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Міжнародна науково-редакційна рада:

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Рецензенти:

к.філол.н., доц. Олександр Волковинський
д.філол.н., проф. Олександр Глотов

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Адреса редакції:

46027, Тернопіль-27, а/с 554
Електронна пошта: dryuryzavadsky@gmail.com
Веб-сайт альманаху: studiamethodologica.com.ua

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ФІЛОСОФІЯ ТА МЕТОДОЛОГІЯ

Sergiy YAKOVENKO

IS THE POSTHUMANIST ANTHROPOLOGY POSSIBLE? LACAN, DERRIDA, AND THE IMPOSSIBLE EVENT OF CUNNING

With the posthumanist decline of man and its central position, the recent (post-Hegelian) “anthropologically-oriented” theories have been inevitably marginalized. The author contends that the arguably radical Derridean posthumanist field of language, species divide, and ethics remains theoretically incomplete without confronting it with Freudian-Lacanian notions of belatedness, the dead (or the Name-of-the) Father; Theodor Adorno’s dialectic of enlightenment, the generative anthropology of Eric Gans, Wolfgang Iser’s literary anthropology, and Jean Baudrillard’s concept of the symbolic exchange. What emerges out of these theories can be called a “negative anthropology,” exploring not the man but his concepts and thus constantly predicating about his non-identity.

Key-words: posthumanism, anthropology, man and animal, subject.

У рамках постгуманістичного дискурсу, що ставить під сумнів привілейовану позицію людини, антропологічно орієнтовані (пост-гегельянські) теорії неодмінно маргіналізуються. Автор доводить, що постгуманістичні сфери мови, етики та поділу на види – у їхній сумнівно радикальній дерриданській інтерпретації – залишаються теоретично неповними й нерозкритими без зіставлення з фрейд-лаканівськими концептами «запізнення», «мертвого (або «Імені») Батька»; діалектикою просвітництва Теодора Адорно, генеративною антропологією Ерика Ганса, літературною антропологією Вольфганга Ізера та концепцією символічного обміну Жана Бодріяра. Те, що передбачають ці теорії, можна назвати «негативною антропологією»: її об’єктом є не людина, а поняття людини, що утверджують її в стані постійної нетотожності самій собі.

Ключові слова: постгуманізм, антропологія, людина і тварина, суб’єкт.

В рамках постгуманістичного дискурсу, ставящего под вопрос привилегированную ситуацию человека, антропологически ориентированные (пост-гегельянские) теории неизбежно маргинализируются. Автор аргументирует, что постгуманістические сферы языка, этики и видовой дифференциации – в их сомнительно радикальной дерриданской интерпретации – остаются теоретически неполными и нераскрытыми без сопоставления с фрейд-лакановскими концептами «задержки», «мертвого (или «Имени») Отца»; диалектикой просвещения Теодора Адорно, генеративной антропологией Эрика Ганса, литературной антропологией Вольфганга Изера и концепцией символического обмена Жана Бодрияра. То, что подразумевают эти теории, можно назвать «негативной антропологией»: ее объект – это не человек, а понятия человека, которые определяют его в состоянии постоянной нетождественности самому себе.

Ключевые слова: постгуманизм, антропология, человек и животное, субъект.

The philosophical grounds for the relatively new subdisciplines of ecocriticism, bioethics, animal studies, and disability studies tend to remain basically anthropological, notwithstanding the declarative objects of their investigations. The anthropological subject matter, that is, the notion of human, continues to be a constant point of departure and reference for this whole transdiscipline continuum which lately more and more often becomes subsumed under the discourse of posthumanism. Posthumanism is inevitably tied with human(ism) by its very derivation, as well as by its declarative object of opposition (the same way as postmodernism is unthinkable without modernism), and – by the same token – ecocriticism confronts human with its environment, bioethics presupposes nobody else but human as a subject of ethical activity, animal studies pose animals as an *object* of human investigation, and disability refers to some kind of human *ability*. This obvious fact makes all the more strange that posthumanism, in the works of its latest researchers such as Neil Badmington, Chris Hables Gray, Elaine L. Graham, Katherine Hayles, Bruce Clarke, Donna Haraway, Cary Wolfe (with the exception of Giorgio Agamben’s “anthropological machine”) tends to escape any open confrontations of the posthumanist pack of subdisciplines with the discipline of anthropology as such (of course, in its philosophical sense), despite the topicality of the interdisciplinary war in humanities.

In this essay, however, I am not intent on proposing a new system of disciplinary delimitations or winning a place for anthropology in the new order of (post)humanities. My intention is not only to look into some of the basic motifs of philosophical anthropology under the scrutiny of those new-emerged subdisciplines (the undertaking which more or less all posthumanist writings have in mind), but, which is even more important, to trace the posthumanist contentions from the anthropological point of view; especially taking into account that this very point of view remains inherent in the core of each of those disciplines – if not as a latent homocentric position then as the mentioned above default point of reference. In doing so I also want to make clear that anthropology as such should not be associated with

any sort of a metaphysical discipline which presupposes homocentricity by its definition, and that it is already included in the discourse of posthumanism.

To posit the question more precisely, my special interest here is to estimate the weight and scope of the recent (post-Hegelian) “anthropologically-oriented” theories which solicit to be involved into the arguably radical Derridean posthumanist field of language, species divide, and ethics. The Freudian myth of cultural origins, which at the same time is a myth of the subject and thus presupposes always relevant for Lacan Hegelian Master-Slave dialectic, seems to be the most potent context for the Derridian concepts of parricide, *différance*, event, and gift, without which his last (posthumanist) contention of the animals question (such essays as “And Say the Animal Responded?” and “The Animal That Therefore I Am”) is unthinkable. My point here is to remind that the way the posthumanism has been promoted so far remains theoretically incomplete without confronting them with Freudian-Lacanian notions of belatedness, the dead (or the Name-of-the) Father, Theodor Adorno’s dialectic of enlightenment, the generative anthropology of Gans, Iser’s literary anthropology, and Baudrillard’s concept of the symbolic exchange.

In the first book of his *Seminar* Lacan clearly states that the main feature distinguishing humans and animals is language: only humans possess language, whereas animals merely have codes [17, 240]. As Derrida explains in “The Animal That Therefore I Am,” Western philosophers from Aristotle onward (he mentions Kant, Heidegger, Lacan, and Levinas) “all say the same thing: the animal is without language” [8, 400]. In his lecture “The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious” Lacan develops his ideas on this human peculiarity by stressing the remarkable feature of “the deceptiveness of Speech,” namely its distinguished function of being the witness of Truth. According to Philippe van Haute, it means that language just “introduces the dimension of the truth into reality” [16, 75]. It obviously does not mean that the Speech is a metaphysical container of Truth. The witness of Truth demonstrates the gap between object and sign, that is, the very process of making a signifier of the sign. Van Haute explains that, along with the dimension of truth, language introduces also the possibility of lying, which appears to be something different from the mere pretence of which the animals are also capable. As Lacan writes:

... animals show that they are capable of such behaviour when they are being hunted down; they manage to throw their pursuers off the scent by briefly going in one direction as a lure and then changing direction. . . . But the animal does not feign feigning. It does not make tracks whose deceptiveness lies in getting them to be taken as false, when in fact they are true – that is, tracks that indicate the right trail. No more than it effaces its tracks, which would already be tantamount to making itself the subject of the signifier.” [16, 683]

What I would like to underscore with respect to this statement is a profound misapprehension that emerges not so much out of Hautean interpretation as out of Derrida’s contention and its celebration by Cary Wolfe (in the latter’s *Zoologies*, *Animal Rites*, and *What is Posthumanism?*) The problem arises from the precarious theoretical status of what Lacan consistently tends to deny on the part of animals – language. The argument against Lacan, the one that I want to discuss, is not that of his anthropological thesis about denying the possibility of animals’ language (which is obvious), but that of imposing upon Lacan the categories of power (Derrida) and intention (Wolfe). The reason I am undertaking this discussion lies in the unnecessary cutting short of the tradition of posthumanist thought at the expense of Lacan and the psychoanalytical thought in general, especially taking into account the constantly underlined importance of the “linguistic turn” for posthumanism.

Wolfe backs up Derrida’s contention by associating Lacan’s theory of the human and nonhuman subjects with the scale of intentional systems offered by Daniel Dennett in his book *Kinds of Minds: Toward an Understanding of Consciousness*. Wolfe arguably denies the anti-Cartesianist thesis of Dennett by maintaining that “restabilization of the subject by means of language” makes little difference with the Cartesianism it tends to reject: “Only here language is doing the work previously carried out by the Cartesian *cogito*” [19, 39]. It seems to be a slightly strange argument taking into account that, first, Cartesianism was intent on rather stabilization than “restabilization” of the subject, and, second, this restabilization of the subject by virtue of language is a core momentum of the posthumanism itself, including the thought of Derrida. The main Dennett’s flaw, thereby, can be just political depriving of the animals of the capacity of language. But, to be fair, Wolfe is absolutely right about the phenomenological aspects of Dennett’s metaphysics. In Dennett’s anthropological model the key role is played by the intention of the purportedly destabilized subject, and in this three-ordered intentional structure humans occupy the last, third-order intentional system: the beliefs and desires of the first system can include many things but the beliefs and desires themselves, which are the domain of the second-order intentional system; and the “third-order intentional system would be capable of such feats as *wanting* you to believe that it *wanted* something” [4, 120]. The basic difference between Dennett’s and Lacan’s anthropological models, however similar they may seem according to Wolfe’s interpretation, is that Lacan’s subject of language, or the subject of the signifier, is not an active agent of the system of language, as well as the language itself is not an intentional system.

The concept that is at stake here is *deception*. In “The Subversion of the Subject” Lacan, in the same paragraph where he demonstrates the difference between animals and the “subject of the signifier,” clearly opposes “the deceptiveness of Speech” to the intentional act of feint, of which animals are also capable. How, one might ask, is it possible that the subject of language (as the very title of Lacan’s seminar testifies, it is the subverted subject – compared to that of the metaphysics) can function as an intentional agent when “one cannot even speak of a code without it already being the Other’s code”? “The Other, as preliminary site of the pure subject of the signifier, occupies the key

position here, even before coming into existence here as absolute Master – to use Hegel’s term with and against him” [16, 683]. The Hegelian Master-Slave schema is again very important here because it structures the *self-consciousness*, while for Lacan language structures the *unconscious*. That is why, speaking about the gap that separates Freudian and Hegelian relations that occur between the subject and knowledge, Lacan juxtaposes the deceptiveness of language that feigns Truth (which itself is nothing but feint, so we come up with the feigning of feint) and the Hegelian “cunning of reason” which “means that, from the outset and right to the end, the subject knows what he wants” [16, 679]. This “cunning of reason,” the undoubtedly intentional act, is possible only so far as the subject remains the subject of *connaissance* (“Antiquity’s knowledge”), for the realization of which “truth is to be immanent” characteristic. In Freud’s work, Lacan argues, the subject’s knowledge exists in a state of *un savoir*, “one that doesn’t involve the slightest *connaissance*, in that it is inscribed in the discourse of which the subject – who, like the messenger-slave of Antiquity, carries under his hair the codicil that condemns him to death – knows neither the meaning nor the text, not in what language it is written, nor even that it was tattooed on his shaven scalp while he was sleeping” [16, 680]. That is why language does not introduce (for its subject) the possibility of lying, as van Haute would argue; language is the deceptiveness itself: the subject cannot see or talk the Truth because the only witness of it is the Other (language). Consequently, he cannot lie about anything, because in order to feign one should know what is true (and, again, this is only the Other who knows and introduces the Truth), so the subject of the signifier is doomed to pretend that he is lying, to pretend pretending. Moreover, for the act of lying by telling the truth to be an intentional action, one should imagine a witness of this process, the one who is able to appreciate the *joke*, even if it would be the joker himself. Such a witness cannot be imagined in the Lacanian psychoanalysis, because he would be located outside the deception of language, would be the other of language itself. It is not possible for the subject who is *subjected* to the signifier. As Lacan famously says, “... there is no metalanguage that can be spoken . . . , there is no Other of the Other” [16, 688].

The deceptive Speech witnessing the Truth, with its subject who is always deceived and who can only pretend pretending, is akin to Baudrillard’s concept of simulation. To illustrate his idea of simulation, Baudrillard involves the allegorical opposition of simulation/dissimulation. For example, a schoolboy who intentionally pretends being sick *dissimulates* his illness in order to stay home and not go to school. The process of simulation presupposes that this boy tries to pretend an illness that he really has: he *simulates* the illness by the real symptoms of it. Does he do something other than pretending to pretend, then? As for Lacan the Other is “a preliminary site” of the subject of the signifier, Baudrillard writes about the precession of simulacra: they always anticipate the subject by liquidating all referentials and, thus, all meaning; the process of the simulation artificially resurrects them in system of signs, which are no more the signs of the real itself, because they do not imitate the real – they are this only possible real (“there is no metalanguage”). Baudrillard’s metaphor of Disneyland serves for the same goal: it is lying by telling the truth. Artificially pretending to be reality, Disneyland *is* this true reality, because everything outside Disneyland is also faked; so Disneyland only pretends pretending, it deceives the subjects of the simulation the same way as does the Lacanian signifier.

In terms of Hegelian dialectics, the Lacanian Other is an (absolute) Master, and the subject of the signifier is subjected to him as a Slave, whose product of activity can be conceived of in terms of a surplus-contribution in favour of the Master-Signifier. That is why it looks inappropriate to ascribe any intentional power to the subjected unit, as Derrida and Wolfe do. Derrida comments: “According to Lacan, the animal would be incapable of this type of lie, of this deceit, of this pretence in the second degree, whereas ‘the subject of the signifier,’ within the human order, would possess such a power and, better still, would emerge as subject, instituting itself and coming to itself as subject *by virtue of this power*, a second-degree reflexive power, a power that is *conscious* of being able to deceive by pretending to pretend” [6, 130]. In fact, power, and intention, and consciousness are the last terms that Lacan would use to describe the trap of the symbolic in which the unlucky (according to Freud and Lacan) mankind has found itself under the power of the Name-of-the-(dead)-Father. The powerfulness and *capability* are the features that Derrida most obviously *imposes* upon the image of the *disabled* Lacanian subject. It is remarkable that Žižek, also putting into controversy the culture/nature motif of the Lacanian theory, elucidates the Lacanian symbolic neither as an outstanding ability nor any sort of advantage over the animals, but rather as “some primordial deficiency, stupefaction, idiocy or tomfoolery,” and man is distinguished “by the fact that, in contrast to the animal, he falls prey to some lure” [20, 287].

Moreover, the future perfect tense is the time-dimension of Derrida’s notion of *différance*, which – generally speaking – is a deferred differentiation. If we take the opposition of nature/culture (or human/animal, to be more precise) as a structuralist binary opposition par excellence, how can we imagine the alternative anthropological schema of *différance*? It is remarkable that from the outset Derrida explained the concept of *différance* using the language of the Freudian psychoanalysis. In spite of its “metaphysical name” (to be sure, coming from its strict linguistic opposition of the consciousness), the Freudian unconscious gave Derrida his basic notions of traces and deferral. “With the alterity of the ‘unconscious,’ Derrida writes in his 1968 essay “*Différance*,” we have to deal not with the horizons of modified presents – past or future – but with a ‘past’ that has never been nor will ever be present, whose ‘future’ will never be produced or reproduced in the form of presence” [9, 21]. So if the binary opposition of nature and culture clearly presupposes the presence of the two entities – nature and culture, can the anthropological schema of the non-original origin, developed by Freud and Lacan, possibly escape the metaphysics of presence, the “diabolic,” in Baudrillard’s words, structural opposition which “divides and confronts distinct identities: such is the division of the Human, throws

beasts into the Inhuman” [2,]?

As an alternative to the *present in his self-possession* subject of the nature/culture opposition, the subject of the signifier, by contrast, is a “retroversion effect by which the subject becomes at each stage what he was before and announces himself – he will have been – only in the future perfect tense” [16, 691]. That grammatical tense describes the Freudian and Lacanian *Nachträglichkeit* (belatedness, deferral) and fits perfectly the time of the Derridean “impossible” event – the one that occurs “before the Law” and simultaneously inaugurates it. The order of belatedness is called upon to elucidate the temporal paradox of the origins of culture, namely, the emergence of guilt before any moral consciousness and cultural laws. Moreover, it appears to be not only the question of logical temporality (about the absent, prenatal cause of the sons’ remorse), but also a problem of singularity of such an event emerging from the scene that should have been wide-spread. Berndt Herzogenrath describes it as a problem of representation innate to all attempts to “tell the origin,” the problem that derives from the nature of the linear narration which “necessarily has to posit the point of origin:” “Any distinction between ‘before’ and ‘after’ belongs to the symbolic and thus cultural register, that is, already to the ‘after’ of nature and origin. The spatial *inside/outside* opposition is thus revealed to be ultimately based on a temporal paradox: the origin of a given culture can only be ‘invented’ in retrospect, is a *belated effect* of that very culture which is said to be founded on it” [14, 89]. The cultural myth of origin is in itself a symbolic event that historically never occurred, as Paweł Dybel explains the Lacanian interpretation of it, its preliminary state was a permanent “outrageous Void in the place of the Other” [10, 26-27]. The dead father who becomes the Name-of-the-Father in the symbolic order and thus appears as an externalized Other, serves as a constant return of the repressed event of the murder, while the “event” itself precipitates as an outer remainder of the symbolic, that is, as the Real. The symbolic nature of culture and the external status of the originary event can be explained in the later theory of Lacan as not the memory of the past in its “archaeological purity” but – as Shepherdson puts it – “rather a trait that emerges from the symbolic order, and yet presents itself as the remnant of a past that has been lost” [18, 46-47]. According to the later Lacan, there was no pre-symbolic Real that existed as a graspable condition of nature: before the Law there was the Real in the future perfect tense, the Real that *will have been* as the remainder of the symbolic order.

Writing, which can be conceived of as the Derridean symbolic, also evolves out of the originary event of the patricide (as “Plato’s Pharmacy” tells us), and, in addition, develops the system of the “unconscious” traces (“there are no conscious traces,” says Derrida in “Différance” [9, 21]) and the temporal trait of belatedness. Moreover, the Freudian-Lacanian myth of cultural origin presents itself as a pure Derridean “event,” maybe the only one possible. In his late essay “A Certain Impossible Possibility of Saying the Event” Derrida shows himself as merely a latent Lacanian anthropologist. The paradox of the Lacanian “second-order Real” and the always-belated origin can be compared with the Derridean “nondialectizable contradictions” of the real event: given in human experience, the event is inscribed in a spectral structure – “the impossibility haunts the event” [5, 13] because it occurs, in its indispensable iteration, in the Lacanian future perfect tense: the “event will have taken place,” says Derrida [5, 16]. The event comes for the subject from the realm of the Other, so that the “I,” the metaphysical subject, “must remain absolutely disarmed” [5, 12]; moreover, it *befalls* the subject as a *symptom* – in the etymological meaning of the word “symptom” serving as “a signification of the event over which nobody has control” [5, 17]. Ultimately, along with recognizing the impossibility of foreseeing the event, Derrida acknowledges the theoretical failure to “say” the event in discursive terms, obviously leaving it for the domain of mythology and fiction.

“The story (of what never happens),” as Derrida puts it [7, 206], lies in the centre of Iser’s literary anthropology based on René Girard and Eric Gans’s theory of the “originary event.” Although the name of Lacan never falls with Iser, as with Derrida in his ruminations on the event, the Iserian literary anthropology is basically founded on the Lacanian psychoanalysis. Backed by Arnold Gehlen’s definition of man as a “creature of deficiency” (not that of power, as Derrida tries to ascribe to Lacan) – Lacan saw the physiological cause of such a deficiency in the human “generic prematurity of birth” [16, 686] – the origin of humankind is described in generative anthropology as an “eclipsed” turning point (“information gap”) of entropy’s transmission into information: “Culture keeps emerging out of this constitutive emptiness, which implies that there are no discernible origins of culture, and any presumption to know such origins is bound to turn onto mythology” [15, 162]. Gans develops his theory as if the Freudian law of belatedness was already inscribed in it *a priori*: not only he states that culture emerges out of the need of the symbolic representation (the representation of the social conflict that could not be possibly solved otherwise), but also repudiates the historical actuality of such an event, its linear narrative order. The statement that his hypothesis “is constructed by working backward from its necessary result – that is, the act of representation – rather than forward from a conjectured prehuman state” [12, 99] implies the possibility of qualifying the originary event as a symbolic return of the repressed, of *something* that happened in the pre-symbolic, before the Law, and thus presupposes the event’s “nonconstructibility” in cognitive terms. The Law itself transforms the object of “appetitive satisfaction” into the “object of desire, indicating the impossibility of appropriating it” [15, 165].

The ineffability of the originary event in theoretical terms replicates the very essence of the turn that it inaugurates – it reveals the nature of the sign which “itself is the interdiction that separates the sign-user from the designatum” [11, 104]. As long as the “blank” between the sign and its referent can never be bridged, this gap (or the Lack, speaking in Lacanian terms) serves as a permanent generator of culture (it is the Lack in the Other that produces the *object* in the place of a thing, which now becomes an object of desire). For Gans, literature takes on a special

function within the symbolic production of desires because “it brings the originary impulse of the sign to full fruition” [15, 167]. With Iser, literature becomes the only strategy of reading culture because, on the one hand, it is opposed to the fruitless discourse of the “explanatory” theoretical language, and, on the other, due to “its fictionality . . . prevents it from turning into myth” [15, 168]. As Iser concludes, “The function exercised by the “aesthetic” in the originary scene is, after the instituting of the declarative language, taken over by literature, which plays out the interchange between center and periphery into the unforeseeable possibilities and with hindsight present themselves as the course of human history. In this respect a generative anthropology turns into a literary anthropology...” [15, 169]. This seems to be the point where Iser’s and Derrida’s anthropological projects merge: “Here, we know neither *who* *whatis* the law, *das Gesetz*. This, perhaps, is where literature begins” [7, 207]. Although the diminishing of theoretical language looks not so much surprising for Iser as for Derrida, for the most part because it presupposes the mere structuralist question of what distinguishes fiction from other kinds of literature. Supposedly, with Derrida we have to deal not so much with the distinguished ontological features as with the intentional aspiring of different kinds of discourse for truth.

The originary event as an act of representation in Gans’s theory involves a double-deferral: it prevents the primal conflict over the body of a kill by the act of signification, and delays the differentiation between animals/humans as the repressed content within the symbolic order. It gives Gans the right to maintain that in his anthropology “man is not distinguished from the animal by his propensity to economic activity but by his use of representation” [12,]. However, this statement, intent on contending the Marxist anthropological schemata, proves to be at least doubtful, specifically in the light of theories combining the Marxist and psychoanalytical conceptions such as Žižek’s theory of the *surplus*— the surplus value as an indispensable momentum of the capitalist economy, and the surplus/remainder precipitating from what subject is saying compared to the intended meaning of the message. In their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer conceive of the Homer’s *Odyssey* as an array of the anthropological originary scenes of our civilization. In their interpretation, Odysseus is read as a metaphoric forefather of Western culture – of everything that belongs to the human features in their opposition to “nature.” One of the best known scenes of the poem, the perilous episode with the Cyclops Polyphemus, can be scrutinized from various methodological perspectives, but seen from the dominant anthropological, that is Hegelian-psychoanalytic point of view, the myth turns the scope of human characteristics into the logic of the bourgeois-enlightenment ideology.

Homer scornfully mentions a deficiency of mutual respect in the Cyclopes’ patriarchal tribal society with its lack of any objective *law*— the lack which is tantamount to stupidity. Odysseus fools Polyphemus and other representatives of the primitive societies or natural deities (the models of the later Christian devils like Shylock or Mephistopheles) by means of that sort of the enlightenment cunning which makes the others speak our language: for us to fool or mock them they should be called on from their otherness into our order of representation – this has been the way the empire of the enlightenment Reason works. Most of Odysseus’s artifices (like the interpreters’ favourite episode with the Sirens) are significant within the Hegelian dialectic and its kind of intentional cunning – the one which has been ascribed to Lacanian subject by Derrida. But the trick played on the Cyclops involves what – as I have argued – belongs to the symbolic order and its vicissitudes for the Lacanian subject of the signifier.

Odysseus’s trick with his name, the play on words, when the hero calls himself “Udeis” (nobody) in order to deceive the giant and his tribesmen by concealing Ithacan’s act of blinding Polyphemus, has been developed by Adorno and Horkheimer into the sophisticated philosophy of language:

In reality, the subject Odysseus denies his own identity, which makes him a subject, and keeps himself alive by imitating the amorphous. He calls himself Nobody because Polyphemus is not a self, and the confusion of name and thing prevents the deceived savage from evading the trap: his call for retribution stays, as such, magically bound to the name of the one on whom he would be avenged, and this name condemns the call to impotence.” [1, 67]

But the enlightenment cunning, embodied in Odysseus’s trick, does not escape the dialectical pattern to which the epic as a whole is subdued in its every moment. By virtue of his trick the hero does withdraw the name from the realm of magic, initiating the stage of the bourgeois nominalism, but the next moment “falls victim to *hubris*” [1, 68]. Still within the reach of Polyphemus’s physical power, Odysseus hastens to reveal his real name, as if being still more afraid of the magical powers of language than of the primitive force of the giant. And by that Odysseus just confirms the dialectical rule of enlightenment: his/its self-assertion turns into self-denial. By this Adorno and Horkheimer demonstrate the vicious circle of enlightenment, which – in this particular case – means the “dialectic of eloquence,” one that turns cunning back into stupidity. The episode attaches an additional meaning to “cunning,” which appears also to transform the historical situation of language, starting its transition to de-notation. While the mythical word had direct power over the object, maintaining the unity of expression and intension, cunning consists in the exploitation of this distinction, thereby engendering the discourse of modernity.

The episode with the Cyclops has to offer something more than, in Lacan’s words, “the relationship between Master and Slave, a relationship that is replete with all the cunning tricks by which reason advances its impersonal reign” [16, 686]. Adorno is right that Polyphemus is not the real *self* for Odysseus, as the Slave cannot serve as a full-fledged evidence of identity for his Master, but what happens to Odysseus-self seems to cross the borders of the mere bourgeois cunning. His language pun, the phonetic likeness of the words “Odysseus” and “Nobody” in ancient Greek, once uttered with intention to fool, immediately ceases its belonging to the Master and finds its new and permanent Master – the order of the signifiers. The hero becomes the subject of the signifier insofar as, in Žižek’s words, “the

speaking subject is always already spoken, i.e., insofar as he cannot master the effects of what he is saying: he always says more than he ‘intended to say,’ and the surplus of what is effectively said over the intended meaning puts into words the repressed content – in it, the ‘repressed returns’” [21, 14]. Odysseus’s final act of “fear” or “stupidity” (however we would call it) is a *symptom* “by means of which the ‘letter arrives at its destination,’ i.e., by means of which the big Other returns to the subject his own message in its true form” [21, 14]. In other words, Odysseus’s calling back his trick with the name (interpreted as hubris, stupidity or fear in Adorno’s work) in our interpretation becomes the act (or the originary scene) of his subjecting to the signifier, and thus, of the mere *pretending to pretend* (the hero pretends being Nobody, but he actually *is* nobody within the symbolic order).

“Negative dialectic” was Adorno’s response to the enlightenment dialectic of Hegel; and the negativity of Adorno’s dialectic springs from the mentioned above *surplus* (or remainder). The principle of exchange, which is the very essence of our civilization, demands the equivalence (exchange value, in Marxist terms) of what cannot be ever equivalent (use value), and thus imposes identity and unity upon the objects which are inherently non-identical. The question appears: is there an innate correspondence between capitalism and the specificity of human species? Or is capitalism – in its broader meaning – just a stage in the “dialectic” of humankind? Adorno demonstrates that bourgeois ideology descends to the oldest origins of humanity and is inseparable from myth; Žižek gives evidence of the inherent homogeneity of the capitalist and symbolic surplus as a remainder of the psychic (Lacan) and economic (Marx) processes. Baudrillard’s interrogating and putting on trial the Marxist alienation (predominantly in *The Mirror of Production*) by means of, firstly, symbolic exchange and, secondly, the specific situation of the consumer society, effects directly not only the Marxist material labour as a human finality and thus a permanent anthropological category, but also its collusion with the Freudian psychoanalysis. Actually, he never puts these theories into doubt as such, but tries to historicize them, and thereby to deprive them of their permanent ontological status as a constituent of human nature. In doing so, that is in building a kind of a historical schema compiled from a primitive symbolic exchange, an alienated civilization of capital and labour, and, ultimately, a consumer society of the post-industrial era, Baudrillard manages to remain anthropologically anti-essentialist, but at the same time adds nothing to the question of the human’s origin.

Baudrillard’s critique of the Marxist-Freudian anthropological collusion resembles that of Derrida’s: the former puts into doubt their “essentialist” *split* and *alienation* concepts but remains all the time within the frame of their conceptualization. The problem with Baudrillard lies in one’s inability to distinguish if the author of *Simulacra* is making universal ontological statements or just describes the post-consumer epoch. He consequently criticizes the Marxist approach according to which labour is an essential human feature that constitutes man’s basic way of his struggle with his ontological opponent – nature. On the one hand, alienation as an indispensable consequence of labour is impossible because there is no true essence of man from which he could alienate; on the other hand, historically, at least in *The Consumer Society*, Baudrillard betrays the dialectical way of thinking by depicting the age of consumption as “the historical culmination of the whole process of accelerated productivity under the sign of capital,” which he calls “the age of radical alienation” [3, 191]. Baudrillard traces the changes in the structure of the human subject which passes from the subject of the alienated labour to the subject of consumption. As long as there is no true essence of man, there could no longer be any dramatic friction between the inner consciousness and the mirror image (in the Lacanian anthropology); the reciprocal functioning of the mirror is replaced with the one-sided functioning of the shop-window.

Baudrillard erroneously interprets the Lacanian imaginary mirror stage as the originary anthropological scene of the split image, in which a child recognizes himself in the mirror and thus starts his dramatic upbringing under the gaze of the Other. In *The Consumer Society* he offers his own mirror scene: a child kissing his image in the mirror before going to bed. Like in Lacan, the child does not mistake his image for himself, but unlike the ontology of the mirror stage, the image is not any longer his alienated double: the child “plays with it, *somewhere between sameness and otherness*” [3, 192]. This *play* (as opposed to the capitalist relations of profit) is a basic trait of the Baudrillardian “symbolic (exchange),” the sphere which is shared by humans and animals. And this is precisely the point where Lacan’s and Baudrillard’s view of animals merges. As we can conclude from *Simulacra and Simulation*, the Baudrillardian “symbolic” is close to Lacanian “imaginary,” and what Lacan denies in animals, i.e. the symbolic order (the human language), is something that Baudrillard also depicts as our main predicament: animals do not talk. The silence of animals, which causes the human Reason to talk on behalf of them, bewilders Baudrillard the same way as the silent gaze of a cat calls forth a feeling of shame in Derrida. Man’s “monopoly of the unconscious” (as ascribed to the psychoanalytical anthropology) is just another stage of the former monopoly of consciousness – all the same historical chain of the human reason speak on behalf of animals:

We can fantasize about them, project our fantasies on them and think we are sharing this *mise-en-scène*. But this is comfortable for us - in fact animals are not intelligible to us either under the regime of consciousness or under that of the unconscious. Therefore, it is not a question of forcing them to it, but just the opposite of seeing in what way they put in question this very hypothesis of the unconscious, and to what other hypothesis they force us. Such is the meaning, or the non-meaning of their silence. [2, 138]

The question is: if the symbolic exchange, as a primal stage of the human development, is the order which men shared with animals, with its “implosion rather than of explosion, of metamorphosis rather than energy, of obligation and ritual defiance rather than of liberty, of the territorial cycle rather than of...” [2, 164], and all that *has turned* into the

“explosion,” “energy,” and “liberty” under the rule of capitalism or enlightenment, isn’t this *turn* the predicated originary event of the humankind? Should we call capitalism a human essence or not, Baudrillard suggests that this historical stage of mind still defines us, even if we allow to mislead us with the abandoning of the enlightenment principles: “The imperialism of reason, neoimperialism of difference” [2, 137].

So is it possible to imagine a posthumanist anthropology? That is true: the posthumanist thought tends not to posit man as the centre of the universe, but at the same time man cannot become an object of the animal studies, or, putting it another way, whenever we say “human,” it presupposes the existence of something named “human,” and thus its distinguished features and the scene of its emergence, whether we call them essential or not. Provided that many postmodern theories emerged out of the dialectic schemata of thinking, and the very posthumanist theory is, as we have seen, indebted to the anthropological thought, we can try to think, within the realm of posthumanism, some sort of a *negative anthropology*, moulded after the image of Adorno’s negative dialectic. The negative dialectic deals primarily with the plague of *concept*, trying to neutralise the inevitability of its usage by the proviso of its non-identity. If the (at least) contemporary man of Western cultural tradition is a creature of the capitalist order with its economy of the surplus as a result of the ontological imbalance of the values, it seems possible to imagine the negative anthropology which explores the very concepts of such a man and constantly predicates about their non-identity. Such anthropology would collude with the marginal cases studies, animal studies, disability studies, queer and races studies in their obvious, as it seems, anti-essentialist stipulation that all these disciplines explore not the substances but the concepts.

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