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CROSSING PATHS: THE CASE FOR AN ECO-CRITICAL POSTHUMANISM

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Abstract: In this paper, as a response to some of the recent attempts to promote a “post-critical” approach to the humanities, I propose an eco-critical posthumanism as a research program that analyzes the historical nexus between humanism and capitalism, thus attempting to reconcile several traditions and interventions in an intersectional framework. For this purpose, I look at the essential theoretical developments from the 1970s (eco-feminism, ecological economics) that have contributed to a critique of both humanism and capitalism as precursors of critical posthumanism. Instead of inventing new forms of ontological and metaphysical thinking, I argue that we still need, in the words of Marx, “a ruthless criticism of all that exists” that may lead to an alternative to capitalist humanism.

Keywords: posthumanism, postcritique, Marxism, capitalism, humanism.

If one were to map a tiny bit of the contemporary debates around what is left of the humanities, what they are and, maybe more acutely problematic, what they should be, one would inevitably come across Latourians of many flavors, Marxists of various inclinations, and investigators of different kinds of posthumanisms. However, in recent years, there seems to be a more clear-cut distinction between those who still practice critique in the sense of a “hermeneutics of suspicion” and those who argue or begin from the assumption that “critique has run out of steam.” It has by now become obvious that this distinction is not only a methodological one, but also a politically relevant one. While the former maintain that types of Marxist or post-Marxist critique are the way to

preserve and advance anti-capitalist theory and praxis, the latter turn to an approach that criticizes *critique* as some sort of “conspiracy theory” (Latour 230) or “paranoid reading” (Kosofsky Sedgwick 127) and propose alternative modes of engagement, from actor-network theory and object-oriented ontologies to “postcritical readings” (Felski 173). In the middle of all this, posthumanism is simply reduced to a general de-centering of the “human subject” with such flavors as (literary) “critical” or “cultural” (Ferrando 25). In this paper, my aim is to propose an eco-critical posthumanism that attempts to reconcile several traditions and interventions in an intersectional framework. In other words, I argue that there can be such a theory as “suspicion” posthumanism by using contemporary theories as toolboxes, as Deleuze suggested in an interview with Foucault (208). The need for this critical posthumanism arises both from the sense that postcritical approaches (which are becoming more and more common) act only to reinforce neoliberal capitalism and, thus, need to be answered in some way, and from a very particular way of looking at what we may call the “prehistory” of critical posthumanism, that is, the eco-theories of the 1970s.

Even though talk of post-critique seems to happen mostly within the field of literary studies, it is worth noting that a general approach in this direction has been developed in the humanities for the past two decades. Starting with Latour’s “Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern” (2004), which was initially a Stanford presidential lecture held in 2003, a distrust of critique has become relatively commonplace. For instance, as I have argued elsewhere, object-oriented ontology (sometimes dubbed “flat ontology”) plays into the hands of neoliberal capitalism through its internal theoretical assumptions, but also by methodically refusing to entertain the possibility of critique (Cinci 291). Others have noticed that “the new modesty” (as the new methods of surface reading, new formalism, distant reading, and so on were described by Jeffrey J. Williams) depoliticizes the humanities, thus being neoliberal in that “it gives up the political fight” and because it “encourages a rhetoric of helpful and largely positive advice to the would-be consumer” (Robbins). For Marxist critic Robert T. Tally Jr., the causes of this shift might as well be the “broader neoliberalism permeating twenty-first-century society as a whole” (51), with all its ideology of individualism and free market efficiency. It thus follows that “the new modesty,” post-critique, flat ontology, or whatever name is used to describe it, is a

symptom of Fisher's "capitalist realism" (*Capitalist Realism* 2), the impossibility of imagining alternatives to neoliberalism and the cancellation of any futures other than the capitalist one (or the cancellation of the future in general). By now, this idea of a "slow cancellation of the future" has become something of a commonplace complaint within the left. Bifo Berardi's *After the Future* (published in English in 2011) explains that the "psychological perception" and the "cultural expectations (...) of an ever-progressing development" have been cancelled after 1977 (42). Fisher takes on this argument and notices that nostalgia is the pervading response to the current situation (*Ghosts* 16). Citing Wendy Brown's criticism of the absence within the left of both a radical critique and an alternative to the status quo (26), Fisher mentions that "the specters of lost futures (...) reproach the formal nostalgia of the capitalist realist world" (*Ghosts* 21). It is in this context that postcritical theories emerged.

Historical sources of posthumanist thought

Where does critical posthumanism fit in all this? As Ferrando rightly points out, posthumanism is the result of the postmodern turn (25) that emphasized new forms of critical theory such as feminist, post-colonial, black, and so on, on the one hand; on the other hand, it must be admitted that posthumanism is strictly related to the postmodern dissolution of the modern ideology of progressive development whose demise was decried by Berardi and Fisher and whose expression is Lyotard's assumption about the "incredulity towards metanarratives" (xxiv):

To the obsolescence of the metanarrative apparatus of legitimation corresponds, most notably, the crisis of metaphysical philosophy and of the university institution which in the past relied on it. The narrative function is losing its functors, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goals. It is being dispersed in clouds of narrative language elements (...). Each of us lives at the intersection of many of these. (...) There are many different language games – a heterogeneity of elements. (Lyotard xxiv)

It is clear now that there is a profound tension between the above definition of the postmodern condition as the loss of the "great" elements of modern legitimation practices and the concept of lost futures employed by Fisher and Berardi. In a sense, the

postmodern, with its disbelief towards the grand narratives of history, leaves little room for futurology. At the same time, it offers the opportunity to dismantle modern historical ideologies and concepts in a way that makes critique even more necessary and relevant. If postcritical thought is rooted in the postmodern condition because it accepts to completely give up what Lyotard calls the “great” elements of modernity, critique dismantles them in order to expose their underlying workings. In the end, it is a matter of political perspective: one may either accept and perpetuate the status quo of neoliberal capitalism, or apply, in the words of young Marx, “a ruthless criticism of everything that exists” (MarxEngels, *Collected* 142). In this context, the “hermeneutics of suspicion” is that which brought about the postmodern condition and, methodologically speaking, it is worth remembering that Marx, in the *Afterword* to the second German edition of *Capital*, volume 1, where he tries to answer some of the criticism to the first editions, ironically says that it was not his intention to write “recipes for the cook-shops of the future,” but to do a critical description of capitalism.

One major part of the Western metanarrative apparatus of legitimation is obviously humanism. For instance, posthumanism began by analyzing and eventually dismantling the Cartesian distinction between *res cogitans* and *res extensa* (Badmington 18; Herbrechter 53). More importantly, in what I consider to be the foundational text for critical posthumanism, “The Cyborg Manifesto,” Haraway describes Western dualisms as political tools of systemic domination of “women, people of color, nature, workers, animals – in short, domination of all constituted as others (...)” (Haraway, Wolfe 59). This intersectional perspective on Western systems of oppression founded on dualism is the basis for a potential critique of “anthropocentrism.” At the same time, Cartesian dualism is discussed, for instance, by Sagan and Margulis in another attempt to critically dismantle humanism:

It will cost our culture until we recover our senses (...) and return to the awareness that we must fully reject Cartesian anthropocentrism. We are interconnected not only to other people but to all other living beings on this planet's surface. The received view is that air travel, telephone lines, internet computer hookups, waterways, and fax machines connect only people. In fact, they connect, through us and others, all life. This incorrect view,

symptomatic of residual Cartesian anthropocentrism, is biologically naive. (Margulis, Sagan 182)

What we see here is the legacy of the 1970s, another major source of posthumanist critical thought and one that is often overlooked. When Lyotard published *The Postmodern Condition*, in 1979, a number of eco-critical interventions had already been underway. The most notorious of these is Lovelock and Margulis' Gaia theory which posits that the Earth is a self-regulating system where, simply put, life creates the conditions for its own existence (Lovelock, Margulis 9), a system consisting of "physical, chemical, biological, and human components" (Lovelock 1). As Lovelock noticed later, much to his discontent, two versions of Gaia theory were developed after his initial research: a strong one, which says that the Earth is alive in the biological sense of the word, a kind of Mother Nature, and a weak one, which is more in tune with Lovelock's original hypothesis, and which says that the Earth is a self-regulating system. Within the contemporary ecological and eco-critical framework, the fact that the Earth system is made up of interconnected and interdependent components is no longer seen as dubious as it was during the 1970s. The Gaia theory, as one writer notes, sounds ancient to modern, hard-scientific sensibilities in part because some of its tenets were explained by pre-Socratic philosophers and in part because of the Cartesian-Newtonian mechanistic philosophy (Scofield 151). The Gaia theory contradicts Descartes' view of nature, or *res extensa*, as a machine, thus quantifiable and ready to be subjected to exploitation for profit without any consequences (Scofield 157).

This mechanistic interpretation was challenged in the field of economics in 1970 by Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen's paper "The Entropy Law and the Economic Problem." In a context where, much like today, talk of "economic growth," the macroeconomists' rendition of the modern metanarrative of "progress," was taken as a given or as an unquestionable necessity, Georgescu-Roegen was set to explain why infinite growth was impossible using the entropy argument. The self-described "unorthodox economist" posited that the economic process was not self-sustaining. Rather, it transformed "*valuable natural resources*" into "*valueless waste*" (81; original emphasis) or, in other words, it turned low entropy into high entropy. Thus, Georgescu-Roegen managed to shed new light onto a fact that was becoming a concern at the time, pollution. If every

economic process ultimately creates waste, as per the second law of thermodynamics, then nature/natural resources is/are not a machine to be exploited *ad infinitum* without any consequences. Eventually, the waste will accumulate in the environment and have a harmful effect on future generations (Georgescu-Roegen 131). This simple conclusion is what led Georgescu-Roegen to advocate for what he called “bioeconomics,” a merger between economics and ecology, and for limiting economic growth. At roughly the same time, Lovelock was developing his Gaia theory in a more positive and optimistic vein, but in very similar terms. For both Georgescu-Roegen and Lovelock the relationship between human activities and nature was, in the very least, debatable, if not downright problematic. However, I must notice here that whenever there is talk of causes for concern, the term “human” is used, as if “humanism” refers to all the genus *Homo*.

Looking at the sources of Haraway’s posthumanist intersectional approach to what Western thought constituted as “others,” yet another contribution to the development of critical theory in the 1970s was ecofeminism. Starting as a critique of the historical construction of a patriarchal consciousness defined in opposition to nature and recognizing the essential fact that nature was perceived as feminine in, for instance, Rosemary Ruether’s 1975 book *New Woman, New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation* (Adams & Gruen 16) or Susan Griffin’s 1979 rather poetic, but nonetheless straightforward exploration of the same topic in *Nature and Woman*, ecofeminism too shifted its focus towards a critique of Western and, more specifically, Cartesian mechanistic philosophy. Carolyn Merchant’s *Death of Nature* (1980) sought to understand the development of the system of domination of both women and nature via the Scientific Revolution and thus to openly merge the ecology movement (with its critique of capitalism, progress, and infinite growth) with feminism (with its critique of Western patriarchy) (xix-xx). Cartesian dualism is rendered as an overarching scientific ideology that justifies oppression of “nature, women, and the lower orders of society” (Merchant 164) by enforcing the workings of capitalism upon them.

Let us now return to our initial question: what of critical posthumanism within the divide between neoliberal postcritical approaches and the “hermeneutics of suspicion”? In a sense, this depends on what we mean by “critical posthumanism.” If we take it to be a theoretical position that emerges out of the critical postmodern interventions mentioned above and whose foundation lies in Haraway’s “Cyborg

Manifesto,” then critical posthumanism is Marxist-socialist-feminist approach that deconstructs the supposed “anthropocentrism” of Western humanism by correcting the assumption that “humans” are responsible for the current climate crises. It does that by understanding Haraway’s cyborg as alternative scientific theory and praxis, one that exposes Western dualisms for what they are, i.e., systems of oppression (Haraway, Wolfe 67). As we have already seen, the critique of the assumption that nature is inert, dead, and mechanistic that was so common and that created so many converging points of view in the 1970s already contained the seed of Haraway’s inherent critique of capitalist humanism. Insofar as critical posthumanism is concerned, the practical alternatives to Western dualistic ideology were created in the form of ontologies by those who are now referred to as “new materialists.” For instance, Barad’s agential realist ontology takes Niels Bohr’s formulation of an anti-Cartesian and anti-Newtonian framework in order to come up with the concept of *intra-action*, the co-constitution of subject and object within the event (Barad 154, 152). At the same time, Barad’s materialist-discursive approach has a political stake in that it considers economic practices and social matters such as gender identities as being produced within an intra-active process (Barad 237-238). Thus, Barad shifts the original meaning of Crenshaw’s intersectionality in identity formation to a more fluid framework whereby “‘identities’ are mutually constituted and (re)configured through one another in dynamic intra-relationship with the iterative (re)configuring of relations of power” (240-241). In other words, modern identities such as human, man, woman, nature, animal, matter, etc. are configured within intra-active events that configure relations of power. In turn, this means that everything that makes up the Gaian system we call Earth is co-constituted, erasing the Cartesian divide between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, a notion that Stacy Alaimo theorized as “trans-corporeality” (*Bodily Natures 2; Exposed 8*).

Posthumanist intersections

Considering the above explanation and the general narrative that I am trying to (re)construct here a number of issues present themselves. Firstly, if the critical posthumanism described here is a feminist anti-capitalist materialism, how is it that “posthumanism” has lately become equated mostly with inoffensive “apolitical” Latourianisms? Secondly, if critical posthumanism implies, let’s say, Barad’s new

materialism, how is it different from historical materialism? Thirdly, if critical posthumanism is anti-capitalist materialism, as we have seen, what is its relationship with eco-socialist critique? And lastly, how can eco-critical posthumanism as a potential research program follow the path set in the 1970s and the 1980s by ecological economics, eco-feminism, socialist feminism, and so on?

There is obviously some overlap between non-critical forms of contemporary theory and the anti-Cartesian new materialism that I associate with critical posthumanism. As I have already noticed, both begin from or end up refuting the Western tradition of human exceptionalism. That said, beginning with the 1990s, the initial posthumanism and its potential critique of systems of domination and exploitation have been rendered neutral. Whether or not this had something to do with the United States winning the Cold War, a consolidation of neoliberalism, and the general sense that there is no alternative to it is, of course, up to debate and speculation. However, symptomatic of this fact is Haraway's relegation of a major criticism of Latour to an endnote in a paper from 1992. More specifically, Haraway rightly notices that Latour dismisses "masculine supremacy or racism or imperialism or class structures" as "old 'social' ghosts" that have no place in his discourse on science studies (*The Promises* 332n). It seems that the drive to construct and to affirm new instances of onto-metaphysics overpowered the development of posthumanism as a form of critical theory, which led to the commonly held assumption that Latour's work is "the clearest example of a posthuman philosophy that seeks to simultaneously reconfigure what we understand by politics whilst rejecting engagement with politics as it is currently configured" (Martin 99). For instance, Braidotti, when proposing "critical posthumanism," strangely asserts that she wants to "move beyond analytic posthumanism and develop affirmative perspectives" (45), before talking about how "we are becoming posthuman ethical subjects" (190) without actually explaining what this means. On the other hand, Wolfe criticizes Western humanism because it reproduces a "normative subjectivity" and "a specific concept of the human" (xvii), which he goes on to dismantle by proposing an intersectional framework of "shared trans-species being-in-the-world" (141). While it is true that Wolfe does not engage in a critique of capitalism, he does nonetheless practice a political critique of humanism in tune with Haraway's socialist-feminist perspective. In a sense, the fact that after 1990

posthumanism focused more on criticizing the normative identities of humanism in an attempt to promote a strictly ontological equality *without* striving to explain the processes involved in the development of political inequality may be the cause of the widespread perception that posthumanism is merely flat ontology.

Instead, I argue here for a political posthumanism, one that takes seriously Haraway's original Marxist feminist intersectional theory and that turns it into a research program of theoretically and practically analyzing the normative concept of "human" as it was historically formulated by Western humanism in opposition with an entire range of "others," such as animals, workers, women, children, and so on. At the same time, political posthumanism necessarily understands an intersection of another kind, that of classical humanism and capitalism. In their historical materialist method, Marx and Engels famously argued that the dominant ideas in a given society are the ideas of the ruling class and that these ideas are expressions of the dominant material relationships (Marx Engels, *The German* 64). Thus, classical liberal humanism emerges as the expression of capitalism as a system of economic, social, and political oppression. At the same time, the Cartesian divide between reason and nature was perpetuated because it served the purposes of capitalism. One example that I will provide here is Eric Williams' assertion that "slavery was not born of racism: rather, racism was the consequence of slavery" (5). Since the American colonies of the seventeenth century were in need of labor (Anievas, Nişancıoğlu 157), the Europeans resorted to African slaves as the "cheapest and best" (Williams 17). In this context, where colonization had already been predicated on the liberal humanist right to private property, as it is found, for instance, in Locke's *Second Treatise* (18-19), the African essentially became property of the plantation owner who had all the legal rights associated with this status. By mid-seventeenth-century, Africans were deemed either inferior to the white Europeans, or simply "subhuman" (Fredrickson 56-57). As such, Western modernity invented racism in order to justify slavery which was used in the development of capitalism. Thus, it becomes clear that Aristotle's assumption that "human" was not a definition applicable to all the genus *Homo* but only to the dominant class (Zimmerman) directly informed and structured the configuration of Enlightenment humanism. While some, such as Aimé Césaire, have talked about the necessity of an alternative, more inclusive humanism, antithetical to the one described above (22), I propose that deconstructing

the very idea of humanism and exposing it for what it is, i.e. the ideological side of capitalism, is more helpful for understanding and critiquing its present workings, especially in what the current ecological crises are concerned.

Capitalism has obviously changed since the days of Marx and Engels. Today, probably its best description is that of Guattari, as Integrated World Capitalism (47) consisting of three main aspects: a productive one, historically, that which Marx and Engels analyzed, an economic one, and a subjective one. Taken as a whole, Guattari's Integrated World Capitalism is a system of oppression that permeates all the layers of social and ecological relations. In response to IWC, the French psychoanalyst advocates for ecology as a systematic questioning of "the whole of subjectivity and capitalistic power formations" (52) from three points of view that form his ecosophy: social, mental, and environmental. Herein lies an important detail that I must emphasize. Marx and Engels presented their materialism as "new" (*The German* 123) and radically different from what they called "contemplative materialism" (e. g. that of Feuerbach) because it was concerned with social relations or, in their own words, "social humanity" (*The German* 123). However, since the industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century was less complex than what Guattari calls Integrated World Capitalism, especially in what the ecological aspects are concerned, the politics of new materialism may shed some light on the ways in which capital works globally to subject and extract value from labor and how it turns the environment into "resources" for its own reproduction. New materialism, with its focus on intra-active co-constitution and on flows of matter-energy is not opposed to Marxist materialism. Rather, it is a necessary addition that may contribute to a critique of capitalism. To take an example that I have given elsewhere, a T-shirt (like any other thing) is a complicated object: made of cotton from Global South plantations that use the largest amount of water of all crops, thus leading to freshwater loss, and huge amounts of pesticides, thus leading to loss of biodiversity and worsening workers' health, processed and dyed using toxic chemicals that end up contaminating waters and affecting fish populations, then manufactured by, for instance, Bangladeshi textile workers facing high risks for low wages, and then entering consumer culture with the aid of advertising only to be discarded as waste, often exported from overdeveloped countries to underdeveloped ones (Clinici 290-291). In other words, a T-shirt is a complex event or object co-constituted within the flows of Integrated World Capitalism,

encompassing a social ecology, that of productive labor (like that analyzed by Marx), an environmental ecology, that of pollution, resource extraction, and generation of waste (such as the one analyzed by Georgescu-Roegen), and the mental ecology of, let's say, capitalist commodity fetishism.

So far, the intersectional critical posthumanism that I am trying to develop here resembles the relatively recent eco-socialist Marxist approach of, for instance, John Bellamy Foster. In a paper from 2023, Foster explains that Marx was a critic of Enlightenment humanism and seizes the opportunity to criticize contemporary posthumanism for failing to see this very fact. According to Foster, this eco-socialist Marx is anti-anthropocentric in that it seeks to “reconcile humanism and nature” and to supersede “those material conditions of the capitalism mode of production that had made Enlightenment humanism the paradigmatic form of bourgeois thought.” Foster focuses specifically on the intersectionality of Marxist thought (although he does not name it as such): humanism breeds colonialism, worker exploitation in the form of the wage relation or in the form of a property relation, that is, slavery, the treatment of women, and individualism. Moreover, in Foster's reading, Marx saw that alienation from nature and alienation of labor are two aspects of the same historical process and that “nature” has become enclosed, segmented, fragmented, and eventually turned into property. With these ideas in mind, Foster goes on to provide a critique of posthumanism (which he sees as replicating Marx's criticism of humanism) for not being a philosophy of praxis. The general confusion around the term “posthumanism” lingers on, as Foster mentions Latourianisms such as object-oriented ontology alongside Haraway and new materialism, all of which he seems to equate with flat ontology. If we take Foster's perspective (that posthumanism is merely flat ontology) for granted, his criticism is extremely accurate, echoing Marx and Engels' critique of Feuerbach's materialism and understanding the highly problematic “apolitical” character of such theories. However, in this context, we need look no further than Engels' discussion on dialectic materialism that starts from the very premise that the material world is “an endless entanglement of relations and reactions, permutations and combinations” (367) where “causes and effects are eternally changing places” (369). New materialism, as presented in the works of theorists like Barad and Alaimo, starts from this Heraclitean assumption. From this point of view, the critical posthumanism that I am trying to

outline here matches Foster's interpretation of Marx's criticism of humanism, but it includes new materialism as a way to understand how Integrated World Capitalism essentially causes multiple ecological crises that are connected to, but not exclusively caused by, the process of capitalist production. In the same paper, Foster cites Soper saying that "it is human ways of living (...) that are wrecking the planet" (366). Although not completely shared by Foster, who insists on capitalist production, this quote is emblematic of a misconception that is found deep within the concept of the Anthropocene, that is, the fact that "humans" are responsible for the current ecological issues. One of critical posthumanism's tasks is to insist that "human" is a normative historical concept not applicable to all the genus *Homo*, especially in this context. The genus *Homo* is not "wrecking the planet." The workings of global capitalism are.

There is another tension related to the conceptual framework that I am proposing here that I need to discuss. Within Marxism, the question of intersectionality is still thorny. Obviously, orthodox Marxism traditionally focuses on class relations, while feminist Marxism, critical race theory, and postcolonial theory discuss race and gender (Bohrer). Intersectionality emerged as a way to express the cross-oppression of black working-class women in the United States, it eventually led to the identity politics that is often criticized by Marxists (Bohrer). However, if we look at Foster's interpretation of Marx or at Losurdo's similar reading (13), we understand, firstly, that class struggle is not merely the conflict between the laborers and the owners of the means of production, even for Marx, but the tension within social relations of exploitation and oppression. Identities are therefore not ahistorical, they are co-constituted as social relations at the intersection of liberalism, capitalism, colonialism, neocolonialism, and so on. And I am not simply talking about a new humanism. It is worth remembering that Marx criticized mid-nineteenth-century English industrial farming as a "system of cell prison" and decried the "abnormal" physical development of the animals, a process whose sole purpose was that of rendering more produce, thus more profit (Saito 62). In general, one of the Marxian concepts that was rediscovered by eco-socialists and that became one of the pillars of their theory, "metabolism," states that there is a matter/energy "interchange between society and nature" (Foster, Clark, York 75), or, if we change the phrasing a bit, the intra-action of society and nature mutually constitutes them according to the material, social, economic, and political conditions of a given time. The

“metabolic rift” initially theorized by Foster on the basis of Marx’s observations regarding soil fertility is the impact of capitalist economic and social praxis onto the global ecosystem. Thus, Marxist eco-socialists themselves turn out to be less orthodox in that their eco-critical reading of Marx is consistent with the intersectional perspective that I am proposing here. The capitalist-humanist system exacts oppressive practices not only onto workers and animals but onto the very material conditions of life, onto the Gaian system.

Conclusion

The eco-critical posthumanism that I proposed here is, in many ways, a response to post-critique. Even though it may seem that post-critique is limited to literary studies, on a closer examination of its entanglement with generally apolitical approaches, we find that it is an academic movement that is trying to erase critique as, in Latour’s phrasing, “conspiracy theory.” Oftentimes, post-critical theories are integrated within the broader label of “posthumanism.” However, by taking a closer look at posthumanist thought, its critical (and eco-critical) potential is revealed as a very specific critique of historical and contemporary capitalism-humanism. One of the major propositions that I tried to develop here is that of a deconstruction of classical liberal humanism by exposing its workings as the ideology of capitalism. If anything, as a critical research program, posthumanism should make visible and insist on intersectional systems of oppression that legitimize integrated world capitalist practices. I am very much aware of the fact that this heterodox Marxist approach seems weird. As it is generally understood today, posthumanism is not a critique of capitalism. However, such a critique is absolutely necessary if we entertain the possibility that posthumanism is not merely apolitical academic theory, but also the seed of potential practices. Similarly, it may be said that exclusively practicing critique without prescribing some “recipes” for the future is problematic because one cannot simply engage in acts of demolition without a plan to rebuild. Still, the climate crises, the economic crises, the social crises, the looming prospect of global conflict, and the general Gaian ecological crises are sufficient reasons to insist that capitalism-humanism must be exposed for what it is: a globally integrated system of oppression driven by private profit.

In 2013, Mark Fisher published his famous article “Exiting the Vampire Castle” at the end of which he stated that outside of the sterile debates of “communicative capitalism” there lies class struggle and the prospective class consciousness. Similarly, I would argue that beyond academic debates regarding this or that Marxism, this or that critical approach, there is a potential for a unified leftist critique. Reconciling all these branches of the left, the program that I tried to outline here, is probably not very appealing for a number of those involved. But, like Fisher, we must keep in mind that our objective is to “build comradeship and solidarity instead of doing capital’s work for it by condemning and abusing each other.” When the act of practicing critique is under threat of becoming more marginal than it already is, this solidarity is the only answer.

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