

ITERATIONS HISTORICAL FUTURES

REOPENING THE FUTURE: EMERGING WORLDS AND NOVEL HISTORICAL FUTURES*

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ABSTRACT

Unlike those studies that conclude with a future collapsing under presentism, this article takes a fresh look at the issue of futures. To that end, the first part of the article offers a review of presentism, which amounts not to the erasure of any given future but to the proliferation of possible futures in the age of the Anthropocene. The second part sets out to identify novel futures that, while they may differ from those of presentism, do not seek to revive the future proposed by the defunct modern regime of historicity. By tracking the experience of “real utopias” bent on birthing other worlds, we can begin to map their preconditions. At the intersection of several extant regimes of historicity, the autonomous Zapatista zone that has, since 1994, arisen in southern Mexico has proven uniquely inventive; it may serve as a remarkable observatory for the appearance of unprecedented futures.

Keywords: regime of historicity, modernity, presentism, Anthropocene, planetary, real utopias, Zapatista insurrection, postcapitalist future

In the age of the Anthropocene, the human species has become a geological force; it is altering the habitability of the planet, causing a massive reduction in biodiversity and potentially endangering its very existence. As the alterations made to the Earth system increase, all talk of an Anthropocenic future must include the disclaimer that there may well be no human future at all, no future for many living species. Since the last quarter of the twentieth century, a more immediate issue has been the prominence of presentism, which has stifled future horizons or, at the very least, instigated the collapse of the future-centric regime that had, until then, been behind modernity’s seminal representations. The future comes to seem reduced, blocked, even closed to us forever.

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Still, good reasons exist to call for reopening the future, or at least for reopening the issue of futures. To accomplish that, the future must be liberated from the imprisonment and apparent eclipse to which presentism has subjected it.² In the first part of this study, then, I will offer a reconsideration of presentism, treating it not as the absence of all futurity but as a proliferation of specific modalities of the future. This amounts to a sequel to Zoltán Boldizsár Simon and Marek Tamm's invitation to map "historical futures."³

"Reopening the future" must not, however, be mistaken for a return to an extant version of the future. This is far from an attempt to revive the future posited by the modern regime of historicity by shedding all presentist tendencies. That regime—essentially the Grand Narrative of Emancipation—promised glorious tomorrows, such powerful incentives, yet those tomorrows were likely ruled out of consideration by both the historical experience of the twentieth century and the characteristics of the Anthropocenic present. Reopening the future must involve a search for unprecedented futures (or for futures that were partly present in the past but have been concealed or denied). It means bringing careful scrutiny of the present and its potentialities to bear on the seeds of new futures, which will in turn offer insights for a new reflection on historical knowledge. Such is the serial program of "Historical Futures," to which this article hopes to make a contribution. Unprecedented—and certainly multiple—futures may be pursued along a range of paths. In the second part of this study, I will try to detect their fragile and uncertain emergence by observing "real utopias"⁴ that are already experimenting with other possible worlds and are thus sketching the horizon of a possible postcapitalist switchover.

PRESENTISM'S FUTURES AND ANTHROPOCENIC HISTORICITIES

Regimes of Historicity and Regimes of Temporality

It would be a mistake to advance into these issues without a brief discussion of François Hartog's notion of a "regime of historicity."⁵ Two points support a modification in the term's application. First, we should dispel the suspicion of homogenization that hangs over this expression; after all, a given society seldom possesses a single, uniform understanding of its relation to historical time.⁶ While Hartog

2. That is the approach proposed in Jérôme Baschet, *Défaire la tyrannie du présent: Temporalités émergentes et futurs inédits* (Paris: La Découverte, 2018). On that work, see Marek Tamm, "How to Reinvent the Future?" *History and Theory* 59, no. 3 (2020), 448–58.

3. Zoltán Boldizsár Simon and Marek Tamm, "Historical Futures," *History and Theory* 60, no. 1 (2021), 3–22.

4. Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias* (London: Verso, 2010).

5. François Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time*, transl. Saskia Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015). To the "way relations between the past, the present, and the future are configured" (*Regimes of Historicity*, 17) Hartog subsequently added a second criterion, the relations between *Chronos* time and *Kairos* time (and *Krisis* time, too). See his *Chronos: L'Occident aux prises avec le temps* (Paris: Gallimard, 2020) and "Chronos, Kairos, Krisis: The Genesis of Western Time," transl. Samuel Gilbert, *History and Theory* 60, no. 3 (2021), 425–39. In the same issue of *History and Theory*, see the discussion of Hartog's article by several authors (440–68).

6. For a more precise analysis, see Baschet, *Défaire la tyrannie*, 60–63.

surely took this into account, in practice the notion may have led to overgeneralization. In any case, we can admit that each regime of historicity encounters limits and resistances, can give rise to diversified configurations and forms of discordance, or can even come up against other competing regimes. Any discussion of a given society's regime of historicity can only refer to a leading tendency, which may not be exclusive. More precisely, we should distinguish diversified historical situations. In some societies, one regime of historicity may be largely dominant or even almost exclusive, whereas in other contexts there may be a more marked competition between distinct regimes of historicity, and sometimes a lesser cohesion of them, or even a proliferation of multiple relations to historical time. While we must be wary of hasty generalizations, it may be that the first scenario occurs more often in traditional regimes of historicity that belong to ancient societies. As for the Christian regime, its internal tension surely exceeded what Hartog identified.⁷ It is no doubt true that the "apocalyptic presentism" of the Gospel's message has broken *Chronos* time's continuity so that the *Kairos* of the Incarnation and the imminent end of time, or *Krisis*, prevail. However, ecclesiastical institutionalization, for which Augustine laid the theological foundations, leads to an inverse configuration in which *Chronos* time predominates and brings under its control *Kairos* and *Krisis*. To be precise, a persistent tension within medieval Christian societies stretched between the dominant ecclesiastical model, which was based on the inclusion of *Kairos* and *Krisis* in a chronological time, and, opposed to that socio-clerical order, the drive to break the Church's mastery of *Chronos* time so as to make room for eschatological, if not millenarian, urgency.⁸

One may characterize the nineteenth century, when the religion of History and the faith in Progress peaked, as the triumph of the West's modern regime of historicity, yet we must bear in mind that this triumph was never complete. Very different relations to time persisted uninterrupted in other parts of the world, and their resurgence will be a topic of discussion in the second part of this article. In regions that had been subjected to Western colonization, the modern regime of historicity clashed with other relations to time and had to intertwine with them; meanwhile, in Europe itself, the rise of the modern regime of historicity went hand-in-hand with that of a Romantic counter-regime of historicity, which criticizes the modern present and refuses to abandon a valorized past.⁹ Finally, our current era, with its deeply troubled temporality, provides an example of a heterogeneous and unstable configuration. As such a situation invites us to map the various concepts of historical time and the shifting connections among them, the notion of a regime of historicity comes to seem less useful. Still, we need not discard it as long as we avoid postulating a monolithic conception of historical time and set out to dehomogenize the analysis in order to make room for diversified and complex configurations.

7. Hartog, *Chronos*, chapters 1–3.

8. Jérôme Baschet, *La Civilisation féodale: De l'an mil à la colonisation de l'Amérique*, 4th ed. (Paris: Flammarion, 2018), part 2, chapter 1.

9. Michael Löwy and Robert Sayre, *Romanticism against the Tide of Modernity*, transl. Catherine Porter (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001). The authors analyze both the general import of Romanticism and the wide range of its manifestations.

Note that the concept of a regime of historicity is not without ambiguity. To say that it refers to the interrelations between past, present, and future makes it a way of conceiving historical time. But now and then the concept addresses a quite different aspect of the experience of time, such as how the acceleration found in our presentist world affects the rhythms of life.¹⁰ These are highly different temporal registers that are not directly correlated and whose possible relations can only be identified if they have been distinguished beforehand. So, I would propose two different notions: I use the expression “regime of temporality” when considering the rhythms of human existence, with an emphasis on daily life, whereas I reserve the expression “regime of historicity” for referring to how a society sees itself in relation to historical (or cosmo-historical) time—more accurately, its relations to the past, present, and future.¹¹ If these two temporal scales—one brief, the other longer (or very long, when it applies to traditional societies in which societal time and cosmic time intertwine)—are more clearly distinguished, they may lend greater precision to descriptions and analytic hypotheses.

Which Presentism?

Over the last few decades, according to an “increasing consensus,” the perceptions of historical time have undergone significant transformations.¹² In tracing the crisis of the modern regime of historicity, Hartog emphasized the growing presentist tendencies, which reduced relation to the past to a commemorative function while choking off all visions of the future.¹³ In my opinion, the shift from the modern regime of historicity to a presentist one may be connected to the dawning of a second age of capitalism that is marked by the power of a globalized economy that imposes its norms on state institutions and, tendentially, on every aspect of human existence. One might say that the withdrawal of the modern regime of *historicity* left a vacuum that is now occupied by the regime of *temporality* that has long been associated with modernity, and this is the way we may understand the advent of presentism.¹⁴ In the first modernity, the regime of historicity enjoyed a certain independence from capitalism’s regime of temporality—the abstract time of clocks—but presentism is the effect of the expansive norms set by the economy; it is a regime of historicity that aligns more closely with the capitalist’s regime of temporality. Still, it would be a mistake to cast presentism as stripped of all connection to the future. Linked to the collapse of the modern futuro-centrism, presentism has also spawned the proliferation of specific modalities of the future. Taking on a research program devoted to “historical futures” must entail itemizing

10. Baschet, *Défaire la tyrannie*, 133–38.

11. Or how it articulates the “space of experience” and the “horizon of expectation,” as noted in Reinhart Koselleck, “‘Space of Experience’ and ‘Horizon of Expectation’: Two Historical Categories,” in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, transl. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 267–88.

12. Marek Tamm and Laurent Olivier, introduction to *Rethinking Historical Time: New Approaches to Presentism*, ed. Marek Tamm and Laurent Olivier (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 1–20; Marek Tamm, “Future-Oriented History,” in *Historical Understanding Today: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Zoltán Boldizsár Simon and Lars Deile (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 131–40.

13. Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity*, chapter 4 and conclusion.

14. Baschet, *Défaire la tyrannie*, 66–70, 152–74.

the futures that are compatible with presentism and understanding their configurations. A brief review of three main axes follows.¹⁵

Consider, first, what remains of the future envisioned by modernity. For while the harm inflicted on the ideology of Progress by the twentieth century's tragedies—not to mention ecological and climatic crises—need hardly be rehearsed, no one should speak of its complete disappearance. We may have lost hope in the perpetual advance of civilization, but the ideology of Progress survives in an abridged form: the ceaseless pursuit of technological innovation and economic expansion. Development, now always festooned with the label “sustainable,” stands as a broadly supported goal, a campaign promise that brooks no opposition, especially in the Global South. As for Progress, that rallying cry that formerly lifted all hearts is now a lackluster slogan that, above all, is acknowledged negatively. Any voice bold enough to express doubt about modernization is soon branded anachronistic and retrograde, accused of working by candlelight or in a primordial grotto. Chained to the logic of the second age of capitalism, presentism could not break free from the residue of a faded and tattered faith in Progress, extending no further than technology and economic expansion.

In contrast to these atrophied forms of the modern future, others give a hyperbolic version of them, apparently impervious to everything that nourishes the crisis of modernist convictions. For instance, Alex Williams and Nick Srnicek's “#Accelerate Manifesto” sets out to overthrow capital by preaching “an *accelerationist politics* at ease with a modernity of abstraction, complexity, globality, and technology,” unabashedly calling for “a Promethean politics of maximal mastery over society and its environment.”¹⁶ It is hard to imagine a more faithful reiteration of the modernist doctrine of emancipation, which grew out of a faith in Progress, in the benefits of science, and in the limitless expansion of the economy. Instantly, one understands why Déborah Danowski and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro divided the contemporary Left into two camps: those who embrace acceleration and those who prefer slowing down.¹⁷ More broadly, one camp champions the recovery of a modernist vision of emancipation, contrasting it to presentism, while the other insists on the devastation wreaked by the logic of modernization, promoting instead the untried byways of an alternative regime of historicity.

To judge from its success, transhumanism appears to be a much more important issue than the previous example. Without any doubt, it represents a major modality within the “historical futures” as they appear today. In this vision, by hybridizing with bionanotechnology and artificial intelligence, human beings will transcend their limitations, going “beyond the human” to a “better-than-human world.”¹⁸ At that point, as humans shed the familiar parameters of their existence, the basic nature of the future will be altered, and transhumanism will instead offer

15. On the three themes, see *ibid.*, 70–102.

16. Alex Williams and Nick Srnicek, “#Accelerate Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics,” *Critical Legal Thinking* (blog), 14 May 2013, <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2013/05/14/accelerate-manifesto-for-an-accelerationist-politics/> (emphasis added).

17. Déborah Danowski and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *The Ends of the World*, transl. Rodrigo Nunes (Cambridge: Polity, 2017).

18. Tamm, “Future-Oriented History,” 133. See also Simon and Tamm, “Historical Futures.”

“disconnective futures” that are completely divorced from the past.¹⁹ Yet, along with its disjunctions, transhumanism also entails a number of important continuities, such as the persistence of the normative framework that is specific to liberalism. One might say that transhumanists can more readily imagine changing the blueprint of the species than the current socioeconomic system.²⁰ Indeed, transhumanists may be seen as the epigones of an intensified humanism, partisans of the Promethean ambition that enables human beings to escape the limits imposed by nature.²¹ The modern regime of historicity itself announced a radically new future that broke with an outdated past; transhumanism does much the same, even if it pushes disconnection to unprecedented extremes.²²

Presentist futures also extend along a second axis, since, in an economy centered on finance, anticipation occupies a central position. A range of leading forecasts for growth and other key indicators, such as interest rates, are carefully inspected and, each day, such oracular utterances are critical for markets, firms, and state policymaking. The markets themselves only act according to the anticipation of future trends; ever since the neoliberal revolution of the 1980s, an increased logic of liquidity has reconfigured those markets, spurring, to the microsecond, the circulation of capital in its never-ending hunt for securities that enable the expectation of ever-greater profits.²³ It is only confidence in future profits that sustains the financialized economy. A galloping expansion of credit is also needed to support consumption, which would otherwise remain insufficient, as well as to ensure firms' investment and the activities of the states, whose debt levels approach 100 percent of the gross domestic product of many developed nations. Thus, the entire economy depends on the anticipation of future value production, which characterizes the capital invested in the form of credit. Simply stated, the global economy runs on a mortgaged future; we have hooked the future up to an intravenous drip, which is keeping our presentist world alive.

Further studies focused on the prevailing connection between present and future could expand the current picture of presentism.²⁴ One thinks of the

19. Simon and Tamm, “Historical Futures,” 7–8. See also Zoltán Boldizsár Simon, *History in Times of Unprecedented Change: A Theory for the 21st Century* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019).

20. Apolline Taillandier, “‘Staring into the Singularity’ and Other Posthuman Tales: Transhumanist Stories of Future Change,” *History and Theory* 60, no. 2 (2021), 215–33.

21. Tamm, “Future-Oriented History”; Frédéric Neyrat, *Homo labyrinthus: Humanisme, antihumanisme, posthumanisme* (Bellevaux: Dehors, 2015).

22. On the growing divergence between the “horizon of expectation” and the “space of experience,” see Koselleck, “‘Space of Experience’ and ‘Horizon of Expectation.’” Koselleck noted, “my thesis is that during *Neuzeit* the difference between experience and expectation has increasingly expanded; more precisely, that *Neuzeit* is first understood as a *neue Zeit* from the time that expectations have distanced themselves evermore from all previous experience” (276). Note the term “evermore,” with its suggestion that the distinction between expectation and experience at the heart of the modern regime of historicity is not, *prima facie*, absolute. The result could be a certain ambivalence toward the past, since the march of Progress insists on a distance even as one applies the past to legitimizing today's institutions, particularly those of the nation-state.

23. André Orléan, *The Empire of Value: A New Foundation for Economics*, transl. M. B. DeBevoise (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014); Baschet, *Défaire la tyrannie*, 95–102.

24. Baschet, *Défaire la tyrannie*, 102–14. On the notions of retention and protention, see Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, ed. Martin Heidegger, transl. James S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), 57–63.

overwhelming sense of urgency that forces us to project into the instant that follows. Yet one might characterize presentism, more generally, as the domination of the present by the immediate future. One need only think of “channel surfing,” “scrolling,” and other practices that are emblematic of our loss of focus and retention to see how squeezed the present is, driven ever onward to the next instant by protensive constraints. To emphasize, the presentist regime rewards protensive futures that are already involved in—and by—the present. Since such futures are contained in and predetermined by the present while the present must annex the future to survive, the relation between present and future is mutually determinative. As weakly retentive as it is firmly protensive, our presentist life reaches toward an immediate future that is fused to the present. Everywhere, the present lacks presence, torn from its moment and defined by a loss of experience.

The third axis is linked to the rise of concerns about global warming, which, since the 2000s, has been seen as a critical, inescapable challenge. This blow shook the previous version of presentism at its foundations and unfurled—at top volume and flanked with charts and graphs—a forecast of the state of the Earth in 2030, 2050, or 2100. Such a future had been inconceivable just a few years earlier, when the presiding regime was a presentism that focused strictly on the short term. When complications clouded the picture, doubts regarding presentism’s coherence may have arisen. However, the perspective changes if we refer not to the supposed absence of any future in a presentist regime but to the quasi-fusional junction between present and future that I have just underlined. Indeed, the future of the global warming curves is a predictive future that is largely predetermined by the present accumulation of greenhouse gas emissions since the beginning of the industrial era. No matter how far climatic forecasts may see, they are already largely determined; the impact on those graphs of what happens in the present and in the future may begin only in the medium term.²⁵ And that aspect of the future, its intimate connection to the present, makes it surprisingly compatible with presentism. This link also manifests in another way: what confronts us with the most threatening futures of the worst climate scenarios is the persistent primacy of the most presentist short-term perspectives. For all of the goals drawn up in the Paris Climate Accords, the United Nations Environment Programme’s *Emissions Gap Report 2021* states that, if the signatories are in compliance with their commitments, the outcome will be an increase of 2.7° Celsius by the end of the century—a big “if.”²⁶ Even though there has been a return to forecasting a distant future, one notes no progress in forestalling short-term demands driven by the forces that dominate the economy. To invert that reasoning, it is the leading

25. The sixth report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) includes a remarkable instance of *predictive certainty*: according to every climatic scenario considered, the estimated mean increase in temperatures by 2040 is 1.5° (or 1.6°) Celsius. Only for the following decade do the predictions diverge. See IPCC, “Summary for Policymakers,” in *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis*, ed. Valérie Masson-Delmotte et al. (2021), 14, <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/#SPM>.

26. UNEP, *Emissions Gap Report 2021: The Heat Is On—A World of Climate Promises Not Yet Delivered* (2021), <https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2021>.

role played by presentist rationales that renders devastating environmental and climatic catastrophes even more likely.

The ensuing burst of apocalyptic futures flows in large part from the prospect of a radical transformation of the conditions for life on Earth and, hence, of an existential risk for humankind itself. Danowski and Viveiros de Castro have drawn up a rich atlas of imagined ends of the world, ranging from a hypothesized “world without us” to humans without a world, survivors in a lifeless, devastated universe.²⁷ All of the scenarios place us in the time of the end, threatened by a catastrophe that is less sudden—but far more likely—than that of nuclear apocalypse. Never before has the planet or humankind confronted such a negative fatality. As it follows directly from the present, this future is very much involved in presentist configurations.

A Planetary Regime of Historicity?

However incomplete, the foregoing sketch gives some idea of how futures have multiplied under presentism. But before we can think of advancing our understanding, we must consider the blow delivered to the Earth system by the Anthropocene, that new geologic epoch that was first proposed by Paul Crutzen and that is currently undergoing assessment by geologic authorities.²⁸ In our consideration of “historical futures,” we must determine whether a new regime of historicity, Anthropogenic or planetary, has commenced.

Sharply contrasting interpretations of the Anthropocene derive from its contradictory nature. Some see the Anthropocene as proof of humankind’s unprecedented power insofar as it has become a geological force on a global scale. Here, for the first time, we have human beings altering the geological timescale, which had always been utterly indifferent to their actions. So, this would be, more than ever, a “human-dominated” epoch, and this may lead some to conclude that technological innovations will make it possible to control the effects of anthropogenic disturbances of the Earth system.²⁹ Others see a threat to various earthly forms of life, including that of the human species, increasing our awareness of limits and questioning our faith in a linear history based on ever-improving Progress.³⁰ Such an Anthropocene delivers the death blow to the modern regime of historicity and, at the same time, erases the boundary dividing nature and culture, an essential distinction for modernity.³¹

27. Danowski and Viveiros de Castro, *Ends of the World*. See also Alan Weisman, *The World Without Us* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2007).

28. Will Steffen, Jacques Grinevald, Paul Crutzen, and John McNeill, “The Anthropocene: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A* 369 (March 2011), 842–67. For an overview, see Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz, *The Shock of the Anthropocene: The Earth, History, and Us*, transl. David Fernbach (London: Verso, 2016); Bruno Latour, *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*, transl. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Polity, 2017); and Dipesh Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021).

29. Paul J. Crutzen, “Geology of Mankind,” *Nature* 415 (January 2002), 23.

30. Dipesh Chakrabarty, “The Climate of History: Four Theses,” *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 2 (2009), 197–222.

31. On the “collapse of the age-old humanist distinction between natural history and human history,” see *ibid.*, 201–7. See also Latour, *Facing Gaia*, 111–45.

Dipesh Chakrabarty recently suggested that, as an alternative to the term “global,” “planetary” offers a category that is better suited to accounting for the Anthropocenic times. Whereas the term “global” refers to the strictly human history of the modern West’s expansion, the notion of the “planetary” facilitates the transition from a “human-centered” to a “planet-centered” way of thinking.³² In this way, Chakrabarty attempted to avoid producing one of those readings of the Anthropocene that view it in terms of human history, which drags in many moral issues. And that’s why he turned to geologic time, which is radically separated from human temporality. When time is measured in hundreds of thousands of years, it threatens to outstrip human perception and comprehension. In order to give the time of the Earth its due, we must acknowledge its otherness and indifference to the time of human history: “To encounter the planet in thought is to encounter something that is the condition of human existence and yet remains profoundly indifferent to that existence.”³³ Another attribute of the planetary is its inaccessibility: the Earth is so inhumanly vast that no effort to grasp the whole of it can succeed, particularly if the effort is grounded strictly in politics. On the basis of such findings, Hartog has proposed, as a key trait of the Anthropocenic regime of historicity, a split *Chronos* in which two radically incommensurable temporalities are found: the temporality of human beings and that of the Earth “experience contacts and conflicts but can never truly mix in view of their incommensurably different scales.”³⁴

As we assess the shift to a new geological age, we must reckon with the Earth’s long timescale, a span that is much greater than that of human societies’ history; and we must also discard a “human-centered” approach, with its modernist presumption of a nature-culture division. Nonetheless, one may wonder if, in his recourse to geology, Chakrabarty doesn’t end up presenting a schema that he has posed previously. Recall that, in “The Climate of History,” he wrote of putting “global histories of capital in conversation with the species history of humans,” so the categories of a bio-geological history of the human species were to be mapped onto those of a socio-history of capitalism.³⁵ And before that, in *Provincializing Europe*, he wrote of adding to the history of capital (dubbed “History 1”) the histories of the many different ways of being human that could not be fully described in the former (“History 2”).³⁶ Never mind that the orientation is now reversed, from his early emphasis on particularities to his recent interest in larger scales; in all cases, Chakrabarty relativized the socio-history of capitalism by confronting it with the phenomena it marginalized or neglected. But, in this instance, that willingness to juxtapose the history of humankind with the things it overlooks could end up diminishing an essential attribute of the Anthropocene:

32. Dipesh Chakrabarty, “The Planet: An Emergent Humanist Category,” *Critical Inquiry* 46, no. 1 (2019), 1–31. That article is also available in Chakrabarty, *Climate of History*, 68–92. See also Zoltán Boldizsár Simon, “Planetary Futures, Planetary History,” in Simon and Deile, *Historical Understanding Today*, 119–29.

33. Chakrabarty, *Climate of History*, 70.

34. Hartog, *Chronos*, 324.

35. Chakrabarty, “Climate of History,” 212.

36. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 63–71.

the collision of those two temporalities that are considered incommensurable. What is the Anthropocene if not the moment when the Earth's time is radically altered by human history and can no longer be indifferent to it? And is it not also the moment when humanity, which has triggered reactions within Earth itself, recognizes the existential threat that arises from its activities? Finally, is it not, as Danowski and Viveiros de Castro pointed out, the moment of "the collapse of scalar magnitudes," that extreme Anthropocene moment when "the difference of magnitude between the scale of human history and the biological and geophysical scales has decreased dramatically, if not reversed"?³⁷ That is a significantly different picture from the one drawn by Chakrabarty and Hartog. Such is the disorder in temporality that the Anthropocene creates when the timescales of the Earth and those of human history collide in this way and lose their incommensurability.

Obviously, it is clear that fossil fuels and biodiversity are not renewable on the scale of human time.³⁸ Yet the latter is quite adequate for generating the devastation of species and the depletion of petroleum and other fuel sources. The two temporalities have ceased to be incommensurable: we can recognize this in the short historical span within which geology's immensely protracted labors can be undone. Despite colossal differences, these two temporalities are put on the same footing when what is accomplished by humanity in a few centuries is of a magnitude that is comparable to what the Earth system has produced in billions of years.³⁹ Now, Chakrabarty knows perfectly well that the Anthropocene is marked by historical time's impact on Earth time and by the sudden appearance of geology in the middle of daily life. Yet, such interferences occupy a secondary status in his work, probably to avoid framing the Anthropocene as a "story about humans" and so he can privilege a "planet-centered," subjectless account with the leading role played by "the Earth system itself, not humans."⁴⁰ Nonetheless, as much as a grasp of Earth system science is essential to addressing the challenges of the Anthropocene, so too is it necessary to address the distinctive categories of human history; doing without them would prove difficult in this context. If anthropogenic factors account for the current disturbances in the global climate, failing to mine human history for the origins of those factors would deprive us of a full understanding (and note that the search for causes must be conducted in order to increase knowledge rather than to address a moral question and to point the finger of blame).⁴¹ Furthermore, we should not minimize the fact that

37. Danowski and Viveiros de Castro, *Ends of the World*, 96, 79.

38. Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Anthropocene Time," *History and Theory* 57, no. 1 (2018), 22.

39. Humanity triggered the "destruction of billions of years of accumulation of resources, a change in atmospheric composition, a fourth planetary energy revolution, and mass extinction. . . . The potential for planetary change is almost as great as that caused by the origin of life or the rise of oxygen" (Charles H. Langmuir and Wally Broecker, *How to Build a Habitable Planet: The Story of Earth from the Big Bang to Humankind* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012], 645, quoted in Chakrabarty, "Anthropocene Time," 26).

40. Chakrabarty, "Anthropocene Time," 29, 31, 25.

41. In acknowledging the aptness of "Capitalocene" as a label for this period, I do not mean to reject the notion of the Anthropocene, and I certainly want to give Chakrabarty his due for rejecting the unilateral mapping of Earth history onto human history. See Jason W. Moore's "The Capitalocene, Part I: On the Nature and Origins of Our Ecological Crisis," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 44, no. 3 (2017),

specific socio-human forces can act on these causalities, whether by perpetuating, mitigating, or removing them.

Therefore, grasping the meaning of the Anthropocene does not lead to dismissing any concern for human politics. But the politics that are likely to slow our mad rush to catastrophe cannot resemble the politics that led us to our current situation. No, the two must be radically different at their very starting points, as we need, at least, a cosmopolitics that offers a more-than-human perspective and that rejects the divide between humanity and nature. Still, no matter how human-transcendent it may be, a cosmopolitics cannot shake off the awareness that it, too, is a human politics that is conceived and performed by human beings who have bound up their fate with that of nonhumans, with Earth time, betting on the alliances that may result. Classical politics, which is based in representation and in a human-nature divide, must be discarded, but without wholly abandoning politics. Displacing the human from the center of our attention in order to privilege the scale of geological time, which is deemed incommensurable, may introduce the danger of a new fatality. Once that incommensurability has collapsed, the ways for the broadest array of possible more-than-human histories open up.

Switchovers (Basculements)

The time may have come to give up on the idea of a single Anthropocenic (or planetary) regime of historicity. This is due not only to the plurality we may consider inherent in the very idea of a regime of historicity but mainly to the range of radically different futures that are opened by the Anthropocene.

Let us begin with increasing uncertainty, something that appears to be at odds with Anthropocenic temporality, which is generally associated with predictability. Yet climatic scenarios themselves are marked by uncertainty—we will return to this later—not least if the possibility of nonlinear evolutions is admitted. That same growing unpredictability has, in recent times, appeared in human history. Consider, for example, the worldwide cycle of popular uprisings during 2018 and 2019, particularly the yellow vests movement in France or “Chile Despertó,” with more protests in Hong Kong, Sudan, and many other countries. Another example of unpredictability is the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the studies that were already devoted to the spread of viral zoonoses, this pandemic managed to erupt violently, plunging virtually every person on the planet into an unprecedented and bewildering situation, with the global economy virtually paralyzed.⁴² We may

1–37, and *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital* (New York: Verso, 2015). We can understand why Earth system science has focused on identifying the role played by *Homo sapiens*, a species well described in its literature. However, in an era marked by the intertwining of terrestrial and human temporalities, it would be a pity to deprive ourselves of hybrid concepts drawing from both the social sciences and Earth system science as long as they could improve our understanding of the factors at work. So, the two concepts—Capitalocene and Anthropocene—both offer distinctive insights. As for the possible chronological gap between capitalism and the Anthropocene, which is invoked to challenge the notion of the Capitalocene, it does not seem decisive. A sufficient justification for the concept of the Capitalocene could be found in Ian Angus’s assertion that the Anthropocene is “the culmination of two centuries of capitalist development” (*Facing the Anthropocene: Fossil Capitalism and the Crisis of the Earth System* [New York: Monthly Review Press, 2016], 110).

42. On the economic consequences of the pandemic, see Robert Boyer, *Les capitalismes à l'épreuve de la pandémie* (Paris: La Découverte, 2020).

consider that the occurrence of major events, which are theoretically prognosticable but largely unexpected, is bound to be more and more frequent, which should make the future more uncertain. For the most part, this uncertainty may be attributed to human history, but it may also be connected to the changing Earth system. Although the results did not persist for long, it is notable that the spread of SARS-CoV-2 triggered conditions that led to a dramatic drop in CO₂ emissions and other forms of pollution. No political system on Earth is now capable of matching those results. There is a very powerful order of causality here that is not subject to any human intentionality and that could play a major role in the future of the Anthropocene. More broadly, one might propose a contrast between periods of relative systemic stability during which the specific variables are not capable of affecting global trajectories in any significant way and periods of systemic crisis during which small variations of initial conditions yield significant outcomes. I would hazard the hypothesis that the current period is undergoing a systemic crisis that—combining the effects of rapid alterations in the Earth system, the fragilities of the globalized economy, the erosion of representative democracy, and various symptoms of social disintegration—sees increasing difficulties in systemic reproduction.⁴³

Whether for human history or for the history of the Earth system, we must admit that the Anthropocene offers several possible trajectories, each radically different from the others.⁴⁴ This plurality of distinct futures, which could be considered one of the Anthropocene's distinctive traits, invites the forging of “transitional concepts” that are capable of accounting for such a situation.⁴⁵ One such concept could be called “switchovers” (*basculements*). It permits us to sideline every idea envisioning a single, inevitable trajectory, such as what is found in the apocalyptic discourse of collapsology on the general and fatal collapse of industrial civilization.⁴⁶ On the contrary, the notion of switchovers invites us to pluralize the range of scenarios. Some will hasten to point out that a number of possibilities lie within every historical moment; yet, that plurality is exacerbated during periods of systemic instability.⁴⁷ The field of possibilities expands further to the point where antagonistic options can, at the same moment, also increase

43. Jérôme Baschet, *Basculements: Mondes émergents, possibles désirables* (Paris: La Découverte, 2021), chapter 1.

44. “Possible Climate Futures” is a section of the sixth report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which outlines five different scenarios. See IPCC, “Summary for Policymakers,” 12–23.

45. Simon and Tamm, “Historical Futures,” 15–17.

46. For a critique of collapsology—a concept that was notably developed in Pablo Servigne and Raphaël Stevens, *How Everything Can Collapse: A Manual for Our Times*, transl. Andrew Brown (Cambridge: Polity, 2020)—and a further elaboration of the concept of “switchovers,” see Baschet, *Basculements*, 18–20, 215–17.

47. On the growing interest (within the history discipline and the social sciences more generally) in the possible, see, for example, Quentin Deluermoz and Pierre Singaravérou, *A Past of Possibilities: A History of What Could Have Been*, transl. Stephen W. Sawyer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021); “Réalité(s) du possible en sciences humaines et sociales,” ed. Laurent Jeanpierre, Florian Nicodème, and Pierre Saint-Germier, special issue, *Tracés*, 24 (2013); and Haud Guéguen and Laurent Jeanpierre, *La perspective du possible: Comment penser ce qui peut nous arriver, et ce que nous pouvons faire* (Paris: La Découverte, 2022).

in probability. The switchovers that follow can be essentially unforeseeable—transformations as broad and massive, once begun, as they were undecided, uncertain in their activation. In addition, a diversity of movements can be included within the notion of switchovers: the abrupt appearance of unprecedented and unexpected situations, threshold effects that involve violent accelerations, sudden turnovers, largescale movements comparable to tectonic shifts, and so on.

The concept of switchovers thus departs from the continuous and linear concept of history that presided over the modern regime of historicity. Here, discontinuities—in particular, “tipping points,” like those that lie grimly ahead for our planetary climate—are privileged. While the idea of processuality must not be wholly discarded, this way of thinking about historical transformations insists, above all, on discontinuities. The concept of switchovers brings together a dual logic: the rupture brought by the switchover proper and the preceding accumulation that makes it possible. Still, and this is essential, that accumulation must not be understood in a continuous mode, like the maturation of germs that would only grow to lead to a new situation. Switchovers can only occur on the basis of prior elements, but those are subjected to a reconfiguration that lends them a wholly new meaning. We must not minimize either of these two dimensions—namely, the necessity of processual accumulation and the intensity of the reconfiguration that generates qualitative novelties and not simply quantitative accumulations. Switchovers, as a transitional concept, may help us to visualize a nonlinear history that, while discontinuous and attentive to the possibilities, nevertheless honors the imperatives of a reformulated processual approach.

This foundation permits us to sketch, albeit only partially and without cataloging all of the possible variations, a number of scenarios that are subject to possible switchovers. First, the pursuit of economic growth principally via carbon-based fuels will precipitate the most severe outcome, with mean warming between 3.5° and 4.5° Celsius, and even more when a cascade of feedback loops and threshold effects is figured in.⁴⁸ A massive extinction could result. That would push humanity into “existential risk” as it faced altered conditions of life and a radically degraded environment; given all that, and a likely surge in zoonotic pandemics, the possibility of human extinction cannot be dismissed lightly.⁴⁹ The Anthropocene would nevertheless persist despite the disappearance of its causal factor. But the halt of new anthropic greenhouse-gas emissions could, in due course, benefit the Earth system and enable nonhuman life-forms to surge back as long as no far vaster catastrophe grew out of nondismantled nuclear facilities and untreated radioactive wastes. Laid atop this is the cosmic colonization scenario that would make humanity into a multiplanetary species. According to its promoters, such as Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos, it is the prospect of an Earth made

48. The figures correspond to scenario 4 (“high GHG emissions”) and scenario 5 (“very high emissions”) from the sixth report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. See IPCC, “Summary for Policymakers,” 12–23.

49. Nick Bostrum has set the probability of human extinction at a minimum of 25 percent; others have estimated 50 percent. See Bostrum, “The Future of Humanity,” in *New Waves in Philosophy of Technology*, ed. Jan Kyrre Berg Olsen, Evan Selinger, and Søren Riis (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 194–95.

uninhabitable by the effects of human activities that necessitates this extraterrestrial destiny by fleeing the planet, itself on its way to becoming garbage.

Within the horizon of the capitalist world-system, a range of different switchovers, particularly toward China's global hegemony, are possible, either through a collapse of the institutions supporting the globalized economy, in turn prompting an open confrontation, or by in part preserving the interdependencies of globalization. Let us focus, though, on the scenario that shows capitalist production gradually turning away from fossil fuels. Indications of such a shift—for example, the decline of the oil majors in the hierarchy of transnational companies or the calls of the International Energy Agency (IEA) to end investments in carbon-based fuels—are increasing.⁵⁰ Such a change would be significant, as it would sever a link that has been essential to the entire history of capitalism and would crown capitalism the first mode of production to rely on two successive energy regimes. Given capitalism's flexibility, such a feat should not be discounted, and we need not assume that its destiny will forever be coupled with that of fossil fuels. Yet we cannot overlook the immense obstacles to such a shift—including resistance to devalue capital invested in fossil fuels, the focus on short-term profits, inadequate investment in energy transition, and so on. In such a way, the transition could proceed only too partially and too haltingly, which would hardly make it possible to mitigate the worst climatic scenarios mentioned above.⁵¹

Any efforts to restore a less destructive relation to the ecosystems and to the Earth system would encounter a still larger obstacle: the necessity of an exponentially increasing economic activity to feed the imperative of unlimited capital accumulation. The expansion of the world-system, which draws on capital accumulation and on an attendant compulsion for production, is the direct cause of disruptions in the biosphere; so, eliminating this causality can happen only if this world-system is dismantled.⁵² To save the Earth system from the impacts of marked global warming, one of the most reasonable options would be to eliminate the factors that drive the capitalist economy. In our discussion of the possible switchovers in the Anthropocene times, considering a postcapitalist trajectory is crucial, although this is far from the most likely scenario. Judging from the reactions to the very first visible effects of global warming, which, in a decade, has become an unavoidable concern and which, since 2018, has given rise to massive youth demonstrations, it seems reasonable to speculate that deteriorating

50. IEA, *Net Zero by 2050: A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector*, 4th revision (October 2021), https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/deebef5d-0c34-4539-9d0c-10b13d840027/NetZeroBy2050-ARoadmapfortheGlobalEnergySector_CORR.pdf.

51. The sixth report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change offers two scenarios—(1) “very low emissions” and (2) “low emissions”—that might be treated as approximations for a rapid energy transition, though they are not identified as such. They imply an immediate decrease in net emissions—which is clearly not the case. A late and slow transition, with a small increase until around 2040 (a very optimistic assumption) and then a moderate decrease, would lead to scenario 3 (“intermediary”), with an increase in average temperatures between 2.1° and 3.5° Celsius. See IPCC, “Summary for Policymakers,” 13–14.

52. An effort has been made to exculpate capitalism from its role in global warming by asserting that social inequality cannot fully explain it. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Climate and Capital: On Conjoined Histories,” *Critical Inquiry* 41, no. 1 (2014), 11, 20–21. That argument flounders because of too narrow a conception of capitalism.

conditions could engender not only growing dissatisfaction with the capitalist system but also increased collective action to save the habitability of the Earth. Rather than leave aside what may yet prove to be an entire section of the cartography of our Anthropocenic epoch's "historical futures," I would like to direct our attention to these futures.

IN SEARCH OF POSSIBLE POSTCAPITALIST FUTURES

Instead of attempting to define the epochal traits of the Anthropocene, I assume that the unity of the period will probably dissolve into different trajectories, both in terms of human politics and in terms of their effects on the global climate and the Earth system. One of those branches of the Anthropocene will be the focus of this section, and it will be our means for exploring postcapitalist futures. The latter can be analyzed as concrete potentialities that are rooted in a critique of the present, particularly of the ecological and climatic crises. But these potentialities are also real: they emerge as countless interstitial experiences, also called "cracks" or "liberated spaces," in which flourish forms of life that emphasize making-in-common (*faire-commun*) and the effort to stand apart from the norms of the economy and a generalized commodification.⁵³ By exploring such universes, we gather clues about futures that strike us as "emerging" both because they possess new traits and because they are (maybe) destined to unfold and expand, lending them the anticipatory value of future worlds. But as the future is always uncertain, a question mark must be appended to this locution, and the object of our search should be labeled "emerging(?) futures."

To pursue this search for postcapitalist futures, I will turn to southern Mexico's experiment in Zapatista autonomy, which has been ongoing since the uprising of 1 January 1994. The selection of that case is justified by two main reasons. First, among the "real utopias" that can currently be studied, it is one of the most long-lasting, largest (it accounts for roughly one-half of the state of Chiapas), and most politically radical (it has a popular self-government that stands wholly apart from Mexico's state institutions and comprises three levels—villages, autonomous communes, and regional coordination by eleven "councils of good government"—while justice is maintained through mediation, without recourse to prisons, and experimental health-care and education systems have been self-financed by collective work and exchanges of services).⁵⁴ Second, the Zapatista experiment is a source of both practical and theoretical inspiration. Historical reflection stands out, as it occupies considerable space at the heart of a struggle that has been self-consciously fashioned as a rebellion of history; moreover, early on,

53. For the notions of "real utopias" and "interstitial strategy," see Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias*. For the notion of "cracks," see John Holloway, *Crack Capitalism* (London: Pluto Press, 2010), and for that of "liberated spaces" (as well as for a critical discussion of Wright's proposals), see Baschet, *Basculements*, chapter 5.

54. On Zapatista autonomy, see Jérôme Baschet, *La rébellion zapatiste: Insurrection indienne et résistance planétaire*, rev. ed. (Paris: Flammarion, 2019). Among the Zapatista texts on autonomy, see particularly the Sixth Commission of the EZLN's *Critical Thought in the Face of the Capitalist Hydra I* (Durham, NC: PaperBoat, 2016).

the Zapatistas identified the reign of a perpetual present, labeling it a trait of neoliberal domination.⁵⁵ I hypothesize, more precisely, that the situation of the Zapatista experiment—at the nexus of different cultural traditions, both Western and non-Western, and at the intersection of different regimes of historicity—lends it a singular creativity, rendering it a special observatory from which to view emerging(?) historical futures.

Future: Anticipation without Planning

The challenge is to reopen the future, making way for novel modalities of the future. The pre-empted futures of presentism must be left behind, as must the apocalyptic future of the Anthropocene's scenarios; yet, there is no returning to the future of the modernity that was outlined in advance by the arrow of Progress, let alone its hyperbolic offshoot, which dreams of a transfigured humankind launching a cosmic emigration.

I thus begin with a suggestion that is deeply rooted in the Zapatista experiment. Even though such a vision is common enough within the political tradition from which the Zapatistas come, they reject the idea of a vanguard that is supposedly enlightened by the science of History and, therefore, able to lead the masses toward a foreknown promised land. As they assume the irremediable crisis of the classic notion of revolution, the Chiapas rebels oppose any pretension of vanguardism by embracing an alternative principle that recommends “to walk while asking along the way” (*caminar preguntando*).⁵⁶ We should grasp all the critical implications of this principle (note that it is the Zapatista way to use simple and concrete expressions, which are very different from standard political language). It implies that no previous trail has been blazed and that the journey that gives rise to such a path is riddled with uncertainty. Over the course of all the doubts and questioning that accompany the very process of walking, a path appears. Yet the *caminar preguntando*, a metaphor for the collective struggle, is anything but a wander or stroll guided by whims. Whatever one hopes to shake off and wherever one seeks new possibilities, what one rejects and what one aspires to are the *sine qua non* of setting out—all the more so when we contemplate the mighty effort called for in the struggle to transform collective reality.

In fact, the image of the path appears perpetually in Zapatista speech, notably in the tales that constituted a large part of the movement's appeal. “Old Antonio,” who we are told conveyed so much about indigenous cultures to Subcomandante Marcos, explained the importance of “looking back” at the path that may have led nowhere yet was not a waste of time: “It served because we knew it was useless . . . and we can make another that will take us where we want to go.”⁵⁷ The path, we now see, may not have been marked out in advance, but it implies a wish, a longing for what does not yet exist. Admittedly, the nourishing questions that arise with each step along the way prove that the arrival point must always differ from whatever initial destination may have been imagined. Yet there is

55. Baschet, *La rébellion zapatiste*, chapter 3.

56. *Ibid.*, 237–39.

57. *Ibid.*, 214–15.

an original intention, a *tending-toward*, and one can speak of an anticipatory aspiration.⁵⁸ We may recognize here Ernst Bloch's beloved utopian aspiration, which seeks the Not-Yet-Being that is contained in the real.⁵⁹

The difficulty resides here in making room for this anticipatory aspiration, this desire for what does not yet exist, without simply reproducing the modernist version of anticipation. The latter claims to state in advance what is to come—at least, in its broad strokes. It is programmatic and planning-oriented. By and large, the modern future is already thought and already known. This does not mean that it must reproduce what has gone before. Quite the contrary, it is forever deviating further and further from the past and the present. But it does so by perpetuating the announced dynamic of Progress and by working from a predictable extrapolation of its tendencies. An anticipatory aspiration without an orientation toward planning would launch itself on impulse toward that which does not yet exist, but it must set aside all certainty and accept that a destination will come into existence only through the invention of a path. Normally, the existence of a plan means that any deviation from the goal is a flaw in the execution. To avoid such an outcome, the guidance laid down by planners must constrain the real-world situations, an instance of abstraction trumping concrete experience. Conversely, anticipation without planning refuses to limit the resulting action to its initial aspiration and opens up to the unexpected possibilities that arise *en route*. Anticipation without planning facilitates the primacy of a logic of concreteness and a wider opening of potential futures.

The present effort to mobilize the future casts it as open and not predetermined. To the extent that it registers in one's anticipation, imagination, and desires only as a possibility, this future may be called "possibilistic." Any such possibility remains *necessarily uncertain* and, in addition, *doomed to be disproven* over the course of its own realization.⁶⁰ Some may say that the future of the modern regime of historicity—a future that was guaranteed by the science of the Universal History—was much more mobilizing. And they would be correct. But we must admit that the knot uniting hope and certainty—which gave the modern project of emancipation its power of entrainment—has been snapped for good. An anticipatory aspiration without planning draws a possibilist's future, which seems far more fragile. And at the moment when mobilizing to halt the mad rush to earthly

58. In Zapatista communiqués, the routine comment "Falta lo que falta" ("What's missing is missing") emphasizes the relation between the struggle and the Not-Yet. In their journal, the rebels underlined that such an expression sums up the "Zapatista gaze," which knows that "what remains to be done, uncompleted, is its legacy." See *Rebeldía* 37 (November 2005), 3.

59. Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, vol. 1, transl. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, and Paul Knight (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 142–47. For a reading of Bloch's work, which still maintains the perspective of the final realization of a unified totality, see Löwy and Sayre, *Romanticism*, 169–87.

60. Unplanned anticipation, in this sense, obviates the "paradox of anticipation" noted by Jacques Derrida: "Anticipation opens to the future, but at the same time, it neutralizes it. It reduces, presentifies, transforms into memory, into the future anterior and, therefore, into a memory, that which announces . . . [that it will come] tomorrow" (Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler, "Phonographies: Meaning—from Heritage to Horizon," in *Echographies of Television: Filmed Interviews*, transl. Jennifer Bajorek [Cambridge: Polity, 2002], 105–6). Now we can understand that this "paradox of anticipation" was specific to the form that anticipation takes in the modern regime of historicity.

destruction is pressing, its effectiveness could prove insufficient. Yet, this fragile, uncertain future holds an advantage over modernity's future. As it arose from a homogeneous, abstract time, the latter was already given, inscribed in the announced trajectory of History. Our undecided future is written nowhere, certainly not in historical necessity. It is an uncertain possibility, something to be invented as we walk. In this sense, we may think it more truly future than modernity's offering, which may look radiant but is trapped in the drab design of a linear history with inescapable unfolding.

A Bridge between Past and Future

The novel Zapatista modality of the future possesses another remarkable trait: its bridging relation to the past. Documents speak approvingly of "turning to the past to move forward" and advancing "toward the rear" inasmuch as "in the past we find the paths for the future."⁶¹ In what follows, we will see how such an attitude differs from simple valuations of the past that can find their place in more conventional historical or historiographical approaches. Here, the valorization of the past is willingly pushed to the point of becoming a provocative claim of anachronism, and this owes much to the commitment to defending the indigenous forms of communal life that modernity means to erase. Still, the Zapatistas reject the transformation of the original peoples into museum pieces. In order to avoid being confined to a defense of a supposedly immemorial and folklorized past, and to dodge the trap of an identity-in-the-past, they claim their capacity to project themselves into the future.⁶² Moreover, their insistence on that connection between past and future has wider implications, since it arises out of their identification of the perpetual present as a trait of the new forms of capitalist domination.⁶³ Very much in response to that configuration, the Zapatistas declared their fight "a rebellion reacting defiantly against the present disenchantment by placing one foot in the past and the other in the future."⁶⁴

This alliance of past and future possesses remarkable relevance.⁶⁵ It reverses the presentist closure, yet it also departs from the modern regime of historicity,

61. Baschet, *Défaire la tyrannie*, 27–28.

62. Subcomandante Marcos wrote in a statement entitled "El otro jugador" (The other player): "Power . . . hopes to enclose the actual combat of the Indians within the past," contrasting that with "In the struggle for dignity, we also look back to the past, but the future is the final horizon. . . . Our fight enables us to read the future that was sown yesterday, that we cultivate today, and that will be harvested tomorrow if we fight, that is, if we dream. . . . In sum, we Indians belong not to yesterday but to tomorrow" ("El otro jugador" [12 March 2001], in *EZLN: Documentos y comunicados* [Mexico City: Era, 2003], 5:232–33).

63. The perpetual neoliberal present is identified in a statement dated February 1998. See Subcomandante Marcos, "La mesa de San Andrés: Entre los olvidos de arriba y la memoria de abajo" (February 1998), in *EZLN*, 4:182–83, and Baschet, *Défaire la tyrannie*, chapter 1.

64. Baschet, *Défaire la tyrannie*, 30.

65. The same conception is found among other Amerindian populations. Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui has proposed the notion of the *nayrapacha*, the image of "a past capable of renewing the future" (*Violencias (re)encubiertas en Bolivia* [La Paz: Editorial Piedra Rota, 2012], 52). Rivera Cusicanqui has written elsewhere that "the project of indigenous modernity can emerge from the present in a spiral whose movement is a continuous feedback from the past to the future" (*Ch'ixinakax Utxiwa: On Practices and Discourses of Decolonization*, transl. Molly Geidel [Cambridge: Polity, 2020], 48).

which is characterized by Progress nudging the glorious future further and further from a surpassed past that has lost its value.⁶⁶ And while the alliance values the past, it seeks to elude the traditional regimes of historicity in which the future must, at least ideally, reproduce ancient times. A triple surpassing is thus outlined: that of the somewhat iterative time of the indigenous world, that of the linear time of modernity and historical materialism, and that of the neoliberal perpetual present. These are all outcomes of the confluence of three regimes of historicity. They comprise the Marxist-Leninist version of the modern regime that had to be left behind because of the crisis of the classic paradigm of revolution, a communal indigenous tradition that demands protection against an existential threat even as it assumes the need to revitalize and transform itself, and the presentist hegemony that belongs to the neoliberal reconfiguration. In this confluence, each element can be criticized on the basis of the other two. Thus, a critique of presentism spells out the need to revive a historical consciousness, whereas a critique of modernity rejects a unilinear approach to history. Communal traditions receive their due, but the aspiration to transform them prevents one from enclosing oneself in the circles of repetition. These elements indicate just how crucial the positive alliance of past and future can be, as it reverses presentism and makes possible what was unthinkable in the modern regime of historicity as well as in its traditionalist opposite.

This alliance is not completely unprecedented, as a comparison with the revolutionary Romanticism described by Michael Löwy and Robert Sayre shows. That tendency preaches not “a return to the past but a detour via the past” so as better to launch into the future.⁶⁷ And consider the following from Bloch: “The rigid divisions between future and past thus themselves collapse, unbecome future becomes visible in the past, avenged and inherited, mediated and fulfilled past in the future.”⁶⁸ At the same time, the Zapatista thought enriches such perspectives, giving them new life. Bloch’s critical outlook, like Walter Benjamin’s, set out principally to confront the modern regime of historicity, whereas the Zapatista view adds to this dimension a critique of both the presentist regime and the traditional regime rooted in indigenous communities. A constellation may be drawn, with great justice, unifying the Zapatista experiment and Benjamin’s reflections—his concern with “fanning the spark of hope in the past” and with fracturing the continuum of time by glorifying “a present which is not a transition, but in which time

66. As has been stated, in the modern regime of historicity, the relationship to the past is ambivalent; it has also elicited the glorious pasts of national histories. Nonetheless, such pasts are seldom destined to be revived as such; they tend to be seen as the starting point or the stages in a process leading up to some present (or future) achievement.

67. Löwy and Sayre, *Romanticism*, 254.

68. Bloch, *Principle of Hope*, 1:8–9. Late in life, Marx saw the traditional rural commune—the *mir*—as a possible “point of support of a social regeneration of Russia,” so he developed a similar bridge from past to future. In this way, he undid the model of a linear history marked by a series of required stages and rejected the chauvinism of a Progress that faulted the past as anachronistic. On the various drafts of Marx’s letter to Vera Zasulich, see Haruki Wada, “Marx and Revolutionary Russia,” in *Late Marx and the Russian Road: Marx and the Peripheries of Capitalism*, ed. Teodor Shanin (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), 63–69 (the passage quoted at the beginning of this note appears on page 69).

takes a stand and has come to a standstill.”⁶⁹ But we must keep in mind that the passage from one regime of historicity to another separates them, which implies a drastic shift in the situation the criticism addresses. Inasmuch as the Zapatistas face a more complex situation, they have drawn up proposals that share a partly novel, singularly suggestive dimension.

Emerging(?) Regimes of Historicity

A singular, partly novel modality of the future is taking shape: it forms an open future that is uncertain but possible and that assumes the novelty while seeking points of support and sources of creative impulse in the past. Around the two images I have just analyzed, one or more emerging regimes of historicity may take shape. In what follows, I will set out three possible traits.

The first concerns the basic nature of historicity. One might frame the question as follows: How is a notion of history to be maintained without returning to the modern regime that lent history its greatest glory? And how is the unilinear conception of history underlying that regime to be abandoned without undermining the very idea of history, which is already underway thanks to presentism and postmodern fragmentation? Breaking with the unilinear, continuous, and unidirectional vision of a Universal History identified with the movement of Progress is now a common answer. The task has, in any case, mostly been carried out by Benjamin, who was determined to “[blast] the . . . ‘historical continuity’” without losing sight of “the course of history” that we can apprehend through its disaggregation in dialectical images.⁷⁰ But if we accept the need to banish the straight, unique, homogeneous line, does it follow that any form of line must be dismissed? The Zapatista image of the path suggests not, for what are those paths if not lines? Those paths are, admittedly, not straight, and their destination is never announced in advance, but they are specific lines all the same. Moreover, the similarities between the Zapatista image of a path that is made by asking questions (*caminar preguntando*) and Tim Ingold’s concept of lines are striking.⁷¹ The latter points out that, while the straight line and modernity are inseparable, a number of non-Western societies value other sorts of lines. Instrumental rationality conceives the straight line as the most efficient connection between two points, whereas those others are trajectories, active lines that construct their way as they move forward. This allows us to think of line trajectories that lack preexisting arrival points and that are processually constructed. They are sinuous lines that are conveyed by the

69. Walter Benjamin, “On the Concept of History,” in *Selected Writings*, vol. 4, 1938–1940, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, transl. Edmund Jephcott and others (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 391, 396. On Benjamin’s theses, see Michael Löwy, *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin’s “On the Concept of History,”* transl. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 2005). On this constellation, see Sergio Tischler Visquerria, *Tiempo y emancipación: Mijaíl Bajtín y Walter Benjamin en la Selva Lacandona* (Guatemala City: F & G, 2008) and Baschet, *Défaire la tyrannie*, 199–205.

70. Walter Benjamin, “Eduard Fuchs, Collector and Historian,” in *Selected Writings*, vol. 3, 1935–1938, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, transl. Edmund Jephcott and others (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 262. See also Baschet, *Défaire la tyrannie*, 222–24.

71. Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (London: Routledge, 2007). The coincidence extends to the link between past and future, since, as Ingold stated, “the past is with us as we press into the future. In this pressure lies the work of memory, the guiding hand of a consciousness that, as it goes along, also remembers the way” (122).

desire for what does not yet exist, yet they are uncertain of their way, spiraling and returning in order to dart forward. Given this premise, a conception of historicity that rejects reductive unilinearity without sidelining all linearity becomes thinkable; so, we may imagine an intertwined cluster of path-lines that interweave and knot, cross and collide, and also, sometimes, appear or vanish.

The full significance of this multiplicity of processual lines appears only once historical time is understood as heterogeneous, as an interweaving of heterochronic dynamics. This does not eliminate the possibility of convergences, resonances, and inclusive dynamics, but it does mean we must account for a range of processes that are out of phase and marked by arrhythmias as well as for temporal discord and “the contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous.”⁷² Hence, history appears like a tangle of heterochronous lines. However, to speak of paths and lines means speaking of processes. Yet that does not imply restoring the historical continuity Benjamin set out to blast, and it need not lead to a totalizing History as a unified process. Rather, the implication is more room for discontinuities and “eventness” (*événementialité*). Earlier in this article, I discussed the possibility of developing discontinuous transitional concepts that would address switchovers (*basculements*) characterized by both a long preparation and a sudden rupture, marking a complete reconfiguration. This may reuse elements that were partly present before, but such an approach is enough to ruin the sleepy course of gradualist history and to challenge the idea of process as a regular and continuous germination.⁷³ Credit must be given to the powerful thrust of the event and to the break it can bring about, but this must be done without endorsing the view of the event as pure epiphany, temporal ecstasy, or revelation that is all out of proportion with its situation.⁷⁴ That would permit us to articulate a thought of the event and a thought of the processes. Thus, a processual line may experience sudden variations in rhythm and singular moments of intensification of the forces at play: in such cases, the event may be due to threshold effects, the crossing of tipping points, or qualitative leap phenomena. Furthermore, the encounter and clash of several processual lines may lead to a largely unforeseeable shock, above all if the lines are winding—and the result is, undoubtedly, an event. And, once again, the transitional concept of switchovers (*basculements*) may enable us to combine the uncertain encounter of several processual lines, the discontinuities they exhibit, and the quality of a disruptive event that occurs during switchover moments in the narrow sense of the term. Despite the sketchy nature of these commentaries, and the possible existence of “pure” events lacking any earthly processuality, we can see that affording space for the event and for discontinuities

72. Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times*, transl. Neville Plaice and Stephen Plaice (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 104–316.

73. Helpful here are the punctuated paradigm and critique of gradualism developed by Stephen Jay Gould, who acknowledged the influence of Thomas Kuhn’s discontinuous model. See Gould, *Punctuated Equilibrium* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007) and Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

74. Jean-François Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*, transl. Antony Hudek and Mary Lydon (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011). On “the messianic without messianism,” see Jacques Derrida, *The Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, transl. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), 59.

does not challenge our picture of history as a tangle of heterochronous processual lines. Conversely, no theory of historical processes can succeed if it overlooks the roles played by discontinuities and events.⁷⁵

Adopting a possibilist approach to history is another way to challenge the historicist continuum without abandoning the idea of processes. We must then consider that each historical situation is open to several possibilities so that the unfolding of history is never fatally and univocally contained in the existing configurations. Such a conclusion emerges from a view of history as the intertwining of heterochronous processes acting upon one another. As every historical situation implies the intersection of partly autonomous causal series, it may result in a certain degree of unpredictability and contingency—and even in what a mathematician would call chaos. Still, opening up space for uncertainty and the exploration of possibilities in no way absolves historians from the task of identifying significant causalities and iterative tendencies when they appear. If historians may reject the notion of homogeneous epochs and fasten on the lack of synchronization in observed phenomena, they remain obligated to evaluate to what extent logics of convergence or encompassment operate *through* this very heterogeneity and desynchronization. To the extent possible, then, their task should be to grasp both the relative coherence found in historical configurations and, within them, inclinations to clashing or diffraction, shifting and dyschrony.

The second trait stems from the rejection of the scheme of a Universal History in which all human societies are destined to follow (with delay) the (only) trail blazed by the modern West.⁷⁶ As the modern regime of historicity fades away, the postcapitalist horizon also escapes such a pattern; it can no longer be conceived as a realization of the Universal—a Universal that was, in reality, only the particular universal of the West, which is to say, “European universalism.”⁷⁷ The Zapatista invitation to build “a world in which many worlds fit” (*un mundo donde quepan muchos mundos*) suggests quite a different approach.⁷⁸ Far more than a simple praise of diversity, that statement should be seen as a radical affirmation of multiplicity. In opposition to the logics of a globalized economy, which induce both uniformity and fragmentation, dissemination of the abstract equivalence of value and the destruction of many forms of life, the Zapatistas propose a politics of autonomy built from experiences lived in specific places, which is necessarily a politics of multiplicity. And yet their motto is not limited to appealing for such a multiplicity of worlds. It relates this to “a world”—which is only one—that makes all worlds possible and establishes something common between them. This “one world,” first of all, is the unity of their shared dwelling,

75. For another approach to discontinuity, one that is not processual but evental, see Zoltán Boldizsár Simon, “The Transformation of Historical Time: Processual and Evental Temporalities,” in Tamm and Olivier, *Rethinking Historical Time*, 71–84.

76. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, chapter 1 (27–46).

77. Immanuel Wallerstein, *European Universalism: The Rhetoric of Power* (New York: New Press, 2006).

78. Baschet, *La rébellion zapatiste*, chapter 4. On a universalism of multiplicities, see also Baschet, *Basculements*, 167–75.

planet Earth, as the many possible worlds are conditional upon its habitability. But this “one world” also designates the horizon of a planetary common, which challenges localist confinement and the absolutization of identities while building itself through the heterogeneity of experiences, cooperation, encounters between different geographies, and the interpenetration of particular memories. Among the experiences and words of the Zapatistas, one finds material for critiquing the West’s universalism, which is both abstract and particular, as well as suggestions for conceptualizing a new universalism. Since it searches for the common *within* the differences, it may be called *pluniversalism* (stacking up the prefixes *pluri-* and *uni-*) or, perhaps, “universalism of multiplicities.”

It now seems crucial to give up the idea that there is only one single exit from capitalism. If the hypothesis of postcapitalism is to have any meaning, it must be through fostering the unfolding of the many forms of life that the Earth’s communities can bring to fruition. What we are talking about here are not small differences but radically distinct ways of being and acting. They imply an ontological multiplicity with room for animism, totemism, and analogism, with the vast range of their variations and the novel hybridizations among them, excluding only naturalism.⁷⁹ In keeping with this reasoning, a world of the multiplicity of worlds cannot be associated with a single regime of historicity. Its diversity may be read in the ontologies just evoked (and yet the description offered here presumably applies only to worlds that are postnaturalist in the strict sense—that is, those facing the prospect of undoing a modern tradition that has long been internalized). One should expect a postcapitalist world to entail a range of regimes of historicity; and we could also say that the planetary community suggested by the invitation to build “a world in which many worlds fit” points to the notion of a “regime of historicities,” thus combining the characteristics proper to a postcapitalist existence and the many forms of life that may flourish there.

Finally, a third trait brings us back to the ontological matters evoked in the first part. Not every world will necessarily find a place in the world of multiplicity, as some may threaten this very multiplicity through their expansionism, in turn imperiling the planet’s habitability. Such is the case with naturalism, modernity’s constitutive ontology. Inasmuch as it provided the foundation for the domination and exploitation of nature, one may fairly say that naturalism and the accelerated degradation of the Earth system are tightly associated. This accounts for the idea that postcapitalism bears a close relation to postnaturalism, which is already a critical force in our Anthropocenic present. The implications of this ontological shift for the configuration of the regimes of historicity and for conceptions of historical knowledge have already been widely noted: once the dissociation of natural history and human history has been challenged, the time will have come for a “multispecies history,” thus bringing together humans and nonhumans.⁸⁰ But how to understand this decentering? Should the “human-centered” point of view yield to

79. Philippe Descola, *Beyond Nature and Culture*, transl. Janet Lloyd (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), chapter 8; Descola, “Más allá de la naturaleza y la cultura,” in *Cultura y naturaleza*, ed. Leonardo Montenegro Martínez (Bogotá: Jardín Botánico de Bogotá, 2011), 75–96.

80. Chakrabarty, “Climate of History”; Tamm, “Future-Oriented History.”

a “planet-centered” one, which gives priority to a radically other geological temporality that is quite indifferent to human history? Rather than bind the planetary to the geological in a way that privileges the latter, perhaps it would be better to reconsider the former category from the perspective of the Earthbound, as has been suggested by Bruno Latour, Danowski and Viveiros de Castro, and Christophe Bonneuil.⁸¹ This leads us to grant geological time its rightful place but also to take into account the diverse rhythms of the histories of multiple living species—along with their interbreeding, interactions, and co-evolutions—and bear in mind that these encounters also have a history, right up to the unprecedented intertwining of all these temporalities within the Anthropocene. When viewed from the postcapitalist future, there is no history that is not a history of the Earthbound—or, more precisely, there is no history that is not part of an interspecific geohistory of earthly worlds.

CONCLUSION

I have offered a panorama of the many now-circulating futures (persistent modernist futures, sometimes atrophied and reduced to the cult of growth, sometimes driven to hyperbole by transhumanist disconnection; immediate futures of presentism and the financialized economy, scenarios of Anthropocene catastrophe, et cetera), yet, for the most part, I have sought out emerging(?) futures that are inscribed in the uncertain postcapitalist potentialities of the present. This has permitted us to detect remarkable and largely unprecedented aspects of the future that defy the presentist confinement and the predicted apocalypse without reinstating modernity’s glorious future or advocating the repetitions of tradition. The positive alliance of past and future is crucial, for it offers a complete reversal of presentism while it also blazes a trail that was off-limits to previous regimes of historicity and avoids the “disconnective futures” of an exorbitant hypermodernity. Secondly, this future is open, uncertain, anything but preset; it is far from the very essence of the modern future—namely, the knot of positive expectation and predictive certainty.⁸² Still, it manages to elude both the narrow outlook of presentism and the near certitude in the end of the world, to which some respond with plans for emigrating to off-planet colonies. The futures highlighted here are meant to restore a positive expectation, but in the mode of indeterminacy and uncertainty, which gives them qualities that are quite different from those of modern

81. For Latour, the “Terrestrial” supplements the “Planetary,” adding “a politics of life forms” centered on the habitability of the planet. See Bruno Latour and Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Conflicts of Planetary Proportions – A Conversation,” *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 14, no. 3 (2020), 425n14. On the opposition of the Earthbound and Humans, see Latour, *Facing Gaia*, 246–53, and Danowski and Viveiros de Castro, *Ends of the World*. Bonneuil has defined the regimes of planetarity as “the historically situated ways that human societies have, when they reflect on their becoming, of articulating the agency of human beings and of nonhuman beings, at the planet’s temporal and spatial scales” (“Der Historiker und der Planet – Planetaritätsregimes an der Schnittstelle von Welt-Ökologien, ökologischen Reflexivitäten und Geo-Mächten,” in *Gesellschaftstheorie im Anthropozän*, ed. Frank Adloff and Sighard Neckel [Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2020], 73). See also Frédéric Neyrat, “Nous, les planétaires,” *Lignes* 61 (2020), 151–67.

82. For an analysis of this dual dimension of waiting, see Alexandre Escudier, “Temporalisation et modernité politique: Penser avec Koselleck,” *Annales* 64, no. 6 (2009), 1267–1301.

futures. These are eminently fragile futures, but they are nevertheless possible. Being conceived neither as the reiteration of the past, nor as the perpetuation of the present, nor as the prolongation of the trajectory of Progress, nor as the advent of the apocalyptic fatality, they are truly open, destined to be realized in the processuality of the paths to be made. A fuller quality of futurity belongs to these alliances of indeterminacy and open possibilities than it did to past futures. These emerging(?) futures, finally, must not be only human. Here, we have planetary futures that are willing to remain on Earth, futures that are concerned about the many forms of life of humans and nonhumans that are situated on a planet rendered habitable, over a history spanning billions of years, by its own dynamic processes.

Once and for all, the tranquil flow of a continuous temporality has been fractured. Long seen as incommensurable, the temporal scales of the history of Earth and that of humankind are colliding. The past, present, and future no longer comply with the sequence decreed for this temporal holy trinity. The emerging(?) futures just mentioned outline a regime of historicit(ies) that assumes both discontinuity and processuality: history is no longer pictured as a unified straight line but rather as a tangle of multiple heterochronous lines, marked as much by convergences and articulations as by discordances and gaps, bifurcations and tears, or even by spiraling junctions of the past and the future. While a nearly religious faith and a paradoxically ahistoric element undermined the modern regime of historicity, the emerging regime bodes well for the prospect of developing a more vivid consciousness of historicity. Making that possible is the dual recognition of, on the one hand, the open and uncertain character of becoming and, on the other hand, the concrete dimension of the processes that have been freed from the straitjacket of an abstract, homogeneous, and continuous time.

In addition to its suitability for developing new transitional concepts, like switchovers (*basculements*), this emerging regime of historicity seems well situated for recasting other notions, such as emancipation. While the modern regime of historicity succeeded in coaxing emancipation to full bloom, a profound reformulation is needed for such a notion to regain its effectiveness. Even as it pays the search for novelty its due, emancipation no longer needs to be viewed as a complete break with the past. On the contrary, the past may provide support for marking out new paths. It may open the horizon of possibilities, but this reconceived emancipation comes with no guarantees: no path traced in advance, no certainty of any future glories. And there is no thought of an ideal ending—no perfection at all, nor any assignable end of the path. No Universal Peace, and no other realization of perfect unity. No promised land. No Paradise regained. There is nothing for it to do but to trace a path, experimenting with worthy and free forms of life in the midst of difficulties, dissensus, and conflicts that may arise from a commitment to multiplicity. We can only imagine emancipation as a perpetual struggle against everything that might undermine it.⁸³

83. For the Zapatistas, the construction of “autonomy is endless”; see Baschet, *La rébellion zapatiste*, 375.

Such a concept of emancipation, deprived of all certainty and any perfect ending, differs significantly from the one fostered by the modern regime of historicity. Yet, despite all its fragility, constraint, and uncertainty, it offers anticipatory aspiration the possibility of a desirable Not-Yet. Moreover, this emancipation would not be strictly human, as its first priority would be to safeguard the habitability of the Earth for all living beings. In what pertains to human worlds, it would encourage the unfolding of multiple forms of life that are both self-determined and concerned about the interdependencies that make their existence possible. In spite of their many differences, their common principle would be the search for a good life for all people, which requires eliminating every form of social and gender domination (in addition to prioritizing concern for the planet's habitability). Such is the vision that we can sketch from the emerging(?) historical futures presented here—fragile, uncertain futures that are possibilistic and discontinuous as well as processual, wedded both to the past and the present yet without renouncing the unprecedented, woven with heterochronicity, and opening up a multiplicity of worlds (that may be) still habitable for the Earthbound.

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