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PANDEMONIUM AND POSTMEDIA ANIMISM

Abstract

In what follows I distinguish «postmodern animism» from my preferred term «postmedia animism», which I propose is a better term to express a minor, virtual, contrarian art and media. In the time of planetary trauma, ecological devastation and collapse, this term will serve as a heuristic concept to trace the passage from pandemic, panic, catastrophe and crisis to the series pandemonium, delirium and the carnivalesque. My gambit is to invoke a rebellious and affirmative *Yōkai* imaginary (妖怪, ghost, phantom, strange apparition) in order to contest passive forms of «transcendental narcissism» or «transcendental miserabilism».² This we shall designate

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² There is much research on *Yōkai* to explain the particular nature of Japanese animism, see: M. Foster, *Pandemonium and Parade: Japanese Monsters and the Culture of Yōkai*, University of California Press, California, 2009 and C. Ouweland, *Namazu-e and Their Themes: An Interpretive Approach to Some Aspects of Japanese Folk Religion*, Brill, Leiden, 1964.

as an aesthetics of existence³. In particular, I will analyse the relationship between natural disasters and politics within the Japanese imagination through reference to *Namazu-e* (鯰絵, woodblock prints depicting catfish), and their political effects in the aftermath of the earthquake of October 1855 (安政江戸地震, *Ansei Edo Jishin*) in the Edo period of Japanese history (FIG 1). My intention is to show that this historic art form, which grew out of trauma, demonstrates a fabulatory, dissensual and political aesthetics of resistance and creativity. It is an imaginary which appears conspicuously absent in our contemporary moment.

Keywords: Postmedia, Animism, Edo period (江戸時代 –1603-1867), Guattari.

Pandemónio e Animismo *Postmedia*

Resumo

No que se segue, distingo «animismo pós-média» do meu termo preferido «animismo pós-moderno» e que defendo ser um termo mais adequado para expressar artes e meios de comunicação social menores, virtuais e subversivos. Em tempos de trauma planetário, devastação ecológica e colapso, este termo servirá como conceito heurístico para rastrear a passagem da pandemia, do pânico, da catástrofe e da crise para a série do pandemónio, do delírio e do carnavalesco. O meu estrategema é invocar o rebelde e afirmativo imaginário *Yōkai* (妖怪, avantesma, fantasma, aparição estranha) a fim de contestar formas passivas de “narcisismo transcendental” ou “miserabilismo transcendental”. Isto será designado como uma estética da existência. Em particular, analisarei a relação entre as catástrofes naturais e a política no imaginário japonês no rescaldo do terramoto de Outubro de 1855 (安政江戸地震, *Ansei Edo Jishin*) durante o período Edo da história nipónica (FIG 1) através da referência aos *Namazu-e* (鯰絵, xilogravuras que representam o peixe-gato) e os seus efeitos políticos. A minha intenção é mostrar que esta forma de arte histórica, nascida do trauma, demonstra uma estética efabulatória, política e dissonante, de resistência e criatividade. Trata-se de um imaginário que está notoriamente ausente da nossa situação contemporânea.

Palavras-chave: pós-media, animism, Período Edo (江戸時代 –1603-1867), Guattari.

³ S. Lotringer, L. Hochroth and J. Johnston, *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961–1984*, Semiotext(e), 1996.

Figura 1 (Story of the big catfish of Edo)



The *Namazu-e* are prints which depict monsters living in a sublime interstitial world, in between the collective imagination and the traumatic memory of natural catastrophe⁴. They have been described as «a handy, cheap, disposable tool for helping to create Japan as a nation...»⁵ They constituted a «high degree of linguistic and visual sophistication»⁶ and «a powerful form of political rhetoric for a group theoretically forbidden from engaging in political discourse»⁷. In other words, the natural disaster raised social and political questions in and through the natural catastrophe. In the «crisis event» of the earthquake⁸ we find the aesthetic expression of resistance to the political status quo. Here the *aesthetics of existence* is dissensual. It says no. We can say the 1855 Edo earthquake traumatised the

⁴ O. Reinhardt & D. Oldroyd, «Kant's Theory of Earthquakes and Volcanic Action», *Annals of Science* 40:3 (1983), 247-273, p. 258.

⁵ Cf. in G. Smits, «Shaking up Japan: Edo Society and the 1855 Catfish Picture Prints» *Journal of Social History* 39:4 (2006), 1045-1078, p. 87. Y. Abe, «Amaterasu,» p. 50. A. Yasunari, «*Namazu-e no ue no Amaterasu*» (Amaterasu in the *Namazu-e*) *Shisō*, no. 912 (June 2000) 25-52.

⁶ Smits, art. cit., p. 1078.

⁷ Smits, art. cit., p. 1078.

⁸ C. Ouwehand, *Namazu-e and Their Themes: An Interpretive Approach to Some Aspects of Japanese Folk Religion*, Brill, Leiden, 1964, p. 237.

worldview of the folk of Edo (1603-1867), conferring *Zerrissenheit* (Hegelian diremption of spirit, torn-to-pieces-hood, alienation [*Entfremdung*]) on the power relations of the Tokugawa *Bakufu* (*shogunate*), and brought fully, to the popular mind of the national body, the possibility of *Yonaoshi* or world renewal (世直し). So here we can note that there is less of the transcendent sense of the other-worldly, of utopia or dystopia, and more concern with fabulation in the precise Deleuzian sense. In other words, in the traumatic experience of the 1855 Ansei Edo earthquake, a new ethical, ecological and aesthetic expression emerged which was critical of the present order of things and suggestive of a new way of re-ordering the world. However, I am not suggesting this is a molar form of «postmodern animism» which we should agitate and foment, rather that it is a minor form of postmedia animism, a virtual ecology, as Japanese philosopher Toshiya Ueno aptly puts it.⁹ For this is where we may find a political and dissensual dramaturgy of catastrophe in the present moment.

1. Earthquake as numinous event

On November 11, 1855, a devastating earthquake struck Edo, cracking, ripping and tearing not only the ground of Japan but also its social and political fabric. The epicentre of the earthquake in the heart of the political capital of Edo (now modern-day Tokyo) caused immeasurable damage, with the number of victims estimated between 7,000 and 10,000. The material damage was also severe, with the earthquake and fires destroying more than 14,000 buildings. Compounding the woes of *Edokko* (江戸っ子 – child of Edo) were not only the large number of injuries, persistent fires and widespread structural damage but also the arrival of the Black Ships of Commodore Perry which landed a second time in 1854 (FIG 2)¹⁰. The tumult ultimately led to the end of 鎖国 (*Sakoku*, seclusion) and the opening up of Japan to the world.

⁹ 上野俊哉. 四つのエコロジー: フェリックス・ガタリ的思考. 東京: 河出書房新社 2016. [T. Ueno, *Four ecologies: The Thought of Felix Guattari*. Kawade Shobo Shinsha, Tokyo, 2016].

¹⁰ Earthquakes are frequent in the archipelago and indeed shortly before the disaster of 1855, Japan experienced many earthquakes, which destroyed more than 20,000 homes and claimed thousands of lives.

Figura 2 (Neck-pulling game between the earthquake catfish and Commodore Matthew Perry)



Amidst this pervasive sense of the traumatic sublime¹¹, from the unconsciousness of Edo folk arose *Yōkai* spirits (妖怪, ghost, phantom, strange apparition) to explain the cosmological, mystical and allegedly supernatural significance of the natural disaster.¹² This came only a few decades after Japan suffered a series of natural disasters, epidemics and famines in the 1830s which led to popular protest. The common belief was that there was an imbalance in the cosmic forces of the earth. In their superstitious way, *Yōkai* spirits helped to articulate this fear.¹³ In the wake of the earthquake, artists expressed visions of Japan during the «month without gods» (*Kannazuki*, 神無月) and hundreds of woodblock prints featuring the giant catfish

¹¹ D. Sawyer, *Lyotard, Literature and the Trauma of the Differend*. Springer 2014.

¹² From his standpoint as a geographer and philosopher, Kant argued that earthquakes were not the punishment of a vengeful god but rather natural phenomena as such. In *The Critique of Judgment*, Kant removes the sublime from nature and resituates it in «the ideas of reason». Nature may be catastrophic and petrifying but is never sublime. Kant is the author of three essays on earthquakes and volcanoes written after the Lisbon earthquake and the tsunami on November 1st, 1755. In these works, he opposed theological views of Divine Providence regarding the cause of seismic activity and speculated – ultimately wrongly – that it was a natural phenomenon caused by the «ferment» and explosion of natural gas – the coming together of sulphur and iron — in the depths of the earth: «The subterranean air, set in motion by the raging fire, could well force its way through cracks in the Earth's strata that are normally blocked except on such occasions of violent eruption» (O. Reinhardt & D.R. Oldroyd, «Kant's Theory», art. cit., p. 258).

¹³ The Japanese Buddhist philosopher Inoue Enryō 井上円了 makes a heuristic distinction between phenomenological monsters (現象の妖怪, *genshō-teki Yōkai*) and transcendental monsters (超理の妖怪, *chōri-teki Yōkai*). The latter for Inoue Enryō, the unfathomable as such, is the true preserve of Buddhism. The former can be explained by scientific understanding. J. Bradley «Transcendental Monsters, Animism and the Critique of Hyperobjects», *Australian Journal of Environmental Education* 35:3 (2019), 163-172.

were circulated by Japanese printmakers in the city of Edo. According to the ancient animist Shinto mythology, in the absence of the god Kashima, the *Namazu* or catfish were free to indulge in destruction. Autochthonous Japanese spirits were believed to live beneath the Japanese archipelago and Kashima restrained the catfish with a foundation stone or *Kanameishi* (要石). In popular iconography, the movements of a giant catfish were kept at bay by the foundation stone protected by the *Kashima Daimyōjin* (FIG 3).

Figura 3 (The deity Ebisu falls asleep while guarding the foundation stone [Kanameishi] for Kashima)



Kashima was perceived as a powerful divinity close to the terrestrial world, in communion with humans, and a safeguard of order and stability. In mythology, when Kashima was absent, the *Namazu* stirred and caused violent earthquakes. Some woodblock prints highlighted the destruction and deaths wrought by the catfish; others affirmed the catfish as a harbinger of *Yonaoshi* or world change because in the Shinto religion, *kami* – gods or spirits – are bound to a particular place and reflect the regenerating forces of nature. In the animist tradition, *Namazu* are worshiped as *Yonaoshi Daimyōjin* or gods of world rectification.

According to the Shinto religion, at Kashima Temple (*Kashima Jingū*, 鹿島神宮) there is a spiritual access point between the human world and the gods. The warrior deity, *Kashima Daimyōjin* (鹿島大明神) is celebrated there, as well as the aforementioned monolithic rock which is believed to keep the world in place. In the imagination of Edo folk, this *Kanameishi* served as a defence against the malicious forces of nature.

Out of the trauma of experiencing the «dynamically» sublime forces of nature, the terrifying events in nature that Kant speaks of in the Critique of *The Critique of Judgement*, we find *Namazu-e* representations of Kashima regaining control of the monster. Some prints expressed frustration that incompetent deities had failed to prevent the disaster from happening. In others, Edo folk appear to rely on Kashima to regain control over the catfish and to restore the balance of cosmic forces. Some prints show Edo folk attacking the catfish and seeking revenge (FIG 4).

Figura 4 (*The cause of the great catfish at Shin Yoshiwara*)



Others show a preference for the almighty saving power of Amaterasu (the great Divinity Illuminating Heaven) rather than Kashima. In this respect, as *Namazu-e* show a conflict between Kashima and the spiritual founder of Japan this fact points to the collective unconscious of the Japanese. In the subterranean terrain of the collective unconscious we find a conflict between the imperial house and the *shogunate*, a conflict foreshadowing the eventual overthrow of the Tokugawa shogunate regime and the imperial restoration of 1867 – ending the Edo period of Japanese history.

My focus is not on retelling the story of the end of the Edo period and the beginning of the Meiji period of Japanese history but rather on the state of the political consciousness and artistic expression among Edo's common folk in the aftermath of the Ansei earthquake. For example, many *Namazu-e* expressed both the profane and the sacred and were concerned with crop failures, epidemics, earthquakes, and other natural disasters. Moreover, we find similarities in the rhetoric and themes of some of the *Namazu-e* and the songs of the *ee ja nai ka* dancers – (why not remake the world?)¹⁴.

2. Minor Media

In their way the prints acted as a minor media, *a little tradition of protest* in the time of quaking, fear and trembling. The prints were a way for local people to vent their frustration regarding their social and political lot. In a way the catfish in the *Namazu* prints represented both a saviour and all-devastating monster, as well as divine punishment and delivery from social abuses. *Namazu* became «the great avenger of social injustice, shaking the rich until they vomit and defecate their gold and silver, their riches passing to the little man in the street»¹⁵. The *Namazu-e* prints reveal how animism can be imbued with new meaning after a crisis or traumatic event like the Edo earthquake of 1855¹⁶. From an ethico-aesthetic point of view, as that explored in Guattari's *Chaosmosis*, the art of *Namazu-e* encapsulates the postmedia animist perspective because the art form which came out of the trauma and crisis of the earthquake and the upheavals in Japanese society expressed criticism of the established forms of authority and power. For me, *Namazu-e* offer a quintessentially Guattarian aesthetics of resingularisation and dissensus as they suggest a postmedia prospectus which celebrates the molecular and the minor aspects of aesthetic production. What I mean by this is that they express criticism of the social and political reality but are also affirmative, creative and suggest something other than the status quo, a fabulatory future perspective. Such an aesthetics recognises the necessity for a change in mental ecology or ways of thinking about the world. It seems to me that in this aesthetics we find on the one hand a reaction to the trauma of natural events like earthquakes, but also criticism of social and political life. Added to this is a demand to change the organisation of social life which I think demands a transformation in mental and dissensual ecologies.

¹⁴ Abe, «Namazu-e», art. cit., pp. 25–52; Smits, *Shaking up Japan*.

¹⁵ Ouwehand, *Namazu-e*, op. cit. p. 15.

¹⁶ Ouwehand, *Namazu-e*, op. cit. p. 50.

What I mean by this is that *a critical postmedia perspective*¹⁷ would look at and celebrate multinaturalism, the plurality of worldviews, or so-called «fifth world» perspectives¹⁸ because at present what we find in certain forms of expression such as «postmodern animism» or «transcendental narcissism»¹⁹ or the «transcendental miserabilism» of writers such as Timothy Morton, is so much silence, passivity and nihilism²⁰. Collectively this is a form of postmodern nihilism²¹ to which a critical postmedia perspective is dogmatically resistant and opposed. I therefore find something meaningful in the catfish picture prints as they are consistent with the postmedia prospectus of Guattari. The prints are a kind of primitive and dissensual postmedia form of protest²² as they conjure alternative Universes of reference and value. I find in their pandemoniacal expression, the possibility of a new ethico-aesthetic paradigm – a creative form of protest against the status quo and the nihilism of the moment. To explain this, I contrast what I shall call postmedia animism with postmodern animism²³. It seems to me it is not enough to simply claim that the mass media (for example Miyazaki Hayao's *Kaze Tachinu* 風立ちぬ) can somehow cater for our existential fears and worries vis-à-vis climate change. Yoneyama makes this claim:

Although Miyazaki does not use the phrase 'postmodern animism', his concept based on his reflections and critique of modernity is nothing but postmodern animism.²⁴

My stance is to critique postmodern animism for its passivity, naysaying and fatalism and its handing over of critique of the mass media industry. Against this, and at the pathetic level, in the pandemonium of the animist spirits, I foreground the possibility of the generation of dissensual affects of joy and *Yonaoshi* as it seems to me that what precisely is at stake is «the creation and composition of mutant

¹⁷ N. Manoj, N. J. Bradley, A. Lee, «Gadfly or Praying Mantis? Three Philosophical Perspectives on the Delhi Student Protests», *Educational Philosophy and Theory* (2020), 1-11; J. Bradley, *Schizoanalysis and Asia: Deleuze, Guattari and Postmedia*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2022; J. Bradley, A. Lee, N. Manoj, *Deleuze, Guattari and the Schizoanalysis of Postmedia*. Bloomsbury, 2023.

¹⁸ B. Glowczewski, *Indigenising Anthropology with Guattari and Deleuze*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2019.

¹⁹ M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1972, p. 203.

²⁰ T. Morton, *Humankind: Solidarity with Nonhuman People*, Verso, London, 2019.

²¹ M. Bookchin, *Re-enchanting Humanity: Defense of the Human Spirit Against Antihumanism, Misanthropy, Mysticism and Primitivism*, Cassell, London, 1995.

²² F. Guattari, S. Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*. Semiotext(e), Los Angeles, 2008.

²³ S. Yoneyama, «Rethinking Human-nature Relationship in the Time of Coronavirus: Postmodern Animism in Films by Miyazaki Hayao & Shinkai Makoto», *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 18:16 (2020).

²⁴ Yoneyama, «Rethinking Human-nature Relationship», art. cit. p.

percepts and affects»²⁵. We need less of the mass media and more minor, mutant percepts and affects. Addressing traditional worldviews such as animism is not undertaken here to embrace some form of eco-mysticism, transcendental ecosophy or other such primitivistic worldviews. I am not invoking the transcendent or the mystical as a form of pseudo-scientific explanation. The last thing the world needs is a return to religion and superstition and mythology. We do not need traumatic silence in the wake of the traumatic sublime.²⁷ Rather what we are aiming to do is to extract a celebratory, carnivalesque potentiality, which is to say, to highlight the possibility of a dissensual practice, an expressionism which emerges out of trauma and crisis. A critical postmedia prospectus is thus concerned with emancipatory social practices, practices which are resolutely atheist, immanent and this-worldly. I am aiming to find in animism a worldview *against the state-form*²⁸ What can we find in *Namazue* which is consistent with the postmedia thesis and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's insistence that «animism is an ontology of societies without a state and against the state»?²⁹ A critical postmedia perspective cannot be conservative or reactionary, statist or nationalist as it must not only call the world to order but offer a vision of what the world must become, hence the affirmation of fabulation (the fictionalizing of the world following Bergson and Deleuze), of *Yonaoshi* or world renewal. It must think beyond the fashionable cynicism, passive nihilism and trauma of the moment. It looks back at historical examples of animism but only to find in them a model which we can reapply to the present moment. I am thus not calling for new age spiritualism or other-worldly ecosophy but a «revolution of mentalities»³⁰, that is a recomposition and resingularisation of subjectivity. I think Guattari was searching for a «revolution of mentalities» and a rethinking of social practice from non-anthropocentric sources, *from artistic creation as such*. Ecosophy thus aims for a revolution in sensitivity, intelligence and desire. I think in *Namazue*

²⁵ E. Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-aesthetic Paradigm*. Indiana University Press, 1995, p. 91.

²⁶ Here take for example, Jensen's uncritical focus on the re-enchantment of the present with a retrospective on ancient modes of thinking: «The very term 'techno-animism' is intended to convey this continued capacity for enchantment in non-modern, techno-scientific life». C. Jensen, «Techno-animism in Japan: Shinto Cosmograms, Actor Network Theory, and the Enabling Powers of Non-human Agencies», *Theory, Culture & Society*, 30: 2 (2013) 84-115, p. 105. Jensen thinks of «Japan» as a theoretical experiment, a land of «polymorphous perversity» transgressing boundaries between the human, animal, spiritual and mechanical beings (p. 84). In this Jensen finds a way to assess the «entanglements of science, politics, ecology and cosmos» (pp. 84-85). Japanese techno-animism seems to blur the distinction between science and religious practice (p. 87). What does this mean? What have *Kami* (神) and *Yōkai* (妖怪) or *Bakemono* (化物) to do with techno-animism?

²⁷ Here it is noteworthy to invoke Schiller's sense of the «practically sublime». The sublime object discloses and expands our defiance of power and nature.

²⁸ A. Melitopoulos, M. Lazzarato, «Machinic Animism» *Deleuze Studies* 6:2 (2012) 240-249; EV De Castro, *Cannibal metaphysics*. University of Minnesota Press, 2015; EV De Castro, *From the Enemy's Point of View*, University of Chicago Press, 2020.

²⁹ G. Genosko, «Félix Guattari in the Age of Semiocapitalism», *Deleuze Studies* 6:2 (2012) p. 241.

³⁰ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 119.

we find the potential expression of desire as a form of mobile subjectivity, escaping the inhibition of thoughts and feelings related to trauma and loss. Throughout the chaos and pandemonium of the Ansei earthquake and political turmoil in Edo³¹, we can perhaps say that new modes of primitive animistic subjectivity and ecosophical practices surged forth, suggesting the restoration of the futural «subjective city» of Edo³². What would be the ecologies – political, environmental and mental – which emerged from the trauma of the earthquake? Guattari perhaps would look to forms of animist hylozoism, that is, the doctrine that all matter has life, to find an emergent subjectivity forming an immanent relationship with the non-human world. In our time of climate change, the Anthropocene and post-Fukushima existence, in what ways can opening up to the nonhuman world offer a means to resist the political order and to stave off ecological catastrophe and degradation? Postmedia animism focuses on the root and branch reorganisation of social life, which involves not only the natural world, but social and mental ecologies. This is what postmodern animism does not address. How can we interpret historical instances of animistic practice to escape the pervasive sense of fatigue and exhaustion in the present moment?

3. Anthropocene and animism

What Universes of reference and Universes of value are opened or closed in the time of the trauma and catastrophe of climate change and the Anthropocene? What are the affects of trauma transmitted through animist practice and what are their political effects? How do animist beliefs shape the aesthetic representation of trauma? What is it in the traumatic sublime which reveals the workings of the unconscious? The answer to these questions is found somewhere in the following quotations:

We cannot resolve the problem of radioactivity with this relation between nature and culture. In Japan after Fukushima geography is psychology. The atmosphere does not move geometrically. We adapt not only to our environment but also to our psychosis.³³

We cannot conceive of solutions to the poisoning of the atmosphere and to global warming due to the greenhouse effect, or to the problem of population control, without a mutation of mentality, without promoting a new art of living in society.³⁴

³¹ M. Foster, *Pandemonium and Parade: Japanese Monsters and the Culture of Yōkai*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2009.

³² F. Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, Bloomsbury, 2005.

³³ C. Minato, *L'incommensurable: Une Recherche Audio-Visuelle Après Fukushima*. Montreuil: Label vidéo, 2013.

³⁴ F. Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 20.

In the time of the Anthropocene, new Universes of reference and value are demanded that re-animate the non-human world and its life-forms. Such psychological and cosmological universes can be perhaps modelled on a renewed animistic *mode of sensibility*. Such a sensibility one might call delirium or existential crisis, that is, a psychotic divorce from the social through which one accesses the real of the sublime violently and intimately. Through animism, what semiotic material or «power signs» emerge in the corporeal molecular flows – where sounds and images, words and gestures meld and mesh together in collective assemblages of enunciation? Through ritual, rhythm and gesture, what new forms of animistic semiotics are non-exclusive to humans? In polysemic multiverses, what is the nature of the proto-subjectivity of matter which itself comes into being – a virtual, experimental animism at once mutating and evolving? What we are searching for is not a psychoanalytic explanation as such but a *schizoanalytic* one regarding the materialist ecosophic animist object. I argue that postmedia animism is a heuristic paradigm of thought to appreciate animism and its relation to aesthetics and trauma.

4. Postmodern animism

Objects constitute themselves in a transversal, vibratory position, conferring on them a soul, a becoming ancestral, animal, vegetal, cosmic. These objectivities-subjectivities are led to work for themselves, to incarnate themselves as an animist nucleus; they overlap each other, and invade each other to become collective entities half-thing half-soul, half-man half-beast, machine and flux, matter and sign.³⁵

How is postmodern animism different from the postmedia animism I am exploring in *Namazue*? Yoneyama argues that the notion of postmodern animism emerged from grassroots activity in the aftermath of mercury poisoning in Minamata and the nuclear meltdown in Fukushima in 2011. According to her³⁶, proponents explain that animism can help humanity somehow *survive modernity*. Yoneyama says we need to reconsider nature and *spirituality* especially, in order to engage the Anthropocene, climate change, and the *zoonotic pandemic*. She suggests that postmodern animism has significant implications for the Anthropocene:

[T]here seem to be two contrasting theoretical approaches concerning how to respond to the apparently untenable premise of the nature vs culture/ human/society dichotomy. One is to materialise human society even more

³⁵ F. Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 102.

³⁶ S. Yoneyama, S., «Rethinking Human-nature Relationship», art. cit., p. 214.

with technological and engineering advancements and ultimately to control nature. The other is to re-enchant modernity, to reconnect humanity with the spiritual facets of nature and the earth, by shedding the obsolete, modernist straight-jacket of the human–nature division, and by opening up our (social-) scientific knowledge to new philosophical, epistemological, and ontological possibilities, that is, to start building new knowledge for a new modernity.³⁷

And again, she argues that postmodern animism suggests that the life-world must find its place in ethics, democracy, and spirituality: «I contend that postmodern animism's appreciation of intangible cultural and indigenous heritages, even in modernity, can function as a basis for a new knowledge to connect multitudes of localities around the world» (p. 220). From my point of view, the protests against the mercury poisoning in Minamata and the incompetence of the authorities in handling the Fukushima accident are right and meaningful but passivity, spirituality, fatalism and withdrawal in the wake of the environmental crisis are ethically reprehensible. Contra postmodern animism or neo-animism, the postmedia and ecosophical prospectus is my preferred political response to ecological disaster and catastrophe. This is resistant to withdrawal into isolation which is intimated in the fetishism of the inaccessible object in Timothy Morton's work³⁸. We are not looking at animism in the Orientalist sense of romanticisation or fetishism in indigenous, primitive or ancient cultures, but we can view animism as helping to build a collective utterance and political response to mitigate ecological disaster. Guattari is important here because it is his postmedia prospectus which remains timely in explaining the animistic belief in technology³⁹⁴⁰ .-

³⁷ S. Yoneyama, S., «Rethinking Human-nature Relationship», art. cit., p. 214.

³⁸ T. Morton, *Humankind: Solidarity with Nonhuman People*, Verso, London, 2019.

³⁹ See S. Mbembe, *Necropolitics*. Duke University Press, Durham, 2019.

⁴⁰ In recent scholarship, there is much interest in animism — in the work of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Achille Mbembe, Bruno Latour, Maurizio Lazzarato, Isabelle Stengers, Philippe Descola, Tim Ingold and Alphonso Lingis, among others. In recent years there has also been much interest in the question of animism and its political implications. See A. Melitopoulos, *Ways of Meaning: Machinic Animism and the Revolutionary Practice of Geo-psychiatry*, Phd Dissertation, Goldsmiths University of London, 2016; A. Melitopoulos, M. Lazzarato, «Machinic Animism», *Deleuze Studies* 6:2 (2012) 240-249; A. Melitopoulos, M. Lazzarato, «Assemblages: Felix Guattari and Machinic Animism», *e-flux* 36 (2013). And one finds excellent scholarship on Guattari's understanding of animism that he learned from travels in Japan and Brazil (Guattari & Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution*; B. Glowczewski, *Indigenising Anthropology*, op. cit.; J. Glazier, *Arts of Subjectivity: A New Animism for the Post-media Era*, Bloomsbury Academic, New York, 2020). This itself builds on extant research on Guattari's interest in machinic animism (J. Hetrick, «Video Assemblages: 'Machinic Animism' and 'Asignifying Semiotics' in the Work of Melitopoulos and Lazzarato», *Footprint* (2014) 53-68 ; F. Guattari, G. Genosko, J. Hetrick, *Machinic Eros: Writings on Japan*, Univocal, Minneapolis, 2015; A. Melitopoulos & M. Lazzarato, «Machinic Animism», art. cit.; M. Lazzarato & J. Jordan, *Signs and Machines: Capitalism and the Production of Subjectivity*, Semiotext(e), Los Angeles, 2014; J. Ramey, «Deleuze and Guattari's Machinic Animism» *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Religion* (2016); T. Ueno, «Guattari and Japan» *Deleuze Studies* 6:2 (2012) 187-209; D. Viveiros, *Cannibal Metaphysics*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2017).

Within the paradigm of philosophical postmedia animism several questions come forth: How can we use animism as a political weapon to decolonize the self? Do animist beliefs themselves constitute a form of critique? I think it is possible to combine Marxism with animism in some form, but this would be quite different from Timothy Morton and his form of passive nihilism⁴¹. In terms of the Japanese context, the question is how one refocuses the analysis of *Yōkai* on machinic animism and ecosophy as expounded by Guattari⁴².

Guattari celebrated the animistic practices and animistic cosmologies which contested Western semiologies. There is some sound evidence for this as Guattari was interested in the monstrous crossing of animist powers in these cosmologies: «trans-individual polysemic animist subjectivity uncovers the possibility of producing and enriching ... semiotic symbols of the body, dance, postures, and gestures... as well as a-signifying semiotics such as rhythms, music, and so on»⁴³. In *Schizoanalytic Cartographies*, Guattari writes:

That a practice of existential refrains is possible, that one is not necessarily condemned to remaining passive in the face of their springing up (an attitude arising from a general function of capitalistic-monotheism) is something that the ritual procedures of 'animist' societies in particular teach us.⁴⁴

Discussing the nature of the proto-aesthetic paradigm, in which subjectivity is formed through chants, dances, stories about ancestors and gods, Guattari argues: «Aspects of this kind of polysemic, animistic, transindividual subjectivity can equally be found in the worlds of infancy, madness, amorous passion and artistic creation»⁴⁵. With this in mind, we can say that the *Namazu-e* animist art form contested the disenchanting world of Edo, developing the mythological and «gothic» possibilities of *Yōkai*⁴⁶. The postmedia aesthetic experimentation connects with local urban spaces and embraces a form of machinic animism, becoming «the battle cry of a decolonised self»⁴⁷. In some ways then animist art suggests a revolution in sensitivity and desire, a new relation to the subjective city of Edo.

Why focus on *Yōkai* and the question of postmedia animism? Why view *Yōkai* as

⁴¹ J. Bradley, «Transcendental Monsters, Animism and the Critique of Hyperobjects», *Australian Journal of Environmental Education* 35:3 (2019) 163-72.

⁴² J. Bradley, D. Cole, «Afterword: Zhibo, Existential Territory, Inter-Media-Mundia», *Principles of Transversality in Globalization and Education*, Springer, Singapore, 2018, pp. 227-243.

⁴³ J. Hetrick, M. Hardt, A. Negri, «Towards a Critical Nomadism? Félix Guattari in Japan» *Machinic Eros: Writings on Japan*, 2015, p. 4.

⁴⁴ F. Guattari, A. Geoffey, *Schizoanalytic Cartographies*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2012, p. 148.

⁴⁵ Guattari, *Schizoanalytic Cartographies*, op. cit. pp. 102-103.

⁴⁶ F. LeRon Shults, L. Powell-Jones, *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Religion*, Bloomsbury, 2016, p. 81.

⁴⁷ LeRon Shults, Powell-Jones, *Schizoanalysis*, op. cit. p. 91.

modes of poesis or world-making? My argument is that the re-interpretation of *Yōkai* may help us to fathom a remaking of the present world, a remaking of social practices – a materialist *Yonaoshi* (世直し) or *world renewal* of the present. However, to reiterate I am not interested in varieties of religious explanation *per se* but rather the ramifications upon politics that art can manifest⁴⁸. I am not interested in falling back into pacificism and spirituality to protect oneself from the ecological problems facing mankind. In other words, postmedia animism can be thought *in excess of religion and ritual* but only in the context of the fundamental, earth-shattering critique of capitalism.

5. Fabulation

I am interested in differentiating the two senses of fabulation in Bergson and Deleuze. And I found a way to tie this together with my discussion on *Yōkai* and *Namazue*. In Bergson's *Two Sources of Morality* the function of fabulation acts as a counterweight to the intellect. William James finds in Bergson's work a critique of vicious intellectualism⁴⁹. In what sense? Ouwehand in his brilliant work on *Yōkai* and *Namazue* explains the point thus:

When the crisis event (such as an earthquake) so deeply shocks and so totally affects the individual and society to which he belongs that the cause and consequences of the event are beyond comprehension and cannot be coped with by any normal intellectual perception or when intelligence itself would constitute a danger to the individual and society because nothing can withstand the logic of the 'facts' and no form of compensation is conceivable – at such a time the 'fabulation' takes effect, and it then becomes a function of religion as a defensive reaction against the overpowering force (or deadening impotence) of the intellect.⁵⁰

It is interesting that Ouwehand mentions Bergson because in a discussion on static religion in Bergson's *Two Sources* we find a consideration of William James's experience of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake which he recounts in his *Memories and Studies*. There we find the sense of *Zerrissenheit* (torn-to-pieces-hood), a concept James derived from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which in terms of mental stages and varieties of mental experience we can understand as social schizophrenia in the wake of trauma and catastrophe and the experience of the sublime:

⁴⁸ T. Miura, *Agents of World Renewal: The Rise of Yonaoshi Gods in Japan*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 2020.

⁴⁹ «[t]he essential contribution of Bergson to philosophy is his criticism of intellectualism. In my opinion he has killed intellectualism definitively and without hope of recovery» W. James, *William James: Writings*, Library of America, 1988, p. 727.

⁵⁰ Ouwehand, *Namazue*, op. cit. p. 243.

I realize now better than ever how inevitable were men's earlier mythological versions of such catastrophes, and how artificial and against the grain of our spontaneous perceiving are the later habits into which science educates us. It was simply impossible for untutored men to take earthquakes into their minds as anything but supernatural warnings or retributions.⁵¹

Interestingly, Bergson mentions his own experience of *Zerrissenheit* as a boy in the days leading up to the Franco-Prussian War:

While still a boy, in 1871, on the morrow of the Franco-Prussian War, I had, like all people of my generation, considered another war to be imminent during the twelve or fifteen years that followed. Later on that war appeared as at once probable and impossible: a complex and contradictory idea, which lasted right down to the fatal day. Indeed it called up no image to our minds, beyond its verbal expression. It kept its abstract character right down to those terrible hours when the conflict became obviously inevitable, down to the very last minute, while we were still hoping against hope.⁵²

But when, on August 4, 1914, I opened the *Matin* newspaper and read in great headlines: 'Germany Declares War on France,' I suddenly felt an invisible presence which all the past had prepared and foretold, as a shadow may precede the body that casts it.⁵³

Horror-struck as I was, and though I felt a war, even a victorious war, to be a catastrophe, I experienced what William James expresses, a feeling of admiration for the smoothness of the transition from the abstract to the concrete: who would have thought that so terrible an eventuality could make its entrance into reality with so little disturbance?⁵⁴

Deleuze picks up on the notion of fabulation but gives it a less psychological, phenomenological or utopian reading and grants it a more political aspect:

Utopia isn't the right concept: it's more a question of a 'fabulation' in which a people and art both share. We ought to take up Bergson's notion of fabulation and give it a political meaning.⁵⁵

⁵¹ W. James, *Memories and Studies*, Longmans, New York, 1911.

⁵² H. Bergson, W. Carter, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, Doubleday, New York, 1935, p. 148.

⁵³ Bergson, Carter, *Morality and Religion*, op. cit., 148.

⁵⁴ Bergson, Carter, *Morality and Religion*, op. cit., 148.

⁵⁵ G. Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972-1990*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1995, p. 174.

Deleuze's understanding of fabulation allows us to look at *Namazu-e* to understand the political aesthetics at work in the print. Bogue is instructive here in his *Deleuze's Way: Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics* on the question of the political nature of fabulation: «Bergsonian fabulation has the political function of perpetuating a closed, static society, whereas Deleuzian fabulation promotes the invention of a people and the formation of new modes of social interaction»⁵⁶. In the political aesthetics of *Namazu-e* we find not the mere bearing-witness to natural catastrophe as such but the artist reaching forth «beyond the perceptual states and affective transitions of the lived».⁵⁷ The artist is «a seer, a becomer» according to Deleuze and Guattari, and we can say fabulation is thus both creative and speculative, the wellspring of renewal and revolution:

The artist is a seer, a becomer. He has seen something in life that is too great, too unbearable also, and the mutual embrace of life with what threatens it, so that the corner of nature or districts of the town that he sees, along with their characters, accede to a vision that, through them, composes the percepts of that life, of that moment, shattering lived perceptions into a sort of cubism, a sort of simultaneism, of harsh or crepuscular light, of purple or blue.⁵⁸

Bergson describes fabulation negatively as a force of «phantasmic representations» that generate superstitions⁵⁹, especially in «closed societies». This contrasts with «open societies» in which something exceeds traditional customs and points to a form of universal love for humankind. Through fabulatory «powers of the false» this we might call, as Deleuze does, the invention of *a people to come*. Fabulation is neither myth nor imagery but an act of becoming, often in local politics, excessive of closure, and opposed to the transcendence of closed societies and the offering of a world-to-come. So while for Bergson fabulation reproduces illusions or deceptive fictions, and thus sustains the order of things in closed societies, in Deleuze, fabulation intimates the *possible* and *virtual*. Fabulation constitutes artistic resistance.⁶⁰

My argument is that out of trauma and crisis and catastrophe, *Yōkai* animism reflects a way to critique the present and to offer another world to come. At present in models of postmodern animism it seems there is no politics other than personal and spiritual well-being; the only response is to say something like «I am spiritually intact as the planet burns». Against this, I couch my approach in Guattarian

⁵⁶ R. Bogue, *Deleuze's Way: Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2010, p. 104.

⁵⁷ «the artist, including the novelist, goes *beyond the perceptual states and affective transitions of the lived*» Cf. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1994, p. 171.

⁵⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, op. cit. p. 171.

⁵⁹ Bergson, Carter, *Morality and Religion*, op. cit., p. 88.

⁶⁰ R. Bogue, *Deleuzian Fabulation and the Scars of History*, Edinburgh University Press, 2010.

language and address *Yōkai* as a means to explain trance or crisis as constituting an assemblage capable of producing collective utterances – a collective assemblage of enunciation – and a collective critique of the present even though *the people are missing*⁶¹. I am principally interested in finding minoritarian expression, or ways in which subjectivity can overcome existential crises.

Yet it remains puzzling that Guattari saw in animism – both ancient and modern – a means for the renewed production of subjectivity. It is my view that Guattari was searching for animist subjectivities, new pluri-universes of meaning, which might see beyond one-dimensional shrink-wrapped subjectivities and the looming ecological crisis. At our most euphoric and expressive, in Guattarian language, we can say that artistic animism and *Yōkai* aesthetic deterritorialises the real, agitating the role of a partial enunciator. In this way, art contributes a sense of alterity to the perceived world. This generates a quasi-animist speech⁶². The animal and the human relay across each other in a zone of indiscernibility, transience (animalist cross-species becomings) and transversality. Animism becomes a kind of haptic practice but not one of spiritual *secrets of immanence* as Ramey claims regarding Deleuze's philosophy⁶³. We are not trying to understand mysticism as spiritual revolt as such but as a means to constitute weapons of machinic animism.

It is Guattari who juxtaposes assemblages of enunciation with non-modern archaic worldviews as he searches for «animist cartographies of subjectivity» which we can understand as a form of nonsubjective subjectivity, at once distributed, relational and multiple⁶⁴. We can use the concept of techno-animism not merely as a synonym for machinic animism but as a means to explain the sustained interest in ghosts, zombies, monsters in the Japanese imagination⁶⁵. This is to grasp the interstitial realm, the Uncanny Valley or included middle, between the human and nonhuman, perhaps even to understand, at our most generous, hyperobjects that are «unfamiliar, even monstrously gigantic» scale⁶⁶, but only on the condition that this is treated as a means, despite trauma and crisis, to explore the aesthetic, political and philosophical expression of resistance to the status quo. We are thus performing something quite different than the Oriental fantasy-gazing which looks at Japanese folklore (*Minzoku-gaku*, 民俗学) and the Shinto religion (神道) as offering some resplendent, apocalyptic and transcendent solution to the woes of the present.

⁶¹ G. Deleuze, *Cinema: 2*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1989, p. 22.

⁶² Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 131.

⁶³ J. Ramey, *The Hermetic Deleuze*, Duke University Press, 2012.

⁶⁴ F. Guattari, – S. Lotringer, *Soft subversions*. New York: Semiotext(e) 1996.

⁶⁵ C. Jensen, A. Blok, «Techno-animism in Japan: Shinto Cosmograms, Actor-network Theory, and the Enabling Powers of Non-Human Agencies» *Theory, Culture & Society*, 30:2 (2013) 84-115.

⁶⁶ Morton, *Humankind*, op. cit.

6. Schizoanalysis of animist subjectivity

The four functors (real, possible, actual and virtual) can be used to explore the plane of immanence which maps the unconscious and the proto-subjectivity of animist spirits. Such a diagrammatic concerns the creative and expression in the time of traumatic sublation. Such a diagrammatic scours the existential territory of both dominant and minor refrains of animist subjectivation to isolate a postmedia expression *contrary to the social quo*. What can be extracted from incorporeal animist universes and applied concretely to the pulverised, quaking milieu? What can be taken from the assemblage of the functorial domains – real and potential, fluxes and material – from rhizomes, constellations, flux and territory – to make sense of the world of *Yōkai*, monsters and *the eerie* as such? Where are the new constellations of Universes of reference and value? Are they to be found in postmodern animism or postmedia animism? Let me explain why I favour the latter.

A map can be drawn of the unconscious and the subjectivity of the traumatised Edo citizenry in 19th century Japan which can metamodel the political expression of a minor literature and media. In the virtual possibility of the animist incorporeal universes, we find not only actual and real material fluxes – non-discursive chants, incantations, prayer, veneration, state religion codes, political strictures – but also the actual and potential machinic Phylum: *Namazu-e*, ritual, market exchange, political decree, printing press, artist creation, historical analyses, political rhetoric against the Tokugawa government. The language of abstract machines, machinic phylum, incorporeal universes, flows and existential territory makes sense not only of animist practice but also the imagination and collective unconscious in Edo. Why? The ecosophic object of *Namazu-e* has four dimensions: flows, machine, value and existential territory.

What is the traumatype of *Yōkai*? In *Namazu-e* we find an artistic response to crisis and catastrophe, a response which explores the traumatic existential territory of Edo in the days after the earthquake. An assemblage of creative resistance emerges with the insistence on remaking social practices, bearing an ethics of responsibility, fabulating the present in the name of the future. Refusing to fall into exhaustion and naysaying, and rejecting the black hole of despair, the ecosophical object of *Namazu-e* offers a world in perpetual renewal. The images of *Namazu-e* cartographically metamodel a pluriverse of the human and nonhuman, conjuring a political pluriversality, a politics of otherworlds⁶⁷. The images paint the world afresh through a kaleidoscope of magnificent colour. Animism is thus a polyvocal system of metamodelisation, where *Namazu-e* is the expression of world-making projecting possible futures of social transformation to contest ecological trauma and crisis.

⁶⁷ A. Escobar, *Pluriversal Politics: The Real and the Possible*. Duke University Press, 2020.

7. Transilience and intermundia⁶⁸

Yōkai engage in transilience, the leaping from one animal world to another, and emerge in times of abrupt transition and crisis. *Yōkai* leap across or skip over worlds, and emerge and fall away through contact, by sudden and violent separation, in sparks and flashes. Objects become animal, vegetable, spirit through leaping from one thing or condition to another. In our own time, there is something potentially revolutionary in this new mode of perception. But we should be cautious about the romance of animism as Jay Hetrick seems to do: «[T]here is indeed something potentially revolutionary about finding subaltern, animist sign-particles germinating within works of art that escape the overcoding of Integrated World Capitalism».⁶⁹ Indeed, I think Guattari too was seduced by Japanese animism in Okinawa and traces animism in Latin America:

I am more inclined... to propose a model of the unconscious akin to that of a Mexican Cuanderoo of a Bororo, starting with the idea that spirits populate things, landscapes, groups, and that there are all sorts of becomings, of haecceities everywhere and thus, a sort of objective subjectivity, if I may, which finds itself bundled together, broken apart, and shuffled at the whims of assemblages. The best unveiling among them would be found, obviously, in archaic thought.⁷⁰

Yet in Guattari's ecosophy and his semiotics of pre-discursive molecular flows, we find the idea of animism as part of the process to decolonize subjectivity. Subjectivity itself is formed at the junction of heterogeneous compositions. The individual is a partial and heterogeneous composition.⁷¹ The problem then is that subjectivity is also caught in patterns or compositions of machinic enslavement. Subjectivity struggles to maintain mental and social autonomy from the seductions of capitalism. In some ways the form of machinic enslavement helps to explain the paucity of *critical* artistic creation in the time of the pandemic, in the time of ecological crisis and catastrophe, in the time of the Anthropocene, in the time that we live in *post-Fukushima*. With this in mind, how can we vibrate the «molecular consciousness» to awaken bodily and sensual awareness? Perhaps in order to adapt to the new climate, we desperately need novel modes of perception which *animate* the non-

⁶⁸ Transilience signifies that which leaps across something, or from one thing to another. Intermundia signifies the middle zone or term between things. Paul Klee insists that intermundia is perhaps only visible to children, madmen, and primitives.

⁶⁹ Hetrick, Hardt, & Negri, op. cit. p. 151.

⁷⁰ Guattari, as quoted in Melitopoulos & Lazzarato, op. cit. p. 240.

⁷¹ F. Guattari, K. Uno, «Entretien de Uno Kuniichi», *Chimères. Revue des Schizoanalyses* 48:1 (2002) 69-94.

human environment and life-forms (as in indigenous, animistic cosmologies and ontologies), but how can postmedia co-function with animism to promote a form of ethico-aesthetic sensibility? At the end of *Chaosmosis*, Guattari's question remains timely *yet unanswered*:

Among the fogs and miasmas which obscure our *fin de millénaire*, the question of subjectivity is now returning as a leitmotiv. It is not a natural given any more than air or water. How do we produce it, capture it, enrich it, and permanently reinvent it [...] all the disciplines will have to combine their creativity to ward off the ordeals of barbarism, the mental implosion and chaotic spasms looming on the horizon?⁷²

We know that animistic sensibility does not privilege the verbal order. Rather sounds and images, words, rhythms and gestures meld and mesh together in complex assemblages of enunciation. The subject and the object dissolve into each other and animistic semiotics spread across nature and cosmos and touch various non-human entities including the proto-subjectivity of matter itself. In animistic rituals, people communicate with animals or plants, and *become* non-human life-forms. Animistic semiotics is thus *a-signifying*, concerned with rhythmic, polyphonic and acoustic forms of perception. This is expressed in manifold states of consciousness including «artistic creation, falling in love, political passions, existential crises, and, even discursively, through philosophy»⁷³.

8. Euphoric view: Ethico-aesthetic paradigm and *Namazu-e*

The ethico-aesthetic paradigm embraces a metamodelisation exercise that rethinks the formal organisation of power relations. Subjectivity – what constitutes the self – is key to this ethico-aesthetic paradigm. This subjectivity is a collective expression, floating over the existential territory of Edo Japan, dissolving and fragmenting the citizen, opening itself out to new possibilities of being and experimental political configurations beyond the Japanese state. Assemblages of enunciation act upon the subject as a modality of subjectivation. Animism produces mutant creative subjectivities and forms of heterogeneous alterity, stemming from collective or existential territories emergent from the territorialised assemblage of the clan, tribe or the collective-in-becoming. In *Yōkai* art, through percepts and affects, the individual is enveloped by transversal collective identities, from the past, present and future. The

⁷² Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit., p. 135.

⁷³ M. Lazzarato, J. Jordan, *Signs and Machines: Capitalism and the Production of Subjectivity*, Semiotext(e), Los Angeles, 2014, p. 104.

individual is found at the intersection of numerous partial subjectivations: infinite, virtual and immaterial instances enter and then irrupt and crystallise on the plane of the real. The mutations inherent to *Yōkai* art detach themselves from historical axiological references; *Namazue* become a weapon in the collective means of protest, emerging from religious practice but now deterritorialised towards the infinite cosmos and thereby actualising immaterial Universes of reference and value through chants, incantations, dances, pandemonium, and animism. Such Universes beckon toward the deterritorialised infinite. Through processual immanence, animism breaks free from ancient ritual and enforced Transcendent Universals (transcendent, despotic signifiers) invoke and fabulate *prospectively* of what is to come. In the transience and transversality of animism myriad constellations of Universes of value are invoked, mutant coordinates are conjured to the mind engendering «unprecedented, unforeseen and unthinkable qualities of being» as Guattari says in *Chaosmosis*⁷⁴. Animist art contaminates the everyday and brings forth another world.

Conclusion

I have aimed to identify visions, figments and imaginations beyond disaster, extinction, catastrophe and apocalypse. I have looked at *Yonaoshi* or world renewal in the Edo period of Japanese history to extract a critical potential to think beyond melancholia, depression and trauma in the present. *Yonaoshi* was examined to understand the problematic of trauma and transformation in *our time* of ecological catastrophe. I have resurrected the concept of fabulation and applied it in the wake of the geo-trauma of the Anthropocene⁷⁵. The study of postmedia animism thus becomes a materialist and immanence geomancy.

My intention throughout has not been to romanticise the Shinto religion, animism, or *Namazue*. My interest is how to provide an animist reading out of trauma literature which is consistent with Guattari's three ecologies (the interplay of natural, social and mental ecologies) as I believe it is necessary to take into account trauma *vis-a-vis* the environmental crisis and to ask how postmedia might respond to the geo-trauma of the real. Here the concept of «generalised ecology» in Guattari's *Three Ecologies* embraces ecologies which are not only of corporeal species but also incorporeal species, that is, species aesthetically produced by the imaginary (in music, the arts, cinema) like *Yōkai*. Guattari rightly insists that ecology *per se* cannot be treated *in vacuo* from other spheres such as mental ecology and social ecology. Generalised ecology allows for experimentation and creativity and the engineering

⁷⁴ Guattari, *Chaosmosis* op. cit., p. 106.

⁷⁵ D. Cole, R. Dolphijn, J. Bradley, «Fukushima: The Geo-trauma of a Futural Wave», *Trans-Humanities Journal* 9:3 (2016) 211-233.

of new forms of subjectivity through postmedia practices. What Guattari demanded from ecology was not a new form of conservatism of the real but an exploration of the heterogeneous universes, new modes of enunciation and universes of the possible. It is in this sense that we can understand the claim that the protection of the life world of vegetable and animal species must go hand in hand with the protection of incorporeal species. *Yōkai* would be one example of this because pluralist ontology understands the workings of the machinic unconscious⁷⁶. With the way the machinic unconscious works not only inside the mind of the individual with regard to the perception of the world, but also the way the body is enjoyed, with the way social relationships in the home, school, neighbourhood and factory are practised, a pluralist ontology runs in tandem with the hypersensitivity to the cosmos. This is the meaning of immanent, atheist, this-worldly ecosophy.

What remains of interest is how to understand the plurality of modes of existence in a non-representational, a-signifying, inorganic, and inhuman way – that is to understand the life of animality, animus, animism, and anomaly. My goal has been to interpret *Namazue* through the concepts of schizoanalytic metamodelling, existential territory, vital materialism and animist immanent ecologies. Yet we are not addressing animism as some quaint, primitive way of being in the world but rather attempt to extract from it a vibratory, quaking thought, a dissensual thought and mode of being. The chaotomic act of dissensus proffers the belief of *Yonaoshi*, that is, the world can be otherwise and can be recreated afresh. We are not looking for some abstract, impersonal, indifferent object but the creation of a collective, concrete subjectivity which can reset the world. My idea about distancing postmedia animism from postmodern animism is that the former aims to rip the world to bits to create it afresh; a perspective that is carnivalesque and celebratory. And so we say *ee ja nai ka?* (ain't it great?). Emma Goldman is said to have claimed she did not want to belong to any revolution that does not dance. And I believe the *Yonaoshi* and the *ee ja nai ka* movement practised what Goldman preached. The machinic aspect of animism is a question of how we work with *Yōkai*, how we connect with them to create a new aesthetic paradigm. The aesthetic paradigm always approaches a point of virtuality. Silence, pacifism, withdrawal, fatigue and exhaustion – found in postmodern animism – are the last things the world needs. Pandemonium as the site of confusion and uproar, a place of demons and evil spirits, both hellish and infernal, sites of carnival, dance, drumming and feasting are infinitely preferable to the dreary silence of the present.

⁷⁶ E. Alliez, A. Goffey (eds.) *The Guattari Effect*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011, p. 38.

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