

POSTHUMAN ETHICS, PAIN AND ENDURANCE

20.08.2018 - 24.08.2018

D13, 004 - Utrecht University

Drift 13, 3512 BR Utrecht, the Netherlands

Course Director: *Prof. Rosi Braidotti*

Lecturers: *Prof. Rosi Braidotti (Utrecht University), Dr. Rick Dolphijn (Utrecht University), Lucas van der Velden (Sonic Acts), and Simone Bignall (Flinders, University of South Australia)*

For all information, please contact Prof. Braidotti's assistant: Evelien Geerts: gw.braidottiass@uu.nl

COURSE SUMMARY:

The intensive course "Posthuman Ethics, Pain and Endurance" offers an overview of the contemporary debates about the ethical implications of posthumanism and the so-called 'posthuman turn' as well as Rosi Braidotti's brand of critical feminist posthuman theory. The focus of the course this year will be on the relationship between the posthuman and the neo-materialist, vital ethics of affirmation, with special emphasis on how they deal with the complex issues around the lived experiences of pain, resistance, suffering and dying. Deleuze famously describes ethics as the aspiration to live an anti-fascist life. What does this mean for posthuman subjects situated between the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the Sixth Extinction? In the brutal context of the Anthropocene and climate change, of rising populism, growing poverty and inequality, how does posthuman ethics help us to deal affirmatively with these challenges?

These issues will be outlined, explored and assessed by addressing the following questions: How does a vision of the posthuman subject as a transversal an affirmative process of interaction between human, non-human and inhuman forces, help us cope with the complex and often painful challenges of the contemporary world? How does it affect the feminist quest for social justice, as well as environmental sustainability? How does it intersect with indigenous epistemologies and anti-racist politics? How does the neo-Spinozist notion of endurance foster the project of constructing an affirmative ethics for posthuman subjects? How does the idea of endurance connect to the philosophical tradition of neo-stoicism, and to Foucault's re-reading of it? How does a posthuman ethics of affirmation help us practically to confront the lived reality of pain, death and dying?

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE:

Following an established tradition, each day of the course is structured as follows: the mornings are devoted to plenary keynote lectures, by the course leader, invited teachers and special guests.

The afternoons are devoted to parallel seminar sessions. All of the participants will be sub-divided into smaller tutoring groups, led by a team of tutors who follow the same group throughout. Participants will be notified of the group they have been assigned to and receive the name and contact details of their tutor before the summer school starts. Rosi Braidotti will be present every afternoon, will visit all the groups and will participate in all of them in turns. Adjustments and changes to the assigned groups can be made if necessary. At the end of the afternoon all the tutorial groups come together for a closing plenary discussion session, chaired by Braidotti.

THE TEACHING STAFF:

Rosi Braidotti (B.A. Hons. Australian National University, 1978; PhD Cum Laude, Université de Paris, Panthéon-Sorbonne, 1981; Senior Fulbright Scholar, 1994; Honorary Degrees Helsinki, 2007 and Linköping, 2013; Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities (FAHA), 2009; Member of the Academia Europaea (MAE), 2014; Knighthood in the order of the Netherlands Lion, 2005). Distinguished University

Professor and founding Director of the Centre for the Humanities at Utrecht University (2007-2016). Her publications include: *Patterns of Dissonance*, 1991; *Metamorphoses*, 2002; *Transpositions*, 2006 *La philosophie, là où on ne l'attend pas*, 2009; *Nomadic Subjects*, 1994 and 2011a; *Nomadic Theory*, 2011b; *The Posthuman*, 2013. She co-edited with Pau Gilroy *Conflicting Humanities* (2016) and with Maria Hlavajova *The Posthuman Glossary* (2018). See also: www.rosibraidotti.com.

Rick Dolphijn is a teacher/researcher at the Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University, a Honorary Associate professor at Hong Kong University and member of Critical Studies at the Sandberg Institute. He is interested in continental philosophy, ecology and art. He has recently edited *Michel Serres and the Crises of the Contemporary* (Bloomsbury 2018, in print); *Philosophy After nature* (Rowman & Little field, 2017, with Rosi Braidotti); *This Deleuzian Century* (RODOPI 2015, with Rosi Braidotti). With Iris van der Tuin he wrote *New Materialism Interviews and Cartographies* (OHP 2012). He is currently finishing a monograph entitled *Cracks of the Contemporary*.

Lucas van der Velden (NL) is the director of Sonic Acts in Amsterdam. He studied at the interfaculty for image and sound at The Royal Conservatoire and the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague. He is co-founder of the Rotterdam art collective *Telcosystems* and co-founder of *Baltan Lab* in Eindhoven.

Simone Bignall (video lecture) is a Senior Lecturer in Indigenous Strategy and Engagement at Flinders, University of South Australia. Her research interests are postcolonial political philosophy, often informed by active participation in various communities of practice and the Continental philosophical lineage from Spinoza to Deleuze with special focus on theories of embodiment and agency, feminism, psychoanalysis and ethics. Her publications include *Postcolonial Agency*, 2010; *Deleuze and the Postcolonial* (with P. Patton); *Agamben and Colonialism* (with M. Svirsky); and *Deleuze and Pragmatism* (with S. Bowden and P. Patton). She is currently completing a work titled *Excolonialism: Ethics after Enjoyment*.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Participants in the course are expected to have read before the start of the intensive course the compulsory texts assigned for the lectures and the tutorials. Attendance to all the sessions is compulsory and the participants are required to sign up formal attendance lists for all the sessions. They are also expected to actively take part in tutorials, prepare questions and discussion points for plenary sessions, both the morning ones following the keynote lectures and the closing plenaries after the afternoon tutorials.

CERTIFICATES and CREDITS:

Participants who meet all the requirements, attend all the sessions – or can formally justify their absence-, and show active participation in the discussions will be issued with an official Utrecht University Certificate of attendance on the last day of the school. This intensive course grants participants 2.0 ECTS credits.

COMPULSORY READING:

The basic textbook for the course is *The Posthuman Glossary* (Bloomsbury Academic 2018), edited by Rosi Braidotti and Maria Hlavajova, which all participants are expected to buy.

BACKGROUND READING:

Please note that all participants are expected to have read Rosi Braidotti's book *The Posthuman* (Polity Press 2013), and for an introduction to brutalism, the special issue of *e-flux*, co-edited by Rosi Braidotti, Timotheus Vermeulen et alia, which can be found here: <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/83/>

REGISTRATION:

Applications are now open online: <https://www.utrechtsummerschool.nl/register/>

SCHEDULE AND PROGRAM

Saturday and Sunday, 18-19 August		
Time	Activity	Description
12.00-18.00	Key pick up	You will find the exact key pick up location in the pre-departure information, which becomes available after you have paid the course fee.
Monday, 20 August		
Introduction to the Posthuman		
Time	Activity	Description
09.00-09.30 D13, 004	Welcome & coffee and tea	Official Welcome: Rosi Braidotti Logistics introduction: Evelien Geerts
09.30-10.00 D13, 004	Introduction: Rosi Braidotti and Rick Dolphijn	<p><u>Presentation of the aims of this course:</u></p> <p>The posthuman turn is triggered by the convergence of post-humanism on the one hand and post-anthropocentrism on the other. The former focusses on the critique of the Humanist ideal of 'Man' as the universal representative of the human, while the latter criticizes species hierarchy and advances ecological justice. These critical strands often overlap, but they refer to different genealogies and theoretical traditions.</p> <p>Their convergence will be explored within the French philosophical tradition of critical Spinozism, best represented by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. They defend a vital materialist Life philosophy, based on non-dialectical processes and notions of difference. This course explores the implications of the posthuman predicament for contemporary ethics and for practices of endurance. It argues for the need to develop a more ethical and more complex relationship to our planetary dimension and to our relationship to non-human others, both animals, plants and technological artefacts.</p> <p><u>Focus:</u></p> <p>Posthuman critical theory argues for the pertinence of posthuman ethics as a way of re-framing the question of how to lead the anti-fascist ethical life, striking a balance between vulnerability and affirmation. How effective and credible is to re-create a new sense of pan-human interconnection based primarily on the fear of extinction? How does a posthuman sensibility turn into the need for a new ethical awareness based on affirmative and not on reactive values?</p> <p><u>ASSIGNED READING:</u></p> <p>Special issue of <i>e-flux</i>, co-edited by R. Braidotti, T.</p>

		Vermeulen et alia: http://www.e-flux.com/journal/83/
10.00-12.00 D13, 004	Lecture: Rosi Braidotti "The Posthuman Condition"	<u>ASSIGNED READING:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Braidotti, R. 2013. Chapters 1, and 2 of <i>The Posthuman</i>. Cambridge: Polity Press - Braidotti, R. and M. Hlavajova. 2018. "Introduction" In <i>The Posthuman Glossary</i>. London: Bloomsbury Academic - Alaimo, S. 2012. "Sustainable This, Sustainable That: New Materialisms, Posthumanism, and Unknown Futures". In <i>PMLA</i> 127(3): 558-64 - Goodley, D. Lawthom R. and K. Runswick-Cole. 2014. "Posthuman Disability Studies". In <i>Subjectivity</i> 7, pp. 342-61
12.00-13.00	Lunch	
13.00-15.00 Group 1: D25 - 201 (26), Group 2: D25 - 204 (28), Group 3: D25 - 206 (28) Group 4: D25 - 301 (30) Group 5: D25 - 302 (30) Group 6: D25 - 303 (28)	Tutoring sessions	<u>ASSIGNED READING PER TUTORING GROUP</u> (*taken from <i>The Posthuman Glossary</i>): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Group 1</u>: Transhumanism, speculative posthumanism, insurgent posthumanism - <u>Group 2</u>: Transcorporeality, technoanimalism, postanimalism - <u>Group 3</u>: Posthuman critical theory, posthuman ethics, non-human agency - <u>Group 4</u>: Posthumanism, ahuman, critical posthumanism - <u>Group 5</u>: Femicinity, feminist posthumanities, gaga feminism - <u>Group 6</u>: Algorithm, digital rubbish, computational turn
15.00-15.30	Short Break	
15.30-17.00 D13, 004	Plenary panel session on "The Posthuman Condition" led by Rosi Braidotti and invited participants	Moderator: Rosi Braidotti

Tuesday, 21 August Pain, Endurance & Posthuman Ethics		
Time	Activity	Description
9.00-9.30 D13, 004	Coffee and tea	
09.30-11.00 D13, 004	Lecture: Rosi Braidotti	This session explores posthuman ethics through the angle of neo-materialist vital philosophy, the notion of affirmation and an ethics of joy or affirmation. Affirmative ethics rests on an enlarged sense of a vital interconnection with a multitude of (human and non-human) others by removing the obstacle of self-centred individualism and anthropocentrism on the one hand and the barriers of

	<p>“Posthuman Ethics and the issue of pain”</p> <p>Q&A</p>	<p>negativity on the other.</p> <p>This new-materialist philosophy rejects dualistic oppositions and posits all subjects as transversally connected, as differential modulations of a common matter. This vision takes distance from the dialectics that pitches self-versus-other oppositionally. In so doing, it also questions the importance granted to negativity in the dialectical scheme, where difference is defined as ‘different from’ a dominant norm, and interpreted as being ‘worth less than’ that norm. Affirmative ethics frees difference from pejoration and replaces it with positivity.</p> <p><u>ASSIGNED READING:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deleuze, G. 1988. <i>Spinoza: Practical Philosophy</i>. San Francisco: City Lights Books <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Chapter 2: “On Difference between the Ethics and a Morality” o Chapter 3: “The Letters on Evil (correspondence with Blyenbergh)” o Chapter 6: “Spinoza and Us” - Selected sections from Parr, A. (ed.). 2010. <i>The Deleuze Dictionary</i>. Edinburgh University Press <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o “Ethics”; o “Body”; o “Force”; o “Freedom”; o “Creative transformation”; o Spinoza”; o “Spinoza and ethics of joy”
<p>11.00-12.00 D13, 004</p>	<p>Lecture: Rosi Braidotti “Affirmation & Endurance”</p> <p>Q&A</p>	<p><u>ASSIGNED READING:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapters from Braidotti, R. 2011. <i>Nomadic Theory. The Portable Rosi Braidotti</i> (New York: Columbia University Press): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Chapter 10: “Powers of affirmation”, pp. 267-298 o Chapter 11: “Sustainable Ethics and the Body in Pain”, pp. 299-234 o Chapter 12: “Forensic Futures”, pp. 325-357 <p><u>VIDEO MATERIAL:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Please watch: L’ <i>Abécédaire</i>: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DskjRer95s - J for Joy
<p>12.00-13.00</p>	<p>Lunch</p>	
<p>13.00-15.00</p>	<p>Tutoring sessions</p>	<p><u>ASSIGNED READING PER TUTORING GROUP</u> (*taken from <i>The Posthuman Glossary</i> book):</p>

<p>Group 1: D25 - 201 (26), Group 2: D25 - 204 (28), Group 3: D25 - 206 (28) Group 4: D25 - 301 (30) Group 5: D25 - 302 (30) Group 6: D25 - 303 (28)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Group 1</u>: Pill, placenta politics, the pregnant posthuman - <u>Group 2</u>: General ecology, ethics of joy, multispecies - <u>Group 3</u>: Digital citizenship, wearable technologies, algorithmic studies - <u>Group 4</u>: Ecohorror, ecopathy, political affect - <u>Group 5</u>: Ecocriticism, extinction, PH disability studies - <u>Group 6</u>: Ecomaterialism, new materialism, media-natures
15:00-15:30	Short Break	
15:30-17:00 Room D13, 004	Plenary panel session with Rosi Braidotti, Katie Strom, and others to be announced	Moderator: Rosi Braidotti

Wednesday, 22 August		
What, of Art, Belongs to the Present?		
Time	Activity	Description
9.00-9.30 D13, 004	Coffee and tea	
9.30-11.00 D13, 004	<p>Lecture/Seminar: Rick Dolphijn with Lucas van der Velden "How Art Objects" Q&A</p>	<p>All too often, art is captured by objects (=by the realities of the present), but it does not want that (=it has different desires). Objects as social entities (as things that circulate/are being circulated) are created by those in power... all too often produced in favour of the status quo, as a means to slow down history and to slow down social change. From the totem, to money, to all of the desirables that keep the capitalist machines at work today; the aim of the object or the thing, is to secure the organisation of society... to keep the hierarchies intact (or in our days, to keep the money flowing in the right direction). Objects (or, the realities of the present), in sum, are all too often obstacles for art.</p> <p>In this research lab we explore how art comes to matter. How it occupies, intervenes in or deterritorializes objects, resisting the realities of the present.</p> <p><u>ASSIGNED READING:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blanchot, M. 1982/1943. "The Gaze of Orpheus." In <i>The Gaze of Orpheus and other Literary Essays</i>. Station Hill of Barrytown. - Woolf, V. 1974/1948. "The Moment: Summer's Night." In <i>The Moment and Other Essays</i>. Mariner Books.
11.00-12.00 D13, 004	Plenary discussion	<p>Moderators: Rick Dolphijn and Lucas van der Velden</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED READING:</u> (*taken from <i>The Posthuman Glossary</i> book):</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Epigenetic landscape, necropolitics, xenofeminism - Afrofuturism, neuronal aesthetics, trans* - Animism, forests, planetary - Decolonial critique, neo-colonial, socially just pedagogies - Expulsions, Lampedusa, Posthuman rights - Anthropocene, Capitalocene, war
12.00-13.00	Lunch	
13.00-15.00 On location (TBA)	<p>Workshop: Rick Dolphijn, Lucas van der Velden and various Artists</p> <p>“Through Ideas, Through Art, We Explore, Persist, And Resist”</p>	<p>Taking up the questions posed in the introduction, we jointly explore the questions posed in the introduction, in the performance and in contemporary theory, in order to explore the necessity of the present, for art. Collectively, we will enjoy some contemporary art/ecology projects and talk to some artists involved with the Sonic Acts Festival and Academy.</p> <p>Also, we will explore some key concepts in order to get a grip on the new materialist and posthuman strategies and tactics of art-in-time. In this mapping, the persistence and resistance in-and-through matter, are key.</p>
15.00-15.30	Short Break	
15.30-16.30 D13, 004	Plenary discussion	Moderators: Rosi Braidotti, Rick Dolphijn and Lucas van der Velden
17.00-18.30 D13, 004	DRINKS	Cohenzaal, Trans 10 (Utrecht University)

Thursday, 23 August
Endurance & Power

Time	Activity	Description
9.00-9.30 D13, 004	Coffee and tea	
09.30-11.00 D13, 004	<p>Lecture: Rosi Braidotti “Endurance, Power, Posthumanism.”</p> <p>Q&A</p>	<p>Today we will focus on the political implications of the affirmative posthuman ethics, by addressing more specifically the issue of power.</p> <p>Because a new-Spinozist ethics of affirmation is a practical philosophy, it offers immediate applications to our understanding of the fractures and contradistinctions of the posthuman condition. It is not because “we”- the inhabitants of this planet- are in this predicament together, that differences and inequalities disappear. On the contrary, the posthuman era exacerbates and polarizes structural injustices.</p> <p><u>ASSIGNED READING:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Braidotti, R. 2013. Chapter 3 of <i>The Posthuman</i>. Cambridge: Polity Press.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mbembe, A. 2003. "Necropolitics". In <i>Public Culture</i> 15(1), pp. 11-40. - Guattari, F. 2000. <i>The Three Ecologies</i>. London: The Athlone Press: pp. 23-53. - Protevi, John. 2013. "Ge-hydro-solar-bio-techno-politics". In <i>Life, War, Earth: Deleuze and the Sciences</i>. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: pp.39-74. - Nixon, R. 2011. <i>Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor</i>. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Chapters 1 and 8.
11.00-12.00 D13, 004	<p>Video lecture: Simone Bignall - "Excolonialism and The Posthuman".</p> <p>Q&A</p>	<p><u>ASSIGNED READING:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S. Bignall: "The Collaborative Struggle for Excolonialism", <i>Settler Colonial Studies</i>, 2014, Volume 4 Issue 4: 340-356, DOI: 10.1080/2201473X.2014.911651 - S. Bignall: "Three Ecosophies for the Anthropocene: Environmental Governance, Continental Posthumanism and Indigenous Expressivism", <i>Deleuze Studies</i>, 2016, Volume 10 Issue 4: 455-478. https://www.eupublishing.com/doi/10.3366/dls.2016.0239
12.00-13.00	Lunch	
13.00-15.00	<p>Group 1: D25 - 201 (26),</p> <p>Group 2: D25 - 204 (28),</p> <p>Group 3: D25 - 206 (28)</p> <p>Group 4: D25 - 301 (30)</p> <p>Group 5: D25 - 302 (30)</p> <p>Group 6: D25 - 303 (28)</p> <p>Tutoring sessions</p>	<p><u>ASSIGNED READING PER TUTORING GROUP</u></p> <p>(*taken from <i>The Posthuman Glossary</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Group 1:</u> Affective turn, ethereal scent, survival - <u>Group 2:</u> Art, earth, geo-hydro-solar-bio-techno-politics - <u>Group 3:</u> Art in the Anthropocene, the contemporary, four elements - <u>Group 4:</u> Animacies, make Human, postimage - <u>Group 5:</u> Postglacial, biological arts, hacking habitat - <u>Group 6:</u> Architectonic disposition, commons, ecologies of architecture
15.00-16.00	Short break	
16.00-17.00 D13, 004	<p>Plenary panel session led by Rosi Braidotti, and selected participants</p>	Moderator: Rosi Braidotti

	Discussion	
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Friday, 24 August Affirmation as Praxis		
Time	Activity	Description
9.00-9.30 D13, 004	Coffee and tea	
09.30-11.00 D13, 004	Lecture: Rosi Braidotti "Self-styling one's life, self-styling one's death" Q&A	How does the ethics of affirmation deal with dying and the preparation for death? What is the ethical correlation between living an anti-fascist life and self-styling one's death? Is the stoical tradition, re-read with Foucault and Deleuze, of assistance in dealing with the pain of the forced and chosen transformations we are undergoing in posthuman times? Where does capital-drive technological enhancement and ethically-driven self-improvement meet and reinforce each other? Are we going through new-stoical times? <u>ASSIGNED READING:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foucault, M.: <i>The Hermeneutics of the Self</i>, chapters 22, 23, 24; pp. 437-477 on stoicism - Braidotti, R. (2006) <i>Transpositions</i>, Chapter 5 "Transcendence. Transposing death" - Sellars, J. (2006): "An Ethics of the Event. Deleuze's Stoicism". <i>Angelaki</i> 11:3, 157-171 - Woolf, V. 1930. <i>On Being Ill</i>. Hogarth Press.
	Lecture: Rick Dolphijn "The wound"	<u>ASSIGNED READING:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dolphijn, R. (2018 forthcoming). "The Mat(t)er of Thought." In R. Dolphijn (ed.). <i>Michel Serres and the Crises of the Contemporary</i>. Bloomsbury.
12.00-13.00	Lunch	
13.00-15.00 D13, 004	Plenary panel session with selected participants led by Rosi Braidotti "On Endurance" Discussion	Chair: Rosi Braidotti
15.00-15.30 D13, 004	Distribution of Course Certificates	Rosi Braidotti: concluding remarks End of Summer School course