

Geophilosophy and Anthropocene: a conversation with Tim Ingold and Andrea Le Moli

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Abstract

This interview emerged from the 2025 Sicily Summer School in Environmental Humanities at the University of Palermo, devoted to the geophilosophy of Deleuze and Guattari. Its guiding hypothesis is that no concept arises in a neutral space: every thought has an environment, a terrestrial consistency. The dialogue joins Tim Ingold's ecological anthropology and Andrea Le Moli's historical-philosophical reflection on the constitution of territories and landscapes. It moves through five nuclei: the distinction between territory, environment, and landscape; geophilosophy as "thinking with the earth"; a critique of the Anthropocene, opposing Ingold's "neotenic" humanism to Le Moli's *anthropokenosis*; the unresolved legacy of Deleuze and Guattari; and anthropocentrism, reframed as Ingold's "benign anthropocentrism" and Le Moli's immanent conflict of the human with itself. The result is a dense dialogue arising from an already-inhabited world.

Keywords: Anthropocene; Geophilosophy; Anthropokenosis; Territory; Environment

Introduction

The following interview arose in the wake of the 2025 edition of the Sicily Summer School in Environmental Humanities at the University of Palermo, entitled *The Concept and Its Environment: On the Geophilosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari*. Organised by Andrea Le Moli, Emilia Marra, Francesca Sunseri, and Marcello Di Paola, in collaboration with the journal *La Deleuziana*, the Summer School proposed a reconsideration of geophilosophy not merely as a chapter in the thought of Deleuze and Guattari, but as a critical device capable of rethinking the relationship between concepts, places, materials, and forms of life. Its underlying hypothesis was that no concept can arise within a neutral space: every thought has an environment, a terrestrial consistency, a weave of material, historical, technical, and perceptual conditions that orient its genesis and transform its effects.

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In this context, the presence of Tim Ingold, as an international keynote speaker, constituted one of the central moments of the Summer School. One of the most influential anthropologists in contemporary debates on the relations between human beings, environment, technique, and the living world, Ingold devoted his lecture to the essay “The Tablet and the Furrowed Field: A Meditation on Nature and Culture”, published in the monographic volume *Terreno. Tracce del disponibile quotidiano* (2024). Long engaged in questioning the modern oppositions between nature and culture, subject and environment, organism and world, Ingold offered a reflection on the possibility of putting these oppositions back into circulation precisely from the standpoint of the problems raised by geophilosophy: what does it mean to think not simply about the earth, but with the earth? How does thought take shape in the furrows, lines, surfaces, gestures, and materials through which living beings inhabit the world?

In dialogue with Ingold is Andrea Le Moli, full professor of history of philosophy at the University of Palermo and director of the Sicily Summer School in Environmental Humanities. Over the years, Le Moli’s work has traversed the history of philosophy from Plato to Heidegger, eventually arriving at Deleuze and contemporary French philosophy, with particular attention – especially over the last decade – to the question of technique, its relation to ontology and to the notion of environment, as well as to recent posthuman and non-human perspectives.

The encounter between Ingold and Le Moli, therefore, is not limited to a thematic convergence, but stages two different and complementary ways of interrogating the relation between the living being and the world. On the one hand, Ingold’s ecological anthropology is attentive to practices, lines, milieux, and processes of correspondence between organisms and environment; on the other, Le Moli’s historical-philosophical reflection insists on the technical, operational, and material character of the constitution of territories, landscapes, and forms of experience.

The conversation moves through several decisive theoretical nuclei. The first concerns the distinction between territory, environment, and landscape: concepts that both interlocutors remove from static definitions in order to return them to the mobility of practices, perceptions, and processes of formation. The second concerns the contemporary relevance of geophilosophy as a paradigm for the human sciences, understood not as a geographical metaphor for thought, but as the recognition of its intrinsic terrestriality. This is followed by a critique of the notion of the Anthropocene, examined in its ontological and political presuppositions; a discussion of the legacy of Deleuze and Guattari, acknowledged as decisive precisely insofar as it remains open, eccentric, and unresolved; and finally the question of anthropocentrism, addressed not in terms of a simple decentring of the human, but as a problem of responsibility, perspective, and the possibility of thinking the agency of the non-human.

What emerges is a dense and impassioned dialogue in which anthropology, philosophy, the theory of technique, and questions concerning our relation to the environment are bound together by a shared urgency: to understand how thought always arises from

a world already lived – inhabited, traversed, shared – and how, precisely by exposing itself to the earth, it may recover its critical force.

1. From your perspective, what distinction would you make between territory, environment, and landscape?

Tim Ingold: I understand territory as a tract of land defined by its external boundaries or borders. There can be no territories without borders, and no borders without territories. By environment, I mean a surrounding world as it exists in relation to the organism whose environment it is. There can be no organism without an environment, but equally, no environment without an organism. With environment, the emphasis is on what things afford to the organism – that is, on how things function in its lifeworld. But with landscape, the emphasis is more on form than function. It is on the shape of the land, rather than its affordances. But unlike territory, neither the environment nor the landscape is defined by an external boundary.

Having said that, every one of these terms is problematic, and their meanings are contested. I have also changed my own position, many times, in relation to them. In early work, dating from the mid-1980s, I put a lot of emphasis on the concept of territoriality, drawing on literature in animal ecology in which it played a central role. I wanted to distinguish the ecological relations of territoriality from the social relations of tenure, especially in relation to places, paths and land. But later, as I came to reject the dichotomy between social and ecological systems which had guided my early work, I also largely abandoned the idea of territoriality. Today I scarcely use it, except perhaps to contrast the state's-eye view of the land, as a surface to be colonised and appropriated, with the view of its Indigenous inhabitants, for whom the land is constituted in the cosmic union of earth and sky. As my interests shifted to questions of perception, environment became a key concept for me; landscape less so. The question was whether to go with the idea of environment as the *Umwelt* of an organism, as proposed by Jakob von Uexküll, or as a suite of affordances, or a niche, as proposed by James Gibson.

As the distinction between form and function became ever harder to sustain, I tended to stay with the idea of environment, and to give up on the concept of landscape – that is, until I discovered (thanks to the work of historical geographer Kenneth Olwig) that the term was not tied to an aesthetics of formal representation, as art historians would have us believe, but has deep roots in the agrarian traditions of northwestern Europe. I have since returned to it, in the original sense of an area of countryside with its farms and fields, shaped by the practices of its inhabitants. At the same time, I became increasingly dissatisfied with the concept of environment. Thinking of the organism less as a bounded entity than as a bundle of lines, I could no longer see how it could be meaningfully surrounded, as the concept of environment implies. The French word *milieu* – literally 'middle place' – seemed a better alternative. And since the milieu embraces both earth

and sky, I found myself wanting to replace 'landscape' with something like 'earth-sky world' or 'weather-world' instead.

All these words, territory, environment and landscape, but also land, ground, earth, *milieu*, and many more, are still in flux for me, as they are for all of us. It is impossible to give a definitive statement of what they mean.

Andrea Le Moli: By territory I understand something inseparable from the operation of tracing that a material entity performs around, behind, or in front of itself, according to its spatially oriented interactions. One might say that territory is the mobile boundary defined by the totality of a body's active and passive movements. It delimits the trajectory of a life according to patterns that may be linear or punctuated, but that, in living beings, are usually cyclical. Such patterns are expressed in movements that take the form of a symbolic and meaningful return to what Gilbert Simondon called key points or magic points.

By environment, by contrast, I would not mean anything substantially different from the notion elaborated by Uexküll and interpreted by Heidegger, with the further specification that environments can intersect because an organic body, together with its environment, is structurally part of the environment of other organic bodies. In order to understand this relationship, one must necessarily examine the functional and instrumental connections that bodies weave among themselves. This reference to environment and territory as horizons defined by sets of operations and practices allows me, finally, to arrive at a notion of landscape.

What emerges in the landscape is the capacity for phenomenological interaction between, on the one hand, the operational and functional interlacing assembled by materials, forces, and movements, and, on the other, the ability of a gaze to recognize within these operational scenarios forms, structures, figure-ground relations, perspectival cuts, rules of significance, variance, uniformity, and so forth. The point should now be clear: in my view, the three concepts at stake can be held together only through the technical character of the operations that configure them, each time, as products of the spontaneous material interaction of bodies within the different regimes of physical, chemical, mechanical, and perceptual constraints to which all bodies are subject.

2. To what extent can the idea of Geophilosophy, beyond its origins and its immediate articulation in the thought of Deleuze and Guattari, represent a valid hermeneutic paradigm for the human sciences today?

TI: As I understand it, geophilosophy means thinking with the earth, rather than about it. It means allowing thought to grow from the milieu of our engagement with the rocks, the soil and all that grows from it, but also the rivers and oceans, the clouds, eve-

rything. I imagine this ‘everything’ as a convivium – an ongoing life process in which things go along together and continuously bring each other into being as they do. I see our task in the human sciences as one of conversing in the convivium, in an effort to recover the specificity and fullness of our experience as humans. But this goes against the grain of the humanities as they have been understood since the Enlightenment, which – taking the essence of humanity as a given – unfold their conversations within a realm of exclusively human discourse, the results of which are only then applied to a world beyond the human fold, otherwise known as ‘nature’. In my view, this Enlightenment model has run out of steam. Thus, the upending heralded by geophilosophy is both necessary and urgent.

ALM: I believe that the impetus provided by the idea of geophilosophy, as introduced by Deleuze and Guattari in 1991, was decisive because, like all major conceptual inventions, it generated hermeneutic consequences that far exceeded its immediate level of elaboration and application. The idea of geophilosophy was first introduced in order to qualify, once again in Deleuze, an image of thought alternative to the traditional one: that is, to reconceive the relationship that thought establishes with its object, or even with itself as object. Whereas traditional philosophy tends to imagine thought as a relation between constituted substances, subject and object, in the form of the revolution of one around the other or of a traversable connection, the well-known ‘tight thread,’ between them, already in Kant and Husserl thought is configured as a dimension that, despite its claim to constitutive purity, typical of transcendental philosophy, is affected by the intermingling of spatial and material elements. These include, in Kant, the spherical form of the globe and, in Husserl, the geological stratification of the planes of experience, both of which explicitly refer to the notion of the earth.

Yet the most obviously important aspect of the 1991 proposal is its reference to the earth as a relation to territory and, consequently, as the intersection of the two opposed movements of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. It is here, for instance, that the profound connection becomes visible between the evolutionary styles of philosophical thought, from the Greeks onward, and the movements of migration, colonization, and civilization characteristic of those historical contexts.

The idea, also central to the Summer School from which this discussion arose, of a constitutive environmentality of the concept, which makes the concept something genuinely organic, living, and historical, seems to me the strongest feature of that short text. From this point, one could examine the many ways in which subsequent philosophies have developed these insights; the versions elaborated over the years by Tim Ingold offer an excellent example. To review them all, however, would take us too far afield. I shall therefore limit myself, in conclusion, to mentioning a few figures and indicating how I myself have drawn on these suggestions over the years, particularly in the direction of a renewed valorization of the material element of thought within the framework

of a renovated theory of the elements.

This is the perspective that seems to me to be represented today by critiques of the agrilogistical dimension of thought, as in Timothy Morton, which I personally do not endorse but gets directly to the idea of a metaphysical thought which pursues a foundation (a “ground”) only in order to administer a surface, turning it over only enough to renew the fertility of the soil and, in doing so, demarcating each plot of land as an exclusive space of management and control.

This critique, in turn, intersects with the recovery of the structurally tectonic, destabilizing, and mobile dimension of earth-thought, as in the philosophy of Thomas Nail, or with the fluid, bituminous, and potentially incendiary dimension of theories expressly oriented toward the concrete materiality of the subsoil, as in Reza Negarestani, Karen Pinkus, or Amitav Ghosh.

3. In your work, you have often expressed criticism of the theoretical and operational value of the notion of the Anthropocene. What are the reasons for your criticism?

TI: There are well-known objections to the notion of the Anthropocene, principally, that it attributes responsibility for the earth-system transformations supposed to have ushered in the new era to a generalised humanity, when in fact it lies at the door of very specific regimes, of which the vast majority of humans were not so much perpetrators as victims. This has led to alternative proposals such as ‘Capitalocene’, ‘Plantationocene’ or ‘Technocene’.

That scholars should stake their reputations in this game of competing brand-names, while all around the planet burns, is to my mind little more academic *hubris*. My concern, in any case, is with the ‘-cene’ itself, not with whatever we decide to put in front of it. It is the product of a way of thinking that slices the history of the earth into layers, each of which replaces the one that preceded it, only eventually to be replaced in its turn. What if, instead of thinking in terms of layers, we were to imagine the history of the earth as a process of renewal that comes up, as it were, through the middle? This, interestingly, is what cultural theorist Donna Haraway has attempted with her concept of the Chthulucene. Rather than marking a stage or epoch, the Chthulucene is supposed to refer to life’s ongoingness, in a register of time that is not measured out in chronological intervals but simply carries on.

But the word is unfortunate, not only because it is unpronounceable but also because what it denotes is not really a ‘-cene’ at all. As Haraway acknowledges, the suffix -cene comes from the Greek *kainos*, meaning ‘new’. But this was new in the sense not of renewal, as in the birth of a new baby or the turn of the New Year, but of replacement, as when we substitute a new model or state of affairs for another now deemed to be moribund, obsolete or past its time. The Greeks had quite another word, *neos*, for the ‘new’ of

renewal. My contention is that we don't need to join the prophets of posthumanism by adding yet another '-cene' to an already long list of candidates for the new era they imagine to be upon us. What we need instead is a genuinely neotenic humanism, the roots of which lie in the regenerative powers of a living earth.

ALM: I began publicly formulating my reservations concerning the hermeneutic and operational significance of the notion of the Anthropocene only recently, in a 2025 article entitled 'Anthropokenosis: Philosophies of the Nonhuman.' I began from critical considerations that can be directed at the philosophical, cultural, and economic model corresponding to this notion, focusing in particular on the model of ontology that characterizes it. My hypothesis is that the primary relation within the ontological structures of the Anthropocene is exclusionary in nature: the world of the Anthropocene is constructed primarily around relations of exclusion articulated in dichotomous form.

This dichotomy revolves around polarities such as spirit and matter, soul and body, nature and culture. A second hypothesis concerns the role played by processes of subjectivation and objectivation in the constitution, within this dynamic, of the basic substances of the Anthropocene: humanity and the world. A final path leads from the first two hypotheses to the idea that relations of subjectivation and objectivation grounded in dynamics of exclusion are nothing other than articulations of relations of power. One might ask, for instance, what properties, within the ontology of the Anthropocene, belong to the substance-person-individual. We discover that the first feature is the very idea of property, understood as the exclusive possession of a series of characteristics that exist only in relation to us. The relation between a substance and its properties is therefore itself a relation of ownership, that is, of exclusive dominion over an endowment insofar as it belongs solely and primarily to that entity and generates an asymmetrical relation between entities.

Once this critique is granted, the question becomes: what ontology should be set against this powerful framework? In my view, we should move in the direction of what, in 2025, I began to call *anthropokenosis*: a practice of dispossession or emptying of the human that recalls the *kenosis* of the New Testament and yet, unlike it, does not interpret the diminution of the human as the path toward a renewed and fuller enthronement.

This would be a possible, purely human *kenosis*, an *anthropokenosis*, which, unlike what Christ enacted on the cross, would entail renouncing command in every form: emptying oneself of all vestiges so that something else might assert itself. It thus would be a path of liberation for the nonhuman within us and for the more-than-human outside us. *Anthropokenosis* should then become the name for a general philosophy of the non-human, or of the more-than-human, whose directions have already been widely explored in current philosophies, although they still lack, in my view, the systematic articulation that a proposal like this could provide.

4. One gets the impression that the thought of Deleuze and Guattari is an important part of your work, but that your use of it is, so to speak, unorthodox. What is your overall assessment of their perspective, or of Deleuze's perspective, and of their importance for twenty-first-century philosophies?

TI: The thought of Deleuze has indeed grown in importance in my work, as it has grown on me. But that is only because I was thinking along the same lines already. When I first picked up *A Thousand Plateaus* sometime in the mid-1990s, and started trying to read it, I quickly gave up. It struck me as meaningless gobbledygook. However, back in the early 80s while I was working on a book about the history of evolutionary theory, I had encountered the philosophy of Henri Bergson, and was completely blown away by it. For me, the encounter was transformative. At the same time, I was also reading the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead. Then, two decades later, in the early 2000s, I got thinking about the life of lines. And in the course of writing my first book on this, *Lines: A Brief History*, I returned to *A Thousand Plateaus*, and specifically the *Treatise on Nomadology*, and discovered to my astonishment that Deleuze and Guattari had already said it all, albeit in a strange and idiosyncratic vocabulary. I could only understand it, however, because I had already thought it out for myself. That is, I was already in possession of a key that enabled me to say to myself, as I read, “when they use word X, what they actually mean is Y”. Then, suddenly, it all made sense. But this was only because – probably thanks to my earlier reading of Bergson – I was on the same wavelength to begin with. Once it began to make sense, I could go to Deleuze and Guattari for clues or inspiration to help me on my way. I could think with them, which is surely what they intended with the work. I wouldn't say, exactly, that I “use” their ideas. That sounds too instrumental. I don't believe their ideas are usable in this sense, or even that they are meant to be used. Nor has it ever been by purpose to offer an exegesis of their work, or to position it in relation to the philosophy of our century. These are tasks for professional philosophers, not for an amateur like me, swimming in the current somewhere between philosophy and anthropology. Perhaps that's why, from the standpoint of the philosophical profession, my “use” of Deleuze and Guattari seems unorthodox. I am happy that it should remain so.

I believe Deleuze's thinking is hugely important, as it offers a way beyond the stultifying constraints of mainstream paradigms in both the natural sciences and the humanities. But precisely for this reason, I am annoyed with him, along with all the other (what I used to call) “incomprehensible French theorists” (IFTs), who appear to pride themselves on pontificating from on high, in a language so abstruse that no-one else can understand unless, like me, they have already worked it all out for themselves. Is it not the first obligation of the scholar, if they have something to say, to express it with economy, clarity and conviction, in a form accessible to others? If so, most IFTs, Deleuze and Guattari included, have manifestly failed in their duty. Perhaps they never bothered to try, fearing that too much comprehensibility might destroy the mystique they have so assid-

uously constructed around themselves. But the result of this failure is that they end up in an echo chamber, talking only to themselves. As it is, the scholars, whether scientists or humanists, who really need to read Deleuze and Guattari are likely to come away with the same reaction that I had, on first encountering their work. It will only reinforce the prejudice that philosophy has nothing coherent to offer.

ALM: Among what might be defined as hypercontemporary philosophical perspectives – that is, within theories developed, at the latest, over the last fifty years, or, at the earliest, over the last twenty-five, and characterized by a marked novelty of themes and styles, as well as by the revival of the major twentieth-century polemics against modernity and subjectivity – there is perhaps no influence more profound and recurrent than that of Deleuze. In this sense, the most recent period in the history of philosophy, and not only in the Western tradition, has been marked by a spirit that could be described as Deleuzian.

By this adjective I mean the result of a progressive convergence of authors and currents toward the discovery of non-canonical ways of engaging in historical-philosophical experience. These approaches have translated into a project of reviving the ‘great forgotten’ of the tradition, no longer simply in an exegetical or interpretative sense, but in an operational, strategic, and militant one. Consider, for example, the so-called animal philosophies or philosophies of animality.

Since the rediscovery of the ecological-environmental question in the 1960s and 1970s, there has been a progressive multiplication of theories that place the experience of nonhuman actors at the centre of the philosophical problem in its classical articulations – ontological, epistemological, ethical, and aesthetic – as an integral and unavoidable element of any definition of the concepts of life, environment, or nature. Among these actors, nonhuman animals were the first to become a central focus of interest.

Anyone willing to retrace the history of the animal question in twentieth-century philosophy cannot fail to notice the turning point represented by Deleuze and Guattari’s contributions to the philosophical treatment of the topic between the late 1960s and the early 1980s through the notion of *becoming-animal*. Or consider the influence of Deleuze and Guattari’s thought on the field of philosophical botany, or vegetal philosophy. This is perhaps the most recent field of inquiry, with its earliest contributions dating back no more than thirty years, and it too originated in a movement that, according to many of its proponents, found its inspirational nucleus in the Deleuzo-Guattarian treatment of the *rhizome*.

The same could be said of other “unnatural” approaches to a philosophy centred on difference, multiple becoming, and sexual otherness, such as the thought of sexual difference, feminism, and, more recently, queer and transgender reflection. Something similar happened within the progressive multiplication of worlds made available to philosophical research beyond the traditional canon. Such lines of inquiry have articulated Deleuzi-

an notions of multiplicity, minority, and interstice as a way of disclosing another of the great “occults”: Indigenous and native thought as opposed to the colonial and Eurocentric model. Particularly present in the work of certain decolonial and multinaturalist theorists, this trait of Deleuzo-Guattarian thought has extended to function as a countermodel for specific tendencies in contemporary anthropology, especially through its insistence on tracing, the experience of geophilosophy, and the dynamic of deterritorialization and reterritorialization.

These are only a few examples of the impact of Deleuze’s key insights on the constantly expanding and proliferating field of hypercontemporary philosophies. Of course, the risks denounced by Tim Ingold do exist, both among the epigones of Deleuze and Guattari and in the difficulty of extracting from the abstruse, cryptic, and often self-referential style of the two authors a perspective that is not so much systematic as minimally coherent. It remains the case, however, that perhaps precisely because of this lack of final coherence and initial systematicity, certain intuitions, which I regard as brilliant and profound, have generated some of the most original hypercontemporary philosophies. And they have done so because they have never been bound to a single interpretative context, to a vulgate to be celebrated, or to a methodological approach to be slavishly reproduced.

5. To what extent does the question of anthropocentrism pose a challenge to an epistemic approach based on the recognition of nonhuman realities as bearers of agency? How does an anthropologist, accustomed to addressing the issue of ethnocentrism, deal with the more general problem of the human inability to transcend its own interpretative horizon?

TI: First of all, I want to say that the history of philosophy – and not just in the Western world – offers ample evidence of a human ability to transcend interpretative horizons which is not only truly remarkable but probably (thanks to the unique gift of language) exceptional among all living creatures. Nor is this ability limited to philosophers. I am thinking of the feats of transcendence on which ethnographers working with Indigenous peoples from around the world have often reported. The problem, for the anthropologist, is not to delineate the intellectual horizons of people in “other cultures”. On the contrary, it is to show how, in their thinking, these people routinely transcend the horizons that we, in the West, attribute to humanity in general. One of the ways in which they do so, of course, is by opening the conversation to the convivium as a whole.

This does not amount, however, to a denial of anthropocentrism. In fact, I would argue just the opposite – that only from an emplaced centre, in the midst of the lifeworld, can humans exercise their exceptional powers of listening and responding to the forms of life all around them. It is thanks to these powers, I believe, that human beings bear a responsibility for looking after the world in which they find themselves, which is not necessari-

ly shared or reciprocated by beings of other kinds. This is a belief, incidentally, that you find, in one version or another, among most of the world's Indigenous peoples.

What Western critics call anthropocentrism is quite different. It refers a stance that actually decentres humanity, placing it at the top of a pinnacle with rest of the world at its feet. But the critique of anthropocentrism, thus understood, far from restoring humans to the centre, strips them of any responsibility for planetary flourishing. The real centre, say anthropocentrism's critics, is nonhuman. But who then will take care of things? If humans don't, no-one or nothing else will. For this reason, I call for a benign anthropocentrism which, by restoring humans to the midst of things, makes it possible them to exercise their unique gifts of interpretative transcendence, as epitomised in myth and poetry – and of course in philosophy!

ALM: I have very little to add to what Tim Ingold has expressed with such mastery in his lifelong theoretical exploration, condensed here into a few sentences of remarkable depth and acuity. I would perhaps limit myself to pointing out a misunderstanding that is not usually made explicit in discussions of anthropocentrism and that therefore remains at their core as an unexpressed presupposition: a kind of theoretical sediment that prevents us from addressing the issue with full transparency. As a Heideggerian, I am convinced that when a horizon is configured, as in the case of anthropocentrism, as unavoidable, the whole problem lies not so much in desperately attempting to escape it, but rather in learning how to inhabit it in the right way.

Now, assuming that, formally, the perspective of a human being constitutes an unavoidable element for any human being, why should the same not be said of all other organic bodies that display the capacity to orient themselves according to a perspective? From von Uexküll onward, we are told that human beings possess a broader perceptual and operational endowment, one structurally projected, in language, symbolic cognition, and technology, toward the replication, simulation, mimicry, and anticipation of worlds that are not their own, but that, as soon as they are simulated and represented through these faculties, become part of it. Formulated in this way, the question seems to hold, provided that we do not assume this human exceptionality as the basis for an excessive responsibility of the human toward the whole, of which it would represent a kind of embryonic capacity for the self-recognition of an Absolute. In my view, this has been a risk that we have not been able to confront throughout history.

Therefore, were I finally to answer the question of anthropocentrism, I would prefer to focus on unmasking its presupposition in order to defuse it immediately as a self-contradictory instance. Which human being, in fact, stands at the centre of this notion? The individual in his or her irreducible subjectivity? In that case, there would be as many anthropocentrisms as there are human beings, in a form of entirely unproductive absolute polycentrism. Or should the human at the centre be understood as humanity, the immutable meaning of what it is to be human, from the Zinjanthropus of 2.5 million

years ago to the contemporary technology-absorbed *Hikikomori*? I would say that not even this idea of an essential humanity, of a species or a race, as centre allows us to escape the conflict of values and norms, nor the problem of their historicity.

More plausible, perhaps, is the idea that, in every conflict of norms, values, and perspectives, a variable group of human beings seeks each time to occupy the central position, not so much with respect to the rest of creation as with respect to other human beings. I would therefore say that anthropocentrism is perhaps more properly understood as an immanent conflict of the human being with itself. I do not know whether there is a way to overcome it, but I certainly see its essential necessity. Because a human being, whether an individual, a group, a people, or a species, that understands itself as internally determined by conflict does not seem to me even to begin laying the foundations for peaceful coexistence with anything different from itself.