

Paralipomena of a Pandemic

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Abstract. The pandemic, which has affected the whole world and has many victims, changing our lifestyle and having its own narrative structure that would be interesting to retrace. Undoubtedly, despite science fiction getting us used to dystopian and apocalyptic scenarios, the sudden epidemiological emergency caught us unprepared. We could hardly have thought of suddenly giving up habits that we considered consolidated, such as being able to travel, meet friends, gather in public places, go to a restaurant, go to school. The pandemic suddenly cancelled all of this. But what caused this pandemic? Perhaps a simple virus from an Asian wet market? Perhaps the extreme connectivity of the human network? Perhaps the ecological alterations we have caused? Or is the pandemic the result of a deeper cultural crisis?

Keywords: ecological crisis; pandemic; coronavirus; anthropocentrism; post-humanist philosophy

Premise

The advent of the pandemic marked an important caesura in people's lives, not yet fully understood and metabolised. Habits have changed, the digital society has irreversibly affirmed itself, a social and economic transformation with still undefined characteristics has been triggered. Telling the story of the pandemic means immersing oneself in this liquid horizon, made up of mutations in the making, where the virus has become an existential paradigm rather than an infectious entity (Bauman 2020). Faced with this planetary metamorphosis, our interpretative coordinates have shown all their insufficiency. The pandemic has caught us off guard in several ways. Covid-19 found its allies in the habit of strong connectivity between people, not only for the aspects of conviviality, but above all for the concentration of people in metropolises and in the processes of globalisation. All of this transformed a local event into a planetary explosion in a short space of time. This should make us understand what 21st century is coming for the human being. The scarce awareness we have of these phenomena, which unfortunately will be more and more frequent, is worrying (Quammen 2012).

We were unprepared in terms of epidemiological surveillance: there is no doubt about that, regardless the diligent and courageous work of doctors and all the medical staff to whom we are deeply indebted. We must have the humility to keep their sacrifice in mind once this is over. We have learned to have more faith in science, to understand the value of public health, to recognise the mission of health workers, who are unfortunately personally exposed to the danger of the pandemic. But all this, however praiseworthy and strategic, does not disprove the inability and unpreparedness of the institutions to take coherent and rigorous action in the face of the outbreak. This is demonstrated by the absence of global protocols to deal with the risk of contagion and the hesitations of individual governments to take serious prophylactic measures and carry out their political function (Žižek 2020).

Unfortunately, we have witnessed a mad rush against the effects of contagion, rather than effective prevention. Not even the example of the places already affected by the infection has urged the various countries to understand the seriousness of the epidemic and the need for appropriate measures. Instead, all that was done was to make a series of statements aimed at reassuring the public without addressing the situation head-on, as should have been done from the start. In retrospect, it is admittedly easy to talk about what should have been done, but there is no doubt that any commentary on the pandemic spread reveals underestimations and negligence on the part of the institutions that one should not condone. Epidemiological problems soon turned into social and economic problems and the various governments were unable to give adequate responses to the current crisis (Snowden 2019).

We slowly passed from an idea of momentary emergency to the awareness of a profound transformation of society, where all the parameters of coexistence were questioned. The ecological question has once again remained in the shade, as if it had not played a decisive role in the pandemic explosion. Mainstream media have deliberately de-classified the problem as an epidemiological crisis and not as a systemic crisis, an inadequacy of our cultural model. Changing lifestyles is always difficult, perhaps for this reason the great upheavals generally follow historical events, such as revolutions or wars. It is always argued that the ecological crisis requires a radical change in the lifestyle of Western countries, however even in the face of this epidemiological crisis we have been able to notice the difficulties of people in abandoning their habits (Kolbert 2014).

Pandemic Spring 2020

We were unprepared psychologically. We could not believe that this scourge would really affect us, us who are used to dwelling in a world sheltered from

danger, sparkling with colourful shop windows, inviting with its thousands of bars and restaurants, festive even in the performances of street artists. We could not imagine that the pandemic spectre would appear on the threshold of spring – with magnolias, plum and cherry trees in bloom and the gardens of March lush green and filled with the frenzy of birds. We didn't think the virus would really prevent us from enjoying the first zephyrs and sunrays. We didn't believe it was possible, even though science fiction has accustomed us to catastrophic narratives based on devastating epidemics.

Yet, perhaps for this very reason, dystopian projections remained off radar, as something unreal, even when the first reports from Hubei Province showed us the harsh reality of Wuhan turning into a ghost town. It seemed incredible to us that people were trapped in that hell of deserted streets, transfigured into pale shadows that occasionally appeared from afar, shrouded in masks. We were sure, no matter how shocked we were, that we would still be safe. It was as if the habit of watching a thousand virtual worlds had elevated us to the certainty of remaining forever spectators, far away and extraneous to danger as in all the other catastrophes that we could comfortably witness from our couches at home. Then, all of a sudden, we found ourselves catapulted inside, we heard the silence of the squares and the loud ringing bells no longer muffled by the background noise of traffic, in an atmosphere of Fellinian suspension, capable of worrying even dogs on their walks.

The virus has exposed many of our weaknesses, which in turn have exacerbated the morbidity of the infection. We hear doctors talking about their overwhelming efforts, and family members lamenting the pain of having to leave their loved ones, who are forced to die without saying goodbye, in complete solitude. Or, else, we dwell on the details of death at home, when there is no more room in the hospital, and people have to watch the look of terror in the eyes of those who die suffocating, like a drowning man. The sudden Covid-19 pandemic brought back the discourse on topics that had been surreptitiously removed from today's debate, such as the somatic dimension of social relations and life as an opaque, sticky, fragile presence. During the pandemic we experienced a drastic disruption of the personal freedoms that we had placed at the centre of the achievements of modernity.

We thought that our mind worked like a computer, but now we realise that our lucidity vanishes with the lack of the most important molecules that support our emotions. Desire also seems to fade away and we are suddenly abulic as the hours waste away, revealing the close relationship that binds languor to action, which makes the 'desired' object a consequence and not a cause of the projection. Desire finally appears to us in its authentic guise: as

the manifestation of our animality, which makes us the bearers of intrinsic motivations in search of expression (Brooks 2020).

The image of the feverish, industrious city, reassuring in its pulsing rhythm and in the alienation of the crowds that crossed it, suddenly gives way to an expanded and looming space, a tympanic bubble that makes even the smallest noise resonate: from the wing of a pigeon to the barking of a dog. Cities turn into concrete deserts, like plundered skeletons, in the bird's-eye views we see of empty bridges. Cartoons are also multiplying, trying to outline the ellipses of this period with gentle comedy. One of the sketches that struck me is a drawing that shows a 'before' of a happy family visiting a zoo with confined animals and an 'after' with a group of animals looking at a house where the same people are confined behind glass doors. Hence the flashes of people on the subway with their eyes glued to their smartphones, the increasing tendency of young people to spend most of the day on social networks based exclusively on short videos, the rampant functional illiteracy caused by the need to have strongly evocative and superficial experiences, the scrolling of headlines without any desire to learn and understand anything, and the proliferation of fake news, built to satisfy the appetites of an audience that enjoys scandal, rather than understanding the complex nature of things.

Being locked up at home amplifies the tendency to connect to different media – the Internet, television, newspapers – in a compulsive craving for information that creates a sort of protracted collective tuning, emotional osmosis and general simulcast (Eco 2016). Everybody is suddenly a virologist, rehashing advice and recommendations, invectives and complaints, and nothing else is talked about: every TV show, the pages of all newspapers, most of the posts on social media all stick to the leitmotif of the pandemic. Even children, taken away from the classroom, fill paper with drawings of a strange lumpy ball and play war with the virus or protect their stuffed animals with health precautions. Yet it is ironic to see such a proliferation of imaginative scenarios, aimed at outlining a post-contamination age as a radical metamorphosis in people's lives, when we have proven evidently incapable of any short-term forecast. The impression is that even the seemingly better-prepared countries, which have paid more prophylactic attention and implemented a strict organisation of health practices, have chased the evolution of the contagion rather than being able to prepare predictive frameworks of any plausibility.

The shock of the pandemic spread undoubtedly recalled those images that numerous science fiction films and novels had consolidated in people's imagination, provoking a dystopian reading of reality. We have witnessed an increase in the tendency to look for traitors to the homeland – like runners or dog walkers – or for scapegoats against whom to direct the collective

anger. The progressive spread of the infection at first worried us for the risk of endangering people's lives, but later brought to the surface all the collaterals produced by having no certain future, no innovative model to follow and, most of all, no ability to make plans (Esposito 2011). A temporary suspension from the frenetic life we were used to was pleasant at first, enabling us to make some time for ourselves or for those activities or passions we never had time to cultivate. Still, this is only acceptable so long as it has a deadline, only if there is hope. Unfortunately, that is exactly what is missing. The possibility that it will take much time before we return to having the privileges to which we were accustomed is far from remote.

Ecological Crisis

Alongside this, the pandemic made more evident the waning of a cultural paradigm that had been dragging on tirelessly for several decades. Hence, we are now witnessing a great crisis – needless to deny it – which is civil as well as economic, and involves a loosening of those connectives that held together the community itself. One hears that many things will change from now onwards: an announcement that at times seems like a wish, at other times almost sounds like a threat. It is as if we have reached the end of a line or the close of a historical period. It is conceivable, then, that there is a common cultural root at the heart of this metamorphosis, something greater than an infectious event. I believe, in fact, that the difficulties that today we attribute to the contagion were already present: this is demonstrated by the ecological disasters of the last two decades and the humanitarian emergencies that have followed (Haraway 2016). The pandemic simply brought to light the hidden portrait of our model, the place where we kept the vileness and aberrations of our choices, as in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. We must acknowledge that the epidemiological situation, at most, has shown the inconsistency of the wishes related to maintaining the status quo.

If there is one lesson we can learn from this global event, it is that a change involving the whole system is more urgent than ever. I believe, therefore, that we need to assess the contingency with greater scope of interpretation and foresight, going beyond the pandemic factor. What is failing is an entire model of development and, more generally, an idea, i.e. the project of humanity based on the prevalence and domination of our species over the world and its disjunction from the networks of connection with other living beings (Passmore 1974). We may believe that all this has to do with exclusively factual aspects such as ecology, planetary economics, epidemiology. I think, however, that circumscribing the problem to practical aspects, which are important but still

insufficient to undermine the cultural paradigm, does not help to solve the difficulties we are facing. If we continue to believe that there is an oppositional dualism between humanistic and scientific disciplines, as expressions of two worlds that are not only irreconcilable but ontologically different, we will not even begin to understand the current crisis.

The destruction of forests has catastrophic effects on the climate, but not only that. What is at stake are all the ecological relationships that involve the entire planet in a single network. We must accept the fact that there is no environment which, however geographically and biogenetically remote, can be said to be completely separate from the others. We may think that the problem is economic, that it concerns the development perspective, that it is due to the blindness of politicians. And yet, without denying these responsibilities and the importance of these areas of discussion, I believe that the real problem is even more profound and concerns the way in which humans represent themselves. We have built a vision of the human being as proudly autonomous and totally detached from the logic of interdependence, thus unconsciously following the paradigm of a virus (Mason 2005), embracing its inconsistent strategy and, like it, destroying everything on our path.

But what are the other effects of the destruction of a forest, apart from the macroclimatic alteration of the entire biome and the decay of the ecosystems it contains? The first effect is a reduced ability to maintain the carbon cycle and the oxygen production, and when this subtraction begins to become relevant there are consequences that extend beyond the compromised geographical area – we are experiencing this with the phenomenon of global warming and the alterations of rainfall, with localised cloudbursts and absence of precipitation in other areas (Imeson 2012).

The short-sighted approach to exploitation, if combined with the growing operational capabilities provided by technology and with the demographic development of our species, makes the human being like a dangerous virus for the planet, if supported by an anthropocentric ideology based on the ill-fated goal of emancipation from nature. However, I do not wish this reasoning to be interpreted as a kind of anti-humanism, because that would be a mistake. I think it is important that humans reflect on their connection with the community of the living not only to secure a future but also to make the best use of our function as *copula mundi* described by the first humanists, starting from Marsilio Ficino but also from the works of Leonardo da Vinci.

Just as global warming will produce the erosion of coastal areas due to rising oceans, as well as devastating storms in temperate zones due to meteorological tropicalisation and the desertification of large areas of the Earth, so the destruction of forests and the increasingly close interaction between human

activities and wildlife will increase the number of zoonoses. Breeding large numbers of animals in confined spaces, increasing the use of antibiotics for zootechnical purposes, using meat from infected animals, stockpiling live and dead animals, both wild and domestic, in markets that pay no attention to hygiene – all this means exposing oneself to very dangerous zoonoses, because it is tantamount to going against the basic rules adopted by animal populations. Ecological systems are based on the dynamic equilibrium of the populations and, above all, on their dispersion over different territories, precisely to avoid the risk of contagion (Margulis 1999). On the contrary, we are creating all the conditions for viral passages from animal populations to human beings, inaugurating pandemic flows that profoundly change our habits and restrict our freedoms: coronavirus is a prime example of this. But the more worrying risk is that, by massing many hospitalised people, the phenomenon of antibiotic resistance could also become recrudescient. This closes the circle of the problem of intensive farming: on the one hand, antibiotic-resistance laboratories and, on the other, sources of zoonoses.

The idea of continuous growth in prosperity had spread especially since the 20th century through the myth of the machine, already celebrated in the Belle Epoque by the Futurists. It then reappeared in the dream of household appliances and cars, and before that in industrial slaughterhouses, assembly lines and scale production. The increase in machinery suggested that the time had come for human beings to emancipate themselves from the organic bottlenecks of rural culture, from that last glow of coexistence with animals that was the farm. Thus, we witnessed a series of events that sanctioned the divorce of the human from the non-human. These phenomena in retrospect present themselves as linear and constant, even coherent with each other, but in reality, they have undergone moments of alternation and quantum leaps. However, there is no doubt that the model of development of the capitalist system followed a cultural pattern already present in the 16th century (Butler 2020).

The disregard for the destruction of rainforests, the demographic bomb that is increasing the population at an exponential rate, our energy-intensive lifestyle and the agro-zootechnical pressure paint a picture of a serious infection with no cultural immunity. What we can ask ourselves, then, is whether there are points of overlap between the phenomenal pattern of a virus and the behavioural attire of our species. On the other hand, it is undeniable that the ecological disaster in progress cannot be blamed on an undifferentiated “anthropos”: rather, it is essential to consider the environmental and world model that capitalism has structured (Moore 2016).

Paradigm Crisis

I think that the problem must therefore be ascribed to a much more extensive and articulated legacy which, despite having found its ultimate expression in modernity, has much more remote roots. It stems from the persistence of dualism – in this case the nature vs society dichotomy – which has been affirmed above all since the modern age and which therefore cannot be confined to the last two centuries, although it was in the Industrial Revolution that the critical issues manifested themselves in a striking way. Dualism maintains the essentialist disjunction between entities, does not take into account the temporal directionality of becoming, believes in the causal linearity of processes and, above all, affirms a hierarchical relationship where a reified entity – translated into mere substratum – undergoes the centralism of the other, considered the true core of the predicative process.

When applied to the body, dualism transforms the somatic dimension into a receptacle for the multiple infections that gradually become available, from ideological to technological ones, from epidemics to drug addictions (Illich 1982). Dualism, exemplified by the image of a virus that invades a cell and affects its functions while remaining extraneous to it, thus gives rise to a devaluation of the protein component of the living and of the system of the biological phenomenon, in the name of a new form of essentialism based on the power of nucleic acids. Dualism seemed to have relegated the somatic dimension to the role of container of an increasingly viral, dynamic and palpable presence, in the pretence of inhabiting the virtual web and imagining a post-organic transcendence. Our present condition, in fact, arouses in us the sudden discovery that we *are* a body, with its needs and fragilities – a discovery that accelerates our contradictions and suddenly shows us the inconsistency of many assumptions that were taken for granted. In finding ourselves physically separated amidst the hyper connection of the media, immobile within a seasonal awakening, frightened and excited by the magnitude of the unfolding events, we discover that it's not just about coronavirus – there's more to this situation than that.

The short century was characterised by a progressive detachment from animality and more generally from the biological element, as if the artificial and the mechanical represented progress as such, in terms of a departure from a rural past made up of constraints and fatigue. With the advent of the myth of automation, reproducibility and control, the biological dimension was thus interpreted as a legacy to be overcome as soon as possible, with a view to an inorganic future. Agricultural machinery has replaced animal work in the fields, household appliances have reduced our efforts inside the house, while factories have been increasingly enriched with automated chains. Thus, if on the one

hand human beings have become more and more familiar with the machine, on the other hand they lowered their level of socialisation with nature and with the logic of the organic. Even the complex organismic structure is stigmatised as a vestigial entity, evidence of an animal past to be abandoned in the name of a modular conformation. Even the skin is no longer seen as reassuring and we seem to prefer the coldness of a chrome-plated surface.

There is no doubt, therefore, that the flaunted virtualisation of relationships, the idea of a progressive desomatisation of experience and even the chimerical projections of a mechanical body in the near future, which have characterised much of the narrative of the last twenty years, are refuted by the concrete experience of the suffering and languor of this carnal dimension subjected to the test of a forced cloister. It is evident that the dualist reading, which characterises the Cartesian inheritance of the *res extensa*, has transformed both the body and the animal condition into passive entities, unable to express their own centralism and therefore in need of being moved by external factors acting as infectious vehicles. This paradigm is unsuitable to understand emergence phenomena and therefore leads us to seek external superintendence to the processes of bios. This approach has characterised modernity, giving rise to numerous dichotomies that have hindered our ability to understand the coordinates of ecological interdependence and to develop a relational ontology. Drawing on an external element, which penetrates the amorphous substratum and sets it in motion like a virus in a cell, allows us to create binomials, such as culture–nature, human–animal, mind–body, based on a hierarchical relationship. Paradoxically, it took a viral pandemic to show us the groundlessness of this paradigm (Marchesini 2021) and to call for an immediate cultural revolution.

Western culture has stubbornly pursued this project, sanctioning, in fact, a divorce that is at the basis of all the processes of devaluation, negligence, and destruction that we can find today. Modernity has staked everything on the human being as an entity emancipated from all bonds, free to choose a destiny and dignity for itself, without feeling any debt to the non-human. Today we must be able to come to terms with this mirage of purity, exclusivity of condition, and detachment from every relationship with which we have sketched an uninvolved humanity, released from every debt, fluctuating and destined to a transcendent dimension. Now, in the face of ecological disaster, socio-economic turbulence, pandemics, and the often-uncontrollable power of technology, we discover that human beings are no longer so safe in their gravitational centre. Therefore, it is necessary to change this paradigm if we really want to learn something from the events of the recent decades. The humanist revolution has carried out a fundamental task in bringing back the discourse on the human condition, re-establishing the historical sense of existence and responsibility in

the construction of the predicates of the person, freeing the body and its poetics, but at the same time it has traced a path that, in the following centuries, has led us to a vision of autonomy and self-determination that ultimately failed.

In the anthropocentric reading, our dimension is a sort of world apart, governed by self-referential dynamics and no longer in communion with the biosphere, except for the aspects of dwelling and fruition (Adams 2015). Immersed in a cultural sphere, which is presumed to be a simple emanation of its genius, humanity owes everything to itself and need not worry about the rest, from which it has long been divorced. The nature–culture dualism, which perhaps more than others exemplifies the clear separation between worlds that are considered irreconcilable, sanctions the volatility of the human being, who is thought to be in the condition of taking leave of the planet at any moment. Thinking of animality not as our own condition, albeit in species-specific declination, but as the umbilical legacy of a past from which we can emancipate ourselves, is the leitmotiv of modernity. We are faced with a cultural paradigm that takes for granted the extraneousness of the human being from trade and sharing with other living forms, in the belief that we can fashion a lifeboat for ourselves whenever we please.

Post-humanist Philosophy

Undoubtedly, humanist culture has made a fundamental contribution to recovering the historical dimension of the human being and the exposure of the body, recovering the vital centrality of presence – as we can find, for example, in *La Primavera* by Sandro Botticelli (1478–1482). However, the humanist exasperation, which we can find today not only in the deniers of the ecological problem, but also in human suprematism, is based on certain assumptions already present *in nuce* in the early humanists. These assumptions are: i) the ascensional destiny of the individual and the detachment from the earthly dimension; ii) the purity of the human and the autarchic origin of culture; (iii) the protective and containing meaning of *techne*. If we maintain these coordinates of thought, we will never be able to fully understand the current crisis (Braidotti 2019). And yet, the anthropocentric assumptions that characterised its foundations, over time, have shown very precise limits. There is no doubt, in fact, that with the various scientific and industrial revolutions of modernity, placing the human being as a unit of measurement of the universe has turned out to be a boomerang.

Therefore, it is not a question of falling into forms of anti-humanism, but rather of reclaiming the roots of classical Humanism by purging it of those disjunctive germs that led us to the aberrations of the 20th century, when

the entire biosphere was transformed into grounds for human affirmation. In Western countries humanism has radically influenced the interpretative keys of ontology and the values upon which important choices are based (Sloterdijk 2014). We have thus witnessed a progressive disconnection of the individual from the ecological banquet. These problems can be traced back to an attitude of self-absorption of the individual, which I call 'egotheis'. This attitude has transformed the subject into the sole operator of meaning and individual life into an icon worthy of devotion.

In order to understand this progressive transformation of the subject, it is necessary to refer to the solipsism already present in the Cartesian *cogito*, and to place alongside it the subject's rescission from the continuity of relations with the world that has characterised modernity. This separation has led to the extreme consequences of the *principium individuationis*, transforming the subject into a 'central force' capable of acting independently of any other being. In the monadic individual, every expression of ownership is conceived regardless of its connections and as following its own laws, resulting in an evermore isolationist conception of subjectivity and, consequently, in a progressive emancipation from the network of conjugations. The individual claims to be able to assert him- or herself in a self-founded way, severing the roots that make him or her a part of the whole and rejecting any form of bond. I believe that this gravitation of meaning to the individual represents the projection on the individual microcosm of the same anthropocentric conception that has converted every presence into a pure instrument for the realisation of human dominion over the world.

Our culture, unfortunately, is full of words such as perfection, authenticity, harmony, which expressly deny the productivity of relationship and which make it difficult to fully understand an eco-ontological framework. At the very best, we admit that entities are interdependent with each other or that they qualify by opposition, that they are in a relationship of interchange or synergy, but in the end, to understand their qualities, we appeal to supposedly essential content. The humanist view has this major flaw by which it claims to ground the human dimension by cutting out the image of our species, separating it from its ecological anastomosis (Odum 2005), and then gluing it onto a totally ideal and universal level. This is an exclusively interpretative error, because factually the human being continued to remain completely permeable to the loans of the world. However, this view resulted in the depreciation of everything that does not fall on that ideal plane.

Therefore, every possible infection has been read as an attack on purity and, above all, on fidelity to the idealised image of the human being that was supposed to act as a unit of measure, the emblem of non-animality, protein-like

virtuality full of potentiality, ability to ascend and detachment from all that is earthly. If, on the other hand, we admit that human qualities are the result of the infection itself, i.e. of the assumption of external factors, our way of looking at the world changes radically. But there is another aspect to take into consideration: the fear that such an admission would empty human beings of their qualities. This is a mistake that once again can be traced back to the essentialist vision, which leads us to believe that the capacity for reception is measured in terms of emptiness. It is precisely redundancy – in neurobiological terms, for example – that favours the heteronymic capacity of the human being, that is to say the ability to borrow from the world. In other words, we must start precisely from the considerable potential for reception proper to our species, just as the metabolic wealth of a cell that enables the functional conversion imposed by a virus. As we can see, what we lack above all are models with which to read the ontology of relationship, because we are still immersed in an essentialist brain-frame.

Post-humanist philosophy (Ferrando 2019) calls for a deep paradigm shift to understand how to find assonance with the biosphere, and not a simple cover-up that claims to solve an existential problem through simple practical rules of environmental resource management. Considering the human being as the fruit of the relationship with the world means transforming our being in the world – Heidegger's feeling of being-thrown-into – no longer as a fall, but in terms of Latin hospitality, which keeps the act of welcome reciprocal, meaning that hosting also means being hosted. Our qualities are the result of infections, i.e. of external agents that have not merely been assumed as inert materials within our ontological dimension but have operated as active agents capable of modifying the expressive organisation of the human being. The essentialist reading, which underpins the cornerstones of humanist thought, appeals to the purity of the human and chooses the vertical path of distancing, in the programmatic mirage of decontamination. But that is not all. It believes in stability and fidelity to a prototypical structure of the entity, revealing its contiguity with fixity. It is not possible to make Darwinian thought work with the humanist paradigm, precisely because it questions the very concept of essence (Mayr 1982) and ideal type of the human being: in the evolutionary logic, dissimilar does not equal monstrous, something that must be discarded because it is different, but represents the very forge of the power of life.

When Descartes entrusted Being to the *cogito*, establishing the identity of its content, he was clearly laying the foundations of this ontological divorce, because in this view awareness does not lie in the ability to dialogue, but in the withdrawal into oneself. Being is inevitably closed off within a solipsistic cage that does not allow one to accept, or even understand, the poietic meaning of

relationships and, consequently, the relational nature of predicates (Marchesini 2017). In other words, following this path one arrives at self-reference and autopoiesis, seeking the predicates in the entity and not in the relationships that the entity has with the world. It is clear, then, that we need to be able to formulate a post-humanist proposal, one that does not fall within a sterile anti-humanism nor paints some vague post-human condition in the near future, but has the courage to amend those aspects of autopoiesis and disjunction that still prevent us from fully understanding the origin of the problems and the characteristics of the current crisis.

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