

Never modern, never human, always post-Anthropocene?

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Latour, Haraway and Colebrook: assembling conversations (as) becoming knowledge

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Abstract

This article engages with Feminist Science Studies and knowledge production, and specifically focuses on different collective engagements by the authors Bruno Latour, Donna Haraway and Claire Colebrook. How do they use the word “we”, and who are they referring to, as they go into notions of modernity, humanity and the Anthropocene? What are the consequences of articulating a “we” when talking about topics such as the current geo-political situation? What collectivities and exclusions are created? Who has the power to define this “we” and who can talk for, about, or through it? This article positions the different scholars as in conversation, in exploring what kind of “we” they are talking about in their texts and how this “we” is constituted. As such it aims to demonstrate that this “we” is not always taken for granted and does not necessarily assume a unified human species as opposed to all other forms of being and mattering.

Key-words: Anthropocene; Discourse; Feminist Science Studies; Collective Engagements

As an assemblage, a book has only itself, in connection with other assemblages and in relation to other bodies without organs. We will never ask what a book means, as signified or signifier; we will not look for anything to understand in it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed, and with what bodies without organs it makes its own converge.

– Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 – *A Thousand Plateaus*

This text aligns three authors and their texts with comparable titles: Bruno Latour who wrote the book *We Have Never Been Modern*, Donna Haraway who named part I of her book *When Species Meet*, “We have never been human”, and Claire Colebrook who in April 2014 gave a lecture called “We Have Always Been Post-Anthropocene” at a conference about Anthropocene feminism.

Alliances have been made between Latour and Haraway before, by many, and elaborately.¹ Since both authors have written on the process of science and knowledge production – specifically Latour’s *Science in Action* (1987) and Haraway’s “Situated Knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective” (1988) reflect on this – most of the comparative analyses have focussed on those aspects. Such analyses have been helpful for feminist theory in order to think about questions of ‘truth’, ‘objectivity’ and power, which are involved in the process of knowledge production. However, this article aims to highlight a different aspect: not the process of knowledge production per se, but rather how different authors can be brought together as in conversation. Bringing Claire Colebrook in conversation with Latour and Haraway will help to contextualize their work in current discussions on the Anthropocene and link it to concepts of modernity and humanity, thereby calling these concepts into question and decentralizing the position of the human modern subject. As such this conversation can bring feminist analysis further forward in thinking about these issues and concepts.

This article will thus not attempt to reiterate or take up other analyses, and will not read the actual texts together as such², but rather will argue for an alignment as conversation between the authors through their respective texts and investigate how they ‘sound through’ in each other. It will concentrate on *how* certain ideas sound through and are brought across in the different texts, while taking some corresponding concepts, such as the conceptualization of nature(-)cultures, into account.

Resulting from their respective and responsive titles the following questions arose: Who is the “we” the authors are talking about in their titles? How do they respond to each other? And, if they aim to think beyond the human realm, are they not still very much focussed on a human audience when talking of a common “we”? Who has the power to define this “we” and who can talk for/about/through it? This article aims to position the different scholars as in conversation, in exploring what kind of “we” they are talking about in their texts and how this “we” is constituted.

1. Who are “we”?

Before starting the actual analysis of this article, I will first take a brief moment to reflect upon the difficulties, as well as the implications, that exist in talking of and exploring the use of “we”. Throughout this text, I might talk in terms of “we” as well, but whom do I refer to when I do so? Do I mean to implicate that I am speaking for all feminist scholars when I say “we”, because I conduct my analysis from a feminist theoretical perspective? I hope not. Rather, whenever I speak of “we”, I will do so by

putting it in between quotation marks, to indicate that the “we” that I am referring to is not a unified grouping that exists in ‘reality’ (which would indicate generalizing assumptions about who does and who does not belong to this grouping), but rather existing in me and my reader in response-able³ conversation.

As said, the respective titles of the different texts by Latour, Haraway and Colebrook seem to be similar to a great extent and therefore I will try to read them as forming a conversation here. Helping me in the direction of reading the authors together, I will use the Deleuzian notion of assemblage as a framework to think in terms of a relational engagement and entanglement of these different texts.

In their introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari (1978, pp. 3-4) introduce this notion of assemblage precisely in relation to the textual matter of books:

Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an assemblage. A book is an assemblage of this kind, and as such is unattributable. It is a multiplicity – but we don't know yet what the multiple entails when it is no longer attributed, that is, after it has been elevated to the status of a substantive.

The notion of assemblage here refers to the increase of different dimensions and is thus inherently multiple. It contains the possibility of different interpretations, without indicating or pinning down what such interpretations might look like. Along the same lines, this article is not an attempt to detect some inherent essence of the texts, but rather show that bringing these texts together in conversation not only can change their meaning, but also expand their connections with other texts and thereby is able to thicken their different dimensions and readings. The notion of assemblage can thus productively be used to take the inter-textual level of texts into account, as well as bring different texts together and enhance productive new meanings in such an engagement. Therefore, this practice provides innovative ways to include the importance of the materiality of texts, as well as to provoke different modes of thinking in terms of “we”.

The titles of the three different texts that this article discusses seem to be, besides being merely titles, clear statements in themselves: respectively that “we” have never been modern (Latour), have never been human (Haraway), or instead have always been post-Anthropocene (Colebrook). Who do the authors talk about when they refer to “we”, and how do they talk about it? How is this “we” constituted? I like to look into these questions by reading the texts in a comparative way.

Due to limited space I will not discuss and read their complete (and complex) works together as such, but rather will explicitly focus on the “we” in their works with corresponding titles: Latour’s *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993), Haraway’s “We Have Never Been Human” (part of her book *When Species Meet*, 2008) and Colebrook’s conference talk “We Have Always Been Post-Anthropocene” (2014). Haraway’s text explicitly takes up Latour’s book and shifts from modernity to

humanity, while Colebrook's talk seems to link the two concepts, while turning the "never" into an "always".

The analysis of this paper will focus on these works specifically because they all refer to a "we" in relation to contemporary modes of existence concerning humanity, modernity and the current epoch called the Anthropocene. Highlighting this use of "we" in this context is especially relevant as using the word "we" always carries certain power implications and categorizations with it. As such, exploring their use of "we" in their different works can bring such power implications to the fore and possibly open this "we" up, in order to critique the limits of remaining focussed on an anthropocentric "we". As these different usages of "we" can have implicit consequences, this paper specifically explores: who do Latour, Haraway and Colebrook address and whom do they speak *for*? In whose name do they speak? And what kind of power implications does this entail?

1.1. Latour: "we have never been modern"

In his book *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993) Latour examines the way science is conducted and knowledge is gathered in the discipline of anthropology. He links anthropology to the way modernity is presented or conceived of. Central in his book is his conception of the Great Divide: according to him there are two main divides through which Western humanity has come to think of itself in relation to others. These divides can be distinguished as one being internal and the other as being external: the internal divide refers to the distinction that "we" make between nature and culture, and the second, external divide refers to the distinction that "we" make between "us" and "them", the latter referring to all o/Other cultures, who in this view contain a pre-modern overlapping of nature and culture (Latour, 1993, p. 99). These Great Divides are also reflected in other related dualisms such as human/nonhuman, self/other, agential/non-agential, etc.

In the constitution of Latour's "we" these Great Divides play a significant role, in my view, for their existence is one of the main reasons that a distinction is made between a modern "Us" versus a pre-modern "Them". Latour's "we" can then be seen as existing in the modern "Us", as well as in the critical reflection on who this "Us" is and what power divisions play a role in this divide. As Latour argues, the conceptions underlying the Great Divides are false and only constructed as such. As other scholars, such as Karen Barad⁴, have shown as well, nature and culture, human and non-human are not as opposed as they are presented. Instead, "nature, over which we were supposed to gain absolute mastery, dominates us in an equally global fashion, and threatens us all" (Latour, 1993, p. 8). Nature is thus always already intertwined with culture, as much as the non-human is with the human, which proves that the two are in fact not opposed as a great divide at all. Once this is established, this idea can be used to overcome and deconstruct other binaries that are so prevalent and troubling in the human domain like self/other, masculine/feminine, white/of colour, etc.

Moreover, Latour argues that in fact “we” have never been modern; although he does not address who this “we” is explicitly, the assumed “we” seems to consist of the (hu)man embedded in culture, as it is constructed through multiple scientific discourses, placed at one end of the Great Divides. Being modern, in this interpretation, indicates two different practices that must be kept separate in order to remain efficient, but have started to intermingle as of late, and I think that this intermingling also has consequences for the implicit “we” that Latour refers to. The first is the practice of translation, which would enable the blurring of boundaries between new types of being: “hybrids of nature and culture” (Latour, 1993, p. 11). The second practice is that of purification, creating two very distinct ontological realms: that of the human vs. that of the nonhuman. Both practices are valued, as Latour explains: “Without the first set, the practices of purification would be fruitless or pointless. “Without the second, the work of translation would be slowed down, limited, or even ruled out” (Latour, 1993, p. 11). But as he argues, lines between the first and the second practice already have begun to blur. As soon as attention is focused both on hybridity as well as on purification “we” start to become retrospectively aware that they have always already been at work, even before the current historical period, and thus our past begins to change: “Finally, if we have never been modern - at least in the way criticism tells the story - the tortuous relations that we have maintained with the other nature-cultures would also be transformed” (Latour, 1993, p. 11).

This, according to Latour, is the beginning of a realization that “we” indeed have never been modern and that modernity has never begun: this realization is a matter of “retrospective sentiment” in which “we” reread our history (Latour, 1993, p. 47). It can be considered a positive development, as long as the two halves of the symbol that has been broken into two, being nature and culture, are reunited as a sign of recognition: “Half of our politics is constructed in science and technology. The other half of Nature is constructed in societies. Let us patch the two back together, and the political task can begin again” (Latour, 1993, p. 144). The coming into being of these two halves is the result of these processes of translation and purification, and can be undone through a careful rereading of “our” history, which would exemplify how nature and culture have always been connected and part of the same whole, “one and the same production of successive states of societies-natures, of collectives” (Latour, 1993, p. 139). Therefore, it has been the mere idea of modernity and modernization that has “made it possible to distinguish between the laws of external nature and the conventions of society” as Latour asserts (Latour, 1993, p. 130).

As such Latour argues that modernity has not been illusionary, but rather that it has been actively performed (Latour, 1993, p. 144). This is much in line with many feminist approaches to the concepts of modernity and humanity, as they portray it through the figure of the Man of Reason (Lloyd, 1984). This figure refers to the unmarked category, the normative position that the white, European, able-bodied, rational man holds as the ideal universal and liberal subject of science and humanism (Braidotti, 2013, p. 24). Rather than an actual position this is a constructed norm that is performed: “The

dialectics of otherness is the inner engine of humanist Man's power, who assigns difference on a hierarchical scale as a tool of governance. [...] This process is inherently anthropocentric, gendered and racialized in that it upholds aesthetic and moral ideals based on white, masculine, heterosexual European civilization" (Braidotti, 2013, p. 68). Modernity is thus actively performed through different discursive techniques that hold a firm belief in liberal autonomy, pure rationality, and truth, often holding the dominant position of the humanist idea of the "Man of Reason"⁵ at its centre. Moreover the idea of modernity sustains the various Great Divides that Latour mentions and can therefore not be dismissed as merely an illusion: "Neither Nature nor the Others will become modern. It is up to us to change our ways of changing" (Latour, 1993, p. 145). In this quote he thus seems to juxtapose a modern "us" or "we" against "Nature" and "Others", whilst at the same time giving this "us" the responsibility to change. Hence, although it is his main point to criticize the division that is made between the West and the rest, he seems to reiterate the same practice, in urging the self-identified modern subject to rethink its position, both in relation to Nature, as well as in relation to Others. Therefore it seems at times that Latour continues to speak from a position at one end of the Great Divides, from a perspective embedded in modern, human society, as he writes: "At the end of the process, there is indeed a nature that we have not made, and a society that we are free to change; there are indeed indisputable scientific facts, and free citizens" (Latour, 1993, p. 140). However, it seems that he only does so in order to stress his point, as he continues: "but once they are viewed in a nonmodern light they become the double consequence of a practice that is now visible in its continuity, instead of being, as for the moderns, the remote and opposing causes of an invisible practice that contradicts them" thereby dismantling this position as a performative practice of modernity that is actively constructed (Latour, 1993, p. 140). Thus, rather than taking up a specific position of "we" he seems to construct an imaginary "we" and "them", and "Nature" and "Society" as a position to formulate a critique on these processes of translation and purification.

Nevertheless it remains important to take into account, and reflect upon, what kind of "we" it is that has the ability to reflect upon their own position and this responsibility to change, and retrospectively reconsider "our" past. Is this not implying a human audience only? As such his "we" seems to be situated in a human domain, although Latour recognizes that there is an inevitable link between humanity and modernity, asserting that: "The two expressions 'humans' and 'nonhumans' are belated results that no longer suffice to designate the other dimension" (Latour, 1993, p. 137). Donna Haraway more explicitly follows this up in her text "we have never been human", to which I will now turn.

1.2 Haraway: "we have never been human"

Haraway explicitly takes the process of knowledge production up in her work⁶, as well as how "technoscience" comes about and materializes our understandings of

“naturecultures”. Therefore it is rather important to explore how different discourses about technoscience are figured, to be able to expose where certain terms come from, and how the empty signifiers of human/non-human, nature/culture, we/them get their power-laden connotations. In order to point this out and criticize the above-mentioned anthropocentric Man of Reason, Haraway decentres Da Vinci’s Vitruvian Man – the white masculine man of “Perfect Proportions” that has come to be a figure for Renaissance humanism and modernity – by introducing a cartoon of Da Vinci’s “Vitruvian dog” in her book *When Species Meet* (Haraway, 2008, p. 8).

Moreover, along similar lines to Latour, Haraway argues that the world is materialized through interactions between different actors, agents and actants (both human and non-human), which shows that this “we” can also be thought more widely than a human “we”. In actively thinking about the constitution of a more open “we”, she provides ‘becoming with’ companion species as a positive development in this direction: “All of these are figures, and all are mundanely here, on this earth, now, asking who “we” will become when species meet.” (Haraway, 2008, p. 5) Hence, Haraway’s “we” is left open and ambiguous, seems to be undetermined, and more flexible compared to the “we” that Latour refers to. This is due to the fact that her “we” is constituted through encounters and interactions, as such meaning it is more of a process rather than a fixed predicament, and includes humans as well as non-humans, subjects as well as objects.

Haraway takes Latour’s Great Divides up as well in her work, and actively tries to bridge or overcome them. She does so for instance through her configuration of the cyborg, a hybrid between human and machine, which is introduced as a way to overcome diverse great divides, such as the ones between nature/culture, human/non-human. She additionally uses the figure of the dog in her book *When Species Meet* (2008) to rethink the relation between different species (including humans), and proposes a situated becoming with companion species: “To knot companion and species together in encounter, in regard and respect, is to enter the world of becoming with” (Haraway, 2008, p. 19). Such becoming with entails an affirmative interconnectedness between different species, based on mutual respect, care and regard. It is through these encounters of interconnectedness that “we” become; “we” exist through our becoming with others. In this world of becoming with, “*who and what are* is precisely what is at stake.” (Haraway, 2008, p. 19) Through this approach Haraway seems to more explicitly take up this question of “we”, considering it as a process of becoming.

Therefore, it is important to think about who and what constitutes this process of a unified “we”. If this “we” has never been human (and never modern either), then there must be an assumed “we” that has constructed and thinks of itself as human, invented by a certain group of people or type of species, to distinguish itself from others, in order to position itself as superior to them. Perhaps this “we” exists in all the modest witnesses⁷ that have come to rule in science, or is sustained by what Haraway refers to as the “philosopher’s human”. She talks of the “knowledge that we have never been human and so are not caught in that cyclopean trap of mind and matter, action and

passion, actor and instrument. “Because we have never been the philosopher’s human, we are bodies in braided, ontic, and antic relatings” (Haraway, 2008, p. 165). Who is this philosopher’s human? What are those characteristics such as “bodies in braided, ontic and antic relations” about? What does Haraway refer to when she takes up these terms? Perhaps that “we” interpreted as the human species, are not a unified “we” that is separated from others as “we” like to think, and as such does not exist; instead “we” are all intertwined, and become with others through the acts of encountering and relating.

Moreover it is significant that she talks about this in terms of “knowledge”, for knowledge is power, as Foucault has attested. Hence, this stress on *knowing* that “we” have never been human indicates that she knows something that others do not. Apparently “we” have never been human, but not everyone knows this, or wants to know or believe this: what does this implicate? What does it imply about people who actively believe in their own humanity or human-ness? I think what Haraway wants to provoke here is an awareness of the status that “we” ourselves as humans grant: the idea that ‘we humans’ are the only beings that get “to hold all the ‘goodies’ like agency, intentionality, rationality, feeling, pain, empathy, language, consciousness, imagination, and much more” (Barad, 2012, p. 27). “We” thus think that “we humans” are the only ones capable of being rational, having agency, having a consciousness and knowing the difference between what is good and what is bad.

Thus, by exposing that what “we” have come to understand as the rationalist and modern human (the assumed “we”) – a separate entity, more powerful than all the others – Haraway reconfigures the idea of the human and encourages us to rethink this assumed category in relational terms. Compared to Latour, Haraway seems to think more interactively about what and who she refers to when speaking of “we”, and involves the active constitution of this “we” in her project as becoming with. “We” then exists as, and in, alliance and encounters between different species and actors, whether subjects, mold, bacteria or dogs.

1.3. Colebrook: “we have always been post-Anthropocene”

In April 2014 Claire Colebrook was one of the speakers at a conference devoted to Anthropocene Feminism, at which environmental issues were discussed from a feminist perspective. The Anthropocene is here used to refer to the current geological epoch that is defined by scientists as being marked by the significant global impact that humans have on the planet. Negative geological developments, such as climate change and global warming, can then be viewed as a result of this human domination.

In thinking about the Anthropocene, and the issues that come with it, Colebrook very much focuses on the question of “we” that is central in this article. What renders the Anthropocene problematic in her view is that when “we” speak of wrecking the planet, “we” only mean that “we” have wrecked it for “us”, which only refers to a certain type of “us”.⁸ Who is this “we”? And who is this “certain type of ‘us’”? I think what Colebrook means here is that part of the human population only covets profit and

power, and it does so through dominating other people (think of the unequal division of labour: slavery, bad working conditions, a continuing wage gap between upper and lower classes, men and women). This type of “us” has now come to realize that the earth is a non-renewable resource and that this is bad, not for the planet in itself, but for the ends to which they want to use it, thereby continuing the idea of the environment as a resource, serving human exceptionalism.

A feminist approach is therefore highly needed according to Colebrook: she describes feminism as generated by one overarching question, which is the question of “who?” Whose feminism and for whom? Subsequently the question can be asked: whose Anthropocene is it: and who does the “anthropos” refer to? It is therefore important to ask *which* humans come together in certain events, whose “anthropos” we are talking about, and to ask what history lies behind it. According to Colebrook the domination of humans by other humans is closely entangled with the domination of earth. “We” started wrecking the planet when “we” ended massive slavery at the beginning of industrialization, which has come at the cost of the planet. Added to this is the importance of a geological scale: the very possibility of the division of labour that occurs *with* the appropriation (such as industrial agriculture) of the planet, and that this division of labour is no longer (merely) between master/slave, man/woman, as well as between human/non-human. Therefore, the idea of the Anthropocene has had a major influence on difference thinking, according to Colebrook. Difference has been fetishized, up to the point of indifference:

One of the dominant motifs of the Anthropocene is climate change, which (as Bruno Latour has argued) closes down the modern conception of the infinite universe, drawing us back once again to the parochial, limited and exhausted earth. It might be worth redefining all those hyper-modern proclamations of a post-human and post-racial future as hypo-modern, as refusals of the species’ bounded temporality. Nowhere is this more evident than in the seemingly modern fascination with sexual difference. It is the possibility of transcending sexual difference — of arriving at indifference — that has always been harbored as the human species’ end.(Colebrook 2014)

Through this process, the relations between three problematic binaries are reconfigured: humanity in relation to post-/in/non-humanity, temporality in relation to history, and sexual difference in relation to gender. Therefore, feminist and other scholars can use the anthropocentric moment to reconfigure and deconstruct the binaries that have been held as the condition of the humanist modern Man of Reason.

A difference with Haraway and Latour is that Colebrook is much more performing in her approach, and provokingly, asks her audience what “we” are becoming, while implementing irony and jests in adding the issue of the Anthropocene to the modernity and humanity mix. For instance, she critically talks about the constitution of a certain “we”, that is problematic in itself, while jokingly referring to Toyota Prius-driving people, who merely want to clean their consciousness in order not to feel guilty about the state of the planet. This Prius-driving “us” can thus be viewed as a western and

middle class group that is aware of the exhausted condition of the earth, and proclaims to change it, but continues to damage the planet, only it does so through fake and greenwashing solutions of capitalism, by merely participating in feel good consumerism.

Additionally, the representation of the Anthropocene in current dominant narratives has created the illusion of a unified human species, that is *so* dominant and whose influence is *so* significant, that it is capable of destroying the planet. According to her the Anthropocene age thus has had the effect of fetishizing difference, as if there is one singular inscriptive difference, that has now come to erase all other differences, which shifts the scale away from local political problems to the anthropocentric question of how “we” as humans are going to survive. It thus creates the illusion of a unified human species, thinking of itself as no longer part of the eco-system but destructive in and of itself. Differences between subjects are thereby erased and humanity is seen as opposed to the eco-system in which it lives. But are we really that important? “Are we really the only species that makes a mark on the planet?” Colebrook critically asks. Hence a revived human exceptionalism has taken place, which indicates, in the words of Haraway (2008, p. 11):

[T]he premise that humanity alone is not a spatial and temporal web of interspecies dependencies. Thus to be human is to be on the opposite side of the Great Divide from all the others [...] the institutionalized, long dominant Western fantasy that all that is fully human is fallen from Eden, separated from the mother, in the domain of the artificial, deracinated, alienated, and therefore free.

It is this fantasy, that is inherently racist, patriarchal and Eurocentric, that holds the human at its centre, which the Anthropocene seems to have legitimated.

Hence, Latour, Haraway and Colebrook each provide a different understanding of what constitutes this “we” and in what ways. Haraway’s idea of “we”, an entangled process of becoming with companion species, seems to be a critical extension of Latour’s critique on modern humanism. Colebrook seems to follow up both Latour and Haraway, specifically the latter’s question concerning the human-ness of this “we”, by taking up the critical perspective from the Anthropocene. She mocks an assembled “we” that the idea of an Anthropocene has constructed: a unified human species, capable of wrecking the planet. Hence, where Latour and Haraway aim to critique dominant positions of modernity and humanity as constructed, it seems that Colebrook wants to concentrate on exposing the assumed “we” that backs up current ideas of the human’s exceptionalism.

2. Conclusive remarks: post-modern, post-human, post-Anthropocene?

As my account has shown, Latour and Haraway (as well as Colebrook in a less literal and explicit manner) refuse and criticize the labels of modernity and humanity.

As Latour proclaims, “we” have never been modern, therefore we can never be post-modern either: “we have never begun to enter the modern era [...] they [referring to postmodernists] claim to come after a time that has not even started!” (Latour, 1993, p. 47). In a similar way, Haraway (2008, p. 17) clearly distances herself from the term “posthuman”:

I never wanted to be posthuman, or posthumanist, any more than I wanted to be postfeminist. For one thing, urgent work still remains to be done in reference to those who must inhabit the troubled categories of woman and human, properly pluralized, reformulated, and brought into constitutive intersection with other asymmetrical differences.

Closely reading this quote it seems that Haraway thinks of the prefix “post-” as indicating that something is over. Thus she argues against a “post-” approach, because she argues that the humanist project, as well as the feminist project, is still very necessary. Although I agree with their necessity, I do not think that post-humanism indicates that thinking about the “human” is no longer necessary.

This is where I would like to propose a different reading of the “post-”: as a more affirmative and open approach to these labels, which enables not only a rethinking of modernity, humanity and the Anthropocene, but also a different reading of the “we” that has been constituted through these terms. Instead of seeing the “post-“ as getting rid of, dismissing, or coming after, it could also be interpreted as mainly thinking *beyond* modernity, humanity, or the Anthropocene, and can thus expand the scope of analysis, opening it up towards other worlding forces, and different kinds of actors too. Such an approach is already used by Colebrook who argues that “we” have always been post-Anthropocene: not in order to dismiss the Anthropocene, but rather to show that there are other ways to think about the planet in relation to the human. If “we” open up to other readings of the current geological impact, beyond its relation to the human only, “we” can see that humanity might not be as dominant, significant or exceptional as it likes to think of itself.

In conclusion I would like to return to the quote of Deleuze and Guattari that I posed at the beginning of this article, which has helped me in seeing and treating the different texts as assemblages. As Deleuze and Guattari argue, texts function as assemblages that exist only in relation to other assemblages and have no predetermined essence or meaning. It does not make sense to grasp a certain meaning or understanding, but instead is more sensible and relevant to examine a text to see what it becomes *with*. Along similar lines I have compared the different forms of “we” that Latour, Haraway and Colebrook take up in their considerations, by bringing their texts together. A closer examination of their different texts has helped me in figuring out what Latour, Haraway and Colebrook refer to when they talk about “we”. This has productively demonstrated that this “we” is not always fixed, taken for granted, and does not necessarily assume a unified modern, human species as opposed to all other modes of existence. This is a positive and relevant direction for feminist theory to go in, for it enables a “we” that is

more inclusive and open, that helps to reconfigure the place of the human, to make room for other species to meet and become with.

Notes

¹ Scholars who have written on Latour and Haraway in relation to each other and to feminist thinking are for instance Maria Púig de la Bellacasa and Iris van der Tuin.

² This is additionally due to limited space and time.

³ In using the term response-ability I refer to Donna Haraway's and Karen Barad's hybrid inter-connection between "response" and "responsibility", as a possible way to open up space for others to respond in responsible ways. This entails a mutual egalitarian and respectful relation between my reader(s) and me (Barad, 2012, p. 48).

⁴ Karen Barad takes up the notions of intra-activity and agential realism in her work to analyse the materiality and agency of non-human actors and agents, to contest its supposed 'difference from' the norm of humanity. If "we" – here used as referring to humans – take nature seriously, we will see that "all sorts of seeming impossibilities are indeed possible, including the queerness of causality, matter, space, and time" (Barad, 2012, 29).

⁵ Genevieve Lloyd analyses the "Man of Reason" as a figure to refer to the Cartesian maleness (and to a certain extent the whiteness) of Western philosophy.

⁶ For instance in *Modest_Witness @ Second Millennium.FemaleMan Meets OncoMouse: Feminism and Technoscience* (1997) as well as in the article "Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective" (1988). In "A Game of Cat's Cradle: science studies, feminist theory, cultural studies" (1994) she talks of the "natural-cultural gravity well of technoscience" to analyze this process of knowledge production too (Haraway 1994, p. 60).

⁷ Haraway's "modest witness" refers to the holder of unmarked, normative positions; it is a subject who, to retain his modesty, must be invisible, for this modesty is one of the founding virtues of modernity. This figure of the modest witness reflects a practice of speaking from nowhere, a biasing embodiment, disregarding to ground and embed one's knowledge and perspective and is further elaborated upon in Haraway's book *Modest— Witness@ Second— Millennium. FemaleMan— Meets— OncoMouse: Feminism and Technoscience*. Psychology Press. 1997. Print.

⁸ Colebrook, Claire. (2014) "We Have Always Been Post-Anthropocene". Anthropocene Feminism Conference. Center for 21st Century Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Milwaukee, April 2014. Lecture.

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