## Chapter 1: Poststructuralism and the End(s) of Humanism

> While posthumanism owes many debts to antihumanist thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan and Louis Althusser, it tends to differ from antihumanism in one principal respect: while the antihumanists actively set out to overturn the hegemony of anthropocentrism, posthumanists begin with the recognition that 'Man' is (always) already a falling or fallen figure. What this means is that posthumanism often tends to take humanism's waning or disappearance as something of a given.[1]

*Post-, Again*

It is both a blessing and a curse that every generation has to re-appropriate and to re-create the world in their own image. It is a blessing because a new take on something as heavily sedimented as the history of human thought promises to bring fresh insight into something that has at times become decidedly stuffy and oppressive. It allows for a fresh look at things, which often makes former problems look like rather quaint obsessions while new tasks have appeared that impose themselves by their clear and immediate urgency. It is also a curse, however, because the repression that is involved in this re-appropriating and re-positioning process inevitably produces blind spots that might condemn the next generation to fight similar battles or repeat mistakes committed by previous ones. This has always been the mixed blessing involved in 'learning lessons' from history – even if or maybe because they also always involve a certain *un*learning. The transition from poststructuralism to posthumanism is no exception here.

Coming to the discussion about posthumanism and the posthuman and the question of what might come after the human, today, means being caught up in the conundrum of 'belatedness' this historical un/learning process produces. Modernity gave rise to a historical understanding based on the idea of futurity and progress as the driving force of development. The tacit consensus ever since, coinciding with the emergence of the Enlightenment, has been that history moves dialectically: every subsequent generation has to perform a kind of synthesis of previous contradictions and thereby ideally produces human civilisatory progress – an assumption that still underpins much of the legitimatory discourse in contemporary culture and politics.[2]

This consensus also constitutes the foundation of what is usually referred to as '(Western) liberal humanism' as the dominant, common sense, understanding of how every human being, rather ironically, expresses both its uniqueness and freedom in the hope of bringing about a better future for humankind –a very powerful idea difficult to dismiss. The dialectics of history finds its articulation both in Hegel (1770-1831) and in Marx (1818-1883), it is also at work in

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[1] Neil Badmington, "Posthumanism", in: Simon Malpas and Paul Wake, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Critical Theory* (London: Routledge: 2006), pp. 240-241.

[2] It was Foucault's influential "What is Enlightenment?" (a reply to Kant's famous text written in 1784) that described modernity as an "attitude" or "ethos" characterised by the "will to 'heroize' the present" (cf. Paul Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), pp. 32-33).

Freudian psychoanalysis und much of modern science. Nietzsche (1844-1900), on the other hand, was far more sceptical regarding the anthropocentrism and Christian morality underpinning the historiography of his time. Instead, he emphasised the human "will to power" at work in the history of mentalities.[3] Needless to say that all these thinkers had their doubts and conflicting views about the inevitability and feasibility of the idea of human perfectibility and about the ambiguity of the form and idea of what an end of history might actually look like. Following on from these early 'masters of suspicion' – Nietzsche, Marx and Freud – the poststructuralists and postmodernists of the second half of the 20th century form the first philosophical (or 'theoretical') movement that takes the problem of belatedness, the end of history, including the "end of man" (i.e. the mixed blessings of 'coming after' outlined above) as a starting point of their thinking and politics.

In *Specters of Marx* (1994), Jacques Derrida, often seen as *the* representative of a whole generation of poststructuralist thinkers, describes how "the eschatological themes of the 'end of history,' of the 'end of .Marxism,' of 'the end of philosophy,' of 'the ends of man,' of the 'last man' and so forth were, in the '50s, that is, forty years ago, our daily bread". [4] Derrida had previously referred to this "endism"[5] as a certain "apocalyptic tone in philosophy" (echoing Kant [1724-1804]), provoked by "the reading or analysis of those whom we could nickname the *classics of the end*". These formed "the canon of the modern apocalypse (end of History, end of Man, end of Philosophy, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger)", as taught by the influential Alexandre Kojève (1902-1968) in 1930s and 1940s Paris, who helped produce an entire generation of French Neo-Hegelians (among whom Bataille, Derrida, Lacan and Foucault). Derrida, however, also insists on the other – sociohistorical – side that was responsible for this apocalyptic tone and for the ubiquitous endisms of the time (which have been proliferating ever since):

> It was, *on the other hand and indissociably,* what we had known or what some of us for quite some time no longer hid from concerning totalitarian terror in all the Eastern countries, all the socio-economic disasters of Soviet bureaucracy, the Stalinism of the past and the neo-Stalinism in process…[6]

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[3] See especially his *Genealogy of Morals* (1887), "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense" (1873), and *Untimely Meditations* (1873-1876).

[4] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 14. Derrida's target in this passage is Francis Fukuyama and his *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992, a treatise on the end of the Cold War and the triumph of Western liberal democracy which, seen from a Hegelian point of view, are interpreted as the completion of history. Fukuyama later famously relativised his idea that the global reach of liberal democracy had effectively 'ended' history and instead, in *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* (London: Profile Books., 2002), claimed that biotechnology and eugenics contained the potential for a new class struggle (and hence return of 'history') in the form of a division between the (bio)technologically enhanced elite and unenhanced masses.

[5] Cf. Jacques Derrida, "Some Statements and Truisms about Neo-Logisms, Newisms, Postisms, Parasitisms, and Other Small Seisms", trans. Anne Tomiche, in: David Carroll, ed., *The States of 'Theory': History, Art, and Critical Discourse* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 63-94.

[6] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 15. Derrida's comment was made originally at a conference entitled "W(h)ither Marxism", organised by the University of California Riverside, in 1993, which was concerned

Derrida insists on contextualising the movement of 'deconstruction' he inaugurated (and which is often, problematically, seen as a synonym for poststructuralism) within these two dimensions, one philosophical, the other political. Thus, for poststructuralists and their late followers, the idea of the 'end of man', the 'last man', or, indeed, "after the human" bears a certain *déjà-vu*, as Derrida explains:

> those with whom I shared this singular period, this double and unique experience (both philosophical and political), for us, I venture to say, the media parade of current discourse on the end of history and the last man looks most often like a tiresome anachronism.[7]

Ignoring this dynamic of belatedness usually leads to the idea that, in relation to posthumanism and the posthuman, poststructuralism merely plays the role of a precursor who has done its job but now needs to be overcome in turn. This is then expressed in the following way: while the 'antihumanism' of the poststructuralists was a springboard for the kind of radical critique of humanism that posthumanism today represents, this now needs surpassing, extending, radicalising, and so on. We can see the specters of the Hegelian dialectic raise its head again, especially since the antihumanism often attributed to 'poststructuralists' like Althusser, Barthes, Derrida, Foucault and Lyotard – none of whom ever owned up to that label – was in fact already a highly contested inheritance of structuralism.[8] It was Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and his structuralist followers like the anthropologist Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009) who believed that language and its principles could be made transparent and applied to all meaning-making systems (from anthropological kinship to fashion),[9] while the generation following them were already much more sceptical of both the empirical applicability and the metaphysical presuppositions on which a structuralist idea of language as a conventional, rule-based and abstract system of representation relied.

The outlined logic of surpassing and belatedness thus already applies to the relationship between structuralism and its critical inheritors, as well, of course, as to any previous schools of thought and their predecessors and successors. As Robert Young explains:

> 'Post-structuralism' is an 'umbrella term' which involves a 'displacement' and is more of 'an interrogation of structuralism's methods and assumptions, of transforming structuralist concepts by turning one against another'. However, it is not about 'origin' or a 'Fall' from it: Structuralism as an origin never existed in a pre-lapsarian purity or

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with the survival of Marxism after its demise and ideological discreditation following the fall of the Soviet empire and what, in the 1990s, looked like the unstoppable 'triumph' of capitalism and liberal democracy.

[7] *Ibid*., p. 15.

[8] This is made very clear in John Sturrock's influential *Structuralism and Since* (1979) which still remains one of the best introductions to poststructuralist thinking, together with Catherine Belsey's *Critical Practice* (London: Methuen, 1980) and *Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[9] The rolling out of structuralist linguistics as a model towards the humanities and social sciences in general is usually referred to as the "linguistic turn". For a useful overview see Claire Colebrook, "The Linguistic Turn in Continental Philosophy", in: Alan D. Schrift, ed., *Poststructuralism and Critical Theory's Second Generation* (Durham: Acumen, 2010), pp. 279-309.

ontological fullness; post-structuralism traces the trace of structuralism's difference from itself.[10]

Consequently, the same complication also applies to the relationship between posthumanism and humanism. It is, in fact, the awareness of the problematic genealogical relationship between humanism and posthumanism that the 'critical' in the phrase 'critical posthumanism' (CPH) refers to.[11] It is therefore necessary to submit the idea of the posthuman (in the sense of 'after the human') to a poststructuralist, critical reading.

*Post-structural-ism*

One of the most important points that poststructuralism, following structuralism, makes is that meaning is irreducibly plural. Meaning does not reside *in* language but actually arises out of the selection and combination of signs. 'Post-', for example, is a prefix that derives its meaning through difference from other prefixes, in particular 'pre-', and from an entire syntax of prefixation. This is the presupposition without which no meaning can be assigned. What 'post-' actually means, following Saussurean linguistics, is the result of 'negative' difference (it acquires its meaning through all it is *not*).[12] It means 'after', i.e. *not* 'before', while both after and before themselves have a number of additional meanings.[13] They are part of an endless 'chain of signifiers' each evoking plural meanings (semiosis).

The suffix '-ism' (as opposed to, for example, '-ity', which denotes a period or a state, cf. 'modern-ity') refers to a 'discourse' (in the sense of a 'set of ideas', a doctrine, like Marx*ism*, femin*ism*, but also human*ism* and posthuman*ism*, of course).[14] A discourse is probably best understood as an attempt at making meaning cohere around a central term (in the case of structuralism that would be the term 'structure' – while *post*structuralism would be the discourse that is precisely no longer based on the idea of 'structure'). That of course does not mean that there is agreement about what that central term (i.e. structure) actually means. However, if a (temporary) consensus can be established, it can provide a focal point, a perspective from which it may be possible to try and make sense of the 'world', establish (a) 'reality'.

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[10] Robert Young, ed., *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 1.

[11] See my *Posthumanism: A Critical Analysis* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013) for an extensive explanation of what a *critical* posthumanist stance entails.

[12] Derrida goes on the critique Saussure's notion of difference and the binary opposition on which it relies by introducing the neologism 'différance' (in Derrida 1982 (originally 1972), see further discussion below).

[13] I explore and exploit some of the meanings and ambiguities of 'post-' and 'pre-' in *Before Humanity: Posthumanism and Ancestrality* (Leiden: Brill, 2021).

[14] On the poststructuralist notion of discourse, see for example Ian Parker *Discourse Dynamics Critical Analysis for Social and Individual Psychology* (London: Routledge, 1992), discussed in Herbrechter, *Posthumanism: A Critical Analysis*, pp. 36-38 and *passim*.

The reason I put 'world' and 'reality' in scare quotes is that poststructuralists do not believe (this is undoubtedly their Kantian legacy) that there is such a thing as a world or a reality that can be perceived 'as such', i.e. independently from an observer or, to use the more usual term, reality always is a reality *for* a 'subject'. Let me stress right away – because this is a common misunderstanding of poststructuralism – this is not the same as saying that there *is* no world, or no reality (which would be a radically nihilistic claim). It is merely a question of availability and 'realism' (which, itself, is a discourse that claims the opposite, namely that it *is* possible to see reality as it *really is*, i.e. a discourse for which the detour through a representation of reality is ultimately not problematic). For poststructuralists, representation (this can be linguistic in the narrow sense, but also perceptual in the widest sense) is not transparent, it is not just a means to an end (i.e. to give to see reality as it really is), but is something that needs to be foregrounded and analysed. Since we can only ever have representations of reality (instead of reality itself – think of all the ways in which people would disagree about what something really is, for example 'climate change'),[15] what critical thought needs to focus on is the *politics* of representation, i.e. who says what about 'x'. Since all claims about reality are contingent, it is no surprise that they are highly contested, which is saying nothing else than reality is socially constructed, shared or negotiated. What poststructuralists are suspicious of are truth claims about reality – in this sense they are anti-realist – because these are usually powerful claims that position subjects within a discourse that uses ideology.[16]

Ideology is a set of beliefs that underpins a specific discourse:[17] humanism, for example claims that there is such a thing called 'the human' and that humanism as a discourse can produce important knowledge about its 'object' (i.e. the human), or even has the power to explain what it means to be human. Usually this is a claim that is based on exclusivity and essence: there is something like a human nature or a special set of abilities that differentiate the human from nonhuman animals, inanimate objects or supernatural entities. Since this nature is exclusively human it gives rise to a certain exceptionalism or a central position of the human, i.e. anthropocentrism. From a poststructuralist point of view, what is interesting here is that the human is both the subject of the discourse called humanism (and its long history through classical to Renaissance, Enlightenment and modern secular humanism) as well as its object. Humanism, as a discourse, claims to have access to the essential and universal, that is timeless, truth of which all humans and all things human partake. It is a discourse that positions humans as subjects in a very particular, namely circular, or tautological, way. Humans are those entities that through self-reflection must come to know who and what they are by accepting that they share an essential nature that separates them from everything else.

The curious thing about a subject, however, is that it is always in an ambiguous position with regard to power, discourse and ideology. For a poststructuralist, what is particularly suspicious is humanism's paradoxical claim that a human (subject) is essentially human but, at the same time, needs to be *told* so, i.e. humans constantly need to be 'humanised'. What is even more

[15] This is the main bone of contention poststructuralism and its followers have with Object-Oriented Ontology and Speculative Realism.

[16] See Stuart Hall, ed., *Representation*, 2nd ed. Jessica Evans and Sean Nixon (London: Sage, 2013), pp. 1-59.

[17] Cf. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards and Investigation", trans. Ben Brewster, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (London: NLB, 1971), pp. 121-173.

suspicious is that this claim is usually made in conjunction with a liberal discourse that presupposes that the human is essentially free to make a choice about him- or herself (more problematically, 'itself'), in the sense of: you are essentially human if you choose to be so. If you act against your supposed 'nature' you are essentially 'inhuman', i.e. a 'monster'.[18] The discourse based on this contradiction – a free human subject that needs to be reminded that it has a free choice (usually between good and evil) – is what poststructuralists refer to as 'liberal humanism', and which is their main target.

A few words still need to be added about the middle part of post-*structural*-ism. The central idea that structuralists presuppose is that the way people make sense of things is by internalising a system of rules (see above) which allows them to map what otherwise would be a chaotic mess. So, for a structuralist, meaning is produced through an interplay or mapping between a concrete formal manifestation (a recognition) and some underlying pattern, or 'structure'. Let us stick with the example of a map. In order to make sense of a territory that you do not know and that you need to find your way around what you do is look for landmarks. These are signs that you have previously encountered and whose meaning you now project onto the new territory: there is a river, there is a mountain, there is a valley, there is North, there is South, etc. So, you are applying an underlying structure onto which you map the new territory. The particularity and the newness of the territory arises from the differences it presents to the structures you 'recognise': this particular new mountain looks similar to all the mountains you know, but it is also different because its peak looks like, say, a face. So you are applying your previous knowledge of mountains and humans to make sense of the difference that, in a sense, you have helped to establish or create. This works for a geographical as well as for other discourses. You presuppose an underlying structured system of what the 'human' for example is about and can do and which applies once you encounter beings that look at once similar to the kind of humans you know but who are also significantly different from what your structural 'knowledge' of humanness provides: e.g. a different skin colour or 'type', a human with qualities that are usually associated with nonhuman 'others' (e.g. a chimera or a cyborg) and so on.[19]

The critique that poststructuralism applies to this way of making sense – which, however, is and remains the standard way of making sense – is that this idea of underlying structure and manifestation is a depth-surface model that is highly problematic if you think it through. This is precisely what the 'post' in front of structuralism signals, and this is also where (Derridean) deconstruction comes in.[20] If that underlying structure, let us call it a systematic knowledge about 'humanness', is a model or 'territory' onto which concrete humans, nonhumans and also posthumans have to be mapped (or to which they have to be compared), in serving as a

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[18] Cf. Elaine Graham, *Representations of the Post/Human: Monsters, Aliens and Others in Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), and Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, ed., *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

[19] What to do with this 'difference' remains an eternal stumbling block for humanist ideas of 'universalism' and continues to be a highly contentious issue, particularly with regard to race, gender and species and their critique in posthumanist theory.

[20] Cf. Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences [1966]", in: Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato, eds., *The Languages of Criticism and The Sciences of Man: The Structuralist Controversy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), pp. 247-272.

model, it is at the same time both the origin and end point of the meaning thus produced; it is both its essence and its truth. However, if you want to make that structure present, if you want to find out what it really is, you will realise that its ultimate meaning will always escape you, because every manifestation of a particular human, for example, is always different from its idealised type. This means that – and this is the Derridean move that is captured by the neologism 'différance' – the full meaning of any structure and any essence must always be deferred while constantly differing from itself, i.e. while producing and proliferating differences or meanings. One therefore never arrives at a stable structure that could once and for all establish the meaning of what it is to be human (or posthuman for that matter). This would not be revolutionary or problematic if there were not constant attempts to pretend or claim by some people, philosophers, scientists, but also politicians, that they *do* know what things really mean once and for all (again, this is not a nihilist or populist argument that no safe meaning can ever be established, but it does challenge absolute truth claims). Humanists usually think they know what it means to be human (or at least tend to be confident about what isn't human), posthumanists – and this is the point of the 'post' in posthumanism – are less certain.

A discussion of poststructuralist, 'post-Saussurean', linguistics would not be complete without a discussion of the role of narrative. Signs do not occur in isolation, as soon as you perceive or think of a sign (a picture, a word, a landscape, a face, an object – literally everything that evokes meaning), meanings and associations come rushing in: experiences you have had, but also new connections that you make depending on a context. In order to create some sense of continuity, let us call this 'identity', in order to temporarily arrest this meaning and make it meaningful for someone (an 'I', which also implies a 'you', an 'us', a 'them', a 'world' and so on) you need to give this meaning a sequential order. This is what narrative does. It helps you make sense of time and in doing so, it establishes cause and effect – the basic operation of what philosophers refer to as 'rationality' (enabled by the faculty of 'reason' that is supposed to be innate, or natural, to every member of the human species and which, in turn, sanctions the most fundamental claims on which humanism, anthropocentrism and exceptionalism are based). A discourse like humanism is striving to create consensus about what it means to be human by establishing a consensus about how we became, are, continue to be and will further develop as, humans. In short, it takes the indefinite number of individual (human) stories and ways of making sense of (human) identity and turns them into what Lyotard, following Wittgenstein, called a '*grand récit*', or a powerful 'metanarrative'. A metanarrative is a narrative that appropriates a variety of smaller narratives and it is designed to legitimate central social values like freedom, individuality, or, as in the case of humanism's metanarrative, what it means to be human. [21]

Another, decisive, complication in the term 'post-human-ism' is an ambiguity about what the post in posthumanism precisely wishes to post (i.e. to critique, to project, to 'end'). There is a posthumanism that projects the end of human*ism*, the discourse; and there is a

[21] An 'incredulity' towards metanarratives is often seen, following Lyotard, as the central tenet of postmodernism (cf. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections of Time* [1988], trans. Geoff Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

posthumanism that anticipates the end of the *human*. I would prefer to call the second variety, the desire that lies behind the idea of an overcoming of the *human*, 'transhumanist'.[22]

*Poststructuralism and Posthumanism*

*Critical* posthumanism (CPH) appropriates, continues and rewrites the legacy of poststructuralism while being aware of the problematic of dialectical overcoming and the ambiguity of the gesture of posting as described above. As a result, the main challenge is not to overcome (certainly not the human, maybe somewhat more humbly, human*ism*) but to submit to deconstruction the entire humanist philosophical tradition, worldview and set of values that have come to dominate Western culture, arguably form its ancient Greek, Roman and Judeo-Christian beginnings.

More specifically, what posthumanism extends and complicates are poststructuralist notions of subjectivity, writing and alterity. The problems that a posthumanist thinking, or a thinking 'after the human' faces (or a certain humanist notion of the human to be more precise), all refer back to the questions raised by poststructuralism's antihumanist stance. These problems are most clearly articulated in some emblematic postructuralist debates like Foucault's idea of the end of man, Derrida's reprise in his 'The Ends of Man', the discussion around the 'death' of the subject and the question of who or what might come after it, as well as Lyotard's notion of the inhuman.[23]

The main reason why poststructuralism is seen as antihumanist is that it treats the humanist subject (i.e. 'man') as a ghost-like figure, as a misconception that is about to disappear. A very brief history of the modern (liberal humanist) subject would read like this: Descartes believed that by doubting everything but his own ability to doubt he could infer the existence of a thinking subject (*ego cogito ergo sum*). Kant raised the stakes by making the subject the centre of experience and thereby excluded the object (or the 'thing as such') from (human) ontological investigation (which, under the name of 'correlationism', has become the main target of critique by 'speculative realism' and 'object-oriented-ontology').[24] Both Nietzsche and Freud are associated with a critique of the modern, Kantian, or transcendental notion of

[22] For the distinction between post- and transhumanism see Herbrechter, *Posthumanism: A Critical Analysis*, p. 40ff. Transhumanism is not so much a break with humanism (especially not with its anthropocentrism) but a continuation and projected achievement of human perfectibility (usually claimed to be achievable by way of technological and moral enhancement or, transcendence into a new "species", i.e. cyborgs and AI. Transhumanist technotopias of enhancement or replacement usually go the expense or a rejection of human 'embodiment'.

[23] Again, there is a significant overlap between poststructuralism and postmodernism in this context. One way of distinguishing poststructuralism from postmodernism might be simply "pragmatic" in that the former is the more "philosophical" while the latter tends to be a broader "sociological" way of making sense of "modernity".

[24] Quentin Meillassoux defines correlationism as "the idea according to which we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and being, and never to either term considered apart from the other" (Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. Ray Brassier (London: Continuum, 2008), p. 5).

subjectivity, however, it is structuralism in the first half of the 20th century, and poststructuralism that have accelerated the 'decentring' and 'death' of the (unified, self-centred, conscious) subject. Posthumanism partakes in the still ongoing deconstruction of the subject by focusing on a critique of subjectivity's inherent anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism. In this respect, the idea of 'after the human', clearly recalls the landmark collection of essays figuring the who's who of poststructuralism at the time it was edited (1991) by Eduardo Cadava under the title of *Who comes after the subject?*[25] Who (or what) comes after the subject, is the poststructuralist version of the posthumanist question: who (or what) comes after the human? Or, who or what comes after the humanist subject? And, which forms of agency does posthumanism afford?

The idea of 'coming after' the (human) subject, in this sense, also takes up Foucault's image of "man" being "an invention of recent date", which might be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea".[26] Instead of premature apocalyptism Foucault's notorious phrase of the 'end of man' can be seen in a critically historical rather than a jubilantly nihilistic sense. Foucault's disenchantment with the human 'figure' points towards the historicisation of the human as an object of investigation, a shift that is likely to exceed any framework of philosophical anthropology and the 'humanities' more generally. This historicisation of the *figure* of the human (a gesture which programmatically refers to an entire generation of 'antihumanists'), however, remains somewhat incomplete. It is here that posthumanism indeed represents a radicalisation and a relocation of the human in the sense that it transcends any dialectical historicisation in which the human is neither the absolute subject of historicism (its 'end') nor merely one 'object' out of many. Instead, it is the unacknowledged speciesism or anthropocentrism underlying the idea of subjectivity that has become the central target of posthumanist critique.[27]

This critique, however, is already well underway in Derrida's influential interview "Eating Well" (1991), for example, where he speaks of the "fable of the subject" as an anthropocentric "fiction", which traditionally has always denied any form of subjectivity to the nonhuman (e.g. the animal, the machine, the object). In this sense, any discourse which tacitly presupposes the subject as a *human* subject is committed to what Derrida refers to as a "sacrificial" idea which sanctions directly or indirectly the instrumentalisation of the nonhuman by the human (an ideology Derrida names "carno-phallogocentrism"),[28] which not only serves the legitimation of 'meat-eating virility' in Western cultures but, in the age of biotechnology, is also related to the commodification of life in its multiplicity of forms more generally.[29] Today's so-called 'posthuman condition' (the proliferation of cyborgs, generalised biopolitics, the critique of speciesism in animal studies, the Anthropocene or human-induced climate change)

[25] Eduardo Cadava, ed., *Who Comes After the Subject?* (New York: Rouledge, 1991).
[26] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, ed. R.D.Laing (New York: Pantheon, 1970), pp. 386-387.
[27] Cf. Cary Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).
[28] Jacques Derrida, "'Eating Well', or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida", in: Cadava, Who Comes After the Subject?, p. 113.
[29] *Ibid*., p. 115.

therefore does not coincide with the liquidation of the subject but rather with the pluralisation of subjects, including the proliferation of nonhuman subjectivities.

The "nonhuman turn"[30] that posthumanism and its critique of anthropopocentrism and the arrogance of humanism has provoked in the (post)humanities has an important precursor in Jean-François Lyotard's notion of the "inhuman".[31] What this notion of the inhuman prompts within posthumanism is the need to acknowledge all those ghosts, all those human others that have been repressed as part of the process of humanisation: animals, machines, objects, as well as gods, demons and monsters of all kinds.[32]

In summary: what poststructuralism bequeaths to posthumanism is the fact that 'after the end of man', or 'after the human', also need to be understood as *before* the human. In between the crisis of finality and renewal, there is 'our' current chance to rethink the human, to think the human otherwise. This is the ambiguity inhabiting every 'post-', and posthumanism in particular. Or, in other words, what poststructuralism, or simply the legacy of 'theory', reminds posthumanism of is, precisely, the continued need for theorising, or "theory after theory".[33] In this sense, poststructuralism survives in the work of many thinkers that have been instrumental in the development of CPH, notably in the writing of Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, Rosi Braidotti, Judith Butler, Giorgio Agamben, Bernard Stiegler, Claire Colebrook, Karen Barad, Vicki Kirby, Roberto Esposito and Cary Wolfe, to name but the most obvious. What precisely survives, is a kind of critical instinct (which is of course also much older than poststructuralism itself), namely that in between (human) identity and (human) difference there is an otherness that both produces and undermines this very opposition of identity and difference. The posthuman, nonhuman, more-than-human as well as the after-the-human are names for this irrepressible invasion of the other into the supposed self-sameness of the human.

[30] Cf. Richard Grusin, ed., *The Nonhuman Turn* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).
[31] Lyotard, *The Inhuman* (1991). In his influential essay "A Postmodern Fable [1992]", trans. Georges Van Den Abeele, in: Simon Malpass, ed., *Postmodern Debates* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 12-21, Lyotard also raises the important question of posthuman embodiment.
[32] Cf. Graham, *Representations of the Post/Human* (2002).
[33] Cf. Jane Elliott and David Attridge, eds., *Theory After 'Theory'*, London: Routledge, 2011).