

Ecology of affects: From Bioethics to Kinethics

A Metahumanist ontology for transforming reality

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I will start with an immodest claim and a critical claim: what I am going to present to you is an inversion of 2500 years of metaphysics of form, of a philosophy and culture marked by the domination of a nihilistic, reactive, homogenising paradigm of fixation and control, form and identity, preservation and replication, individualism and anthropocentrism, the apex of which is contemporary Informatics of Domination, in which the former realisations of logocentrism, humanism, rationalism, and positivism find their most perverse, ubiquitous, invisible and therefore irresistible form.

What I will present to you is the proposal for thinking reality in radically different terms, for which I will appeal to an ontology of movement as foundational of a world that responds to no linear accounts of extension, a world of intensities, of forces in relation and motion that develop endless possible dimensions of becoming.

As Stefan Sorgner and I proposed in the Metahumanist Manifesto, the world is an unquantifiable field of relational forces in motion. Motion as opposed to fixity appears to be the crucial term in the new ontology, for which I will try to give a specific account of what motion is or how it can be thought. This will not be a universalist account of motion, but rather an inventive or creative one to set us in motion in new, unprecedented ways.

Motion is always incipient, potential, virtual: it has always already begun, and it never fully actualises, since as it is being actualised it is already anticipating new potentials of direction, dynamics, acceleration, and flow. (Premovement theories) This incipiency, potentiality or virtuality of movement is crucial for an ontology of becoming, in which the greater or lesser openness of the potentials of

movement that appear in different configurations of the forces becomes a matter of life or death, and accounts for the current nihilistic domination of reactive forces of sameness and replication.

The incipency of movement accounts for the potential and tendency of the forces that constitute the world to unfold in endless differentiation, or rather in endless amorphous becomings. Form is an effect or illusion of fixity, incipient movement does not imply its actualisation in form.

Form, and therefore matter, are not an intrinsic essence of reality, but rather an effect of multiple sustained nihilistic forces that have attempted to produce an ubiquitous fiction of fixity for the sake of domination and control, which is the opposite of incipient movement as the dance of metamorphoses, of amorphogenesis.

The will to incipency of the forces is the will to permanent differentiation, the deep pleasure in dancing emergence and of becoming as unpredictable process of permanent transformation.

The will to domination is its opposite, since it is about preserving values and relations of forces for the sake of an entity that doesn't change, an individual that wants to affirm itself forever, thus negating the power of transformation of becoming. Domination is intrinsically nihilistic, and its devastating effects are to be seen everywhere on the planet: in the pervasive violence that is performed on humans, non humans, and all kinds of naturecultural ecosystems, that is bringing us close to complete annihilation.

Indeed if we were to mention an outstanding fact about humanity it would be its unparalleled destructive power, its incapacity to develop sustained ecologies of differentiation, its violent imposition of rationalisation for the purpose of replicating and controlling, of which the most extreme example is contemporary aesthetics and culture of simulation.

There are good reasons therefore to acknowledge the human as the illness on the skin of the planet that Nietzsche told us about, and to overcome this account of the human as effect of reactive forces of fixation, domination and control. But what would this overcoming of the human look like. Nietzsche only hinted at it: a new sensibility, a new form. I will actually show you what it looks like: yet I warn you that this new sensibility is not a new form, but a non-form, the amorphous incipency of movement and becoming, the lightness of the dance of becoming as that which is permanently anticipating a move into the unthinkable.

Thinking itself is such a kind of movement. There is a plethora of fields within cognitive sciences today that point to the crucial importance of understanding perception, consciousness, thinking, and also affects, in terms of movement. Thus enactive cognition theories propose that consciousness emerges as the effect of the body perceiving, and that this perceiving happens only in and through movement, as proprioception theories also argue. Theories of the expanded mind, point to the way in which thinking forms in the relations that the body establishes with multiple affordances in the surrounding. Affordance itself is a concept that, following Gibson and Merleau Ponty, accounts for the way in which a context of interaction emerges from the continuous world as effect of moving of the body, thus giving rise to consciousness as ongoing process, not as distinct and unified field. This moving is by no means simple: it embraces all the apparatuses of seeing, writing, speaking, of architecture and design, of family and social relations, of gesture and the non verbal spectrum. Indeed we can look at the many complex ways in which perception is choreographed by a plethora of systems of fixation, systems that attempt to discretise the continuous flow of movement into standardised segments, that account for our dominant universes of reference.

But even as I speak to you now, as I write, movement cannot be fixed, thinking is always moving beyond its actualisations. This is the reason why it is impossible and contradictory to produce a systematic, fixed, closed thinking: it implies killing thinking and its radical incipency of movement. While a word and a sentence is being written down, thinking is already moving in new undefined potentials. When I go back to the written text it is in a new different movement of thought, with new potentials that take the thinking into new uncertain directionalities: I could thus never fully actualise and close a text: it could become a process of endless rewriting and moving: so take what I present to you now as necessarily incomplete, as already obsolete, since my thinking, and hopefully yours, is already moving in unthinkable not-yet-actualised, never fully actualised potentials.

Some of you might wonder about the very specific universes of meaning that my discourse seems to be appealing to: but these are not universes of fixity, but of motion, in which the discrete movements of verbality, enacted in less discrete non verbal movements are not about replication, or understanding, but about enacting change: I don't want you to *understand*, I can never know how you enact and embody the affects that I am disseminating: if at all I want them to become unpredictable movements in you that unleash the unthinkable, what I could never think myself: processes of emergence and differentiation: where understanding turns out to be yet another technology of fixation and control. There is no possible understanding, but there are infinite possible affections for differential becomings.

Yet the systems of fixation have produced impenetrable fictions of fixity, whose falacy and failure becomes however evident in the permanent conflict that closed systems of thought generate with an everchanging multiplicity in which they are embedded. Erasing this multiplicity, and hiding this conflict has been the system's most pervasive attempt. And in this it has succeeded temporarily to a large extent.

Power mechanisms in Informatics of domination, are so invisible, so ubiquitous, so disguised by centuries long falacies of the free will, that the technologies of power get easily installed in the bodies, shaping them accordindly.

¿But what is it that they shape? Foremostly perception and consciousness: technologies structure seeing, and that's why they are so invisible, so hard to see.

The invention of perspective was possibly the most relevant event of the Renaissance, this, together with the early use of the camera obscura gave rise to a rationalisation of seeing that is still operating, much more fully, much more ubiquitously, in all our automated mechanisms of surveillance, from our webcams to radars and military technologies, from biometrics to videogames and 3D design.

What this technology of seing structured was not only seeing itslef, but the actual split between the subject and the object that later Descartes fully rationalised. Perspective, cameras and the objective style of visualisation that emerged from their use implies a fixed framing, a distance, a focus, an exposure, and a rationalisation of the field of vision where objects are identified and traced. It is this fixing of perception that makes it possible to split the subject from the world and position it nowhere, with access to everywhere. It is external perspetive that allows for mapping, reifying, controlling.

While this divide could be traced back to the logos in ancient Greece, as a first stance of perceptual standardisation, related also to a first period of globalisation and imperialism, it is in the Renaissance where it takes its modern form, as fixation of perception, that makes it possible to believe in the fiction of universality, subjetivity and objetivity. Mechanics, geometry and rationalist thinking take this paradigm further,whereby all attempes reinforce the special status of the abstract disembodied subject that has been created artificially through the structuring of seeing, and the erasure of embodied specificity, all of which implies the artificial fixation of perception and of the unpredictable incipiency and multiplicity of movement.

Movement itself has been subdued to the machines of fixed vision: for instance in the research of the Weber brothers in the early XIX C. that still informs perception of movement as seen from an outside, discretised in terms of simple trajectories, of beginnings and ends.

This takes us to the other main topic of this essay, which is how affects and desire are formed. In a reality consisting of relational movement affects are the ways in which forces affect and are affected, while desire appears to be their excess: desire is that which in the relation of the forces does not get entwined in effects of replication, but explodes in lines of flight. Desire in this account appears as the unforeseeable incipency and virtuality of movement, that which gets not enclosed in reactive affects of replication.

However the shaping of this endlessly amorphous (not polymorphous) desire has been the most pervasive preoccupation of a system obsessed with replication and control. To generate trajectories of movement, points of gravitation of the forces as inescapable as possible, from which desire cannot fly away... This is done persistently through the structuring of perception and consciousness: as long as the affordances which we relate to and which become our intelligible world through our reiterated moving in relation to them are more and more standardised, what is outside them becomes more and more unthinkable, to the point where the forces, the affects and desire, get aligned in apparently immutable trajectories, which are nevertheless permanently mutating, because no system can foreclose the emergent character of movement forever.

So a first account of how affects and desire are produced in a society such as ours points towards the fixation of perception, and the formalisation of affordances that give rise to uniform subjective and social consciousness formations.

Sciences, with rare exceptions, are implicitly nihilistic, reactive and conservative, since they always tend to ask for the cause, origin and foundation of something, in order to exert a control over it. An active and creative science would make the opposite question: how is this particular reality conformed, what forces manifest themselves in it, how can we recirculate the forces into creative flows of differentiation and transformation? Of course this implies a genealogical interpretation about the will that manifests itself in each complex set of multiple and ambivalent relation of forces, and from an always partial, embedded perspective, and *immanent perspectivism*.

This reductionist reactive approach is what is moving faster than ever in fields such as affective computing, which for my accounts are even more urgent than

genetic engineering, for the development of an *ethics*, that so far is not even conceived of as possible or necessary.

Technologies of human computer interaction, in which us posthumans are embedded more and more in latecapitalist societies, are machines for bodily, affective and cognitive standardisation, *war machines* of an invisible pandemic in which standard affects and consciousness are virally disseminated in unprecedented scales of global homogenisation, this is what I call the Pancoreographic. The purpose is clear: to assimilate all bodies, all desire, all affects, all perception, in the field of domination of global capitalism, and its market niches where desire is preempted and appropriately killed.

This view might seem apocaliptic, but it might turn out to be too soft regarding the reality and violence of this process of planetary annihilation: from unprecedented ecological damage to permanent wars, from constant erasure of embodied and affective diversity and specificity, to the genetic engineering of seeds that through corporations like Monsanto is destroying not only food diversity, but entire habitats, lands, and the economies and societies that live in them.

All technologies of the Informatics of domination share this same goal: to fix, replicate, simulate, control... and to do it in such a way that we not only don't realise it, but that we desire it, that we actively call, as obedient consumers, for the assimilation in all the technopositivist metastructures of control: facebook, mobile technologies, gaming, gps, not to speak of dreams of nanotechnopower, genetic engineering, etc.

There can be no mild stance with regard to this unprecedented and concealed fascistic totalitarian hegemony of the nihilistic forces of endless replication.

An expression of this is to be found in transhumanist dreams of individual immortality, and the bodily erasure presupposed in consciousness transfer, which, consciousness being embodied, will luckily never be possible. What we need is an ethics of free death, an ethics of our relational embeddedness in metabodies of change.

I will now make another critical claim with regard to Transhumanist accounts of transformation of the species, as inherently conservative non-transformative processes. Wherever an account of the good is in play that makes it possible to quantify the good in terms of enhancement we have a reactive will in play, that is seeking to assert given values. The incipency of movement, of permanent amorphogenesis makes it impossible to establish quantifiable accounts of

enhancement. Ecologies of transformation operate on different grounds: of non homogenisation, of flows enacting multiplicity.

I want to poignantly raise the point about the relevance of these distinctions: a matter of life and death in contemporary eugenics society, where bodies, affects and consciousness are permanently shaped according to given arbitrary accounts of ability, age, form, cultural background, class, race, sex, gender and sexuality.

We need to stress this distinction very clearly. We cannot call enhancement a process of amorphogenesis, a process of incipient becoming. Enhancement always implies the reassertion and conservation of given values, of fixity and control. Indeed transhumanist dreams are peopling all of our educational, media, family and social environments for centuries now. Transhumanism thus counts as hiperhumanism, as an intensification, already in play in all of Information Society, of an eugenics of preservation, the most blatant and unecological expression of which is the dream of preserving the individual forever.

Transhumanism does a radical misreading of both the human and the posthuman, and above all of the notion of transformation: instead of doing a critical and genealogical investigation of what the human is, not as an essence but as a contingency, it deliberately avoids any critique in order to foster humanism's dreams, the monsters of the dream of reason, so different from Haraway's promising monsters, in that the former foreclose transformation to given parameters of quantifiable good in what constitutes a highly conservative move: thereby it not only lacks an basic understanding of the changes already happening in the human but forecloses future changes to a capitalistic horizon of preemption.

As Katherine Hayles suggests, the posthuman currently promoted by cybernetics rather than undermining the liberal humanist subject expands it further. There are potentials in cybernetics to go in different directions, but these as so far marginal, the mainstream going massively along the line of increasing replication and control.

Transhumanism, like humanism and capitalism, not only raises the wrong questions (the morality of future genetic enhancement) but in doing so helps to conceal the more urgent ones: affective and cognitive production as it is already happening and has been happening for centuries. I want to raise a critical concern for the way in which the proliferation of discourses on genetic enhancement in transhumanism and posthumanism is *obscuring* the more urgent and as yet unproblematised issues of how our affects and consciousness are shaped within present technocultural environments. I therefore claim for a *shift from a Bioethical discourse to an Ethology and Ecology of affects and cognition*.

So far for outlining a critique. But this is not enough: we need a new paradigm, a new technological, aesthetic, epistemic paradigm, and I will suggest you now how this paradigm may look like: instead of a reactive nihilistic conservative knowledge that tries to fix reality asking questions about its essence, coreographing and fixing perception and consciousness, we need a paradigm that foregrounds movement, partial embedded perspectives in motion, incipency, amorphous becomings, the affirmation and dance of multiplicities in transformation. This implies a radical shift in how our consciousness, perception and affects are shaped, not in terms of replication and fixation, but of radically setting them to motion in unforeseeable ways: new modalities of affects and awareness are needed.

The new technological, technoethic paradigm will be *neither analogue nor digital*, though it may seek recourse to both. *Analogue and digital technologies* (in particular mechanical and computational) are based on humanistic rationalistic principles of *utility, function, identity, form, fixity, external universal centralised perspective of observation, disembodied subjectivity, simulation, replication and control*.

The new *Radical Relationist, Kinethical, or Metahumanist* paradigm will be based on the principles of *embodied knowledge, cognition and affects as relational motion, embodied specificity, partiality and plurality of immanent perspectives in motion and change, amorphous becomings, and creativity* with regard to new and permanently changing modalities of perception, consciousness, affective and relational formations.

The new paradigm will seek to establish *creative sustainable ecosystems* based on heterogeneity and change, as opposed to the *destructive unsustainable ecosystems* of fixation, replication and control.

Some of you might wonder how this could ever be possible without leading into entropy and destructive chaos. The answer lies in the ecologies of forces and affects that we may set forth, where I consider *homogeneous ecosystems* to be destructive and unsustainable therefore weak, though strong in destructive powers, whereas ecosystems that *foreground heterogeneity* through incipency and becoming, would be creative and sustainable, therefore strong (though weak in regard to destructive homogenising powers).

The question is how to set such heterogeneous and changing ecosystems to motion.

This is what we will address in a forthcoming european project that I am launching from Reverso with a transdisciplinary network of international institutions and collaborators, and to which you are welcome to participate.

The scope of the project will be no less than inventing new technological, technoethic, technoscientific and technoesthetic paradigms that radically surpasses the paradigm of fixation, thereby inverting 2500 years of logos, 300 years of mechanics and 50 years of cybernetics.

Since movement is embodied and implies the pluralism and specificity of the bodies and ecosystems involved, we will work both with reappropriating existing analogue and digital technologies, while at the same time experimenting with radically new paradigms.

The project will explore the notion of **Amorphogenesis** (emergence of amorphous fields of awareness), **Metabody** (the body redefined as relational field of forces in motion), **Metaformance** (the process through which metabodies emerge), **Metaformativity** (the heterogenetic and amorphogenetic paradigm of metaformance), and the **Postanatomical body**, (a body defined by changing fields of intensity, not by function and form).

I will now show you other previous projects in which i have opened up this field of research:

Microsexes - the preacher - <http://www.reverso.org/microsexes.htm>

Morphogenesis - <http://www.reverso.org/reverso-morfogenesis.htm>

ETP - <http://www.reverso.org/ETP.htm>

Jaiser - <http://www.jaiser.info/>

Devisualise - <http://medialab-prado.es/article/desvisualizar>

Mutant Bitches - <http://www.zorramutantes.org/>

Metaprogrammes and metadances

Gender and species Stryke for deprogramming the human subject-body.

So a question I leave you with as a metahumanist move, is how to decoreograph all the metaprogramms of affects and consciousness formations in which our thinking and being move, and start moving in yet unthinkable potentials.