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The Multiplicity Turn: Bridging Japanese Science Fiction and 'Western' Conceptions of the (Human) Subject

The inessentialism of the 'human' as a category has been science fiction's playground since its very beginning; however, since the 1970s and until today, the 'nonhuman' challenge to the human has culminated, both in science/theory and in cultural imagination. In this article I will put into question the cultural context of this transformation that -as Bruno Latour has suggested- has started taking place in Western thought, using as a case study a Japanese science fiction film.

Casshern (directed and written by Kazuaki Kiriya, Japan 2004) takes place in an undefined future, when Asia and Europe have just come out of a half-a-century-long war, whose winner, the 'Eastern Federation', has taken control of the 'Eurasian continent', the land situated between the two competitors. However, "pockets of resistance" still remain in Eurasia, fighting the new oppressive regime of Eastern Federation, leading to a new war that this time threatens to erase the whole human race, as the already long-term use of biological weapons has spread epidemic diseases and heavy environmental pollution.

Although the film draws from elements of different sci-fi subgenres, it mainly combines a classic Frankensteinian theme with cyberpunk elements. In many respects, we are indeed placed in a cyberpunk-like setting: dystopian and polluted city -but also country- landscape, an authoritarian regime trying to eliminate resistance, a mysterious corporation that serves the army's interests and wants to control the biotechnological research and, later on, a war from the part of genetically engineered nonhumans, the products of this research, claiming their rights from the 'real' humans.

But let us try to recompose linearly an all-but-linear plot: Professor Azuma makes a stunning announcement in the forum of the Health Ministry of Eastern Federation: in the genome of a primitive tribe he discovered the *neocells*, that is, cells that can be converted in any other human cell and regenerate human tissue, ultimately making possible the cure of all diseases. Hence, the "human regeneration technology" that will make true this scientific discovery becomes a matter of life and death not only for the country's population, but also for the old and sick monarch, general Kamijo, and for Azuma himself, whose wife, the "gentle Midori", is dying from an incurable illness. However, "it is taboo to suggest that our original genes need improving", so the government has to find subtle ways to expedite the research, hence the involvement of the mysterious 'Nikko Hiral' corporation, which offers Azuma the lab that he needs for his experiments.

The narration unfolds around the axis of the relationship of Azuma with his son, Tetsuya. Tetsuya decides to go to the war, against his father's will, and despite the fact that he just got engaged. However, he soon encounters the war's inhuman face when he is forced to kill a defenseless woman with her child in a peasant village of Eurasia, and later he himself gets killed, trying to protect the life of a baby from the savage fury of the warriors, who consider the people of Eurasia as 'terrorists'. However, a few hours after Tetsuya's death, a mystical life-transcendence takes place: in Azuma's lab the 'regenerated' human organs that float in a tank full of *neocell* organic liquid suddenly begin to form human bodies, rising alive out of the water.

Some of these emergent *neosapiens* (as they are later called) creatures escape and run outside in the city streets spreading the terror. The government launches a genocide against these "foreign agitators", under the excuse that they are contaminated with infection, but a bunch of

them manage to pass the (pre-war) borders of Eastern Federation, abducting Midori. The runaways, after a long and hard ramble, at last find refuge in a deserted region of *Zone 7*, the part of Eurasia that has been totally destroyed from the war. There they set up their own kingdom, with the first *neosapiens* that has been born, Burai, as their king, determined to take revenge from mankind for their pogrom, and eliminate the human species.

Meanwhile in the human city (the capital of the Eastern Federation), Azuma takes the dead body of his son as it has been sent back from the battlefield and dips it into the *neocell* liquid, hoping to bring him back to life –although at the same time we can see Tetsuya's soul begging him not to. However, Tetsuya indeed returns to life, but this time having superhuman powers and incarnating an ancient guardian spirit of Eurasia, called 'Casshern'. He denies his human identity, not just because he was reborn out of the *neocell* liquid, just like the *neosapiens*, but because he does not consider himself human after the murder he committed during the war. Now he is determined to protect the people of Eurasia and to end the pointless fighting between humans and *neosapiens*.

The use of the word 'humans' here is not arbitrary: only those who belong to the rich, developed and technologically advanced nation inhabiting the land of 'Eastern Federation' are called 'humans' in the film. On the opposite side stand all the others: not only the robots or even the genetically engineered *neosapiens*, as it would happen in other works of science fiction: in the case of *Casshern*, the underdeveloped and not-westernized population of Eurasia –the people against which the Eastern Federation managed to prevail– is not considered as human either.

But how is this exclusive formation of the 'human' category associated with cultural and ethnic exclusions? In his work *We have never been modern* (1993), the anthropologist and sociologist of technology Bruno Latour places the formation of this category at the heart of the modern development, which subtracts the 'nonhumans' from the 'human'. What Latour calls (Western) modernity's 'Great Divide' has its roots in the birth of the philosophical modernity with Enlightenment and its philosophers, especially Kant, who contributed to the opening of an unbridgeable gap (a dichotomy) between the subject and the object, the self and the Other. (Latour, *We have never been modern* 56) Thus, the supposedly 'universal' human identity that has been associated with the 'modern project' (Hamilton, "The Enlightenment and the birth of social science" 21) is nothing but the product of a procedure inherent in the workings of modernity: that of the separation between 'purification' and 'mediation'. This procedure serves the need to keep separate nature from society, and invisible their connection. The function of mediation (or 'translation') is performed by hybrids (indicators of the natural-social and, more broadly, the subject-object connection, mainly in the form of technological and natural objects), which proliferate under the 'cloak' of modernity at the same time that purification –the act of suppressing them– intensifies. Latour calls these hybrids 'nonhumans', and this negative definition implies that they have no existence of their own neither are they visible, except when they serve as humble assistants the 'human' identification. Latour argues that the human-nonhuman dichotomy, as well as the one between moderns and 'premoderns', are both products of this purifying procedure. Premoderns are the underdeveloped people who could not follow the stream of Western modernization. From those the West separated itself, building at the same time the identity of the human on the fundaments of 'pure reason' and technoscientific development.

If we accept Latour's claim that modernity's central characteristic is the exclusion of hybridity from the social, human world (coupled with a parallel proliferation of hybrids, which however is not articulated with the process of purification), then science fiction is indeed a cultural genre

placed right at the heart of the discourse of modernity; it negotiates and sometimes even disrupts the space between human subjects and hybrid objects - aliens, machines, robots, monsters, humanoids…. Science fiction sets the human as a goal and not as a vested possession. The challenge that the human category –in varying degrees but constantly- faces in science fiction narratives reminds us that this category is not stable; it can instead be questioned and even transformed.

Casshern stands as a telling example of the culmination of a tradition in science fiction that traces its roots back to cyberpunk and even earlier, in the work of writers such as Philip K. Dick, in which an intense reflexivity corrodes every certainty over the human identity. Analysing the 1982 film *Blade Runner* -which is considered as the exemplary cyberpunk work in cinema, and is based on a novel by Philip K. Dick (published in 1968)- Thomas Byers notes: "What SF has traditionally taken to be a difference *between* the human and the robotic would then emerge more clearly as a difference *within* the human." ("Commodity Futures" 44; emphasis in the original) The human-nonhuman difference is thus being internalized, and becomes a battle inside the human body and identity.

The 'universal' human identity is able to defend itself as long as the enemy is external (or perhaps, in science fiction terms, 'alien'), the very externality of whom presupposes the rigidity of this identity's boundaries, its coherence and unity, its satisfactory self-definition. As soon as this self-definition becomes problematic, as it more and more does in recent years, especially with the development of cybernetics and of the fields of artificial intelligence and artificial life after the Second World War, the very 'externality' of the enemy is also questioned. This questioning is in line with a 'double dissolution of humanism', to which John Law refers in his book *Organizing Modernity*: this 'double dissolution' comes, on the one hand, from the extension of our scope beyond humans, therefore the abandonment of a *speciecist* position, and the opening to other voices, like those of natural, technical, monstrous, even spiritual entities, and on the other hand, from the abandonment of the very idea of entities as such, as all entities, including the human, "are effects or products"; "Neither are given in the order of things". (Law 193)

In genres deeply informed by these developments like cyberpunk, the blurring or even abolition of boundaries between humans and nonhumans becomes the central concern, and the 'enemies' sometimes reside in the human body – as it happens in the case of implants, for instance. Latour is then right; we live in the territory of hybrids. However, this has always been a familiar ground for science fiction. Thus, in *Casshern* becomes explicit what the genre has always been representing, that is, a challenge to human universality -even if in many sci-fi narratives (traditional but also post-traditional) this challenge concludes to humanity's re-affirmation.

But let us now have a closer look on how *Casshern* 'deconstructs' the modern divides of East and West, Self and Other, human and nonhuman, bringing together purification and mediation. *Casshern* deals with the question of human identity rather reflexively–as modernity itself, one could argue. What is not human always defines what it means to be human, but the human cannot stay untouched in this procedure of self-examination and self-definition. Every attempt to define the human immediately changes what this human already means. Reflexivity implies a subversion of binary oppositions, as subject and object, humans and nonhumans enter a loop of 'rescripting' -to borrow Thomas Foster's term (Foster, *The Souls of Cyberfolk*).

Towards the end of the film, a subversive disclosure takes place: the *neosapiens* prove to be real humans, inhabitants of Eurasia abducted during the war to be used for the extraction of

neocells in the human regeneration experiments. But when the experiments failed, these people were "carved up" to provide with their organs and body parts the greedy humans of Eastern Federation -the winners of the previous war over Eurasia- who decided "to make national policy fit the medical needs". Thus, the *neosapiens* 'nonhumans' coincide with the 'premodern' Eurasians, actually being their mystically resurrected (in Azuma's lab) peers. It seems as if "Haraway's desire to connect the cyborg to 'other nonoriginal peoples'" (Foster, *ibid* 140) finds its materialization in *Casshern*. Standing opposite to these nonhumans, the humans in *Casshern* are able to define themselves as 'original' and developed, as 'moderns'. However, an ironic twist makes the two antithetical categories, the 'humans' and the 'nonhumans' to merge into each other. So, not only the nonhumans are real humans, but also, the so far called 'original' humans prove to be their genetic descendents. Thus, the sense of authenticity and originality of those who used to call themselves 'humans' collapses with this double disclosure of the artificiality of the originals and the originality of the artificials; and certainty is destroyed as the line that separates creators and creations is erased. In this way *Casshern*, with its inversion of original, human creators and engineered, nonhuman creations, displays a double impossibility of origin, similar to the one Foucault describes in the *Order of Things*; on the one hand this impossibility signifies that the origin of things is always pushed further back; "on the other hand, it signifies that man, as opposed to things […], is the being without origin […] whose birth is never accessible because it never took 'place'." (Foucault 331)

Contrary to what some might see as an 'expel of otherness' in this conflation of humans and nonhumans into the 'same' human category at the end of the film, I will argue that *Casshern* does not proceed to such an assimilation of the 'other' into the same, but rather to a departure towards what could be same, in and through difference. Back to the film's plot, both rivals –the human and the *neosapiens*– in the end become humans –literally (because of the disclosure of their common human origin) and metaphorically, as they make use of all the (negative) features that 'humanity' has come to signify. The *neosapiens* claim humanity for themselves and, in order to become humans, they have to use the same tools and tactics that humans do. Their goal is to build a society more 'humane' than the real humans ever managed to make, but the means to meet this goal are rather cruel and inhumane. Thus, the same human identity that in the film is disclosed as arbitrary has been functioning as the universal standard to which the nonhumans have no other option but to conform. In this identity war that takes place in *Casshern* all actors despite their diversity are acting anthropomorphically. This war does not have a winner, as after the reflexive realization of their common origin, both rivals reject this human identity that they prove to be sharing. Burai, the king of the *neosapiens*, had been fighting against the humans to prove that they were not worth their title, only to find out in the end that he is also human. On the other hand, the human hero Tetsuya, who has been denying his technologically redeemed humanity to protect the Eurasian people, finds one more reason to depart from the human world when he realizes what Burai's real identity is. Thus, it is only after having rejected the human identity that both ends (*neosapiens* and human) 'become' humans – exactly at this point of no return when the 'humanity' that they prove to be sharing does not seem livable anymore.

Identity politics in science fiction often end up coinciding with the 'nonhuman politics'; and nonhuman politics in this genre become a substitute for gender, ethnic and class politics. However, as reified the term 'nonhuman' might be, it nonetheless indicates the common roots of these debates: the human as a pre-established, exclusive category in –and despite– modernity. The prevalence of the 'human' forces all other identities to define themselves in relation to this dominant category, and sometimes, to use its weapons.

In *Casshern* it is not the biological difference of the humans from the nonhumans that prevails: what defines 'humanity' is rather the social and political prevalence. The 'human' thus becomes a political category except for a biological given; and the exclusion from this category of those who are 'nonhumans' has also a political and not only a biological or epistemological significance. In the end, with the realization that all rivals -humans, nonhumans and even subhumans (in the case of the people of Eurasia)- have been human (participating in the very particular kind of cruelty that is called 'humanness'), the human-nonhuman distinction is decentralized and the focus is shifted: from the difference between original-artificial, human-technological, to the differences between humans –and the not biological but political (in terms of power relations) reasons of their rigidity. In this respect, *Casshern* addresses Foster's call, who suggested that the fluidarity of identities so characteristic of cyberpunk fiction should not just end up to a redefinition of the human through the technological, but also –and mainly– to a re-articulation of the social differences that separate humans (Foster xxvii). This would perhaps be the political stake of meta-cyberpunk science fiction, in which *Casshern* is inscribed.

Perhaps it would seem as if so far we have been leaning towards a serious methodological mistake: that of conflating the Western modernity that Latour's analysis puts into focus (a descendent of the European Enlightenment and the -not only philosophical- problems that it has generated), with the Japanese cultural context in which *Casshern* is unavoidably embedded. How can the human-nonhuman division be relevant to a culture that 'has never been modern' –as long as modernity is associated with the specific social, economical and intellectual developments that took place in particular historical periods in European societies?

Nevertheless, in the period between the two world wars, modernity made a cataclysmic entrance in Japan, especially in the form of technological advancement and weaponry. Japanese critics of the 1930s denounced this imported modernization, maintaining that "their adopted culture was an imitation of an imitation, a reification of a reification, a mask covering a mask." (Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity* x) The Japanese 'became' modern, imitating the Western values. Modernity was imported in their country together with the western lifestyle and technology –which made Japan the technological power that it is today. Thus, "the narrative that dominated Japanese sensibility between the wars was distinguished by a consciousness that oscillated furiously between recognizing the peril of being overcome by modernity and the impossible imperative of overcoming it." (x) The reformist Meiji government had already during the 19th century set the foundations for this massive change of the Japanese society towards industrial modernization. Japan therefore participated in what Harootunian calls 'co-existing or co-eval modernity', "inasmuch as it shared the same historical temporality of modernity (as a form of historical totalizing) found elsewhere in Europe and the United States." (xvi) Of course here Harootunian does not refer to the 'modern project' as set up by the European Enlightenment; it is rather 'modernization' as a procedure in Japan and other countries that he speaks about, and not the philosophical sense of modernity, associated with Enlightenment and the work of certain thinkers of that period. However, Enlightenment's echo certainly resonates with modernization's culmination in the late 19th and early 20th century (with its most characteristic features industrialization and capitalist development), and reflects itself in the 'modernist project' that Japan rashed into. The 'modern attitude' that Foucault sees in Baudelaire but traces back in the Kantian Enlightenment ("What is Enlightenment?" 32-50) is also here: as Harootunian notes, the encounter of the Japanese society with modernity did not only find expression in the specific social and historical transformations, but also in this particular

'attitude' of experiencing and grasping the "fleeting and fragmentary" present that Baudelaire so vividly described in *Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne*. (Harootunian xvii).

Latour's theorization of modernity is done from a mainly anthropological perspective, presenting the East-West dichotomy as a product of the 'modern constitution'; that is what makes the case of Japan even more relevant and challenging with regard to his conceptualization of modernity. The 'human' in Latour but also in *Casshern* is presented as an exclusive category prescribed by the Western, 'modern' model. Having followed this model in order not to be 'overcome' by it, Japan seems to be reinforcing the modern divide, rather than dissolving it. This ideological ally of contemporary Japan with the Western world seems to me a significant target of criticism for Kiriya; and what is mainly criticized in the film –along with the formation of the 'human' identity through artificial distinctions– is the inability of the long Japanese tradition to resist such a differential definition of humanity.

The "dualistic view of the universe" that characterizes the Japanese culture, "wherein opposing forces -purity and impurity, health and illness, good and evil- are always present", is also reflected on the view of the self, as the latter is also always defined in relation to the other (Ohnuki-Tierney, "The ambivalent self of the contemporary Japanese" 198). The cyclical relationship between self and other, internal and external, leaves none of the separate ends unchanged. The Japanese word for 'humans' (*ningen*) is a composition of the words *gen* (among) and *nin* (humans) (207) and similarly, the term for 'self' (*jibun*) literally means 'part self', reminding the embeddedness of the individual self in a larger whole (Rosenberger, *Japanese sense of self* 4). Thus, the Japanese self is never an isolated individual but always defined in relation to the others. This assumption is indeed commonplace in the studies of the Japanese self (mostly by western researchers but also by Japanese), as Rosenberger notes. However, in the relevant literature this 'non-individualistic' Japanese sense of the self is often highlighted in contrast with the individualism of the West, or associated with the past of Japan as a traditional culture in opposition to its westernized present. In this way these theoretical constructions of the Japanese identity rather reproduce the East-West and self-other dichotomies than going beyond them (13).

The binary oppositions such as human-nonhuman, East-West, modern-nonmodern, are not absolute in the Japanese culture, and, as we saw, have also started being rethought in 'Western contexts'. Opposite to the reproduction of dichotomies, Rosenberger suggests that the study of Japaneseness points towards a moving, interactive, and multiple self, consistent with an 'ultimate ideal of multiplicity', which is "the entry into a space beyond difference, at the level of the cosmos rather than self or the social." (Rosenberger 16) This vision of the self that becomes apparent in Japanese cultural texts is one that can find application in western contexts as well. A space beyond self and other, the space of the multiple self to which Japanese culture may be pointing at –as Rosenberger observed- is a space 'beyond difference'.

This move beyond differences is lately expressed also in Western thought, and not only in the work of Latour. Multiplicity is returning as the central concern of the ontological stream of philosophy, in order to redefine –by glancing beyond the human individual- what human subjectivity can be. Alain Badiou (*Being and Event*, 2006) holds that being is infinite multiplicity, so there are only differences; identities on the other hand are the contingent result of the 'counting' of multiplicities that every social 'situation' needs in order to operate, in degrees of similarity and difference. Thus, the partiality of human identity -revealed by *Casshern* in its arbitrariness- is a reminder of the partiality of every kind of identity 'counted' in a situation.

Subjectivization is a formation in a world of counted identities (or appearances); nonetheless this formation does not follow the rules of this world but those of infinite multiplicity. Events happen when what so far 'inexists' in a situation/world –what has been there but is not counted- makes its appearance –just like the nonhumans in modernity; this that has no identity of its own, because it marks the collective being, and it gathers up what is generic in all the different parts of the situation. Subjectivity beyond the human –at least as it has been defined in humanism- requires one to abandon his or her individual identity and participate in a collective praxis; to take up a project that could be modern, as soon as modernity has never been, and 'universal', as soon as this universality does not refer to pregiven universal categories. Because the universal here acquires a paradoxical meaning: it becomes manifest only locally, and its 'universal' character is not a presumption of an identity but the path towards the same through the infinite difference, which is the only thing that is. The universal is a decision and praxis, not a return to an original 'human' essence.

The 'human' is a category that has been challenged in philosophy, especially since the anti-humanism of the 1960s and 70s (expressed by Althusser, Foucault, Lacan *et al*). Badiou's conception of the subject continues this tradition -in which Foucault's legacy played a prominent role. However, the human (*l' homme*) remains a background concern in Badiou's work, although the causal sequence is reversed: it is not the human that makes the subject, but the subject that makes the human. Therefore, Badiou's doctrine offers an anti-essentialist, emergent conception of the human. According to such a conception, the 'nonhuman' (here in ontological rather than specific material terms, such as those of Latour) would not be excluded from the formation of the subject. As soon as the subject is collective, anyone and anything can participate. Moreover, it is exactly the presentation of the nonhuman multiplicity -which 'inexists' in the situation of 'human-ness'- that the subjective formation forces. According to the Badiouian ethics of the 'Same', it is not a question of defining the human or the nonhuman, but of imagining new ways of subjective formation and participation in the world. The 'same' is not anymore the only option for the different to participate in the power of those who impose *their* sameness –as it happens with *Casshern's* 'humans'- but rather it becomes a collective gesture and a politically significant act of fidelity to what inexists –which, in the case of the film, is the collective itself.

Carrying this discussion back to *Casshern* and its cultural context, as Gilles Deleuze writes in *Cinema 2*, "Antonioni spoke of the 'horizon of events', but noted that in the West the world has a double meaning, man's banal horizon and an inaccessible and always receding cosmological horizon. Hence the division of Western cinema into European humanism and American science fiction. He suggested that it is not the same for the Japanese, who are hardly interested in science fiction: one and the same horizon links the cosmic to the everyday, the durable to the changing, one single and identical time as the unchanging form of that which changes." (17) Following Antonioni, Deleuze, talking about the cinema of the Japanese director Yasujiro Ozu (1903-1963, with his most important films released through the 1950s) observes that, in accordance with the Japanese model, there is "no need at all to call on a transcendence". (17) But does contemporary Japanese cinema fiction contradict this claim?

Casshern belongs to a genre that has mainly Western origins: although the Japanese 10th century folk tale *Taketori Monogatari* ('The Tales of the Bamboo Cutter') is considered by some as a primordial science fiction narrative (see Richardson, Matthew (2001), *The Halstead Treasury of Ancient Science Fiction*), it is closer to the fantastic than to science fiction as we know it today. Thus, *Casshern* cannot be presupposed as fitting into this Japanese model that Antonioni and Deleuze refer to. The mere fact that there is Japanese science fiction would

probably seem a paradox in itself for Antonioni. On the other hand, there is a transcendent layer in *Casshern's* diegesis, but this is not of the same type as the one of Western science fiction, as it contains many mystic elements. In a particularly memorable scene of the film, the body of Tetsuya waits for the funeral in front of the defense ministry's building, placed in a coffin carried by soldiers. At the same time, on the stairs of the building Tetsuya's ghost kneels down in pain, as his soul is ready to leave this world forever, while at the secret lab inside the building, the first *neosapiens* creature, Burai, comes out of the tank and stands on his feet, facing his 'creator' Azuma. Biological life ends and 'artificial' life begins, but they are all placed on the same imaginable line that stands as a space-time continuity and at the same time, a link between them. From the generation of the *neosapiens* creatures out of the *neocell* tank to the turning of Tetsuya into a super-hero able to be teleported from one place to another, the non-linear narrative of *Casshern* is full of slots allowing the heroes to transcend their time-spaces. But these transcendent leaps are not uncommon in Japanese science fiction narratives; their presence actually makes these narratives a hybrid of science fiction and fantasy -two genres that are considered as distinct, because science fiction, unlike fantasy, provides quasi-scientific explanations for the events that it narrates.

Susan Napier sees the persistence of the fantastic in this part of the Japanese contemporary cultural production (like the 1988 anime *Akira*) as subverting the rationalistic western values, which have been transferred to the modern Japanese society (*The Fantastic in Modern Japanese Literature* 11). As we saw, at the end of the 19th century the Japanese society got overwhelmed by the western modernity, which it tried to assimilate; the continuous -and accelerating- import of the western model goes on until today, dispersed in several domains of culture and society, from language to consumption. In the face of the western science and technology the Japanese internalized the 'transcendental other', as Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney points out. (199) Fluctuating between its immense technological progress and its tradition, modern Japan has an impressive production of science fiction literature and films, which depict this contradiction in rather dystopian tones (Napier, 4). This way the Japanese fantastic fiction critics, rejects, or subverts "the most important myths of Japanese modernity" (16). The fantastic, dwelling this hybrid/border territory that the moderns dismiss, seems like pointing at a premodern Japan that still finds expression in the modern nonhuman territories such as science fiction.

The move beyond individual identity towards the multiplicity of being or the one of 'cosmos' (characteristic of the Japanese sense of self, according to Rosenberger) perhaps implies that the Japanese culture currently struggles between the internalization of the transcendental other (as it happened in the Japanese modernity according to Ohnuki-Tierney), and the transcendence of its own modern self-constitution. What comes after the reflexive culmination in *Casshern*, at the moment of disclosure/realization of the real (human) identity of the *neosapiens*, is a transcendent leap of Tetsuya and Luna to another dimension, where a different way of human existence (the one appearing in the last scene of the film) is possible. Thus, *Casshern's* closing could be seen as revealing a longing for transcendence which the reflexive dynamics do not allow for it to happen within the narrative, but only in a place 'beyond'. However, this transcendent leap takes a new importance if considered not just as an escape from the human world but as part of the procedure of subjectivization that takes place *in* this word. In Badiou's ontology subjects follow 'truths' that are not transcendent but immanent: "a truth is […] an *immanent break*. 'Immanent' because a truth proceeds *in* the situation, and nowhere else –there is no heaven of truths. 'Break' because what enables the truth-process –the event– meant nothing according to the prevailing language and established knowledge of the situation" (*Ethics* 42-43).

At the level of the Japanese 'cosmos' that Antonioni but also Rosenberger speak about, the evental horizon is accessible. But this is so also in the recent 'Western' philosophical tendencies: 'events' for Badiou do not offer escape from this world, but only indicate the ability to infinitely transform it, by giving expression to the infinite multiplicity that underlies every category and identity. Truths trigger the collective formation of subjects, emphasizing what is common between differentially pre-defined identities. If human identities are always, as Badiou claims, predefined through the exclusion of what is external to them, then truths come from a nonhuman realm (that of infinite multiplicity) which is nonetheless immanent, inside the human counting; and to be able to approach the 'evental horizon' means being able to transcend this counting. Science fiction itself is at the same time immanent *and* transcendent: it creates future worlds using the ingredients of the present; and it is in the present that it finds the means to transcend it.

The fantastic, transcendent elements of *Casshern* point at a multiplicity of identities in this world, and through this multiplicity, at the connection between different worlds. It seems that in the film such a connection cannot be established in this world and there is need for transcendence to another one in order for the collective subject (that the Japanese have always been supposed to stand for) to find a place to exist. This transcendence nonetheless happens within the filmic space, at the closing dream-like sequence. And if in the pessimistic dystopian setting of the film the possibility of subject creation is only fulfilled through love of Tetsuya and Luna (the 'amorous situation' is one of the four conditions of truth for Badiou), the 'other world' is still here, waiting, depicted, almost forced to exist, by this truth –of the incompleteness of what is considered to be 'human'– which calls for the participation in it of those who live at humanity's margins.

Science fiction has been a modern genre that incorporates all the ambivalence and ambiguity of modernity. The human as something to be defended is not a modern idea, according to Foucault; In contrast to humanism, which is the act of 'taking recourse' to ourselves, the 'modern attitude' inherited by Enlightenment also favors and promotes a critique of ourselves. (Foucault, "What is Enlightenment" 44) On the other hand, as antithetical to Latour's view of modernity this may initially sound, his 'We have never been modern' leaves open the possibility that the modern is yet to come. Even if "we can no longer be modern *in the same way*", bringing the nonhumans to light and ascribing to them the causality they deserve, "we continue to identify with the intuition of the Enlightenment", as Latour puts it. (Latour 142)

A fidelity to Enlightenment's modern as an unfulfilled premise that, in order to be realized, requires a fundamental destabilization of the subject first, is common to Latour, Foucault, and Badiou. In this paper I tried to suggest that we do not have to turn back to the birth of the East-West divide in order to find new visions for the human to exist in the world. Multiplicity already appears–not only in philosophical discourses but also in popular culture – and circulates in cultural texts that subvert the dichotomous presumptions of cultural theory.

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