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POSTHUMANISM AND ECOFEMINIST

THEOLOGY — TOWARD A NONDUALIST SPIRITUALITY

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Abstract: The early 21st century climate crisis and environmental degradation has brought environmentalism closer to religion and postmodern feminist theories, in the paradigm of ecofeminist theology and philosophical posthumanist thinking. This era we live in, that of the Anthropocene—which asserts itself through the normativity of a hierarchical and dominant structure of man over non-human others/nature—is about to bring us to the threshold of the Sixth Extinction. This means that ecofeminist theology focuses both on the ecological health of Earth and on that of the dissolution of masculine(culture)–feminine(nature) binary oppositions, but especially regaining the sacred dimension of Earth. This aspect requires a rethinking of the current condition of life, from the perspective of posthumanist and Deleuzian deconstructivist theories of “becoming”, within the transversal, multilayered and nondualistic limits of differences—a paradigm in which the Earth and all human/non-human others are seen, symbolically, materially and spiritually, as being rhizomatic living agents. Thus, the general objective of the paper follows an approach from the ecofeminist theology perspective, regarding the dimension of nondualist spirituality as an alternative method of rethinking man’s spiritual relationship with the Earth. The theoretical objective focuses on the symbolic-cultural deconstruction of *zoē-bios* dualism, from the perspective of Rosi Braidotti and Francesca Ferrando’s posthumanist philosophical theories, in a *Zoē*-centered way of thinking—an aspect that leads to a rhizomatic and transversal relationship with the “vital materiality”, in a post-anthropocentric and post-dualist paradigm.

Key words: posthumanism, ecofeminist theology, nondualist spirituality, *zoē-bios*, post-anthropocentrism, post-dualism.

1. Introduction

The convergence between posthumanism and ecofeminist theology, which we emphasize in this paper, lies in the posthuman shift from humanism to post-humanism (in the paradigm of a post-dualist and non-hierarchical way of thinking the notion of the human), and from anthropocentrism to post-anthropocentrism (where human exceptionalism is deconstructed in favor of a multilayered and transversal way of existence), within the limits of an immanent and nondualistic spirituality. In this sense, the presence of the capitalist-patriarchal hierarchical differences from Western culture—built on the dominant/masculine(culture)–dominated/feminine(nature) binary relationship—is criticized by most ecofeminist theories, where this form of manifestation of male power is seen as materialized in a reductionist dialectic of the ecosystem, within which any component of nature (e.g. soil, water, forests, natural resources and people's livelihoods) is a simple element intended for exploitation in the name of consumption/profit (Shiva & Mies 2014; Anderlini-D'Onofrio 2004, 65–93). This privilege of life as a bios, in the European space (in an epistemological paradigm, built on the Enlightenment principles of progress), is called into question by posthumanist criticism, by offering alternative ways of rethinking the relationship between man, non-human agents and planet Earth (*zoē*)—namely in a non-exclusive and rhizomatic manner, by establishing transversal and reciprocal relationships. In the framework of this late capitalism, characterized by climate change and ecological crisis, as a consequence of excessive consumption of natural resources and continuous degradation of the environment, we are threatened by what Kolbert (2014) calls—the Sixth Extinction. Namely, a mass extinction at global level of all living organisms, including human/non-human entities. This dystopian scenario, which is currently based on an analysis of the accelerated extinction, in recent years, of different species of plants, animals or natural resources (Thomas et al. 2004, 145–48), draws its sap from the disturbing cyclicity of previous extinctions, which had as a result, each time, the disappearance of life on Earth, but not of Planet Earth itself. This global threat of our time, seen as a result of direct or indirect human action on the environment, is one that illustrates the late consequences of this Anthropocene era.

In this order of ideas, the return to the sacred dimension of the Earth, through an open connection with nature, as Mother Earth—supported by ecofeminist theology and certain New Age spiritual movements (under the neo-paganism umbrella)—leads to a revival of goddess-based religions, within the limits of a holism of humanity (in a post-dualist perspective) and non-human others (Anderlini-D'Onofrio 2004, 65–93). Namely, a form of spirituality, rooted in the immanent structure of the human being, seen as an embodied and embedded entity—in a materialist–vitalist approach of existence. This brings into question the posthuman emergent ontology,

which includes a whole set of becomings (becoming woman–earth–animal etc.) that takes place within the rhizomatic, multilayered and nondualistic limits of difference and not in the vertical and hierarchical ones, of the stable ontic-ontological categories of human/non-human existence (Braidotti 2013; 2019a; Deleuze & Guattari 2005). At the ecofeminist theology level, this represents a shift from the transcendental metaphysics of the stereotypical Western image of the omnipotent God, as belonging to the male gender, to the immanent dimension of Goddess spirituality, which involves a set of principles that reject the dominant tradition of the patriarchal figure of God (namely that of God the Father, the vengeful god of death and destruction), in favor of a spiritual dimension of life focused on healing and re-enchanting of the world—in the direction of a struggle of life against death, for the very survival of humanity and the earth. Namely, a reconnection and a reestablishment of our emotional bonds with the world and nature that have been lost in the history of androcentric domination, leading, not necessarily to an undermining of the masculine(God)–feminine(Goddess) binary relationship—and to the creation of a new hierarchical structure with the feminine (Goddess) in the dominant position—but to an onto-epistemological convergence of the spiritual dimension within an affirmative ethic of the posthuman.

2. Nature–Culture Binary and Ecofeminist Critique

According to ecofeminist critics, as well as in the opinion of Braidotti (1994; 2013) and Ferrando (2019)—who are both feminist posthumanist thinkers and whose innovative contributions lie in the posthumanist, post-dualist and post-anthropocentric way of rethinking the human—female gender, nature, less/non-human otherness, and the environment are seen as victims of the Western patriarchal system, characterized by a dualistic hierarchical thinking, reflected in the oppressive policies of domination and control (Braidotti 2013; Ferrando 2019; Shiva & Mies 2014). Inheriting the Western metaphysical cultural tradition, the binary opposition nature–culture finds its roots, in a narrow sense, in the definition of man as *anthropos* (*zoon politikon*) given by the Ancient Greek culture—namely a political animal of *polis* who possesses *logos* (seen as speech, reason, rationality, language), and where *polis* for Aristotle exists by nature, an aspect that makes man by nature a political animal (Aristotle 2000). A paradigm that leads to assuming as a fact that human “nature” is “political” because of language. This “naturalistic” position of Aristotle, however, must be understood outside the ontic-ontological paradigm of nature, as environment—his argument being framed within the essentialist limits of what is natural for humans and what is rational. However, from this Aristotelian equation it turns out that not every man

endowed with *logos* had the status of a political animal, of the *polis*—because the *logos*, understood as reason, was seen as a masculine essence. Therefore, women, slaves and all those who didn't speak Greek (Persians, for example) were considered “less humans”, as a consequence of this definition of hu(man) seen as one (the central image of the Greek male as *zoon politikon*) and not as many—the plurality of the human condition (Ferrando 2019). This reductionist perspective, which we find in the Aristotelian philosophy of *polis* politics, is reflected, according to ecofeminist critics, in the entire Western historical tradition, and later colonialist, based on a negative way of seeing differences (such as gender, race, class or ethnicity), which leads to the construction of an exclusive definition of man, within the limits of the *dominant-dominated* relationship, which provides a perverse and hierarchical structure of power in Western societies (Mack-Canty 2004, 154–179; Hawkins 1998, 158–197). Therefore, this dualistic hierarchical line of thinking is responsible for what Foucault (2002) identifies in the Enlightenment tradition—modeled by reason and progress—as the humanistic definition of man. Namely, that of the white male, identified with culture, which opposes the alterities of others—the less human category mentioned above, non-human otherness (identified with nature)—and which underlies the nature–culture binary opposition and anthropocentric exceptionalism of masculine bias, in Western thinking, according to ecofeminist and posthumanist critics (Shiva & Mies 2014; Anderlini-D'Onofrio 2004, 65–93; Ferrando 2019).

However, this nature–culture opposition has its roots, not only in the ontological–metaphysical paradigm of the definition of man (as *anthropos*), or in the cultural–historical and political one of European humanism, but also in the onto-epistemological one of *Life*, which in Ancient Greek thinking was defined by two separate and structurally hierarchical notions, but interconnected at the same time—*zoē-bios* (Ferrando 2019). For Agamben (1998), this *zoē-bios* binary refers to *Life* as being composed by *zoē*—or the natural life, characteristic of both man and other non-human entities, or Gods—and by a political existence (*bios*), specific to man, as *anthropos/zoon politikon*, shaped by *logos* and culture. The political and social implications of *zoē-bios* dualism—“(…) the relationship between them constitutes one of those qualitative distinctions on which Western culture built its discursive empire” (Braidotti 2006, 37)—contribute to this dialectical division of nature(feminine)–culture(masculine), later maintained by the *biopolitics* of patriarchal capitalism (in the opinion of socialist ecofeminism), which results in a normativization and commodification of all living organisms as exploitable agents (Foucault 2006; 2008; Sandilands 1999; Merchant 1995). According to the same ecofeminist critiques, this *biopolitics* of “bare life” (which is neither *zoē* nor *bios*), applied at the level of existence, means a perverse fusion of *zoē* with *bios*, or rather a politicization and normativization of *zoē* through an “inclusive/exclusive” (Agamben 1998) relationship of patriarchal *biopower* technologies of the

economic capitalism of liberal democracy, over human beings—females, people of color, racial and sexual minorities (Sandilands 1999; Braidotti 2013). Further, this leads to a desacralization of environment and *Life* as *zoē*, consequence of both colonialization and globalization, based on this dualistic inequality (private/public), encountered at the level of liberal democracy politics, which led to the privilege of private property and capital, to the detriment of collective forms of life and nature. For example, the erosion of biodiversity and the degeneration of local food cultures, by free market practices of neoliberalism, have led to a global threat to livelihoods and well-being (Brauch et al. 2009). This antagonism emphasized by Plumwood (1995, 134–168) at the level of Eurocentric democratic policies—in which the interests of market liberalization led to the exploitation of Mother Nature, women, Third World people and non-human others, within the limits of a reproductive–productive dialectics, highlights again the image of the dualised self, which treats these alterities as instruments—takes for granted the inequality and domination of woman/nature by man/culture. However, the ecofeminist critique regarding the association of the feminine with nature does not aim to uproot this empirical connection of the feminine with nature, from the reproductive dialectical paradigm—where women (as reproducers and preservers of life, by birth, the care of the home, food or nature) maintain a harmonious balance in the micro-events of life and community—but aims to de-instrumentalize this vitiated relationship from the patriarchal oppression of the destruction of the environment and of other human/non-human alterities by the capitalist requirement of production (Merchant 1995). In the current ecosocial crisis, this hierarchical binary nature–culture/*zoē-bios* is reanalyzed within the limits of an affirmative ethic of positive diversities (of the posthuman condition), as well as that of radical democratic ecofeminist policies, namely, in a *zoē*-centric shift and in a nature–culture weaving of post-essentialist and non-androcentric epistemic positive values, based on environmental inter-connections and multilocal and decentralized efforts, towards a new holistic approach to *Life* (Braidotti 2013; Plumwood 1995, 134–168). The acknowledgment of the decline and crisis of European humanism, which Foucault (2002) called “the death of Man”, opens not only a post-anthropocentric and post-dualistic vision of life, but also an eco-centric philosophy of environment and human minority groups, based on a fluid, rather than static, interaction of differences and on an interdependence between nature and culture in the name of the politics of the common good. For Ferrando (2019), this posthumanist approach to *Life* refers to the decentralization of the humanist image of man—seen in the Foucauldian paradigm (2002) as a product of Enlightenment thinking—while the post-anthropocentric one, to the removal of human exceptionalism, as an *anthropos*, regarding its superiority over other non-human otherness and the environment. The reconnection of man with nature aims, in ecofeminist thinking, to

decentralize humanistic culture and the dualistic methodology of investigating *Life*, within the limits of a nature–culture weaving of spiritual assemblages, by promoting a cultural and biological diversity (Plumwood 2002; Tøllefsen 2011, 89–95). For Guattari (2013), this means both the implementation of an ethic of care regarding the environment and a “social and mental ecology”. This ethical–political articulation of the social, the ecological and the cultural, proposed by Guattari, draws our attention to the multitude of ecologies, environments or habitats that not only define us, for the moment, but which we should define and reconfigure constantly in this continuous process of becoming, towards a multilayered network of related relationships, based on affirmative ethical practices, which does not refer to removing or bracketing the negative, but to reconsidering it from the binary opposition of the metaphysics of presence discourse—by transforming this dysfunction of the negative (found in various hierarchies, rejections, violence, domination or exploitation) into an engine of healing the identity of the human subject, decimated by the suffering and virulence of the exclusive definition of *Life* (as *bios*). This new ecological democratic perspective embraces human diversity and environmental consciousness as rooted in human existence, dissolving the boundary of the binary between nature (as given) and culture (as constructed), in the direction of a holistic spirituality, based on altruism, solidarity, empathy and care, which shifts the artificiality of humanist culture towards the vitality of *Life per se* as a *zoē*-centered shift.

3. Posthumanism and Ecofeminist Theology

Ecofeminist theology continues the struggle initiated by feminist and ecofeminist movements against the socio-cultural, political and historical construction of patriarchal domination and hierarchical dualisms, as well as the fundamentalist Western Christian theology, both in terms of the transcendence and the androcentric view of God. This deconstructing of the perception of God, from the limits of the metaphysics of presence and of patriarchal paradigm—of God as Father, the vengeful God of the Old Testament, characteristic of “strong theology”—opens an approach to the idea of God in the paradigm of “weak theology”, which depicts a *theology of events* (non-dogmatic and pluralistic) and openness to an affirmative ethic of tolerance, love and diversity, within the limits of a theological universalism (Caputo 2006). Caputo (2006) shows us his ideas, regarding this “weak theology” accompanied by the argument of the “Weakness of God”, whereby he presents a non-interventionist God of forgiveness, in which he no longer holds a sovereign and hierarchical position, in relation to human nature—being an integral part of the essence and daily existence of man as an indeterminate weak force that exerts an unconditional call on us (Crockett 2018). But, because for Caputo the name of God is not a

literal one, being deliteralized by the arguments of “weak theology”—“Weak theology *deliteralizes* the name of God, while at the same time it does not banish the name of God or prohibit it” (Crockett 2018, 100)—places the name of God, both outside the engendered language mechanisms of masculine bias, and of a possible feminist solipsistic language. Which makes names like God, Goddesses or Mother Nature, to represent an event of calls, that these names shelter, and not a transcendental *signified* nor a metaphysical *signifier*. This new relationship with the Divinity, as an *event*—which for some ecofeminist theology critics may include both names God/Goddesses, in a post-dualistic and non-hierarchical paradigm (Tøllefsen 2011, 89–95)—follows this line of thinking, that of a “weak” God, namely an immanent and non-essentialist Divinity, embedded and embodied in everydayness and in this nature–culture weaving of spiritual assemblages. Because, with Nietzsche’s affirmation of the “death of God” (Nietzsche 2001), continuing with the postmodern philosophy, with the secularization of religious life and the birth of New Age neo-pagan movements, we are witnessing a return from the historical religious linearity/verticality, found in the genealogical symbolic system of Judeo-Christian tradition, to the ancestral cyclicity of a nondualistic and immanent spirituality of becoming. Wherein we are not talking about a linear becoming, towards a certain ontological purpose, but rather about a “nomadic” becoming of an emphatic proximity and intensive inter-connectedness—a mixture of wisdom and love, regarding Earth and all animate/inanimate creatures and entities, in all their diversity, which together form a transversal, multilayered and multistratal network of life, which is God as *event* (Ruether 2005; Caputo 2006). A phenomenon that in a posthumanist paradigm “echoes the non-unitary, multiple and heterogeneous sense of space” where “(...) all human and non-human entities are transversal subjects-in-process, in perpetual motion, immanent to the vitality of self-ordering and relational matter” (Braidotti 2019a, 56; 52).

At the same time, this postmodern nihilism adopted by Caputo decentralizes the image of God, seen as a “metanarrative” of the metaphysical theology of Western Christian tradition, bringing it closer to the proximity and immanence of “event” as a difference—that is, in the paradigm in which God is no longer perceived as present, but as an immanent impersonal call/event, a fact which *detrterritorialized* it from the metaphysics of presence as well as from the onto-theological paradigm of the empirical–logical discourse, and *reterritorialized* it as the immanence of the *double articulation* of the event (Deleuze & Guattari 2005). Namely, a post-dualistic paradigm where, in the first articulation, God frees events from chaos (into a plane of consistency), and in the second articulation this plan of consistency is updated—that is, the event becomes a call (becomes determined/affirmed), but not a call to what is present, but to what is to come, which makes it a fluid and transversal force of the *virtual* (Bell 2006). This dispossession of God by the attributes of sovereignty,

within the limits of the “weak theology” argument, goes hand-in-hand with the decentralization of human sovereignty in relation to the environment and non-human otherness. This post-anthropocentrism, which embraces an immanent view of life (as *zoē*), involves the creation of “nomadic subjectivity” (Braidotti 1994), of “less” human/non-human alterities, which leads to the establishment of rhizomatic, transversal, multilayered and non-hierarchical relationships, on the one hand between human agents, and on the other hand between human agents and the environment. This attracts a rethinking of the agent’s ontological status, through this paradigm shift from *bios* to *zoē*, in the direction of *zoē*-centered embodied and embedded subjects, connected to a variety of others, starting with the non-human otherness/animals and including the environmental or eco-others (Braidotti 2013, 193–194). The paradigm shift from the ontic-ontological, semiotic-cultural and political concept of human agent (as a self-defying agent) to that of an emerging ontology of becoming of the human agent—which includes the becoming female–animal–earth–machine–God processes—liquefies the underlying reality and the metaphysical structure of the transcendental and material world, within the limits of an immanent structure of multidimensional networks. Where this process of becoming is an affirmation of the positivity of all differences in a continuum and fluid rhizomic connections. Thus, the environmental turn, supported by the ecofeminist theology and posthumanist critique, is not just evoking an (de)essentialization of the Earth, by deconstructing this binary opposition between the Earth and the human agent, but is seeking to see the Earth, symbolically and materially, as a rhizomatic living agent (Ferrando 2019, 106–107).

In this order, the undermining of dialectical oppositions in the paradigm of posthumanist philosophy, directs the interpretation of ecofeminist theology in the direction of a monism that rejects both the humanist tradition and anthropocentrism, and leads to a revival of Spinoza’s (1996) substance monism point of view, regarding God/Nature as a self-actualizing creative power, and a unity between man and nature (Braidotti 2013). This aspect also finds its argument within the limits of *double articulation*, which means that, in this interpretation, God/Nature in the first articulation (in the form of a call) established a rhizomatic relationship at the *molecular* level (in the Deleuzian sense)—in this process of becoming substances as forms—and in the second articulation establishes the *molar* compounds in which these structures/substances are simultaneously updated. Which indicates an emerging ontology of the process itself (as event/call) and not a stable ontology of a single agent, such as the human one. This means that the Environment/Earth is not just a place or home where man lives, but an integral part of his essence and existence that constantly marks his processes of becoming. Thus, man and environment are not two distinct entities, in a relationship of binary oppositions, but integral parts of one and the same substance—namely the

God/Nature one. In an ecofeminist theology interpretation, this also means a strong emotional connection with the environment/nature, in a paradigm of sacredness, supported by pagan rituals/mysticism, along with the imperative not to cause/produce harm to the environment. This position of ecofeminist theology finds its convergence in posthumanist philosophy, through this essentialist teleological charge that we find within the limits of an ontological pacifism, of environment as Mother Nature and a living organism. This human–nature connection, also found within the limits of Spinoza’s (1996) substance monism, undermines the ontic-ontological heritage, which served dualism and is another argument in favor of the emerging posthuman ontology, where the boundary between man and environment is transgressed in the direction of a fluid, rhizomatic and post-anthropocentric relationship. Namely, in the direction of a de-instrumentalized relationship, in which the environment/nature is no longer a means of exploitation for human well-being, but rather an embedded essence of human existence in a *zoē*-centered shift. This monistic ontology which includes the materialist vitalism approach—which deconstructs dialectical oppositions (at the level of the *zoē*-*bios* relationship) through this post-anthropocentric approach of the perception of matter as a vital and self-organizing essence, in which the posthuman raises “(...) as a transversal entity encompassing the human, our genetic neighbors the animals and the earth as a whole (...)” (Braidotti, 2013, 82)—militates in favor of a materialist environmental politics and ecofeminist theology, regarding species equality and the environment in a process of continuous development that involves the *virtual*. This means a relational ethics which dissolves the barriers of negativity regarding the other non-humans/animate-inanimate entities and the actual-virtual binarity. This position adopted by Braidotti is one that brings to the foreground the “nomadic materialism” or neo-vitalism, as she calls it, where this monistic vitalism has the role of articulating the multiple dimensions of life (Braidotti 2019b, 31–61). Which makes the force of the present outside the dialectic of the here and now. Because, in the neo-vitalist neomaterialist paradigm, all human and non-human entities appear as nomadic subjects, who are in a process of perpetual motion, within the immanent limits of the vitality of matter that is continuously ordered (Braidotti 2019b, 31–61). In this process, the present appears as a perception of the real and the virtual, where both phenomena take place simultaneously, in a continuous and non-linear process of time, an aspect that short-circuits the current dimension of that “now”—defined spatio-temporal—by opening towards a continuous becoming that involves this virtual (Braidotti 2019b, 31–61). Such an argument emphasizes the complexity and vital diversity of multiple becomings—such as becoming woman-animal-Earth—an aspect that identifies the entire Universe as a single nondualistic and indivisible substance. In a posthumanist, vitalist and ecofeminist theology point of view, this means that life represents a

property of the substance as a whole and not a property of individual entities, split by the subject/object ratio. Such a monistic understanding of the Earth, regarding our embeddedness in nature alongside the recognition of both continuity and difference—within the limits of a holistic virtual becoming, by embracing an onto-epistemological, affective and ethical equilibrium—leads to a re-connection to the environment and to all-otherness, empowering the specificity and value of *zoē* seen as an ongoing flow of becomings and transformations of forces (Braidotti 2019a). This paradigm that emphasizes the perception of all living systems as being self-organized vitality leads to the process of decentering not only the *anthropos*, but also the hierarchical dialectic of existence, within the limits of a plane of immanence as a virtual surface “that gets actualized through relational bonds” (Braidotti 2019a, 39; Marks 1998; Deleuze 1990). This creates not only a multilayered interdependence in which we all live, but also a blurring of the boundaries regarding the negativity on eco-others in this inter-connection based on a collective agency.

4. Ecofeminist Theology and the Nondualist Spirituality

At a general level, nondualist spirituality, embraced by ecofeminist theology, refers to a form of spirituality, seen as a holistic union and interconnection with all that exists, which places it outside the Western epistemological framework, by this exclusion of binary oppositions and by embracing a spirituality that lies outside the Christian dualistic metaphysics of the natural (material)–supernatural (spiritual) relationship, as well as outside the Cartesian tradition of the mind-body/subject-object/animate-inanimate relationship, etc. This unitive dimension of being(s) sustained by ecofeminist theology embraces a dynamic system of relationships, grounded in the native holistic orientation of indigenous cultures, Eastern religions and theologies and esoteric Western beliefs/practices (Spretnak 1997, 425–437). The resacralization of the Earth as a living entity has led to the (re)birth of Earth-centered religious practices, which are based on ecofeminist theology and have led to the celebration of the immanence of the God/Goddess as a matrix of love, care, compassion and unity of the world, in the paradigm of “post-Christian spiritualities”—namely in a holistic, diffuse, transversal and immanent paradigm of the sacred, that unified all life forces, within the limits of this nondualist spirituality that emphasizes the potency of the individual’s inner experience, being outside of the doctrines/dogmas of the Christian religion (Houtman & Aupers 2007, 305–320; Houtman & Tromp 2018). Healing the Earth and all we-others is also an eco-theological and psychic-spiritual way of thinking, which finds its applicability at the heart of these nondualistic, New Age-oriented spiritual practices, and may

include magical naturalism, animism, neopaganism (such as Wicca), shamanism, esotericism or spiritual elements from oriental mysticism, among others (Hanegraaff 1996). This requires a shift in human consciousness, one in which there is no onto-epistemological hierarchical way of thinking, just layers and rhizomatic bondages of energies which organize themselves in increasingly unified ways and “where we recognize our kinship with all other being (...)” and where “our kinship with all earth creatures is global, linking us to the whole living Gaia today” (Ruether 1992, 250–252). Thus, in a narrow sense, neopaganism, as a post-modern religious movement, is seen as an Earth-based religion, which covers a wide range of belief systems, some of them rooted in Western ancient tradition, and which includes both a personification of nature as well as an homage to the environment, through a strong rejection of the Enlightenment tradition, based on reason and knowledge, and a strong introspection into the trans-conscious inner feelings of the individual, within a spiritual context (Higginbotham 2002). This makes both Wiccans and neo-pagans not only a reinterpretation of ancient traditions, magical rituals or hierophanies, but also a Goddess movement or spirituality. This Goddess pagan spirituality contributes to postmodern societies and to that of ecofeminist theology, through this renewal of cosmogonic thinking (which has its roots in prehistoric matriarchal or matricentric societies), along with celebrating the cyclicity of time, by renewing the Earth and human life in a permanent dynamic and interrelation of man with nature (Ruether 2005). This ecological healing, which urges towards an eco-justice—which for ecofeminist theology becomes a theological and spiritual-psychical process—revives Gaia (Earth) Goddess religions “(...) in order to reconstruct a harmonious way of life with one another on earth” (Ruether 1992; 2005, 291). Beyond the fact that the name Gaia, in Greek mythological paradigm, represents the “archetypical embodiment of the Earth (Earth-Gaia)”, she is also seen as the “great mother of all creation from the Universe (Universe-Gaia)” —a living and unitary entity, nondualistic, immanent and multivalent, and who gave birth to the universe (Livingstone 2005, 31). This postmodern Gaia paradigm, adopted by ecofeminist theology, distances itself only as a method of argumentation from Lovelock’s (1972) Gaia theory—which is a scientific and not a spiritual-mystical one. However, at a glance, both views converge on the argument that the Earth is a huge alive superorganism and a superintelligent life-supporting network. Thus, the scientific argument of Lovelock’s theory follows the scientific method to demonstrate that the biosphere, together with all the physical/material components found on Earth, forms a living system which makes life possible on Earth, where this “Gaia system shares with all living organisms the capacity for homeostasis—the regulation of the physical and chemical environment at a level that is favorable for life” (Lovelock 2000, 56). Basically, this environmental system/consciousness not only lies outside

the axiological values of life as a *bios*, but imposes an ethical-ecological vision of an “extended Self” (Leopold 1966)—that is, of a transconscious consciousness that destructures the human self and merges it with the vitality of the environment and Gaia as a whole. It is not only an attitude that relies on the boomerang effect, where man’s violent/exploitative actions on the environment can turn against him, but especially on an ethic that goes beyond the human axiological paradigm, while deconstructing the hierarchical structure nature-culture/*zoē-bios* by focusing on a spiritual connection with everything around us in order to establish harmony, in the name of the common good.

5. Conclusions

The paradigm shift that ecofeminist theology and posthumanist philosophy propose, regarding the return to matter/Planet Earth, attracts not only a revival of old traditions, practices or rituals that converge in the direction of a nondualistic spirituality of Mother Earth, but also a rethinking of human existence, in a post-dualistic and post-anthropocentric dialectic, located within the immanent limits of *Life*, centered on *zoē*. This means a reorientation of human thinking and actions, from the instrumentalization of the environment and human/non-human agents (in a dualistic hierarchical and anthropocentric paradigm), to a reconnection and a reestablishment of our emotional, material and existential bonds with the world and nature (in a post-dualistic and post-anthropocentric paradigm). The dissolution of Western white man’s exceptionalism, rooted in the politics of *Life as a bios*, calls for a rethinking of hierarchical dialectics—which include both human alterities (female gender, people of color, sexual minorities etc.) and non-human alterities, seen in a dominated position—in favor of a rhizomatic and transversal relationship of becoming (becoming woman-animal-Earth), in order to embrace a holistic life, built on care, altruism and a call to the vitality of matter. In this sense, the return to a nondualistic spiritual vision of the old beliefs, built around the Earth as a living entity, opens the way toward an emerging ontology of the posthuman, which also undermines the hegemonic essentialist position of the metaphysics of presence, along with the androcentric image of Western Christian God, of Strong Theology, towards that of *call/event*. This fusion with matter, as vital and self-organizing essence, demands not just a minimal respect for the complexities of the environment we are living in, but also an eco-ethical way of perceiving and understanding the notion of *Life* as a rhizomatic and transversal web of relations which includes humans/non-human others and Planet Earth.

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