to the constraints of short-term profitability[36].

3. *From the descriptive concept of hypermodernity to a normative concept of postmodernity: from transhumanism to posthumanism*

> The claim of transhumanism, that it makes up for a noetic flaw, resembles a discourse on the *perfect* human, that is, a project to *eliminate that flaw, that default*, *which is* noesis.
>
> B. Stiegler, *Elements of Neganthropology*

Because of its technoscientific, financial, and influencing power, transhumanism is already shaping the horizon of possibilities through which societies try to imagine "solutions" to those same problems that modernity itself has generated. Efficiently filling the gap left by post-structuralists' deconstruction and the decline of metanarratives – as Lyotard rightly highlighted – transhumanists are dictating the *only way* (both as *the unique* direction and as *the sole* manner) towards which the "human" should reorient itself: because, echoing the neoliberal motto, *there is no alternative* to technological determinism and its techno-evolutionary progressive faith. But their anthropocentric and teleological conceptions are still carrying the burden of the essentialist-exceptionalist feature of the human which led us to the contemporary tragic *impasse* that is the Anthropocene[37].

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35   Or at least with the *mainstream* reception of Modernity: «my argument is that [Western modern] tradition harbors resources for an internal critique of what has been spawned by "modernity" – in all its worst guises». See D. Bates, *An Artificial History of Natural Intelligence*, cit., p. 9. See *supra*, footnote 8.

36   B. Stiegler, *Elements of Neganthropology*, cit., pp. 86 and 90.

37   As well as all its conceptual variants: Capitalocene, Chthulucene, Plantationocene, Wasteocene, etc. I am particularly fond to the Stieglerian proposition of *Entropocene* which is understood as the era of increased production of entropy in all its dimensions: *thermodynamic*, as dissipation of energy; *biological*, as reduction of biodiversity; and *informational*, as reduction of knowledge to data correlations and computer calculations – and consequently as loss of credit, distrust, generalized mimicry and domination of what has been called the post-truth era. See B. Stiegler (dir.) and the Internation Collective,

The concepts of *postmodern* and *posthuman* were invented precisely to imagine some forms of exodus from modernity, but their lack of direct confrontation with the question of technology (as Yuk Hui noted[38]) and political economy (as often stressed by Stiegler[39]) weakened their influence outside of the academic world, undermining their possible adoption especially within the political and technological *milieux*. Conversely, transhumanism has managed to develop a discourse that can marry perfectly with neoliberal demands, thus gaining a central role in defining the future: and yet, such an ideology – obliterating all those theories that have attempted to problematize the boundaries of what defines the "human" through a critique of nature/culture and technology/culture dualisms – narrows the horizon of thought within the toxic coordinates of modernity's mainstream tradition. To summarize with Francesca Ferrando's words:

> if the strength of the transhumanist vision consists in its openness to the possibilities offered by science and technology, therein lays its weakness, which can be detected in a techno-reductionist assimilation of existence, and in a progressivist approach that does not leave space to deconstructionist practices[40].

However, those same deconstructionist practices brought and still bring into the foreground of the intellectual landscape an anthropo-decentered conception of the "human"[41] (or, in Stieglerian terms, of the *non-inhuman being*[42]) with a focus on its intrinsic co-determination, non-separateness and co-evolutionary relationships which, historically and incessantly, determine what the "human" is through its evolving entanglements with the more-than-human. Contrary to the *ultra*-humanism that distinguishes transhumanism, posthumanism – as it is framed by Ferrando, as a sort of second generation of post-structuralism – may offer a better perspective to urgently reorient our thinking and reimagine our collective practices both ecologically and technologically.

> Posthumanism (here understood as critical, cultural, and philosophical posthumanism, as well as new materialisms) seems appropriate to investigate the geological time of the anthropocene. As the anthropocene marks the extent of the impact of human activities on a planetary level, the posthuman focuses on de-centering the human from the primary focus

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Bifurcate. There is No Alternative, tr. Dan Ross, Open Humanities Press, London 2021: http://www.openhumanitiespress.org/books/titles/bifurcate/ (last access: 28-08-2023).
38   Y. Hui, *The Question Concerning Technology in China. An Essay in Cosmotechnics*, cit., p. 33.
39   For example, in B. Stiegler, *Elements of Neganthropology*, in *The Neganthropocene*, Open Humanities Press, London 2018, p. 79: «All these analyses, which I am introducing here in view of a *global geopolitical alternative to transhumanist marketing*» (my emphasis).
40   F. Ferrando, *Philosophical Posthumanism*, cit., p. 3.
41   «[T]his type of relational thinking is emerging in Europe as a replacement for a substantialist thinking that has survived since antiquity. This is evident in the so-called "ontological turn" in anthropology – for example in Descola's analysis of the ecology of relations – […]. Such a multiplicity of relations can be found in many non-European cultures, as demonstrated in the works of anthropologists such as Descola, Viveiros de Castro, Ingold, and others»; Y. Hui, *The Question Concerning Technology in China. An Essay in Cosmotechnics*, cit., p. 46.
42   B. Stiegler, *The Automatic Society*, cit., p. 45, § 25 (*The duty of every non-inhuman being*).

of the discourse. […] Humans are perceived as material nodes of becoming; such becomings operate as technologies of existence. The way humans inhabit this planet, what they eat, how they behave, what relations they entertain, creates the network of who and what they are: it is not a disembodied network, but (also) a material one, whose agency exceeds the political, social, and biological human realms, as new materialist thinkers sharply point out. In this expanded horizon, it becomes clear that any types of essentialism, reductionism, or intrinsic biases are limiting factors in approaching such multidimensional networks. Posthumanism keeps a critical and deconstructive standpoint informed by the acknowledgement of the past, while setting a comprehensive and generative perspective to sustain and nurture alternatives for the present and for the futures. Within the current philosophical environment, posthumanism offers a unique balance between agency, memory, and imagination, aiming to achieve harmonic legacies in the evolving ecology of interconnected existence[43].

Authors like Philippe Descola, Bruno Latour and Tim Ingold represent the third European attempt to overcome modernity[44]: as Yuk Hui highlighted, they «seek to use the event of the Anthropocene as an opportunity to overcome modernity in order to open up an ontological pluralism»[45]. The implicit assumption here is that "a more profound philosophy of nature", one that would resist the division between culture and nature found in naturalism, «is able to overcome the Anthropocene – the symbol of modernity – by bringing back a new way of *being together* and *being with*»[46] in the world. But even if this anthropological and philosophical gesture of rethinking the relations between the "human" and the non-human/more-than-human is necessary for disarming the dualism nature/culture, it is not sufficient for overcoming hypermodernity.

Because if it is crucial to understand the multiplicity of relation that "humans" weave within their eco-systems[47], it is equally important to elaborate different *non-modern modes of thinking*[48] (non-instrumental and anthropo-decentered) about the relation that "humans" entertain generally with technology, and more precisely with the contemporary technological system. Which is why both Descola and Latour, while refusing the concept of postmodern, «are instead drawn to the 'non-modern' in order to address this task»[49] of overcoming (hyper)modernity. And it is for this reason that the Stieglerian contribution proves to be indispensable to date, thanks to his important work in blurring the boundaries of the "human" from a techno-logical point of view through the cri-

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43 F. Ferrando, *Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Antihumanism, Metahumanism, and New Materialisms: Differences and Relations*, cit., p. 32.
44 The first one being centered around the figures of Edmund Husserl and Albert Einstein; the second represented by Derrida, Deleuze, Foucault, and Lyotard, etc. See Y. Hui, *The Question Concerning Technology in China. An Essay in Cosmotechnics*, cit., p. 45. See also P. Descola, *Beyond Nature and Culture*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2013; B. Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1993.
45 Y. Hui, *The Question Concerning Technology in China. An Essay in Cosmotechnics*, cit., p. 45.
46 Ivi, p. 50.
47 Both in the sense of "natural environment" as well as, in the Foucauldian sense, the socio-technical environment.
48 Y. Hui, *The Question Concerning Technology in China. An Essay in Cosmotechnics*, cit., p. 47.
49 Ivi, p. 46.

tique of the culture/technology dualism based on the *organologico-pharmacological*[50] understanding of the human-technology complex[51]. Hence, I would propose here to include Stiegler's thought within the broad category of *posthumanism*[52], while refining the definition proposed by Ferrando to elucidate the constitutive role played by technology within the "evolving ecology of interconnected existence".

The critical and descriptive analysis of hypermodernity represents only the first and propaedeutic movement of the Stieglerian organo-pharmacological approach, which is necessary for the development of new conceptual weapons capable of opening the always *technologically conditioned* (but not for that reason *determined*) horizon of the possible. Stiegler, in fact, argues that the hyperindustrial becoming can only be reinvented through a politicization of technological and industrial issues – thus, a politics of technologies that enhances the search for trans-local ecological (in the threefold meaning given by Guattari) therapies – and not their renouncement. This means a reasoned prescription of technologies in the service of *taking care*: of self and others, but also of territories, through the development of individual and collective practices capable of fighting against the loss of diversity at the biological, noetic and technological levels. This kind of conception of technology thus opens a new ecological-political point of view, different from the *technophilia* of accelerationists and transhumanists, or the radical *technophobia* exemplified by some representatives of the «degrowth»[53] movements.

Throughout the entire Stieglerian philosophical trajectory, technics, is in fact understood «as the horizon of every future possibility and every possibility of the future»[54]:

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50 Which «consists in the constitution of a network of conceptual instances united by the overcoming of dualistic, metaphysical or transcendental perspectives, in favor of a processual thought as a problematic relation» between endo- and eso-somatic organs, social and ecological organizations. For a detailed analysis of organology and pharmacology, see P. Vignola, *L'attenzione altrove. Sintomatologie di quel che ci accade*, Orthotes Ed., Salerno 2013; and G. Gilmozzi, *Tecno-logia, farmacologia e negantropologia. Note introduttive al pensiero di Bernard Stiegler*, in E. Clarizio and M. Feyles (eds.), *Esteriorizzazione. Attualità e storia di un paradigma filosofico*, «Lo Sguardo», 36, 2023, pp. 333-351.

51 «Human and technique form a complex, they are inseparable: in technique, the human is invented – and in the human technique is invented. Such a pair is a *process in which life negotiates with the non-living by organizing it, but in such a way that this organization makes a system and has its own laws*. Human and technique constitute the terms of what Simondon called a *transductive relation* […] which means that one term of the relation does not exist outside the relation, being constituted by the other term of the relation»; B. Stiegler, *Leroi-Gourhan: l'inorganique organisé*, cit., p. 190 (my translation).

52 It should be noted that Stiegler himself did not rely on the definition of posthumanism drawn here from Francesca Ferrando's work, nor did he have a strong understanding of the difference between transhumanism and posthumanism: «All this, planning to build floating cities without state, police, or justice, and without any social dimension, founding an absolute oligarchism of posthuman lords and immortal singularities»; B. Stiegler, *The Automated Society*, cit., p. 223. More than posthumanism, this description represents transhumanist techno-utopia and its plutocratic and messianic "end of the world" imagery. Indeed, Stiegler would address these themes in the second volume of *The Automated Society*, unfortunately never published before his death.

53 As exemplified, within the French contemporary context, P. Servigne, R. Stevens, *Comment tout peut s'effondrer. Petit manuel de collapsologie à l'usage des générations présentes*, Ed. Seuil, Paris 2015. More interesting are, from my point of view, the "post-growth" propositions that are also closer to the economic-political propositions made by Stiegler and Ars Industrialis.

54 B. Stiegler*, Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, cit., p. IX.

the constitutive *and* destitutive role that technique plays in its tragic relationship with the human being, hence with its destructive and curative power in its milieu, requires to rethink the industrial economy[55], taking care of the new articulations of the singular socio-eco-logical relationalities at all levels of locality. It is no coincidence that it was a philosopher deeply inspired by Stiegler who recently proposed the concept of *cosmotechnics*[56] to bridge the gap between the anthropo-onto-logical turn (exemplified by the work of many anthropologists such as Descola, Latour, Viveiros de Castro and Ingold) and the techno-logical perspective opened by Derrida's pupil. These different currents of thought, often opposed as antithetical philosophical alternatives, can be politically understood as converging, allied for the formulation of a posthumanist technological and ecological agenda: that is, for a normative (and not descriptive, as proposed by Lyotard) *post*modern political-ecological and political-technological project through the construction of a new posthumanist theoretical and practical edifice to go beyond the various crises inherited from modernity and nowadays prolonged by transhumanist hypermodernity.

In this context, universities have a critical – in the both senses of judicious evaluation and of vital – role to play: as the students, at the time of writing, are protesting worldwide against some of the most problematic features of modernity (colonization, racialization, and all different kinds of *wasting relationships*[57] – from the ecological disasters to the borderization of bodies[58]), theirs institutions must play an important rhizomatic role along with local stakeholders for trans-local technological and ecological transitions inspired by the perspectives opened by posthumanism.

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55 See the series *Mécreance et discrédit*, *Constituer l'Europe* and *Pour une nouvelle critique de l'économie politique*. This new industrial model is currently being experimented in Seine-Saint-Denis through the *TAC* program launched by Stiegler within the Institut de Recherche et d'Innovation du Centre Pompidou in Paris (URL: www.tac93.fr/programme) and whose founding theses and theoretical-practical methodologies were summarized in B. Stiegler (dir.) and the Internation Collective, *Bifurcate. There is No Alternative*, cit.

56 I do not have time here to criticize some aspects of this concept proposed by Yuk Hui. I will simply point out, as I had the opportunity to discuss with Paolo Vignola, that Hui's concept has been reformulated by Stiegler through the concept of *techno-diversity*; see B. Stiegler, *Qu'appelle-t-on panser. 1. L'immense regression*, LLL, Paris 2018, §33.

57 M. Armiero, *Wasteocene: Stories from the Global Dump*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2021.

58 See A. Mbembe, *Bodies as borders*, in «From the European south», p. 9. URL: http://europeansouth.postcolonialitalia.it/.