

**WIT(H)NESSING THE CATASTROPHE: MORE-THAN-HUMAN
POLITICS AND ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE ANTHROPOCENE**

by
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POLITICS AND ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE ANTHROPOCENE**

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ABSTRACT

WIT(H)NESSING THE CATASTROPHE: MORE-THAN-HUMAN POLITICS AND ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

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Keywords: more-than-human, politics of witnessing, Anthropocene, environmental catastrophe, anthropology

Acknowledging the characteristics and complexities of the environmental catastrophe of the Anthropocene, this thesis aims to focus on the politics of witnessing by theorizing more-than-human perspectives of it. Calling this the theory of wit(h)nessing and describing it as an unfolding experience, this thesis discovers the literature on witnessing by interpreting it through the anthropology of more-than-human and theories of ontological anthropology. Focusing on the literature that explains and builds ethics through the events of Shoah, the thesis proposes to define an ethics of the catastrophe of Anthropocene and through the theory of wit(h)nessing aims to define an ethics that considers vulnerability and response-ability. Further aiming to define what a political animal is, through this ethics, this thesis aims to define and figure ways of living well together, of the possibilities of more-than-human politics through wit(h)nessing.

ÖZET

TEZ BAŞLIĞI

ZEYNEP SELCEN BOZTEPE

KÜLTÜREL ÇALIŞMALAR YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ, TEMMUZ 2023

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Aslı İkizoğlu Erensü

Anahtar Kelimeler: insan-sonrası, tanıklık siyaseti, Antroposen, çevre felaketi, antropoloji

Antroposen'in çevresel felaketinin özelliklerini ve karmaşıklığını dikkate alan bu tez, felaketi insan-sonrası perspektiften kuramsallaştırarak tanıklık siyasetine odaklanmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bunu "wit(h)nessing" kuramı olarak adlandıran ve onu sürece bağlı bir açılım deneyimi olarak tanımlayan bu tez, tanıklığı insan-sonrası antropoloji ve ontolojik antropoloji kuramları aracılığıyla yorumlayarak ilgili literatürü keşfeder. Etik kuramı Shoah (felaket, Nazi soykırımı) üzerine yorumlayan ve detaylayan bu literatüre odaklanarak, wit(h)nessing teorisi ayrıca yaralanabilirlik ve sorumluluk (response-ability) üzerinden yeni bir etik üretmeyi teklif eder ve bu kuramı detaylamayı amaçlar. Politik hayvanın ne olduğunu cevaplamayı amaçlayan bu tez, wit(h)nessing teorisi ile insan-sonrası politikanın olanaklarını tanımlamayı ve şekillendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

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what you mean to me through our daily choreography. I hope that I make you feel at ease and peaceful to be our homely companion. You have been a playful friend, a joyful affinity, a light in my life for the past 11 months.

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*To my kin – Nora and Ceren, one taught me play and one taught me grief, and
Hülya, my mother,
who gave me life and taught me love.*

*"Ne kadar razı ağaçlar altında,
Yemek için mi, acıktık
Ancak bir başka hayvanla dolabilir
İçimizdeki yalnızlık.
— Fazıl H. Dağlarca*

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PROLOGUE: THE DROWNED DOG

“Compassion and brutality can coexist in the same individual and in the same moment...”

— *Primo Levi, The Drowned and the Saved*

“Incredible the animal that first dreamed of another animal”

— *Carlos Fuentes, Terra Nostra*

One month before starting to work on this thesis, I had the chance to visit Madrid. I was severely depressed before the landing and since I had a cheap ticket, I forced myself to go to Spain amidst all the chaos in my life. I did not have any plans ready, so I decided to walk the streets and spend the time trying to remember what I know of Spain, and to consider spontaneity during my visit. After a long day of walking the streets and under heavy rain, I entered Prado Museum. While walking through all the masterpieces by El Greco, Titian, Rubens and many others, although I was a fairly an intellectual admirer, I have gotten angrier to notice that I could not feel anything amongst all this beauty and grace. Everything looked so proportionately sad and beautiful. All the saviors or warriors seemed so young, everything was pure and even Jesus who was suffering looked almost at ease in his crown of thorns.

Shame is a part of my depression, a feeling that makes it easy to feel distorted and ugly amongst the most beautiful paintings in the world. I walked a little faster to see the two infamous Spanish, Velazquez and Goya, only to remember that one of my favorite paintings was in this very building. I walked down the stairs and entered a room decorated with dim light and music in minor keys. In the middle of the *black paintings* by Goya, there it was: The Dog. Black Paintings is the name given to the paintings by Goya, made later in his life, on the walls of his house, Quinta del Sordo (Deaf Man’s Villa). Contrary to the ones Goya have painted as the Court painter, which compiled shades of baby blue and peaceful pink skies,

black paintings reflect fear and terror. The room consists of many famous paintings including *Saturn Devouring His Son and Witches' Sabbath*; these paintings depict distorted faces, disturbing themes and an impatient malaise. In the midst of such darkness, I finally felt at ease.

As I was looking at the paintings one by one, I tried to inspect every stroke of brush that made those faces distort with terror. At the time of painting these on his walls, Goya was nearly deaf and scared that his near-fatal illness was going to relapse. It is said that Goya never intended to exhibit them, and as I was feeling the heaviness of fear and many people I have lost in the last months, I was wondering if he felt the shame of fear too. However, amidst all this terror, *The Drowned Dog*¹, stands different in its own way. Compared to all the terror and chaos reflected by the other paintings in that room, *The Dog* only consists of a rustic yellow wall and the head of a dog on its low end. The dog's face looks desperate, helpless and almost incurable. It also looks finished, heavy, brute. I felt it all coming down, so I sat down to cry, I *mourned*.

As I was sitting there sobbing, the museum guard came beside me and asked me what I can only translate to "what happened?" or if I am well. Since I did not know a word of Spanish, I looked up and said "It looks like a dog I know of" in English. But I was lying. The dog did not look like any dog I have ever met, although, I have been in play with it before. And it was all a dialogue: a relationality I have formed with its species. I made meaning by witnessing what the drowning dog was witnessing, thus, I made meaning of death. I responded to the dog as I was sharing his suffering, mourning what is incurable, in helplessness. I did not know the dog and I do not even know if Goya painted a specific dog or not. I know its species. The dog and I, we have been in play before, we are messmates. The dog's suffering transmits through marks of its memory, expression of the experience of what is insufferable and painful. In the face of this mutual suffering and risk we transmit and share, that is death and pain, and through response that creates the responsibility of taking care of each other: how do we manage to live *together*, despite death? How do we ground ethics and politics in such a world? And lastly, how can we recalibrate it?

The main question that is attractive to some viewers of the painting might be this: *what* did the dog experience? And the viewer who is reading my words might ask: can the dog *witness* this experience anyways? This thesis does not ask such closed questions and expect definite answers nor asks if the more-than-human or the

¹Although the black paintings does not have official and specific names given by the painter himself, the name tag on the museum reads The Drowned Dog while the painting is known by the name El Perro (The Dog)

subaltern can witness. They can, and they do. This piece of writing seeks for the possibilities of a more-than-human witnessing by questioning what it means to be human, or what it means to be other-wise. What kind of politics does more-than-human witnessing lays and how it re-grounds and recalibrates our understanding of politics? I aim to discover the possibilities of a more-than-human witnessing, focusing on the living, on things that we share in the face of catastrophe.

In order to actualize these, I study the act of witnessing as a trans-corporeal unfolding experience constituted by tangible expressions of memory. If I am to define politics as finding ways of living in the world, this thesis aims to seek the politics of *us*, using the promise of politics of witnessing and its anthropological legacy. Through memory and expanding on what I define as *wit(h)nessing*, a theory of more-than-human witnessing, I discuss an ethics that belongs to the epoch of Anthropocene. I believe that defining the ethics of Anthropocene is a response that is symptomatic of our epoch as we acquire and recraft different ways of living and dying. In response to discovering these relationalities, and then through commentating them with discussions of ethics and politics, I aim to discover which methodologies we can follow and tackle as ethnographers and anthropologists. Because another aim of this thesis is to find out what makes the study of humans and their culture, hereby *Anthropos logos* (anthropology), or how it might be extended to *the living*, and which methodologies we can use to observe and understand these multi-species presences and relationalities.

Returning back to the dog's possibility of survival and my grief, death became a concept that is impossible to drive away from my mind as Turkey and Syria were shaken by two massive earthquakes on the 6th of February 2023. Just two weeks after mourning beside The Dog, again I was mourning day and night, constantly panicking about the difficulty of surviving in such a cruel world and turning the news on and off, only to discover that the death toll was rising. As some of us immediately acted on helping physically, most of us stayed in shock and panic, surprised at ourselves and our lack of words to explain how we feel. Everything looked incurable, also unstoppable. Once again I felt the shame of being scared. I was a survivor and I thought, I should have owned the responsibility of being part of the hope that will come after this, yet, I was panicking and getting angrier at the incompetency of the government in rescue efforts. I could not come to terms with grieving the loss of life.

I was scared and I did not want to accept how the geological forces of shifting and cracking of the earth left us not in awe but in despair. Considering all the living drowned under rubbles and waiting to be saved, I panicked about how fragile we

were and how close to the end of life as we know it. As I saw one picture of the immense fault cracks in Antakya, I immediately thought of Braidotti's words: "We build our house on the crack, so to speak. We live to recover from the shocking awareness that this game is over even before it started" (2013,32). People started to iterate similar words, such as "life is short", while they strive to make meaning of this *short* life and finding reasons to be with the loved ones. Another way of saying that this, all of this, is *just* life. But I could not take it. I kept on reading: "The proximity to death suspends life, not into transcendence, but rather into the radical immanence of 'just a life', here and now, for as long as we can and as much as we can take" (*ibid.*). Again I was in despair of depression, unable to make-meaning of life and of living. I once again was ashamed, of being at loss, incurable and unable to help. I was not even saved from the particular event, but I was a nominee of being *drowned* as I was also living on Istanbul's fault lines that are about to crack. And I was ashamed of being scared while there were humans and other animals suffering in the present. I bear witness to their witnessing of death and violence, while I was striving to make meaning, and miserably failing.

Reading the face of the drowned and responding to it is an effort of dialogue. For some, which I will be mentioning later, it is both a trauma response and a resolution of it. It is also the result of the inescapability of pain, of living, which constantly show us the risk of being scarred by life and its happenings. As I argue that our responses bring forth *response-ability*, I also argue that we share suffering and be at risk together by sharing differences and discrepancies that our acts of coming across create. My favorite superhero once said: "hardest thing in this world is to live in it". If so, how do we survive? How do we form politics and keep each other alive? Constructing the post-human, Braidotti (2013) formulates ethics as "moving beyond the paralyzing effects of suspicion and pain, working across them". This thesis work is a dialogue I attend to create, an effort of making meaning, working across pain and suspicion, albeit the risk, albeit death. I do not aim at mastery, I do not expect outstanding conflict resolutions born out of my micro-attempts, solely. Because "there is no happy ending to offer, no conclusion to this ongoing entanglement, only a sharp reminder that anywhere one really looks actual living wolves and dogs are waiting to guide humans into contested wordings" (Haraway 2008). This is my effort to make friends with death, as an ethical way of installing myself in life "as a transient, slightly wounded visitor"

Figure 1 El Perro (The Dog)



1. PRELUDE

1.1 Witnessing

My mourning of the dog became my meaning-making of *death*, I witnessed a dying. The Drowned Dog was witnessing *death*, although, there might seem like there is a paradox since the dog was now *drowned* and maybe in the process of dying. Who can precisely determine when *death* starts and ends? I was already witnessing what *death* is, with all the particular deaths that I and my loved ones were bearing but I was not witnessing death like the drowned dog was bearing it. He was dying, and here I was, crying, making sense of absences. What does witnessing mean, then? What do the process entail? While one of us were particularly recognizing an event in its multiplicity, yet in its reality, one of us were already drowned in it. Similarly, environmental catastrophe, including events of climate change, mass extinctions, Indigenous genocides, etc., is a plural event that we *sensually yet unintentionally* witness every day. It is a simultaneous event that makes *dying* so dispersed and scattered that researchers still ask why humans are so bad at acknowledging climate change while there are estimated 2 million human deaths in the last 50 years due to climate change alone². Around 150-200 species of animals and plants go extinct every day due to such disasters, around 1 million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction, ninety percent of them due to deforestation alone³. Minding the complexity of systems and their intersecting livelihood, Earth is at its demise and it is dying.

Historically, witnessing has a double meaning: testifying and evangelism. Respectively, Oliver (2001) explains that, it is either “testifying to something you have seen with your own eyes or bearing witness to something that you cannot see”; the

²Hossain, Muhammad Amdad. “Extreme weather caused two million deaths, cost \$4 trillion over last 50 years”. UN News. 22 May, 2023.

³Sustainable Development. “UN Report: Nature’s Dangerous Decline ‘Unprecedented’; Species Extinction Rates ‘Accelerating’”. UN News. 06 May, 2022.

“juridical sense of bearing to what you know from firsthand knowledge as an eyewitness and the religious sense of bearing witness to what you believe through faith”. Grammatically, Oxford English Dictionary defines witnessing as action of bearing witness or giving testimony, “the fact of being present and observing something; witnessing is from witness, defined as to bear witness, to testify, to give evidence, to be a spectator or auditor of something, to be present as an observer, to see with one’s own eyes” (Oliver 2001, 16). Eichmann trial in Israel was the first time *the saved, the survivors of the event*, testified before the court. Nurnberg trials are known for upending international law and holding individuals, and not states, for the crimes against humanity. What about catastrophes that are complex in their execution where the lines between the victims, perpetrators and bystanders are so blurred that they become almost too unrealistic to be believable for some?

Environmental disaster in the Anthropocene exhibits such a case. Although it is now a studied subject under many of its naming such as climate change, global warming, extinction, etc. the environmental catastrophe to come consists plurality of events and it still remains unbelievable to some. Environmental catastrophe that we live and the catastrophe to come is both already witnessed and also to be anticipated. However, although it is now studied as an event that we will now remember, witness and testify to, questions of who witnesses and who testifies to it remain undiscussed. What I aim to explore is our ways of recalibrating politics and specifically, politics of witnessing, in the face of such catastrophe. I turn my face to the living, I aim to become-one acknowledging my relationalities, thus, I am playing-with my mortality in the face of such catastrophe. As this thesis aims to seek answers to many subjects I have underlined, its first chapter is structured as a prelude in the most Baroque sense. In this introductory chapter, I aim to reflect the succeeding movements of the following chapters and to present particular concepts to expand on them. As I introduce and elaborate on witnessing, agency, posthumanism and new materialism, and more-than-human and ontological anthropology, and the term/epoch of Anthropocene, respectively, in the “Prelude” chapter, I will be expanding on them and using their conceptualizations I reflected here in the successive chapters.

Transgressing the boundaries of disciplines in order to merge them into hybrid modes of knowing is an aim that we academically manage to succeed in the last two decades. Despite these efforts’ effect on several subjects in and around feminist cultural studies, our studies on witnessing and testimony remain mainly not confronted by post-humanist efforts. New materialist line of humanities and research grew out of feminist positionality theories and these studies confronted their readers about “knowing more” as much as it did on different ways of knowing (or not-knowing). As the modernist capacity of production separated scientific knowledge from mere

opinion as the viable and legitimate way of knowing (life), witnessing came to be known as the positions or the ability of testifying the clarity and purity of objects (Haraway 2010). We have witnessed a feminist interpretation and recalibration of memory and witnessing thanks to the efforts of feminist humanities, anthropology, and memory and trauma studies. Through gendering our perspectives, we have asked the questions of what counts as information, how we can calibrate memory and who gets to be the witness. I am curious about the future of witnessing and my thesis revolves around this curiosity in order to find out what is and can be more-than-human about witnessing.

Here, I describe witnessing from a more-than-human perspective through in-depth discussion on recognition, sense-abilities, representational processes of meaning-making (semiotics) and explain representational processes beyond-language etc. In order to achieve figuring out its connotations, I find it important to discuss what humans and non-humans share through not only embodiment but also different semiotic modalities. This is also a chance to figure out what *testimony* is, how it relates to our politics and ethics, and question if we can construct a more-than-human testimony. Although testimony figured its place along the literature decisively about legal justice and especially after trials of the Shoah⁴, it is now seen as the important tool for constructing a just world since it directly correlates to eyewitness testimony. Testimony also came to know what a “true witness” is, as Arendt described the criteria for “the qualified witness” as “a righteous man with an ability of dealing with the story” and its poetics and politics (see Arendt’s commentary on Grynzspan’s testimony) (Arendt 1994, 230) (Sandomirskaja 2011, 247). By striving to go beyond this, this thesis aims to expand on an account of witnessing that focuses on not the legal justice paradigms but rather to recognition, addressability and responsibility that forms ethics and politics for a livable, sustainable and resilient Earth. It aims to go beyond the account of “eyewitness testimony” that requires positioning subjects before the good and evil, before the judge and the historian seeking for historical truths and truths only, which ends in the impeccable importance given to testimony that is always privileged to the “righteous man”.

In *Remnants of Auschwitz* (1999), which is the work that premised many of the terms that are discoursed in witnessing and testimony literature, Agamben frames subjectivity, witness and the possibility of testimony with Auschwitz-Birkenau. Although Agamben’s work seemed *off* at start when I was delving into questions of how to position witnessing in a more-than-human political anthropology, *Remnants of Auschwitz* is inspirational as a starting point for certain discussions as Agamben

⁴Throughout the thesis I specifically refrain from using the word Holocaust and refer to the events as the Shoah. For a critical analysis of the terminology see *Remnants of Auschwitz*, 28

uses terms such as non-place, *non-human*, *in-human*, *distinguo*, etc. These concepts not only inspired me to recalibrate “witnessing”, which I noticed to be very important for a political anthropology, they also drove me to acknowledge certain concepts that I can expand upon while theorizing a more-than-human witnessing. Agamben’s framing of “the witness” and the act of witnessing constantly regulates itself between what human is and what kind of relationship and recognition it bears with the *not-so-human*: “human beings are human insofar as they are not human or, more precisely human beings are human insofar as they bear witness to the inhuman” (Remnants of Auschwitz, 121). Although there are many points and arguments in this book that I will be challenging, I share the crucial aim that of Agamben: to discover an ethical territory, to listen without jumping into analysis or conclusions that are too brute to bear, and to seek out what calibrates and what can re-calibrate the politics of our times? “Ethics more Auschwitz demonstrata”, proposes Agamben at the beginning of Remnants of Auschwitz; here I propose: Ethics more Anthropocene demonstrata.

In the means of providing myself with the catastrophe of the Earth, I focus on the environmental catastrophe, which consists of multiple events such as climate change, species extinction, nuclear disasters, oil spills, Indigenous genocides, pandemics and many more events that we can name in plurality of temporalities and scales. Throughout the thesis I call the overall event as environmental catastrophe, inspired from the Jewish naming that indicates the extermination, Shoah, meaning “catastrophe” or “devastation”. In parallel with this, aiming for the environmental catastrophe as the subject of this thesis and the point of my theory for a more-than-human witnessing goes three-fold: The fact that the environmental catastrophe of our time is a human induced one, where the relationship between victim-perpetrator-bystander remains complicated, it creates a framework where it is constructive and creative to think about its ethics, and therefore, its outcomes for emancipation. Secondly, mostly as its cause of becoming the subject of a theory of more-than-human witnessing, environmental catastrophe is consisted of multiple events that is in different temporalities and scales while it is also intertwined with violent histories of human politics. Lastly, as the outcome of my own emotive confrontations, this thesis aims to listen and learn how to mourn the dead and the dying, in the Anthropocene, and to learn how such meaning-makings pave the way of politics that is more-than-human, if not out of it. Terminology that are frequently used in the academic literature on Shoah and witnessing, and some conceptualizations such as aphasia, amnesia, impossibility of language, etc. revolve around and consequently re-iterate “impossibility of witnessing”. By contrasting and thinking through these concepts help me to think-with *the living* and discuss witnessing as recognition, and

thus, as a base for a political theory and anthropology. As aphasia refers to the inability to speak, or becoming inarticulate, I focus on the species which are not able to speak (in language-like forms) but still able to communicate. What does the impossibility of language refer to when we think it through a more-than-human paradigm and what happens if we re-calibrate witnessing into a semiotic frame that is not always language-like?

Rather, this work looks for ways of life that extends beyond the human and expand it to “the living”, mostly focusing on animal-non-human animal relations. In order to reground witnessing and its literature, I aim to present the practice as “simultaneous cultivation of the self and caring for others” via active participation in political life (Sheikh 2018). Hereby, a theory of more-than-human witnessing also investigates and re-grounds what a *political animal* is and goes beyond to seek efforts that are not focused on humanistic frameworks. In addition to the affectual, through acknowledging certain positionalities of agents, the feminist literature on witnessing tackled the issues around testimony and why gendering memory studies is important. Although I acknowledge and discuss the details of this particular development in memory studies; I aim to propose new challenges and strive to give answers to these challenges. The particular challenges resemble each other, because the categories of woman and human remains to be troubled. However, the discussion chooses to “stay with the trouble” and proposes to pluralize and reformulate, even to recalibrate, particular sameness and differences about different perceptions of memory, witnessing and testimony. Therefore, although through feminist calibration of memory studies we have acknowledged that “to be the object of vision, rather than the “modest,” self-invisible source of vision, is to be evacuated of agency” (Haraway 2010), I propose to pluralize our studies on being (a) witness, then to discover other-than-human agencies and recalibrate our perception to what can be more-than-human.

Pondering upon these questions, I aim to explore non-human memory and more-than-human witnessing through anthropological inquiry and philosophy, particular post-humanist/more-than-human ethnographies and political theory. I will make attempts to remember the core literature that built up memory and trauma studies and expand on their theories of witnessing while my effort is to congregate on a new theory of witnessing that is more-than-human, and thus, recalibrating political theory accordingly. I find these visits particularly crucial because the effort is not solely on “post-ing” things but rather to tackle the asymmetrical differences, or to quote Haraway, “I never wanted to be posthuman, or posthumanist, any more than I wanted to be postfeminist” (When Species Meet 2008). However, I believe that urgent work is needed on the issue since a more-than-human perspective on

memory and witnessing is both symptomatic and diagnostic: it is both a reaction and a response to their conceptual and contemporary challenges. This elaboration on witnessing and memory, to quote Gundogan Ibrism (2020), “neither overemphasizes the perpetuation of trauma nor prioritizes solely one’s healing but insistently highlights processes that transgress boundaries on different scales”. Our corporeal and performative bodies are constantly aware of the outside violence that remain not hidden, rather become embedded in the “unceasing movement that constitutes the process of becoming” (Massumi as cited in Hemmings).

As I will be discussing this process of becoming through processes of “becoming wit(h)ness”, it is important to emphasize the relapsing and overlapped occurrences of violence, and to “renew and radically interrogate our perceptions and representations of trauma in a way that recognizes the complex entanglements of planetary existence” (Gundogan Ibrism 2020). Witnessing is to be, as Hirsch (2012) would recall, marked by memory. We become with each other, we make up each other in the flesh, through inflicting and coming across to each other. This recognition requires an ability and art of noticing difference. The Other, the stranger, is not only created as an object by another’s gaze, rather, it creates cultures that are embedded in our ethos, our ways of living. Massumi explains a way of thinking difference differently by describing it not as “opposite”, but “knowing and inflecting, and the social world is always crosscut with fissures that have a social and political history that signifies otherwise” (Hemmings 2005). Hereby, I propose a theory of more-than-human witnessing, a process of becoming wit(h)ness, wit(h)nessing. To rephrase Haraway’s (When Species Meet 2008, 4) infamous thesis: to be one (witness) is always to become with many (witness)⁵.

1.2 Agency

*“The core, the centre of your consciousness,
That notes your bubble-world: sense, pleasure, pain,
What are they but a shifting otherness,
Phantasmal flux of moments? —”
George Elliot ‘I Grant You Ample Leave’*

“I love the fact that human genomes can be found in only about 10

⁵Emphasis belongs to me.

percent of all the cells that occupy the mundane space I call my body; the other 90 percent of the cells are filled with the genomes of bacteria, fungi, protists, and such, some of which play in a symphony necessary to my being alive at all, and some of which are hitching a ride and doing the rest of me, of us, no harm. I am vastly outnumbered by my tiny companions; better put, I become an adult human being in company with these tiny messmates.” (Haraway, *When Species Meet* 2008, 4)

What is human about *us* and what is animal-like? How come we become with many and not be (a) One? Discussing witnessing, agencies and subjectivity that produce the narratives of it requires a close inspection of the formulation of these concepts. Agency, referring to a particular entity that represents (itself), is not a privilege or a specialty of the human. Agency and thus, subjectivity, becomes the capability of narrating our experiences of the outside phenomena and makes us address-able. If my agency and the self is always to become with *many* around me, how then subjectivity is constructed and make me, the I, address-able? According to Karen Barad (2007), agency is not something we possess, rather, it is a “matter of intra-acting”, an enactment. Barad’s conceptualization of agency expands upon relationalities between these subjects, where they form variety of relationalities, observing and interpreting the world, forming the ethics of response-abilities. Barad calls this ethico-onto-epistem-ology, referring to the inseparability of ontology, ethics and epistemology. Through this particular neologism and by constructing the agential realism, Barad emphasizes that phenomena always precede and emerge through intra-actions, however, contrary to Latour’s Actor-Network Theory, these are not assemblages of humans and nonhumans. Barad is in play with quantum physics, as they are a physicist themselves, and they require us to understand the rule of objects having no intrinsic properties; objects are defined and potentially developed when they interact. Therefore, bodies of agents, bodies per se, are material-discursive, ethico-onto-epistemological. Barad presents us a groundwork for theorizing a subject position that can be a mean to prioritize issues linked to social justice, ethical accountability, sustainability and to trans-species and intergenerational solidarity (Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge* 2019).

Agential realism is comparatively new in new materialist thinking and object-oriented ontology, however, Karen Barad endeavors to satisfy the gap of theorizing *the subject*, or say a requirement for such theory according to Braidotti (*Posthuman Knowledge* 2019, 59). Agential realism as an ethico-onto-epistem-ology places itself on the background of feminist techno-science notion of situated knowledges which will open the conversation up to modes of knowing and positionality. I believe that it is important to *think-with* such notions and their feminist legacy in order to tackle

subjectivity and self, the other and its object(s), to further tackle the questions of what counts as knowledge, who remembers and how do we witness? When put into the terms of “traditional philosophy”, these questions are not related (solely) to epistemology, but to ethics and politics (Haraway, *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective* 1988). Haraway emphasizes the impossibility of being un-biased, including our scientific observations and argumentations, referring to the illusion of impartiality and neutrality in objectivity that hides specific positions of hetero-normativity. Making scientific data free from bias does not provide us with the knowledge of the “real world” and leaves all other positions invalid and subjective.

The notion of situated knowledges, then, as an apparatus to produce a richer world to live in “critical, reflexive relation to our own as well as others’ practices of domination and the unequal parts of privilege and oppression that make up all positions” (Haraway, 579). We, the selves, position ourselves in the world, using this reflexive apparatus, as a way of seeing things. This perspicacity hereby, is mentioned as “ways of life” in Haraway’s “*Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*” where she re-visits seeing not only as a passive instrument but as actively organizing. This particular vision does not produce the sense of self-knowledge, since “subjectivity and vision are both multi-dimensional, partial, split, heterogeneous, incomplete, complex, contradictory, and able to enact only partial connections” (Rogowska-Stangret 2018). Situated knowledges is our tool in knowledge production for a richer, just world. *What* we know then, the objects of knowledge, are likewise active: “The codes of the world are not still, waiting only to be read. The world is not raw material for humanization; [...] the world encountered in knowledge projects is an active entity” (593). However, if I become with many and if the object of my knowledge is also active, then how am I addressable? How I, *the self*, the enactments of agency, is *referable*, and even, *reliable*? If I become with many, how does “the self” become an *individual*, thus, become addressable?

The better start of this discussion would be discussing Weasel’s article on the feminist model of immune system as this article introduces us both to the feminist scientific work and positionality, and also to great discussions on the divide of self/other through Matzinger’s model of immune system. In “Dismantling the Self/Other Dichotomy in Science: Towards a Feminist Model of the Immune System”, Weasel (2001) makes a historical inspection on how the understanding of immune system was developed as a self/other dichotomy during the Second World War and how this model narrated the dichotomy of the “foreign” non-self as hostile and frequently called upon discourses of immunity as metaphors of military defense

strategies. Weasel weaves discussion with Matzinger's model of immune system and how this model exposes the immense weaknesses of self/other model on questions such as why mothers are immunologically tolerant to their fetuses or the potential mechanisms that develop auto-immune diseases. The article presents us a dual conclusion: how the audience of Matzinger affected the reception of her studies and how she was not perceived a witness as a woman scientist, while also arguing that how the danger model of immunity activates the previously passive categories of self and the knowledge of self. This conclusion drives us to appropriate and acknowledge the multiple identities of the community of knowers, and the situated position of each individual while pointing out to the addressability of the subject.

Referring back to Barad and thus, Haraway, bodies are material-semiotic nodes meaning that bodies constitute themselves through material interaction that is already social. As the Matzinger's model of immune system explains, the immune body becomes itself by coming across to the outside phenomena, what is other, then constructs itself through recognizing the other and merging with them. The danger model presents a model of self that is learnt constantly by witnessing outside phenomena, while evaluating danger, promises a way of knowledge that "becomes with" many. Through seeing and recognizing the other and by knowing them, the immune self recognizes itself, becomes itself. There is no strategy to it and there is no happy ending. The self may die if the coming across is unmanageable. But there is no end to the self, as it will continue to become itself, constructing itself through recognizing more of *the outside*. Each and every act of coming across to what is other than itself forms its boundaries over and over again, making the boundaries of bodies materialize in social interaction. As Barad refers to these as "intra-actions", which creates agents in action, Haraway calls them "mapping practices". These practices and what boundaries contain "remains generative, productive of meanings and bodies". But again, there is no promise of happy ending, no easy ride. Boundaries are very tricky and sighting them is a risky practice.

Thus, there is a certain violence to these positioning(s). While we position ourselves in the world, we endure the necessary violence, hence going back to *Our Dog*, pain is inescapable. I am to be marked by life. I am vulnerable and I only become so. In response to this vulnerability, I can quote Haraway: "the split and contradictory self is the one who can interrogate positionings and be accountable, the one who can construct and join rational conversations and fantastic imaginings that change history" (as cited in Weasel, 2001). It would be impossible to discover anything new without agency. Being open to our vulnerability is to accept this unstoppable becoming. Through discovering our positionality and through discovering ways of knowing and seeing, we understand recognition in which I, omit the I, understand

domination and oppression. This notion of agency deviates from the Hegelian notion of recognition that still haunts the contemporary theory. The Hegelian notion of recognition that is always dialogic and or the post-structuralist conceptions which take the subject as mute, unable to look back. However, here, the self is also the non-self. The agency beyond recognition. This unfolds into how *I*, as a corporeal embodiment, always become with what is more or other than myself. Returning to our Haraway quote at the start of this sub-chapter, if the complex network of the cells that are filled with the genomes of bacteria, fungi, protists, and such that constitute the ninety percent of my body, I become with them and I am more-than-human when I consider their agency. I am human, but not only.

As we continue to imply that distinct agencies emerge in intra-action and that the matter and the meaning cannot be severed through the material-semiotic formulation of self in Barad, in their article “A Symbiotic View of Life” Gilbert, Sapp and Tauber (2012) remind us that “we have never been individuals”. As they explain that the notion of symbiosis has become a core principle in contemporary biology, it replaced the notion of the individual and pushed the life sciences to transcend dichotomies of self/non-self, subject/object and etc. Giving Gilbert the credit for taking symbiosis into the discussion of auto-poiesis, the process of self-making, Haraway refers to Margulis’ theorization of symbiosis in *When Species Meet* (2008) , referring to their understanding of the organism as an ecosystem. However, according to her later writings, although auto-poietic systems are hugely interesting "they are not good models for living and dying worlds and their critters" (*Staying with the Trouble*, 33). Poiesis itself is always sym-poietic. Quoting Dempster’s thesis, we can use sym-poiesis for "the systems are evolutionary and have the potential for surprising change" (as cited in Haraway 2016).

Alaimo (2010) describes this as *mutual worlding* and names this material-semiotic mutual becoming as *transcorporeality*. This entanglement(s) constitute different forms of knowledge, learning *the* self also constitutes “making things visible or knowable as an object of care and concern” (The Kilpisjärvi Collective 2021). According to Alaimo (2016), objects are not separated subjects, instead they are always in corresponding position and always sensible (sense-able) to each other. The subject that is always entangled in its transcorporeality, the self that is in complex relationships, recognizes the world to become itself. Witnessing is recognition, and vice versa. As entities engage in the practice of producing multiple versions of materiality, the expression of knowing multiple worlds and encountering each other inquires us to perceive different ways of understanding memory and witnessing, respectively.

1.3 Post-Humanism and New Materialism

The materialism that Barad builds as a foreground takes its fore in studying ontology as the study of *reality*. This understanding of the study of reality that is born out of the material-semiotic analysis of the outside phenomena grew as a way of seeing in contrast to the postmodernism. For new materialist thinking, as Ferraris emphasizes, it is important not to interbreed ontology with epistemology, which otherwise would again create the conception of “there are no objects but only the interpretation of them” (Ferraris 2018). However, it is also not viable to accept that there can be ontology without epistemology. Ontology studies *how* things exist, rather than explaining if they exist or not. Therefore, rather than focusing on the performativity of the discursive, new materialist understanding strives to understand how agents exist and are shaped by the world as it focuses on “performance, embodiment and material practices that expand, complicate and thus recalibrate the subject” (Gundogan İbrisi 2020). As we have discussed in the previous discussion, the post-human subject is understood in its embodied entity and not only in its transcendental consciousness. This embodiment is not entirely biological or socially constructed, rather, our understanding suggests to collapse the existing dualisms which Latour refers to as the Great Divides of modernity.

As a predecessor to the ontological turn in social sciences, posthuman critical theory and post-humanism developed onto post-anthropocentrism and in critique of the Enlightenment and its Western Humanist ideals. Post-anthropocentrism rejects species hierarchy and human exceptionalism while striving to recalibrate the subject outside of human-only worlds. Rosi Braidotti follows Deleuze and Guattari’s neo-materialist philosophy and makes feminist theory and this neo-Spinozist materialism meet each other; writing *The Posthuman* (2013), Braidotti sketches out the main characteristics of this particular understanding: subjectivity is not exclusive to *the human* and we have to develop a vitalist materialism that encompasses non-human agents, and, the posthuman aims to write a politics that enlarges the frame of ethical accountability. Following the neo-materialist immanence which commits to monism and auto-poiesis, all matter is one and the matter is self-organizing, and re-constructing a nomadic subjectivity that is an emphasis of non-unitary subjectivity that includes multitude of “others”, the posthuman succeeded to form successful critique of everything it touches upon. Inspired by post-colonial philosophy and recognizing Fanon’s clear re-interpretation of recognition and subject formation, posthumanist critical theory and thinking develops recognition and subjectivity outside of Hegelian notions of mutual recognition and the subject. Here, subjectivity is a *process ontology*

that includes empirical project of constant experimentation with what contemporary, bio-technologically mediated bodies are capable of *becoming* (New Materialism: Interviews and Cartographies 2012). It is “framed by Spinozist ethics of joy or affirmation, which indexes the processes of becoming onto a relational bond to a multiplicity of others whose well-being affect one’s own” (Posthuman Critical Theory 2018).

According to Sheldon (2015), feminist new materialism that preceded with works of Haraway, Braidotti, Barad, etc. relies on *relationality* which assumes that ideas and things “do not occupy separate ontological orders but instead are co-constituents in the production of the real”. Their epistemology aims to collapse hierarchical dualisms and insists on the *matter*, or say, how things *materialize*. For Barad, matter and discourses are co-constituting “and so asking what knowledge does is always a matter of asking after its ongoing entanglements” (201). Although new materialism divided into two fields including this understanding of ontology and the Object-Oriented Ontology, what they share in common is a successful critique of Kant and correlationism. While Ferraris makes an expansive critique of what he conceptualizes as knowledge-discourse fallacy through contrasting Kantian notion that “perception without concepts are blind”, Delanda also emphasizes that an ontological subjectivity should be Humean rather than Kantian and it should be constituted by sensations of habitual actions experiencing the outside phenomena (2018, Dolphijn ve van der Tuin, New Materialism: Interviews and Cartographies 2012). I consider materialisms that favour concepts of flux, flow, and vibrancy of the matter such as Stengers and Bennett that relies on material-semiotic analysis of the world. Considering our discussions on agency and the self, merging them with new materialist thinking, I want to emphasize what they mean for anthropology. What does being human, but not only, mean for the study of *anthropos* and culture? What is the ontological anthropology, or anthropology of ontologies is formed in conclusion of our discussions? And lastly, why I chose anthropology, and discuss that anthropological study and thinking is our way of thinking about and with witnessing, and thus, politics?

1.4 More-than-Human and Anthropology of Ontologies

Tackling the troubled categories of both woman and human, Donna Haraway manifested a way of living that is out of tune with categories of salvation history. The cyborg is the manifestation of the post-humanist agent who is invested in discov-

ering its own boundaries and infesting new ones while also being committed to “partiality, irony, intimacy, perversity” through being “oppositional, utopian and completely without innocence” (A Cyborg Manifesto 1991). The cyborg is an inter-species being that becomes with many and involves in inter-species relations, as Haraway explains: “I love that when *I* die, all these benign and dangerous symbionts will take over and use whatever left of *my* body, if only for a while, since *we* are necessary to one another in real time” (When Species Meet 2008, 4). What is crucial in Cyborg Manifesto as a text is that Haraway succeeds to position the agent between –phobia and –philia, between 1, who would represent *the* creator, and the “2”, who would represent the relentless Other; cyborg is always in between, standing in its inter and trans-modulations, refusing to disappear. The cyborg makes kin, gets into interspecies companionships, noticing their own nature-cultures, since it believes that nature cannot pre-exist its conditions.

In relation to the cyborg figure, Haraway wrote of companionship, referring to her dog Ms Cayenne Pepper, regarding symbiogenesis and how Cayenne and her cells make up each other in the material-semiotic flesh. I materialize this companionship with Ms Nora, the cat I happened to live with, as she roams around the keyboard of my laptop while I press down the buttons then go on to eat the biscuit with her bacterium on the tip of my fingers. If we play hide and seek and if I happen to stop suddenly, she bites my ankle to drive me into another round; I carry the bacteria of her tongue everywhere, I sweat them inside of my pores. From the frequency of her “meowing” I understand what she demands me to do. I change my materiality accordingly, position myself and structure my motives according to her needs. She is more reluctant to mine; I must admit that we have spoiled her! But when I shriek in high pitch, she shortens her claws and loosens her jaw during biting to play with me. Before she was our homely companion, I was severely allergic to dust; unintentionally, my cells were immuno-therapized by kissing and caressing her always-dusty fur. She accompanies and constantly changes *our* material-semiotic existence, my way of life, living. I am her witness, I constantly become *us*, dusty and bacterial.

Companion comes from *cum panis*, with bread, explains Haraway, and as a verb, *to companion* means to consort, to keep company; species as in using a discourse of our biological link in explaining our kin and kind. Species is both the specific and, as its own opposite, also refers to a class of individuals. It is a way of explaining *ethos*, the way of living as Geertz explains (as cited in Bird-Rose & van Dooren, 2017), “the tone, character, and quality of life”, a “moral and aesthetic style and mood”. Bird-Rose and van Dooren (2017) integrate Geertz’s conceptualization of

ethos and articulates *ēthea*⁶ to calibrate how we use species as distinctive border-making/agency building notion, not to use it in order to reify difference, but rather to “pay attention to what makes life forms unique”. It is the reality of making kin through inter-species relationalities that position us in our *becoming with(s)*, to enter the world of these becoming with(s) “where who and what are at stake” (When Species Meet, 19). This reality is also a critique of the animal turn that grew in social sciences and philosophy, popularized by Derrida’s famous rhetorical question: “and say the animal responded?”. Haraway responds to Derrida, humorously asking “and say the philosopher responded?”, criticizing his lack of searching for other kinds of *response*, although he does not fall into the trap of making the subaltern speak.

Praising him the most curious of philosophers and able to be so, Haraway criticizes Derrida for not using the chance to be other-worldly, not responding back to his cat, and instead heading towards the Western philosophy he is so embedded in and theorize shame. Although Derrida in the later chapter, in “And Say the Animal Responded?”, solemnly criticizes the kind of representations, of Lacan mostly, to refer to animals as “the animal” and being absent from making dogmatic assumptions solely based on presumptions, and to engage animals only as literary and mythological figures, Derrida concentrates on *his* shame. Derrida follows what he criticized of Lacan (The Animal That Therefore I Am, 124-125) by focusing on *his* desire, hereby shame, thus, recognizing the subject of that is cat’s, however, leaving it *mute* by not responding back and seeking no formula for that response. Haraway’s overall criticism resembles mine: “Even if the cat did not become a symbol of all cats, the naked man’s shame quickly became a figure for the shame of philosophy before all of the animals” (When Species Meet, 23). Critique of Cartesian commentary of determined semiotic power of the animal, which is not-even-language according to Lacan, and noticing the multitude of *ethos* by not injecting it into what Lacan called the animal non-subject, Derrida’s emphasis on the animal question paves our way into question the witnessing of the animal that *we* are. As I promise to return to this conversation in a much more critical manner, which will expand on this discussion and witness in Chapter 3.5, I also promise to expand on Haraway’s other crucial criticism of Derrida: As Derrida seeks out the definition of *Truth* in Lacan and criticizes it, Haraway presents another definition of truth that is material-semiotic (2008, 26), seek out and played out further by many field biologists like Jane Goodall, Smuts, Bateson etc. Haraway insists: the material truth of the communication lies in looking back and to greeting our significant others. Again and again!

These multispecies greetings and the idea of becoming with others as agents has

⁶*ēthea*: Plural of *ethos*

the potential to meld the Great Divide that forms today's ontology according to Latour. In *We Have Never Been Modern* (2020), Latour traces back the emergence of modern ontology which separates the persons and things, and nature and society, emphasizing that humanism alone is not enough to explain modernity. Still we have hybrids and they proliferate, between the two pillars that form modernity: the purification (into categories) and the translation process which mediates categories. Of the modern times that create asymmetries, Latour writes an analysis that is symmetrical into the worlds of Hobbes and Boyle, proving that when it comes to studying the collectives (networks in his discourse) we can build such symmetries with parallel analysis. In this modern classification of other-than-human, which is the things, the objects and the animal, Latour emphasizes that it is anthropology what has been the most competent of tackling "foreign collectives". Figuring out the connections between forces of play such as "distribution of powers among human beings, gods, and nonhumans; the procedures for reaching agreements; the connections between religion and power; ancestors; cosmology; property rights; plant and animal taxonomies", the ethnographer will not write a "three separate books: one dealing with knowledge, another with power, yet another with practices. She will write a single book. . ." (2020, 22). Latour exemplifies Descola's thinking with the Amazon Achuar in "La nature domestique. Symbolisme et praxis dans l'écologie des Achuar" as a monograph of this kind.

I truly agree with Latour on the competency of anthropology in studying such foreign collectives, networks and entanglements (many namings of similar ontologies). I also believe that reworking and analyzing Descola's anthropology with the Achuar is a great introduction to what characterizes ontological anthropology and how it connects to our previous discussions. In order to support a similar cause, Guzmán-Gallegos (2019) re-reads Descola's monograph and become interested in the "omissions" and "cracks" that reveal alternative ensembles of relations between plants, humans and animals, in spite of disciplinary constraints. Latour praises Descola through his monograph with the Achuar and his analysis of foreign collectives as he succeeds to expand "the social" and "the common we" into other worldings⁷, other than human worldings. Following this, I would like to praise Descola and reflect the study of ontologies in his ethnography through acknowledging his analysis of animism as an extension of "the social". This acknowledgement sustains Descola to argue that humanness is not something that defies the Achuar but rather it is a shared condition between and of species. Guzmán-Gallegos reminds us the common critique to Descola that puts emphasis on how his matrix relies heavily on "universal" binary oppositions. This matrix procured via Descola's ontological regimes and modes of identification "deriving from distinction between interiority and physical-

ity used as axes along which humans may establish continuities and discontinuities between themselves and their non-human counterparts” (Guzmán-Gallegos 2019, 9). If so, ends of this axes become the animism and naturalism.

In their analysis of Descola’s anthropology and his own reinterpretation of the monograph, in “Philippe Descola: Thinking with the Achuar and the Truna in Amazonia” Guzmán-Gallegos (2019) summarizes Descola’s *La Selva Culta* as a monograph that focuses on “the relation between natural domains, consanguinity, affinity and marriage, this book’s rich descriptions show the Achuar’s understandings of non-human sociability” as the book gives insights to mutually constitutive assemblies of which human, plants and animals form part. Descola manages to break down the great divides, dualistic conceptions, by formulating concepts such as totemism, “assumption that others have similar interiority and exteriority” (Kohn, *Anthropology of Ontologies* 2015, 317). Hereby, he breaks distinctions between exteriority and interiority, striving to acknowledge the investment by humans and nonhumans to procure hybrid forms of living. And nevertheless, the master code is between humans and nonhumans in Descola’s work, not between human male and female. According to Eduardo Kohn (2015), one of the crucial characteristics that would design an “ideal” ontological anthropology is being *metaphysical*: ontological anthropology can be defined as “the nonreductive ethnographic exploration of realities that are not necessarily socially constructed in ways that allows us to do conceptual work with them” (315). These models can be exemplified as totemism, animism, naturalism and analogism in Descola’s anthropology. Rereading Descola in parallel with this definition, what stands Descola’s prominence is his vision of anthropology: not as *thick descriptions*⁷ of practices, but effectively developing comparative and deductive models of objects.

Rick Dolphijn explains the ontological turn in social sciences, dominantly in anthropology as:

“Instead of exploring what phenomena and objects represent or symbolize within a given cultural system, anthropological work aligned with the ontological turn investigates the multifarious actions of objects and people, the networks that enable agency to unfold and for facts to become cogent. Bodies (human and animal), plants, weather, tools, affordances, imaginary beings and elemental materialities might all be considered on the same existential plane, equally necessary to make reality real.” (the *Ontological Turn* 2018, 304)

⁷The term thick descriptions used here as a method of doing ethnography, explained by Clifford Geertz, which focuses on symbolic and interpretive anthropology

Ontological turn in anthropology, thus, works with these entanglements, networks, collectives where and when multi-species presences meet. Kohn emphasizes that anthropology of this particular turn are reactions to conceptual challenges and contradictions arise in contemporary anthropological thinking; it is a deviation from the Kantian reorientation “which kept philosophy from appreciating great outdoors” (Anthropology of Ontologies, 315). As Latour wrote ANT (Actor-Network Theory) regarding non-human agency and the hybridity of objects in such entanglements of the human and non-human, studying affect which emphasizes that objects are best understood in action gained wide currency. It lacks vibrancy where actants (Latour’s non-human agents) are in relation in these networks, however, I find Dolphijn’s (2018) criticism of ANT theory caricaturized yet viable: “An object is nothing more than the alliances it can support, defeat, foster or resist— and like any actant cannot be reduced to a play of deeper structures, especially not linguistic ones (language too often gets dismissed as immaterial; it is not)” (the Ontological Turn, 305).

Referring to both Latour and Descola’s work, and also re-analysing de Castro’s anthropology, Kohn strives to re-orient ontological anthropology. What Kohn drives forth is both contrary but also complementary to such anthropologies: “selves, not things, qualify as agents” (How Forests Think 2013). Emphasizing that “telos, representation, intentionality, and selfhood still need to be accounted for”, referring to his argument that “resistance is not agency”. In How Forests Think, Kohn discovers entanglements and inter-species relations in their meaning-making processes in the framework of ontological anthropology, which perforce ethnography, thus, arguing that selves are a “product of a specific relational dynamic that involves absence, future, and growth, as well as the ability for confusion. And this emerges with and is unique to living thoughts” (2013, 92). Following de Castro’s perspectivism and metaphysical ideal of ontological anthropology, Kohn defines ontology as the study of reality and re-calibrates representation in anthropology. Rather than focusing on the representation of people on reality, or forcing anthropology to limit itself to asking how people see the world, Kohn insists that life is intrinsically semiotic and the living non-humans are also able to represent themselves. Thus, rather than searching for human representations of reality, anthropology should focus on studying the reality and seek out the relationalities between selves, which Kohn refers to as: the ecology of selves.

This particular ontological anthropology strives in self-comprehension to understand others, similarly, “how other kind of beings see us matters”. Culture is an open whole, according to Kohn, and if we can succeed in acknowledging representational processes as something unique to and even synonymous with life, we can situate

ways of being in this world. Hereby, all life is semiotic and semiosis is alive. Life thinks and thoughts are alive. Our bodies are a product of semiosis. “Self” is also a product of semiosis. Where there are living thoughts, there are selves, and these selves are in entanglements, in *trans-species pidgins*. Although Kohn’s description and reconstruction of ontological anthropology seems heavily complex at first, I believe that Kohn succeeds in recalibrating the aim of ontological anthropology and finds an ultimate ground for it. What he does is to bring a new perspective into the study of *relationalities*, that is the bound of agency in post-humanist thinking, and re-grounds it in the efforts of the study of ontology, studying them in the framework of culture, what he calls the Open Whole.

Kohn uses Peirce’s theory of semiotics, that is formed by a triad of thinkings, Kohn insists that our way of thinking has been colonized by language and the living share relationalities that are beyond symbolic. The living shares basic non-symbolic sign processes, which constructs out symbolic references. Therefore, in understanding non-human selves and how to interpret them, the choice is not between (animal) bodies and (human) meanings. Previously calling it the anthropology of life, because of its reliance on Peirce’s semiotics, Kohn called this anthropology: anthropology of more-than-human. An anthropology invested in radically rethinking the human while it accepts re-defines the anthropologist’s position as the human, understanding our *the life semiotic* through comprehension and observation of reality. Semiotic processes work through the present and possible futures that are represented by signs. Life of signs work through presences but also absences, “all kinds of signs in some way or other re-present what is not present” (How Forests Think, 23). Humans are not the only knowers and humans are not the only ones living for the sake of a future. In these inter-species and trans-species semiotics, life of thoughts depends on these absences and even confusion, states Kohn.

Concluding our conversation of the more-than-human and anthropology of ontologies, studying Kohn’s perspective of ontological anthropology might lead us to a summary of this subchapter and its relation to the previous ones. According to him, we can re-think relationality, since selves are semiotic and relationality is also semiotic yet not always language-like. We form relationalities and transgress and transform boundaries by self-comprehension and then in these *pidgins*, where ontological boundaries become blurred. Our “aboutness” gets into this transformative process of blurring called becoming, through getting to know others’ “aboutness”. Lastly, since semiotic thinking is also constructed by absences as much as presence, not-knowing as much as knowing *the other* matters in the construction of selves and witnessing other selves. As also referred by Kohn, Thomas Nagel famously asked, “What is it like to be a bat?” and had a decisive negative answer of “we cannot

know". So, it is not about knowing or sensing what is it like to be a bat, but rather "the belief that we can know the intentions, goals and desires of other selves that allows us to act in this world" (Kohn 2007, 7), and thus form relationalities and witness.

2. THE UNTHINKABLE CATASTROPHE

horse heart hyena heart swan spine
silver fish shin -in in black
water yes timber wolf tooth yes
pity the ark with its belly
full of glow -in tongues
touch the lion's paw only while
it sleeps the red -tailed hawk
with jewels for eyes swallows
the field mouse and the mouse
was the only proof the field
existed what else will be
forgotten the hawk will starve
soon we will starve soon the
dogs will howl like a god
learning the word for light
and nothing will howl back

C.T. Salazar 'Noah's Nameless Wife Takes Inventory'

2.1 The “Anthropo”cene

I am an earth person. I am just another kid of my generation who feel closest to at least one of the Aristotelian divide of elements in the cartoon series *Avatar: The Last Airbender*. And although I would die to be a cool air bender, I am very much earth-bound. I know that the earth, air, water and fire comes to no divide but there is no sensation that is more healing to my body than to enter a forest and put my hands on its lively, breathing soil; I imagine the mycorrhizal networks underneath that holds everything in its place and make them know each other. I do get familiar with it too. Whenever I lay down on grassland, I cannot help but feeling that I am laying on this planetary world I would like to word as forest. Since I was a little kid, we have made yearly visits to my mother’s hometown, where I also call my own hometown, Artvin. This city is known for its greenery, forests and abundant soil. Its peoples are renowned for their fondness and devotion to their freedom, which is a notion that many of them define as *ability to breathe* and *move around plateaus*. Artvin is the only city in Turkey that does not have an organized industrial zone and most of its plateaus are biosphere reserves under protection. Even amidst the city, you can follow a path that rails to the outskirts of the mountain, since the city is built on a slope, and manage to taste multiple kinds of fruits and encounter different species of animals along the way. For the last ten years, those paths remain no more. Artvin’s urban centre is a blasted landscape with multiple mining activities. Its other topographies have been spoiled by HEPPs (Hydroelectric power plants) and other recurring dam projects that violate its ancestral ecology. It is the end of living in Artvin, living the life we have accustomed to live, as we know it.

After living the first eighteen years of my life in a brutal concrete chaos that I call Istanbul, I have moved to Ankara to study in Middle East Technical University. The university holds the widest territory of a forest area in any university campus in Middle East and Europe, even holding this record as the widest forest area in Central Anatolia. Normally as a steppe, METU forest is a student-constructed one. It is officially a pine grove, not actually a forest, as some ecologists would suggest. Nevertheless, it is a forest we walk to every week. It is the place where we go to seclude and to feel the earth, encounter foxes and dogs, watch birds. The campus does not possess a forest, but it is seen by its students that the forest possesses a campus of just a several buildings. As a school that is both famous for and also traumatized by its socialist past, METU is known also for its ecological activism, both by its academics and also of its students. However, after its business center TEKNOKENT was built, METU lost this reputable character as an ecology.

Founded in 2000 and co-owned by Defense Industry Agency, this immense zone inside the campus caused the cutting down of the willow forests that cover the second circle of the campus territory. This was a huge strike for the anti-militarist principles of the ecology of the school that consists of students, professors, workers and etc. that are invested in keeping the school a lively, peaceful, breathing territory.

Throughout the 2000s, Campus started to suffer constant environmental degradation and oppression by the Justice and Development Party government and Melih Gökçek, mayor of Ankara, who decided to build a road through the METU forest in 2017. This was the second project of a traffic road, disrupting the forest, however, the students were quick to respond as the first project in 2013 was heavily protested and resulted in many students arrested for accusations of violence against the police. As METU Environmental Society, when we heard the decree of the road plan and mapping of the construction, we struck shut: the road was planned to be built on the most abundant and lively micro-forest in the forest area of the campus⁸. Compared to the predominant pine forests of the campus, this particular zone had species of hawthorns, wild pears and almond trees that are endemic to steppe habitat. We felt the unease and frustration just by thinking about the animals of the area and many that will be dispossessed and die. After several protests, one night around 3 A.M., a friend camping on the site heard some voices of drilling and woke up to four heavy machinery waiting by his tent. In following days, the protests continued with the effect of this shock until we have won the case against the construction project.

Although the road was not constructed fully, it was already drilled and the trees were logged as the forest floor was paved until the morning of that shocking night. Melih Gökçek announced proudly in his Twitter page that they have broken a record by ripping almost 4,5 kilometers of forest floor that night alone. I remember vividly that after the night of October 8, we started to see changes around the campus life. You would put a cup of soda beside the sidewalk and wasps and honeybees would form an immediate and aggressive swarm around it. There were bees everywhere and even a person who is not acquainted with the bees would understand the frustration reflected by them. We started seeing more and more foxes in our hikes around the forest areas close to the main campus and even some foxes around the faculty buildings. We were afraid of the coming effect of this on the bird and butterfly lives of the forest, since the campus held 249 species of bird and 126 butterfly species⁹, 4 of the butterfly species endemic to the campus forest. We were glad that only 4

⁸Although the macro-forest of the campus is mostly a human-made pine grove, the forest also consists of many micro-forests that are endemic to steppe, one human-made pond beside the old and now out of service dam, Lake Eymir, and many other micro-habitats.

⁹ODTÜ'nün Doğası, 2020, Doğa Koruma Merkezi, Editors: Can, Tuğba, Zeydanlı, Uğur

kilometres were lost and we saved a floor of approximately 8 kilometres of the forest, yet, we could not help but feeling that things were out of touch and there was an oncoming death around the forest we cannot even comprehend. We could not stop it. The damage done was incurable.

I am imagining this microcosm and stretching my grief out into a planet that is heavily violated. We are losing lives we cannot even barely comprehend. The Earth is exploited and expropriated. Everything we love is being trashed; *our* bodies and landscapes blasted. And still, our affinities strive to be joyful and we succeed to wake up every day. I cannot help but be amazed when I put my ear on Nora's tummy and hear her fast beating kitten heart inside her little chest. I feel that I am levitated every time I walk into a hive and enchanted by the lovely swarm of bees. Every morning I wake up and take a little run around the seashore where the water is mucilage-d and the air is nothing but exhaust gas and construction dust. Sometimes the world gets so black and white that I see death *or* life everywhere. "Dying is an art", Silvia Plath would say. What is living, then? All I know is that life goes on until it stops. And in between, I am *shimmered*¹⁰ by it, and I *grieve* it. But at that time, we were constantly frustrated by the events and were ashamed of grieving, or as we scorned it, of being sad. We loved being angry because it gave us the rush that we needed to fight back, to *fight like hell*. And I still believe that it is good to *make a fuss*¹¹. But if anger is healthy because it shows us that we care, that we think, that it helps us draw boundaries, then what is the use of anger without mourning our losses? Why were we so alienated and out of touch from the things we fought to keep alive?

In my undergraduate years at METU, I studied political science and public administration as my bachelor's degree; our program is based heavily on Marxist theory, political philosophy and political geography. Although my political science education gave me the utmost ability to critique, analyze political complexity of the pre-figurative, which made me the knowledgeable anarchist I am today, and to talk about Hegel for hours on end, it did not prepare me for the violence of capitalism in literality. Addressing capitalism for the present ecological destruction does not require us to accept the standard narrative of capitalism as being about the free market. Stengers shares the same anxieties and explains that "to say that capitalism may be described as exploitation is making capitalism into a purely human question, but capitalism is also a story of expropriation" (Anthropologists Are Talking

¹⁰I borrowed Deborah Bird-Rose's use of "shimmering", described by the Indigenous Yolngu term bir'yun, which translates as "brilliant" or "shimmering". (see Bird-Rose, *Shimmer: When All You Love is Being Trashed* 2017)

¹¹This is a reference to the brilliant book *Women Who Make a Fuss*, written by Stengers & Despret

– About Capitalism, Ecology, and Apocalypse 2018). Here, Stengers refers to Anna Tsing's description of alienation as a notion close to what she refers as expropriation: being separated from what makes you alive.

Can there be a happy ending after such damage? Homeless bees of the campus made us think every day about their idleness, without a place to go, separated from the plants they pollinate in order to live and make life. Capitalism is "the history of the human concentration of wealth through making both humans and nonhumans into resources for investment", describes Anna Tsing (2015). When an asset can no longer be produced, places can be abandoned, left blasted. Just like the mines drilled on the hills of Artvin; those now-active mines are future ruins that will remain there indefinitely. In every act of violence, we sense that there may not be a happy ending. Then why bother waking up in the morning? And how have we imagined this moment when we were past time? Scranton (2020) reflects my anxieties by writing that "the hardest thing about seeing our future is how much we think we know about our world, and how little we know about ourselves". It is hard to imagine a place away from colonization and a geography untouched by capitalism. As Nils Bubandt (2018) phrased it the best, how do we live in and study a "present in a world where the future is not what it used to be"?

Capitalism already lives in its ruins, and although it might be impossible to find non-capitalistic places, un-capitalist value systems are everywhere. Emphasizing this, Anna Tsing attends to disturbance based ecologies, searching for hope and possibility of life in capitalist ruins, and observe matsutake mushrooms and their pickers in the blasted landscapes of Japan. With contested present and future(s), our life now is without a promise of stability, and maybe, it always was. However, capitalist tales of progress cannot sustain itself anymore. Here, Tsing asks: how can capitalism live without assuming progress? What if precarity is the condition of our times? Concluding that "neither tales of progress nor ruin tell us how to think about our collective survival", in *The Mushroom at the End of The World* (2015), Tsing focuses on the unpredictable and unplanned encounters that transforms us through matsutake mushrooms. "Indeterminacy is frightening", she says, "but through this precarity we understand that it is what makes life possible". Defined as being vulnerable to others, precarity reminds us that we have to change according to circumstances, in order to make survival possible. This is collaboration. Meaning working across difference and pain, which leads to contamination. We need help, with or without intention!

Unintentional does not equal to irresponsibility. Still we mind being able and willing to response, hereby, response-ability. However, thinking at the edge of extinction

and excruciating distortion of livelihood on the face of earth, mostly caused by humans, who is *responsible*? If everyone is a bad guy, who is the worst? The name *Anthropocene*'s gift is to make us rethink what *Anthropos* is. It forces sciences, especially anthropology, to become relevant, to understand the world faced with human induced disaster. While we talk about *global warming* on an Earth that is not even a *globe*, Scott (2016) reminds us that the Earth is not a unified space and that the effects of climate change are not experienced uniformly over the anisotropic surface. Although Anthropocene is now the widely accepted naming and the narrative for this geological period, I refrain from calling it an epoch, and there has been many to criticize it too, including its forbearers. Furtherly, Marxist human ecologists and environmental historians have been strong critics of the narrative. As Malm (2014) suggests, basic facts of violence on environment are not reconcilable with a view of humankind as the new geological agent. "Humanity seems far too slender an abstraction to carry the burden of causality", he says. I do agree with Malm on the point that if not narrated critically, Anthropocene might not challenge "the business-as-usual" and it might overlook the differential sufferings.

Instead, Malm used Capitocene, and Jason Moore later historicized the term, to describe the narrative, pointing out that uneven distribution is a condition for *the very existence* of fossil-fuel technologies. Although Malm argues that Capitocene succeeds to reflect the differentiated vulnerabilities of humankind effected by climate change, Capitocene falls short to invent a narrative of an epoch that contextualizes violence and expropriation on the face of the Earth, with their relation to the complex relationalities between the living. Haraway (2016) appreciates Capitocene criticism of Anthropocene, shining light on the potential and certain dexterity to responding to contemporary inspections, Capitocene also has its trappings of modernity, progress and history. Anthropocene is polluted with narratives of tech-fix, business-as-usual and *somebody save the world* narratives, that is for sure. However, I believe that it might carry potentials to drive us into radically thinking what *Anthropos* is. Not as an epoch. And maybe not by accepting humans as a geological force, but by counting them as a power of disturbance, while never failing to mind the critical positionalities and class relations that triggers the very existence of such disturbance. Anthropocene marks severe discontinuities, as I mentioned before: a sense of "what comes after will not be like what came before". Scott (2016) argues, that would not make humankind as altogether a geological force or the central actor of an epoch. Rather, we can argue that Anthropocene is a geological event and even a transition time "where we are not coded into the history of ages that are very much biblical", ending in destruction. Although some argue that apocalypse can be rather a useful trope for the rush that this geological

event requires and its etymological meaning pointing to "uncovering and disclosing" (see Latour, Stengers et al. 2018, Scranton 2020), it does not solely make change possible.

Throughout this work, I will be using the term *Anthropocene* to point out to this transformation time since I believe that the term slightly outweighs its criticisms. As this thesis aims to understand how we form politics and which methods we may apply to recalibrate them in the face of such disturbance, I am "less interested in an authoritative redefinition of the term and its totality than in helping to propel its radicalization" (Howe ve Pandian 2020). Through figuring out politics and through recalibrating it, I firmly believe that thinking through memory and witnessing and their (already) more-than-human repercussions might help us answer our questions such as: Why are humans so bad at acknowledging climate change? Who is guilty? How can we construct the common we? What can we learn from non-human animals and the living about politics? etc. I do agree with Haraway's Chthulucene as it focuses on speculative fabulation and storytelling for survival. We need to re-iterate old and new songs about the ground. The time's, whatever name we name it, may not be "restricted to the too-big players in the too-big stories of Capitolocene or Anthropocene", but again, the past is as much the contested zone as the present or future" (Staying with the Trouble, 42) . In order to focus on our experiences of the trouble, of the violent happenings of *the time*, of catastrophes, we need to figure out its temporalities and how do we memorize it, only to re-member it. How are we marked by memory and how do we retain memory? Then we can return to figure out our meaning-making of them, our witnessings, and how to form speculations to tell stories of the ground, of *us*.

2.2 The Unthinkable: Temporality(s) and Scales

How do we scale a catastrophe? How to recognize anyone affected by the violence and how to not leave anyone behind? How do we memorize and perceive the catastrophe and somehow witness all the scales it is constituted of? After that, how do we recognize witnesses and how do we form dialogue through our testimonies? In *The Witness and The Archive* (1999), Agamben refers to the time when he was criticized for dealing with the "unsayable nature" of Shoah. What did the critics refer to when they describe the nature of Shoah as "unsayable"? When we compare all the names given to the genocidal catastrophe, referring to the catastrophe as "Jewish extermination by the Nazi Party" or Holocaust or Shoah makes an incredi-

ble difference because they either underline a difference on scale of the happening or undermines the victims and separates them solely to the Jewish population. Agamben answers his critics by emphasizing that “to say that Auschwitz is "unsayable" or "incomprehensible" is equivalent to adoring in silence”, as one would do with an incomprehensible god, “regardless of one’s intentions, this contributes to its glory” (1999, 32). We cannot not remember. Survivor testimonies of Shoah referring to the “unimaginable” violence is my reference for building up our discussions on scalability of climate catastrophe. Events that are referred to as “unsayable”, as I will be mentioning later, often times require “an unconscious demand to justify a death that is sine cause – to give meaning to what seemed incomprehensible” (Agamben 1999, 32).

Such attributes can be related to the Anthropocene/Capitolocene discussions or naming climate change as global warming. The climate catastrophe, the present disturbance and violation of the Earth, is a series of events that can be articulated with various names. Such particular events not always go bad or worse, but they do not go backwards in parallel with our efforts too. There are several times in history where humans managed to remedy their violent actions toward the Earth, such as the ban of ozone depleting chemicals in order to leave ozone layer to regenerate itself. Humans managed to succeed: the ozone will regenerate itself by 2045. However, we already know that concomitantly that the holes in the ozone layer have not been dispersed evenly over the Earth. The ozone hole over Tibet in 2006 and 2018 would be an important example for this uneven dispersion. While Tibet holds lesser carbon footprint than many of the European countries that are responsible for realizing ozone depleting chemicals, Tibetan people are exposed to the effects of the overall catastrophe more than any other citizen in Central Europe.

How can we measure such unequal dispersion and seek out remedies through an ethics that values all the living? In characterizing hyperobjects, such as global warming, Morton describes them as “non-local”. After the mediation of a particular event, a bomb for an example, each witness gives a unique account of the bomb since no single witness experiences the entire bomb. Shoah, the Holocaust, changes its scale for the camp survivors as it changes scale in their belatedness. As we talk about happenings that are embedded in their complexity, their scale and our understanding of the space-time of events gives their “unimaginable” nature as an addition to the nature-culture of catastrophe. Our mediation, the process that enables witnessing to be belated, “splits time and carries the temporality of the event forward into the future” (Richardson 2020).

Acknowledging the embeddedness of space-time matterings and dealing with the

problem of scale and temporality by bringing the more-than-human into the continuum can confront our questions. According to Morton (2013), hyperobjects, such as climate change, are responsible for the end of the world. They provide irreducibilist thinking presenting us scalar dilemmas, which thing is the most real becomes impossible to think. Not to use as a strict characterization, but to understanding space-time in accordance with intersubjectivities, which are just local manifestations of interobjectivities, Morton's definition of hyperobjects can pilot our discussions on the scalability and temporality of environmental catastrophe. According to Morton, hyperobjects have viscosity, meaning that although they carry unreality, seem unimaginable, their symptoms are vivid and painful (32). In addition to their non-locality, "global warming" has "temporal undulation" since hyperobjects are time-stretched, they are impossible to hold in mind. Once we become aware, its temporality undulates the smaller objects around us (65), just like any catastrophe creating ruptures between epochs, so that people change time or pass time to another. They are "phased", so there are an inevitable distance between them and their indexical signs, but that abyss translates interactions, for example: "I become aware that a flock of birds on the lake is resting there because of global warming" (79). Although I perceive my analysis through feminist and queer ontologies that focuses on assemblages and relationalities, and prefer them over the strict modulations of Object-Oriented Ontology, I believe that stretching the characterizations of hyperobjects into their complexities can help us with our discussions of temporality and scalability.

Time is always space-time. Temporality is not separated from our corporeality. We do not sense age, for example, we sense our aging body. But what is the time of memory? How can we position the living beings, us, amidst a catastrophe that is also a catastrophe to come. The viscosity and temporal undulation that define climate catastrophe is bound to the temporal complexities of assemblages. As I referred to it in the previous discussion, Anthropocene can be referred to as a time of transition, and a period with no coming back before it, time of extinctions. Anthropocene retains complex structures and assemblages in which we are always drifting in between. Both temporally and in scales. In *Complexity Turn* (2005), Urry explains this with chaos theorem and idea of emergence that is central to this complexity. Climate events in the Anthropocene beholds "non-linear consequences that are non-reducible to the very many individual component that compromise such activities" (5). Environmental catastrophe's characteristics emerge from their micro-dynamics, nevertheless not reducible to them. Breaking down the duality of chaos and order, the flow of time results in unstable futures, stabilizing what Tsing characterized as the situation of our times: precarity.

The accumulation of disorder for a certain catastrophe such as the climate one, the justifiable question might be this: how do we sense and memorize the change, accumulation of disorder, and how then, can we witness to the catastrophe? Temporality is not chronology or historicity. How then can we make meaning of the events and disorder that accumulate through the flow of time? Shiho Satsuka (2018) emphasizes *koto* as an ontology of living: developed by Bin Kimura, the term refers to “events that are experienced temporally in interactions but that evade spatial reification into consciousness” (80). On the other hand, *mono* is translated as *events* by Satsuka, and it emphasizes *things*. While temporality of things requires spatialized representation and made visible through scales, *koto* take place simultaneously without being captured by human consciousness. But *mono* and *koto* are inseparable. *Mono* emerges with the constant happenings of *koto*, and *koto* is only sensible through timing of contact, encounters, coordination between other beings. Then realizing catastrophe is only possible through dialogue. In the face of frightening indeterminacy, if we through precarity we understand what makes life possible (Tsing 2015, 21) or the assemblages that form life, we are to study art of noticing. Noticing that this is a more-than-human witnessing does not require an anthropomorphic effort to ask the questions if the non-human ones do. All living sense and change accordingly to the “difference” they sense in their ethos. All species play to learn and learn to play, in order to adapt into life through ethos. To understand our different worldings, we must be in play with different temporalities, contaminated with multiple space-time.

Following Haraway and my insistence on writing stories of the Earth, of us, Tsing reminds us that we can make the strong claim and make our listening and storytelling a method (2015, 37). And just through this argument, Tsing encourages me to tackle The Unthinkable, the unimaginable catastrophe. Here, naming both the chapter and the catastrophe as the Unthinkable, I make an undercover reference to (and a critique of) Kant’s *unthinkable*¹². Empiricism never working for *knowing* the reality of the world, Kant argues that when we try to make sense of the world, it is always through our concepts. Not only making *us* and *our* concepts already and very much human on a maxim, not making sense of the reality of the world, and say of the environmental catastrophe, it makes our minds passive in placing knowing outside of habitual actions. As I have argued before both in Chapter 1.3 and Chapter 1.4, this conceptual framework of thinking *things*, thinking of reality of the impossibility of thinking it, drove ways of knowing, such as anthropology, away from appreciating great outdoors” (Kohn, 315). However, referring to the environmental catastrophe

¹²Further discussion can be read in this article: Braver, Lee. 2015. "Thoughts on the Unthinkable." *Parrhesia* 24: 1-16.

as the Unthinkable and arguing against the notion, is always a reference to what I explained as the unsayable nature of Shoah at the start of this chapter and my utmost desire to make meaning of what seems comprehensible. I do not aim to argue against the unthinkable nature of environmental catastrophe by thinking through anthropocentrism. However, it is another aim of theorizing a more-than-human witnessing, to think-through environmental catastrophe, to figure its ways of being so that we can dis-figure it to re-figure emancipatory ways.

We are to make kin and tell the stories of Earth, which I will present as emancipatory testimonies and thus, form of politics, to present my theory of the more-than-human witnessing. Just like the Anthropocene, as a term for the situated human impact on Earth, Haraway (2016) reflects Tsing's commentary on capitalist ways of knowing the environmental catastrophe: "the scales are global because the models are global", although the Earth has never been a globe. Earth's assemblages are "open-ended gatherings" according to Tsing (2015, 23), they are patterns of unintentional coordination, born out of the interplay of temporal rhythms and scale in the divergent lifeways that gather. There is always a rush of this diversity, these stories, and they cannot be neatly summed up. Tsing still encourages us to give in to "the rush of stories' power as a science". Arts of noticing, an ethics of looking back and looking around, are unable to scale up without changing methods of tackling the outside world, explains Tsing (*The Mushroom at the End of the World*, 37). What I interpret of it, it is a call for dis-figuring capitalist ways of acknowledging the world. I would like to remind what I have emphasized about the space-time of the catastrophe: If we consider our arguments on the Anthropocene and the destructive experiences, I remain firm on the fact that "global" as a frame for shared experience is inadequate. Bond, de Bruyn and Rapson (2017) emphasize the crucial need for conceptualizing "planetary memory". They argue that planetary memory enables us to "join macro-, meso- and microscopic perspectives" by "registering the literary inscription of individual and collective memories of climate change experience alongside the growing archive of vanishing landscapes and species that characterize the nonhuman universe of the Anthropocene" (10).

In its depth, space-time of the environmental catastrophe have to be re-calibrated especially if we are to celebrate our need for the new ways of thinking that are compatible with the growing consciousness of the Anthropocene and thus, allow us to realize human disturbance on the planet "while thinking the human on multiple and incommensurable scales simultaneously" (Chakrabarty 2009). In order to discover our complexities and the complexity of the catastrophe, we have to dis-figure the temporal frames of hetero-normative re-production and capitalist modulation, which are always intertwined. In explaining the aim of queer-ing temporalities, Hal-

berstam (2005) emphasis how time and geographies of Earth is organized according to capitalist accumulation. Written in the face of the catastrophe of AIDS, Halberstam further emphasizes that the heteronormative and capitalist organization of time not only diminishes future(s) but also “begins to weigh down on a present like a burden” (2005, 7). Violent histories of the world are intertwined, as we will be discussing soon, yet, to re-build different ways of life that is embedded in complex temporalities, we have to figure ways of queering our temporalities. Fragmented and dispossessing patterns of capitalism, and the present diversity of our world requires us to read the differing temporalities and spatial recognitions as queer adjustments, as queerness is defined by Sedgwick (as cited in Smith and Watson) as also “a crossing of temporality with force”.

2.3 Landscape and Living Archives

Colebrook tells of the Anthropocene with the depiction that there will be a time after the end of humans, due to profound impact humans leave, human existence will be discernible as a distinct geological layer (as cited in Craps 2017). Crownshaw interprets this geological record as a type of memory that is “humanity’s inscription” and argues that it can be thought of “as an archive by which the past and future history of the Anthropocene might be remembered” (2018, 500). History becomes meaningful through “past’s futures and future’s pasts”. Past’s futures are a vision of future imagined in the past, they are entanglements of anticipation and retrospection (Craps et al. 2018). They are distant from present because they represent a utopian surplus, they are a “repository of aspirations for a disillusioned present” (503). On the other hand, past’s future is what is inscribed in the Earth body: “past’s future is the not-yet fully realized effects upon the Earth’s oceans and atmosphere of burning, in a few centuries, fuels that fossilized over millions of years” (503). In the present moment, things are always anew. Not because living is cumulative, but because of the intra-active nature-culture of space-time. Things might stay *the same*, but they are always anew, they will not go back in time, they will trip, fall apart, get back on their feet. Temporality is not cumulative, it is intra-active, it is vivid, vibrant. Therefore, when we re-member, as Colebrook recall, it is never to “simply retain and recall a past but always to do so from the point of view of a present that anticipates a future” (2018, 507). To be able to say I or we, to be addressable I would say, according to Colebrook, is to be composed of an archive that generates a horizon of future. “to be is to be dispersed through time”, “not in a sequence of pasts being held over into the future but as a series of possible pasts of various amplitudes”

(507).

When I have read “Noah’s Nameless Wife Takes Inventory” by C.T. Salazar for the first time, the poem I have inscribed at the start of this chapter, I was struck by the lines: “the red-tailed hawk with jewels for eyes swallows the field mouse and the mouse was the only proof that the field existed”. Witnessing the presence of the field became possible only through the field mouse for Noah’s Nameless Wife. It is witnessing other-wise, habitually and sensuously calibrated, re-figuring a space time when the flood comes, amidst the environmental catastrophe. Colebrook calibrates such action as akin to each other: “a system of dispersed traces that maintains itself through time, going through decay, ignoring other differences – is what makes the flow of conscious time and memory possible” (2018, 507). To live, to be intertwined into flows from one moment to the next, to realize the continuation of a past into the flow of future is what makes life possible. In this case, any inscriptive process and object harbors un-actualized futures. In the geological level, we are not far away from supporting Colebrook’s argument here: Earth *has* a memory. When we talk about memory as inscription, in its material form, difference of kind and differences of degree matter. In addition to this, organism *is* memory, argues Colebrook (2018). Life is nested with self-organization, its dynamics “selectively remember their own specific self-organizing configurations”, hereby, organisms are selves that are self-organizing, “which are differentially retained in the maintenance of what can now be understood as a self—a form that is reconstituted and propagated over the generations in ways that exhibit increasingly better fits to the worlds around it” (Kohn 2013, 55).

The field, then, the field of the mouse as the landscape of the living is “a formation of the life-processes” (Ingold 1993). These life-processes, as Ingold describes it in “The Temporality of the Landscape”, are processes of formation of the landscapes that is embedded in time. The landscape is not a land, not a space, but rather a qualitative and heterogeneous form organized by the organism that tells a story. Getting to the landscape or to perceive it is “an act of remembrance, and remembering is not so much a matter of calling up an internal image, stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past” (153). Landscapes are not passive backgrounds, Tsing emphasizes, they act and enact (2015, 5), thus, in order to discover their potential “we need to pay close attention human interactions with other species” (AURA’s Openings. More-than-Human. 2015, 8). What Tsing focuses on and names these relations is *unintentional design* (45): the emergent pattern of all these activities *of* the landscape, human and otherwise.

Telling the story of these relations and activities, in other words, telling a story with the landscape, is “not like weaving a tapestry to *cover up* the world, it is rather a way of guiding the attention of listeners or readers *into* it” (Ingold 1993, 153). Who can tell these story is the one that is attuned to these encounters, relationalities, the unintentional design of the landscape and the movement it *embodies*. Landscape puts emphasis on forms, according to Ingold, therefore, like organism and environment, body and landscape and complementary terms: “each implies the other, alternately as figure and ground” (156). These attunements can be what Tsing call the *arts of noticing* (see Chapter 2.1, 49). This *embodiment* I have referred to the landscape is described as the movement of incorporation rather than inscription by Ingold: “not a transcribing of form onto material but a movement wherein forms themselves are generated” (157). Events of and on the landscape encompasses patterns of past and pretensions for the future. Temporality of the landscape becomes intertwined with its histories and activities. We become with the landscape, so to speak, we constantly and unintentionally design the landscape that we are embedded to.

As no organism and no agency can become itself without the others, Tsing argues that “most organisms are multispecies landscapes” (Tsing 2015, 46). In order to be attuned to the landscapes, we have to acknowledge these interspecies bodies, delve into the relationalities “flesh of mortal world-making entanglements” that Haraway calls “contact zones”¹³ (2008, 4). Species make worlds in their material-semiotic reality. As a detailed example of this, the study I have proposed for my doctoral research is an ethnography that is attuned to such world-makings in a contact zone. The research is dedicated to discovering different modes of becoming and living in the South Caucasian borderlands of Turkey and Armenia by specifically focusing on honeybees and beekeepers as main agents. As two countries that have sealed their borders due to political disputes, this specific landscape is a human-made borderland: blasted, militarized and uncared for. However, the honeybees and their beekeepers figure, disfigure and refigure the landscape constantly by moving along the landscape and swarming, pollinating, caring both each other and the landscape. To follow their ways of knowing and inhabiting worlds, I aim to discover their becoming witness to each other by keeping memory and expressing it along the landscape, placing memory in its affective force and making unintentional design. As the beekeepers form and move their apiaries along the border, honeybees pollinate both sides of the border, taking essence from variety of flowers that expands on the both side of the borderland. Not that all the agents of the landscape take on a mission that is unintentional to make a design, rather, landscape is constantly made

¹³I borrow the terms from Haraway, particularly of her descriptions and ruminations of the term in *When Species Meet*, however, contact zone is described and first used by Louise Marie Pratt in colonial and post-colonia studies (see *Arts of the Contact Zone* 1991)

and remade through their material intra-actions.

Bodies of living and non-living agents become archives through their intra-actions. This refers not only to a phenomenological approach pointing out to a fact that our experiences make up our body and organisms enfold their history of the relations they encounter. Organism may not hold *all* histories in chronology, it may even lose the histories and memories it relates to and works through. However, this is how the organism come to its material-reality: organism always lives in its memory through its world-making. Interspecies bodies come alive in such unintentional design, at the expense of each other, through our encounters, making meaning of their encounters. As the honeybees and beekeepers, as my main interlocutors, lead me the way to their contested worldings, they uncover the intertwined histories of genocide, extinction, climate change and dispossession in the borderland of Turkey and Armenia. They do not only keep the memory of the locations on and around the landscape, rather, they archive the interactions and the landscape itself in their body, in the most literal way! Living archives are not perpetual, they do not live to preserve. They may even die, although, they will surely transmit the knowledge of the data acquired from the outside phenomena. The essences of the flowers in the honey feeds the baby larvae kept in the hive. The Queen waiting for the arrival of her sisters to know and get information about the locations on the landscape, lets the colony to swarm in a specific location, which both affects the landscape as a whole and the birth of the new babies. Species create each other in material-semiotic reality. Landscapes tell the story of their reality.

As the honeybees go on to find essence in beautiful flowers of the landscape, they come back to hive only to waggle dance each other to let each other know about a specific location and to make decision about where to swarm next. When they decide, it is their collective decision to pollinate and swarm around the landscape, keeping its pulse through their interactions. However, it is also up to the beekeeper to locate where they swarm or just to follow them along the landscape to know which flowers they are getting their essence from. As the beekeeper locate and relocates the apiaries or as the beekeeper involves in acts of domestication, both the beekeepers and the honeybees go on to figure and refigure the landscape they inhabit. We do not strictly need oral histories to acknowledge such interactions but we have to be intentional about being attuned to them. Therefore, every agent becomes a living archive of intra-actions and landscapes they inhabit. They witness such intra-actions, again and again, only to participate events to be a witness to and in the Anthropocene. They go on to make worlds intentionally and unintentionally, however, disturbed landscapes are always built through interspecies bodies. South Caucasian plateaus and borderlands turned out to be the disturbed landscapes that

I had the chance to find hope. There is hope in ruins where we acknowledge and meet our positions in such interspecies bodies.

In “Thinking with Salmon Otoliths and Scale” (2019), Swanson turns to salmon and their interspecies landscape in Japan and western United States: “The ways that salmon enact landscapes and waterscapes both entangle with and profoundly transform human lives and histories” (85). Consider how people in Indigenous communities pattern their life around the salmon through their multiple ways of knowing and defining fish in Zoe Todd’s ethnography. Swanson also draws attention to how salmon shape industrial societies, affect the design of hydro-electric facilities and the power they generate. It is the salmon-human landscapes and rhythms under anthropologists’ microscope. Although the crucial aim of the study is to develop and recognize more-than-human methods to the studies of the more-than-human, through this aim Swanson succeeds to show how studying salmon may not even require talking to the “spokesperson” of the animal (85). We can start from the lives of salmon to study the relationalities that salmon takes a part, including the ones with the humans. Swanson focuses on salmon otoliths: small stones of calcium carbonate in the inner ear of the fish, tracing minerals deposited into a protein matrix (89). Otoliths are both play the role in salmon’s recognition as they acquire a sense of outside, sense of acceleration and decelerations, and maintain a temporally sequenced record of some parts of a fish’s life process: the scales on the bands reflect the interactions of the fish with temperature, salinity, other fish, minerals nearby, etc. with their width or narrowness. Dark and narrow lines mark stress checks and difficult life transitions respectively while wide ones indicate food abundance or moderate temperatures (90). Otoliths tell rich stories and help us to situate the salmon in their encounters in the land and waterscapes.

Swanson emphasizes that in the face of climate change, pollution and degradation how being human happens and how it harms; humans have to have a better understanding and sense of what the world needs. In order to achieve that, otoliths seem to give information about what kind of disturbances are bearable and what kind of them hold the limit for the salmon. However, Swanson warns about the information we provide from the otoliths; the analysis is not disembodied that produces “pure truths about salmon histories”. Swanson compares the living archives of salmon organisms to traditional archival research whose subject is sometimes colonial archives, which is a comparison that I will be referring to in the later chapter, and warns us that otolith archives do not capture the entire relationality of the fish. They underline: “Seen through their otoliths, salmon are not only done in practices but also do practices. They have their own multiple ways of knowing and enacting aquatic landscapes, including rivers, riparian areas, estuaries, and oceans. These

practices are often intertwined with humans, but are not encapsulated by them” (95). While arguing that “amid profound environmental crises, the risks of policing the practices that we are allowed to use to know multispecies worlds are far greater”; I would like to interpret Swanson’s work as pluralizing an act of witnessing through observing embodied encounters and communication between salmons and humans.

Remembering that “organism is memory” (Colebrook 2018), interspecies bodies embedded in the landscape can be living archives of our memories. It is important to figure out positionalities and who tells the story of our witnessings to refigure bodies of knowledges. Refiguring such positionalities can help us acknowledge whose position and presence is acknowledged and who we are being at risk with. As I will be discussing these more in detail when I talk about ethics and vulnerability in Chapter 4, I also believe that the methods we use as anthropologists and scientists should be in line with such ethics. Theorizing more-than-human witnessing is crucial. Figuring landscapes is also important. Global warming has never been global, thus, multiplicity of stories about the Earth gives us chance to acknowledge who is at risk and how should we take action. Therefore, it is important to ask the questions about the act of testimony, which I have referred to as “being here” of witnessing amidst a catastrophe. Who tells the stories of the earth and the ongoing and perpetual violence? How are we to discover such position in relationalities and in intertwined histories of violence in which the landscapes tell stories of.

2.4 Violent Histories of the Anthropocene

Environmental catastrophe is both a catastrophe to come and an event that we are living through its symptoms and its multiplicity. Its violence strikes us immensely yet almost *unnoticeable*. Again I would return to Morton’s description of hyperobjects and their hyperness: there is a dislocation between hyperobjects and their indexical signs. We need to understand the violence that this complex catastrophe perpetrates: an event that consists of simultaneous and multi-scalar dying, rupturing, trashing, distorting, dislocating and dispossessing. Since I have argued that organism is memory and Earth has a memory, how does this exacerbated violence is executed on the face of the Earth? How does it wound us and how is it transmitted between generations and inter-species? Without seeking answer to such questions, I would not have any justification to talk about witnessing or asking justice for the affects of the catastrophe. Hereby, *catastrophe* is always an ongoing thing. Furtherly, I would have no ground for recalibrating witnessing into a posthumanist ethics and

politics, shaking its ground from testimony's seclusion to legal justice. What is the point of discussing witnessing in this framework if we do not analyze the perpetual and the exacerbated violence first? Just as I stated in the "Witnessing" sub-chapter in the Prelude part of this thesis, I cannot come to terms with equalizing witnessing to legal justice paradigms of *testifying to truth about and through eye-witnessing a past event*. However, I also find it important, not only as a Buddhist who would accept that pain is the inescapable truth but also as an environmental anthropologist, to understand that we as the living are indebted to pain and death. We have to make meaning. We have to realize the potential of the wound as an affectionate relationality.

We are possessed by the images of the end of the world, apocalypse, where humans remain with less and less of what Earth is, *things* that some would call resources. However, as species that differ, the living is traumatized by the acts of transfer that are inter- and trans-generational. When I first read Hirsch's *Marked by Memory* (2012) and *Generation of Post-memory* (2008), I was inspired by the fact that posthumanist theory would base what Hirsch was proposing to study in memory studies: structure of trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience. Hirsch calls them "deeply internalized but strangely unknown pasts". I then became dis-illusioned because Hirsch's theorization of post-memory remains familial in the most humanistic sense. Post-memory, Hirsch defines, is memory in its affective force. However, memory is always affective, carrying a semiotic potential. Through memories, life proliferates habits, habits of living thought. Evolutionary adaptations are a signs that are interpreted and manifested "in a development of the subsequent organism's body in a way that incorporates these adaptations" (Kohn 2013, 74). So, evolutionary adaptation is also a semiotic one, it is an articulation of living that is retentions and inscriptions. Minding again Colebrook's analysis on different degrees and kinds of retentions and inscriptions being akin to writing as an archival memory, Hirsch's introduction drives me to re-calibrate the terms itself too.

Here, I refrain from building this analysis on a discussion of *trauma*. Pain, violence and death does not have to result in trauma. Catastrophe is ongoing. There is an almost *cumulative* surplus of ruins amidst a catastrophe and catastrophe is events that are already ongoing. However, arguing that the catastrophe is an ongoing and perpetual event is comparatively new in our sciences. Aristotle's *Poetics* defines catastrophe as the tragic moment when the hero pulls down some act that is almost unmeasurable, like Oedipus blinding himself. As I have already argued against this description of the catastrophe, I also argued to make a stance against its characterization to be "unsayable, unthinkable, undefinable". Specifying the discussion

to the environmental catastrophe, the habitual and sensational comprehension of the catastrophe is lacking in our theories of witnessing. Furthermore, there can be ruptures between such aesthesis and the reality of the ongoing catastrophe because of such complex temporalities and scales that humans are describe only in anthropocentric lens. Although the rupture between the experience and expression of these events might be explained with many trauma theories that are now brilliantly discussed under studies that focus on the environmental catastrophe, I aim to postpone the discussion of trauma into the subject of a wider thesis. I also refrain from such namings and descriptions of trauma because they are almost always focus on the unconscious. Nevertheless, I would prefer to refer to such ongoing violence by using Deleuzian *wounding*. Richardson (2018) explains by stating that the climate trauma is a wounding that is *traumatically affecting*: “it manifests in jarring, rupturing, disjunctive encounters with future crisis in the contemporary moment”. This wounding has the potential of emancipation, telling us stories of reality.

Richardson is wise to conceptualize the wound figuring traumatic ruptures as a generative affective relation. But how do we materialize it? And right at this point, I want to return to a question I have asked before: whose wound am I looking into? What Anthropocene makes us reconsider is the word *Anthropos*, because it is humans, as we are sure of it, that brings the Earth’s demise. Who is the victim, the perpetrator and the bystander among these so called *humans*? What about the violence that is becoming stronger and that is traumatizing? When I bear in mind all the characterization I have defined for the environmental catastrophe to come, or any multi-scalar and complex temporalities an event consists of, legal justice paradigms seem both insufficient and irrelevant to ask such questions. Although LaCapra (2010) drives victimhood out from its “psychological categorization” and argues that not everyone traumatized by an event is a victim, I find it difficult to calibrate his theoretical approach into a more-than-human perspective since it relies on a duality of structural and historical trauma. I would rather pave the way of our thinking through Schwab’s brilliant work that focuses on “violent histories”. In *Haunting Legacies: Trauma in the Children of Perpetrators* (2010), Schwab seeks form of political dialogue that resolves violent histories and focuses on the shame, guilt and the silence in Germany after WWII. Schwab argues that the resolution of trauma is exorcism, facing the effects of the unspeakable violence. Laub joins to argue act of bearing witness, hereby testifying, makes and breaks a promise: promise of returning to the same world (*An Event Without A Witness* 1992). If we are to theorize a more-than-human witnessing, I believe that there is a certain promise in the politics of such witnessing.

Keeping these in mind, I want to start a whole new chapter, that is going to be

the main chapter of this thesis, to answer some questions. Who gets to be the witness? What are the ways of reinterpreting *testimony* and create a more-than-human witnessing, so that we can figure out how do *we* witness? What are the positionalities of the victims, perpetrators and bystanders amongst these legacies of violent histories? How can we conceptualize more-than-human witnessing(s)? Does witnessing, and hereby more-than-human witnessing, aim to “recapture a lost truth”? If not, where is justice or ethics outside of legal justice paradigms? What is so crucial for me to interpret from Schwab’s Haunting Legacies is the fact that violent histories of the Earth are always intertwined. We come alive in contact zones, where we create and inhabit complex ecologies. Environmental catastrophe is never a history apart from political trauma of Earth’s inhabitants. Colonization, genocide, the repressive instruments of the nation state, hegemony of the Western civilization that Agamben insisted that WWII Germany did not deviated from but rather a significant moment of, are never apart from the environmental catastrophe to come and that progresses. Figuring and disfiguring such violent histories provides us chances to see the risks, and thus, to be resilient in our own ways. Before I start seeking answers and argue that all witnessing are more-than-human witnessings, and we can recalibrate the listening and speaking that resonates the trauma into posthumanist *ethics of looking back*, I seclude in Caruth’s (2010, 197) words that emphasize knowing each other. There is a promise in not only simply *knowing* each other but discovering what we do not yet know of our intertwined and violent pasts.

3. BECOMING WIT(H)NESS

Etched away by the
radiant wind of your speech,
the motley gossip of pseudo-
experience — the hundred-
tongued My-
poem, the Lie-noem.

Whirl-
winded,
free,
a path through human-
shaped snow,
through penitent cowl-ice, to
the glacier's
welcoming chambers and tables.

Deep
in the time crevasse,
by
honeycomb-ice
there waits, a Breathcrystal,
your unannullable
witness.

Paul Celan **Weggebeizt.**
Translated by **John Felstiner**

I aim to present a theory of more-than-human witnessing: wit(h)nessing. Inspired from Boscacci's and Kilpisjärvi Collective's (2018, The Kilpisjärvi Collective 2021) play with the word witnessing, wit(h)nessing aims to recalibrate and reground the act and the anthropological study around it. Wit(h)nessing itself is not recognition, rather, it consists of many processes and practices of recognition. Its theory redefines such terms, it re-grounds them in a more-than-human manner. As the theory of wit(h)nessing is built on response-ability that comes from response, that is embedded in our meaning making of each other and of the Earth, the theory itself is also a response to contemporary problems. Politics of wit(h)nessing promises ways of living well in this world, cultivates ways of necessity and justice to be evaluated in "a mortal world in which acquiring knowledge is never innocent" (When Species Meet, 70). It also promises resilience and sustainability as it considers ways of the multiple, the living, as it does not bow down to anthropocentric definitions of significance. As I have already proposed many arguments in favor of theorizing the unfolding process that is wit(h)nessing, here I aim to write out propositions to construct the theory and to discuss its relation to re-calibrating politics and anthropology in the Anthropocene.

3.1 Recognition and Sense-abilities

I firmly argue that theorizing wit(h)nessing will help us build the resilience and sustainability we need in the Anthropocene. What do the living require to build this resilience and sustainability? How can we re-calibrate our anti-capitalist politics into a more sensible ones and build politics that not only glorify the "ethical and righteous humanness". What does witnessing mean in all of these relations? Kelly Oliver (2001) discovers the relationship between being recognized in history and process of witnessing by emphasizing the tension between "recognizing the familiar in order to confirm what we already know and listening for the unfamiliar that disrupts what we already know". How do we make meaning of the unfamiliar, the different? Oliver further emphasizes that paradoxes of difference is the result of how we "conceive ourselves", thus, we end up with paradoxes if we are to believe that encountering difference is only intellectual, especially to believe that intellect is distinct from perception, sensation, passion or embodiment. Although witnessing literature that expands on affect theory and tackles issues of global activism and media testimonies works through ways of harmonizing sensors and registers outside of human, these efforts remain humanistic as they serve to find "legal justice".

Reconfiguration of witnessing that is attuned to the more-than-human, human radically rethought, “depends on new forms of aesthesis, or the combination of sensing and sense making” (Richardson and Zolkos 2022). As I will be expanding on the notion soon, what is more-than-human, post-human and other-than-human does not evacuate “the human” from politics or out of our sight. Rather, it requires a radical re-thinking of what is it to be human in order to pluralize our ways of living. This concludes in a radical re-thinking of senses and meaning making, aesthesis, and to acknowledge different temporalities and ways of becoming, not only for different species, but also for every kind of human(imal) world-making and subjectivities including neuro-divergences, Indigenous dreamtime, etc. Having mentioned subjectivities and different world-makings, Oliver emphasizes that conceiving identity in opposition to difference creates another paradox. Since Oliver (2001) argues that process of witnessing is recognition via address and response, acknowledging difference and make meaning of it substantiates the process of witnessing. This subjectivity which is not-One and its ethics which prioritizes *ethico-onto-epistemologies*, urges us to endure “in-depth structures of our subjectivity by acknowledging the ties that bind us to the multiple ‘others’ in a vital web of complex interrelations” (Braidotti, *The Posthuman* 2013).

In the midst of contradictions with the importance given to the “eyewitness testimony” or (im)possibility of human testimonies and our formulation of more-than-human witnessing, what wit(h)nessing is not *merely seeing or merely a theory for recognition*. Wit(h)nessing is about the happening as much as it is about the practice itself. In the essay, *Witness* (2017), in relation to the anthropology of becoming, Naisargi N. Davé puts my thoughts in words beautifully: “to witness is to be implicated and culpable in an event that is not inexorable” (157). According to Davé, witnessing’s “vision” is not singularly intimate, it is its opposite: common sense. Davé becomes its own critique and emphasizes that relating witnessing to common sense rather than the act of seeing seems “the reason enough to be skeptical of the privileging of sight and of the politics of witnessing”. There is more to criticize about the typology of “the witness” between the *testis* and *superstes*: while *superstes* is supposedly the survivor, *testis* becomes the subject that is alleged to be affected “less” by the event. However, between different definitions of the act of bearing witness, Derrida’s reminder that “witnessing is autobiographical”, which Davé also emphasizes as another critique of the privileging the politics of witnessing, and “that it is the proof that I am, that we are” is another aspect of this typology that becomes conceptually in vain (2008, 77; 2017, 157). When we roam between different descriptions of the act of *witnessing* and different positions of the role of the *witness*, I cannot help but think that these descriptions and positionalities require cultivating

local commentaries about the positions they are situated in.

Richardson emphasizes the importance of how we perceive the concept of mediation when we think about witnessing in the Anthropocene. As “the process that enables witnessing to be belated”, either through bodily memory or a technological tool, any translation of the event would be an inferior copy. However, the epistemic orientation of witnessing, which I stated as knowing, cannot be what witnessing is bound to or solely relates to. Mediation also requires an understanding of the ontology of the body in accident. Accident being any happening or phenomena, body referring to the corporeality of the I that is with many, what I aim to realize is explain the permeability of events that we are witnessing to. In addition to Davé’s definition of the witness who is “implicated and culpable in an event that is inexorable”, Massumi states that it is the bodies in relational context, “permeable and elastic in their tendency towards change, attunement and entanglement” (as cited in Richardson 2020, 238). Relating to our previous discussion, what happens when the corporeal entity is breakable rather than permeable, or when it articulates plasticity and not elasticity? Just like Primo Levi’s naming of those who are *the drowned* of the Auschwitz and Agamben’s description of them as the less-than-human, what happens when the body is broken into such that *no recognition* is possible? Fanon’s black bodies haunt us in the dark; they are never seen, not permeable but almost transparent, in ghostly manners.

Trauma is not even sorrow, says Malabou (2012), it is indifference to survival. The violence that the the Drowned¹⁴ endured changes an entity that was already changeable, therefore, “destruction does not respond to its own necessity, does not comfort its own possibility” (Malabou, 30). Forest is the world, and blasted landscapes that are heavily violated carry the hopes of the ground. However, its capacity to be effected does not remain the same. I will be returning to this conversation about plasticity and elasticity, what they define for transcorporeality and ruins, however, I find it crucial to talk about witnessing in relation to recognition and sense-abilities since “one cannot be without being affected” (Malabou, 22). How we mediate that event and how we place that mediation into the theory of more-than-human witnessing matters. The violence of the environmental trauma that manifests in rupturing, polluting, thrashing, jarring and other destructive encounters unfolds unevenly into the space-time of the Earth. I argue that the universal admission of witnessing, especially of legal justice, does not suffice to explicate a resolution for the environmental catastrophe or its political remedies. Act of witnessing under this normative

¹⁴I use the term “the Drowned” instead of Muselmann since the wording and the naming of such specific victims of Auschwitz-Birkenau carries connotations of hate towards other groups of people. The specific descriptions of the Drowned can be read in the page 94 of *If This is a Man* chapter in Primo Levi’s *The Drowned and the Saved*

regulation, which is divided into the moment of mediation of the event and the (im)possible testimony that is the autobiographical story of the event, turns into a study area that focuses on human oral testimonies.

Hereby, I promise to problematize the act of testimony as a form of *truth-telling: truth and nothing but the truth*. However, recalibrating the act of witnessing and conceiving it as an ongoing process that considers the registration of experiences and figuring its relationalities needs foregrounding. I argue that we become wit(h)ness in collectivities, realizing our positionalities, bearing our positions through acknowledging entanglements we are embedded in. Wit(h)nessing is an ongoing process that is always multiple and plural. As I emphasize the living's "capacity to register empirically and express environmental change" (Sheikh 2018), I also argue that witnesses are always produced in more-than-human entanglements. Figuring, refiguring and disfiguring such forms of aesthesis, as I stated before in this sub-chapter (see Richardson and Zolkos 2022), that acknowledges these entanglements are not solely secluded in the act of knowing. Knowing, that is the epistemic orientation of wit(h)nessing, cannot be understood in a dualistic relation with not-knowing. Not-knowing can also be a coming across, a movement of the wit(h)ness beyond the self and back again. We have to acknowledge knowing in its more-than-human relationalities, thus, as Kilpisjärvi Collective describes it:

"Relationality, again, means that knowing is always contingent, emergent, sensory, embodied, social, and animated by multiple, unexpected human, non-human and inhuman agencies. To understand through 'witnessing' is therefore not to claim a panacea or propound a celebratory account of knowing as necessarily possible, unproblematic, reciprocal, nor even arising out of peaceful coexistence. Even the clumsiness of the term on the tongue speaks to the inherent discomforts, the visceral violence, unevenness, and divergences in knowing as witnessing." (Introducing with Microbes: from Witnessing to Witnessing 2021, 24)

Specific attribution to knowing carries hierarchical positionalities and omnipotent power that is attributed to One: remember that the God created light and *knew that it was good*. The witnessing in evangelism or bearing witness to God by sharing his wisdom, King Solomon's story may be an example, requires a *knowing* of God and knowing that he is good. Similarly, Haraway's feminist technoscience questions such relations between knowing and witnessing in *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium*, where certain positionings of specific subjects, such as white men with objective knowledge, determining what knowledge is. Matzinger's model of immune system (see Chapter 1.2: Agency) was the obvious

example to such argumentation: excluding *the other* legitimate knowers and making of the modest witness through the discourse of science that is *objective*. Who can witness in the public space? What counts as knowledge?

Haraway uses Boyle's air pump and his story as a figure for the storytelling of the technoscience and its legacy of knowledge practices. The positionality of the single, white, secular man that of Boyle constructs the modest witness from the ones resembling him. However, as I stated before in relation to Matzinger's story, appropriating and acknowledging multiple identities of the community of knowers and their situated positions matters. Pluralizing both the ways of knowing and the audience of knowers gives me a chance to present wit(h)nessing in multiplying and unfolding ways while it helps me to realize the connection between recognition and sense-abilities. I find Zoe Todd's ethnography in Paulatuuq land and their analysis of multiple ways of knowing and defining fish with the Inuvialuit of Paulatuuq important in making my claims concrete. In "Fish pluralities: Human-animal relations and sites of engagement in Paulatuuq, Arctic Canada", Todd observes both the environmental and colonial history of the political and social landscapes of Paulatuuq through human-fish entanglements, taking "ontological assumptions as literal rather than only symbolic matters".

In the ethnography, Todd (2014) emphasizes that fishing as an activity is composed of many other activities and to be a successful fisherman among the Inuvialuit one must be cognizant of fish's ability to "know" when someone acts with or without respect (2014, 225). Fishing becomes not only about the catch, rather it becomes an unfolding and multiplying act of witnessing as it affects and shapes the makings of material-semiotic bodies of both the fish and the human, also the landscape they inhabit. Secondly, Inuvialuit ways of knowing and recognizing the fish "a form of local Indigenous *métissage* in action" since whenever "non-Inuvialuit are invited out to fish, it is an opportunity to learn more about the environment and how people move through it" and to understand "the knowing and sentient landscape that is inhabited through competence and skill when fishing" (230). Therefore, throughout the ethnography, the act of fishing which becomes acts of witnessing, becomes a tool to observe human-fish relations both as a site of active engagement and also a site of negotiation and conflict. The "whole bodied attunement" and "attention in encounter" (Boscacci 2018) multiplies into ways of knowing each other and thus, unfolds into ways of political reconciliation in Todd's ethnography.

"Arts of noticing" (Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World* 2015) that Todd is engaging with in the Paulatuuq land present the new forms of aesthesis that we need to formulize accordingly to our encounters in the Anthropocene. Sensing, in

this matter, is important for formulating such arts of noticing and to make our listening and storytelling a method of resolution. Sensing represents *another way of knowing* and it ought to be a collaborative effort that is shifted from exceptive scientific knowledge to include more-than-human knowledge practices (Howe 2019). Considering Haraway’s response-ability, Howe names this sense-ability, “the capacity to cultivate sensitivity toward others—through bodily and somatic means—as a form of ethical comportment” (3). In “Sensing Asymmetries in Other-than-human Forms”, Howe examples how a polar bear shot dead provoked emotive responses and how its body became a sensing apparatus, a way of sensing the loss of ice. Another interest instance is how Helga, as a person who grew up in Northern Iceland, cannot hear the “ghostly moans” of ice rubbing up each other at the mountains, a sound that scared her once as a little girl. Howe argue that “disappeared sounds strike Helga as a past passed, a memory more than a presently sensible experience” (5). Silence of the sea ice resembles a silent spring of Rachel Carson’s calling: a catastrophe to come.

Howe explains sense-ability with Alaimo’s formulation of transcorporeality (2016) and how this entangled corporeality consists subjects that are already part of the substances and systems of the world. “Thinking the stuff of the world also means grappling with what she calls “the strange agencies” of ordinary objects” (5) and environmental catastrophe demands from us to look for ways of sensing the Earth. Transcorporeality stretches between past, present and future, making us acknowledge the nonchronological durationality of the Anthropocene and our ongoing engagement with the Earth (Neimanis ve Loewen Walker 2022). These transcorporeal actions are the forces that make time, making other-than-human forms patterns of time in an epoch where “geological time is experienced in ways that were not previously knowable within a single human lifetime” (Howe 2019, 9). *Sense-ability* is good to think-with our problematizing of temporality and scales, helping us prepare for the unknowable futures of our planet. However, sense-abilities does not have to bound to human capacities only. Anna Tsing emphasizes that each living remakes the world “through seasonal pulses of growth, lifetime reproductive patterns, and geographies of expansion. Within a given species, too, there are multiple time-making projects, as organisms enlist each other and coordinate in making landscapes” (Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World* 2015, 21) (also cited in Gabrys 2018).

In “Sensing Lichens”, Jennifer Gabrys (2018) looks for ways of sensing lichens and figuring their bioindication as an expressive process of not only another means of doing environmental sensing but “additionally of other engagements with environmental subjects that attend to the lived effects of pollution as experienced by non-human organisms” (3). Our aims resemble each other as Gabrys also looks for

other-than-human forms, in this case fungal-vegetal forms, that go beyond anthropocentric representational politics to a more “generative politics and worlds in the making”. Hereby, Gabrys asks the important question: “what does it mean to sense environments together with other organisms?” (5). Bioindicators are organisms that recognizes difference through embodying and archiving environmental change throughout time. However, bioindications ought to be explained as a process by which “pollution registers in the bodies, inhabitations and relations of organisms” (7). *Bioindicators* do not react to pollution at a certain moment or at an exact time but rather they become living archives as they materialize pollution requires homing in on the effects of exposure over time.

Gabrys finds it important to insist that lichens do not particularly *signal* that an event occurred or is occurring, rather, they materialize “the relations and processes that are at stake when pollution accumulates, and when environments change due to extractive or damaging industries” (19). Here, encountering pollution from the point of view of other organisms and modes of environmental sensing address us to intertwined histories/stories of environment. Gabrys’ encounter with lichens and sensing, and lichens’ sensing and encounter with pollution creates an unfolding witnessing process. Gabrys’ work with the lichens of Kilipsjärvi Biological Field Station is a successful critique of representationalist anthropology, (see Chapter 1.4: More-than-Human and Anthropology of Ontologies) and the work encourages us to acknowledge a politics of wit(h)nessing that is beyond human. Bioindicators, in this case lichens, materialize and embody a pollution that is mostly human caused. They wit(h)ness the crime of destruction, an ongoing process of the catastrophe. Without anthropomorphizing *the nature* or voicing the lichens, Gabrys succeeds to sense them and also manages to articulate translations between lichenologists, herself as the ethnographer and us, the readers. Gabrys emphasizes the expressive-ness of lichens, rather than attending them speech, acknowledging semiotics that is beyond-language in order to form “more expansive environmental politics”.

Lichens make meaning of pollution while embodying intertwined histories of pollution and violence. Knowing and acknowledging these histories by learning to speak *their* stories is important since their future is at stake with ours: “fracking and pipeline construction across delicate lichen-covered northern landscapes are fundamental to accelerating nationalist, transnationalist, and corporate unworlding” (Haraway 2016, 56). The particular sensing that evolved and cultured into lichens that reads the differences between presences and absences of the pollution makes meaning of their environs. Gabrys makes meaning of the indexical expressions and acknowledges patterns and relations that is stretched out beyond-human. They become wit(h)ness, together, into the world that is beautiful and polluted. They

wit(h)ness inside this story that Gabrys wrote us to read, Gabrys is somewhere in their stories breathing their habitat. Witnessing, generally, is wit(h)nessing with many. However, most crucially: witnessing is always wit(h)nessing.

3.2 The Hope of Ruins

Discussions on recognition and sense-abilities permeates me to think about bodies and how they come alive to make meaning. Mediation is always through a body, not always in the humanistic sense, but always embedded in the ontology of it. *How* bodies exist and *how* they regulate agency in the unfolding practice of wit(h)nessing matters. If mediation perpetrates the importance of experience and permeability of body in their attunement to such experiences, I re-emphasize the question I asked in the previous chapter: what if the corporeal entity is breakable rather than permeable, articulating plasticity rather than elasticity? What happens when the entity becomes traumatized, thus, indifferent to its own survival? The Drowned Dog was drowned already, almost mocking me that it is impossible to bear witness to death: “complete truth is far more tragic”, says Agamben, emphasizing his so-called “impossibility of witnessing” and the realities of the concentration camps. According to him, the survivor is the incomplete witness: “survivors bore witness to something it is impossible to bear witness to” (Remnants of Auschwitz, 13). Eichmann trial was the first case of court where survivors testified and told their stories before the law. The legal paradigm that places witnesses before the law, before the good and evil, and not beyond them, regulates witnesses and categorizes their testimonies in order to punish. Not to emancipate certain catastrophe, not to acquire its resolution. “Not that a judgement cannot or must not be made”, however, “law is solely directed toward judgment, independent of truth and justice” (Remnants of Auschwitz, 17-18).

Interpreted to environmental catastrophe that consists multiplicity of violent events, not only that law falls short to provide justice but most violent climatic and environmental events are not presented before the law, furtherly, they are greenwashed by advertising “daily individual solutions” to the catastrophe. Reader might think if it is truly suitable to interpret such framing of ethical-legal argumentation of Shoah, specifically of Auschwitz, into the subject of environmental catastrophe. The violence of concentration camps could have been generalized into the ethics that fights Nazi violence and affects of the rise of fascism, however, as Agamben stated at the beginning of the Remnants of Auschwitz, Shoah needed a new paradigm of ethics

because according to him, it created no outside witnesses. I do not get into a comparison of such horrors with the horrors of environmental catastrophe or propose to “draw useful lessons” from what we know of Shoah through Agamben’s “narcissistic philosophy” (as cited in (Łysak 2020)). No matter how complicated or not agreeable most of his arguments remain in *Remnants of Auschwitz*, Agamben do emphasizes the need for new demonstration for ethics and its politics. Dividing and categorizing environmental catastrophe into multiple yet differentiated events or asking why humans are so bad at understanding climate change will not provide *solutions* or bring justice. Promise of the politics of wit(h)nessing may help to build and maintain this particular labor by formulating ethics and justice beyond the law.

Returning back to recognition, what I call to be the epistemic orientation of witnessing, knowing, and what I stated as the other aspect, ontology of corporeal entities, are not separate spheres. While discussing recognition and sense-abilities meant to form an introduction to discussing and bounding these aspects, this particular sub-chapter aims to expand on that discussion. Secondly, I aim to study wit(h)nessing when the body is traumatized, however, not particularly or solely through its experiences but also through the “ontology of accident”. Thirdly, I aim to place wit(h)nessing in the study of ruins and blasted landscapes, to see how Agamben described the Drowned, who is “less-than-human” and his body as a ruin, and how they had the possibility of witnessing. Tsing argued that capitalism is already living in its ruins, how, then, it is possible to emphasize their place in politics of wit(h)nessing to the environmental catastrophe? Lastly, I believe that these paragraphs will be the bridge that will resonate a different perspective on the divide between the mediation of the event and its (future) testimonies, thus, the divide between *testis* and *superstes*, driving us to formulate wit(h)nessing to be an expansive and unfolding process of becoming.

Not the subject of desired recognition both from the SS nor the camp victims, the drowned, in Primo Levi’s naming of them, is the anonymous mass who are “of non-men who march and labor in silence, the divine spark dead in them, already too empty to really suffer” (*Remnants of Auschwitz*, 44). The drowned, who are unable to move and suffer from starvation and ultimate exhaustion, are one of the prominent horrors of Levi’s memories of the camp. According to Agamben, they do not know or feel anything, unable to contemplate, they are not “of living”; the drowned mark the threshold between the human and inhuman. Arguing further, Agamben pretentiously asks: “Is there a humanity of human beings that can be distinguished and separated from human beings’ biological humanity?” (1999, 55). Agamben emphasizes formulizing new ethical paradigms as the mission of the *Remnants of Auschwitz* as a book because none of the book of ethics were able to satisfy

what Auschwitz characterized. The drowned, according to him, possesses none of the common ethical principles, thus, becomes inadequate for the testimony (Deranty 2008). What conditions *humanity*, then, is witnessing the inhuman, meaning the “inhuman in the human”, which is the utter violence that is perpetrated by fellow humans in the reality of times according to. Although now the reader might sense that this sub-chapter and thesis itself is headed towards making commentary on the horrors of Auschwitz or theory of witnessing that was interpreted after these horrors, but there is a particular reason for my focus.

What makes Agamben’s commentary so important is not the particular characterization of the drowned but rather the generalization of it: it demonstrates “impossibility of bearing witness”. The witnessing of this special event and the alleged ontology of testimony becomes inseparable. Deranty (2008, 168) states that this generalization is perceived as vain without acknowledging that this alleged ontology is born out of a particular theory of subjectivity and language for Agamben. First I aim to discover the aspect that stretches out to the discussion of subjectivity, and thus, the body autonomy and its capability (Agamben calls this possibility) of wit(h)nessing. The aspect that stretches out to language is generalized as the problem of testimony in studying witnessing, however, I aim to delve into the question by discussing how the inhuman, hereby Agamben’s “becoming-an-animal”, *speaks* of their witnessings in the next chapter. As I promise to pluralize the discussion of testimony further and also relate it to my theory of wit(h)nessing and a discussion on the political animal, I do remember to acknowledge that wit(h)nessing does not behold testimony as a process that is *the end-game* or resolving part of the whole act of witnessing but rather the *being here* of the unfolding process of wit(h)nessing.

In “The Ontology of Accident”, Malabou (2012) iterates a process of becoming through negative plasticity, as an explosive creativity, occurring through “an ontological violence that gives rise to a new being which has nothing in common with its preceding form” (17). Although Malabou makes a commentary of the event-ality through her idea of the Hegelian self and getting into a constant play with its dialectics, she does not argue that negation is needed for the construction of this transformed self after the accident. Her commentary remains rightfully *ontologic* as she deconstructs subjectivity and identity in the face of violence, and then reconstructs it. The body of the drowned of Auschwitz, the mined hills of Artvin that is now ruined or the musilaged sea-coast of Istanbul: “Bodily and psychic transformations do nothing but reinforce the permanence of identity, caricaturing or fixing it, but never contradicting it. They never disrupt identity” (2012, 2). I interpret this as the process of becoming on the bearing of event-ality, a changing in the flux of phantasmal moments that make up the agency of the subject: agency that is the

matter of “intra-acting”. The destruction of the event is formative too, “destruction has its own sculpturing tools” (4). The drowned is described as the anonymous mass by Agamben, disowning its recognition by both the camp system and the camp survivors. Why would he problematize the drowned then? Why make them a subject of ethics? My main critique for Agamben is his commentary on the sole assumption that the drowned of the Auschwitz does not feel or understand the outside phenomena. Agamben bases its assumptions, by also naming the drowned as “inhuman”, which reads very much Cartesian mechanistic perspective of “being-an-animal”.

What makes the drowned a threshold between the human and inhuman then? What makes the other-than-human, less-than-human, the inhuman, so unfit to recognize and sense, and unable to make meaning of the outside phenomena? And if testimony, in his accord, is an evidence, how come the transformed body becomes so out of meaning of itself, that it does not count as testimony? Thrashed and oiled soils of the Amazon are still soil, yet, unfit to their regeneration. Climate is both traumatized and traumatizing, I argued in the sub-chapter 2.4, it still holds agency to traumatize, in midst of destructive violence. And what does the drowned cannot witness to? To death or the camps or the violence they inhabited? Agamben is never clear about the question. However, endangering species are survivors of extinction, and of the environmental catastrophe yet to come. Catastrophe progresses in ways that are sensible to us, will we find a way to witness it? Malabou argues that the accident does not disrupt our coming acrosses, rather, it becomes the moment in “the flux of moment” of the intra-actions mattering of agency. The ontology of accident that causes the “metamorphosis by destruction is the form of impossibility of fleeing” (2012, 10).

What makes the drowned a survivor is the vital configuration of the unity of body/spirit. Malabou interprets Spinoza’s claim that “essence of mind is the idea of a body that actually exists” (Malabou 2012, 20). Polluted, thrashed, ruptured, violated, starved, became indifferent to its own survival: “survivor’s pain manifests itself as an indifference to pain” (18). “The metamorphosis is precisely being in flight”, the subject becomes an ontological nomad, according to Deleuze, “as long as there is form, there is reterritorialization” (18). This is his *becoming-animal*, both omit and not omit the literal meaning, and not to become *an animal*. The drowned does not form itself into a threshold or becomes inhuman; the drowned dog does not become the threshold of my shame and my sorrow; oiled soils of Amazon are not the threshold of life and thrash, but rather, thrashed. Similar to the “inhuman” of the “non-place”, the drowned of the Auschwitz, Tsing’s ethnography of matsutake mushrooms of the blasted landscapes of Japan present a similar plasticity, resembling modification. As forests are shaped by the concentration of wealth,

she follows shifting patches of ruination to discover what the idea of progress left to us in industrial forest landscapes (Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World* 2015, 206). In this chain of destruction, violent events against humans living in poverty and industrial forests ruined by logging, trimming, etc., Tsing finds hope amidst the capitalist ruins through matsutake mushrooms in the forests of Oregon and Japan. These forests are landscapes where humans and matsutake mushrooms regain a generative attitude in the face of ontological violence. What Tsing does is to focus on interspecies bodies to discover the intertwined histories of such events of violence. According to her, disturbance can give rise to new species assemblages (Tsing, *AURA's Openings. More-than-Human.* 2015).

How does the less-than-human become more-than-human, capable of witnessing, making meaning through recognition and sense-abilities? Remembering Gabrys' emphasis on lichens' sense-ability rather than "signaling" environmental change, more-than-human witnessing grounds in this particular attunement. Not through reaction, but through response. Not through signaling, rather, through meaning-making and adapting accordingly to our memory archives. The response becoming indifferent to pain in order to survive becomes a process of becoming, a wit(h)nessing that require coming across to multiplicity of events. Coral reefs that are traumatized, standing indifferent to further violence with their lost ability to regenerate, stand wit(h)ness to extinction with their present process. They may not be witnessing *death*, rather, they recognize and come across to the violence that perpetrates it. Wit(h)nessing, as I stated before, is never an act of singularity. We wit(h)ness with many through our transcorporeal bodies that become with many. Our intra-actions with the outside phenomena, including our irregularities or indifferences, are part of our process of becoming. In every and each encounter we wit(h)ness, violent or caring, we become ourselves, we become us. Like the honeybee that collect and makes substance, collecting essence and creating honey, we pollinate each other in every event of wit(h)nessing.

3.3 The (Un)reliable Narrator

When I first read C.T. Salazar's poem, "Noah's Nameless Wife Takes Inventory", which I have referred to at the beginning of Chapter 2, I was in pain of witnessing mortality. My inability to grief faded away as I had no questions left to ask about death. Not that I discovered death anew, yet, something in the poem kept echoing in my head as I had no answers: "the dogs will howl like a god learning the word for

light and nothing will howl back”. I imagined The Drowned Dog of Goya howling into a moon, drowned and holding on to a piece of Noah’s raft. “Like a god learning the word for light” was an instant Biblical reference for me. Since I read it as a teenager, I was obsessed with Genesis 1:3: “And God said, let there be light, and there was light”, continues, “and God saw the light was good”. Concept of God learning the word for light, witnessing his own first creation on the first day of the Earth was something tragically related to its omnipotence. The one and only that can witness all and can bear witness to all, was now witnessed by a drowning dog learning to be God. The dog would witness like a god, seeing everything, witnessing all, omnipotent, unreachable.

“And nothing will howl back” also carried multiplicity of meanings as I was dealing with the inter-generational trauma that was unfolding between me, my mother and my now-dead grandmother. Just before her death, she forgot how to speak, then she forgot how to walk. Like an infant who knew nothing of the Earth, she only witnessed things that are out of touch, some childhood memories that we now all forgot. When she died, I panicked. Who would testify for her? Who would bear witness? Who would howl back after such catastrophe? Even days before her death, she still remembered little poems she would occasionally tell us. We call these little poems “mani” in Turkish: traditional yet impromptu short poems. Some childhood stories and some poems, those seemed to be the only things she seemed to survive with. Would they count as her testimony? Of the agony that she was in. Or the Earth that was changed and somehow became hotter, more concrete, dusty, almost covered in plastic. Who will howl back to the ones who survive an *extinction*? Here in this sub-chapter, I aim to talk about the subject of testimony and place testimony in the act of wit(h)nessing. What makes testimony so different as an act that it is the crucial point of becoming witness?

In “Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening” (2010), Dori Laub anecdotes a woman in her late sixties testifying as an eyewitness to the Auschwitz uprising for the Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale. The woman with her loud echoing voice tells the story of that day as she *testifies* that there were four chimneys blowing up and everyone was reacting to the chaos of the camp. As the woman testifies, Laub tells the controversy between him and another historian since the memory of the testifying woman turned out to be fallible according to the historian. Since there was only one chimney blowing up that day, historians claimed that the testimony was not accurate and the woman was an unreliable narrator. Laub insists that the woman is indeed testifying, not to the number of chimneys, but to the reality of the unimaginable: “One chimney blown up in Auschwitz was as incredible as four” (223). The woman testifies and “makes and breaks a promise”, breaks a framework and

the historical truth. By speaking and telling the story of the four chimneys blowing up, the woman defeats the silence that served her as a sanctuary till that moment, “the silence out of which this testimony spoke”. However, as an eyewitness, she goes beyond the dichotomy of historical truth and fallible information, of being righteous and unreliable. Oliver states: “Seeing the impossible-what did not happen-gave her the strength to make what seemed impossible possible: surviving the Holocaust” (2001, 1).

Wieviorka (2006) reminds us that many testimonies including diaries, memoirs and literature were not counted as testimonies until the Eichmann trial. When the trial’s prosecutor used witness testimonies as documentation, political setting that they were used legitimized these as testimonies. She emphasizes the conflict between the search for truth and witness’s own memory, as the historian searches for the historical truth. Laub (2010), as the psychiatrist, argues that what is important in testimony is the discovery of the knowledge, its very happening. Therefore, the knowledge of testimony is not given knowledge that is reproduced by the testifier, rather, it is a genuine advent and an event on its own. However, the witness is essentially unreliable because of the poetics and politics in the act of bearing witness, argues Derrida (Sandomirskaja 2011), and Arendt further emphasizes that the witness have to be a *righteous man* who is able to deal with this poetics and politics (see Chapter 1.1: Witnessing). According to Derrida, “testimony is not information and witnessing is not a speech act that produces knowledge” (Sandomirskaja, 249). Hereby, affirming the problematic of testimony, Derrida agrees that the testimony is not proof, rather, it appeals to the act of faith with regard to a speech given under oath. Saying that I bear witness is to say I swear, I swear that I have been there. Therefore, following Derrida’s argument, every testimony is a dialogue where every statement carries the vocative “*You* have to believe me” (as cited in Sandomirskaja 2011, 251).

I am unfolding an understanding that will figure and disfigure testimony in its place in witnessing theories and perspectives. Hereby, what makes testimony the crucial part of witnessing is again in the dichotomy between *testes* – which comes from *terstis* (the third) as the witness – that is present to deal with the two and *superstes* – which is the survivor who is here and been there – that is present to the horror of the past, hence cannot be objective or impartial. Testimony becomes the inherently crucial part of the act of what we name witnessing, making it a dialogue under oath with language, which is all too often already understood according to conditions that are regulative instead of generative: “testimonial evidence both rests on and determines what can *possibly* be said to have been seen rather than on its effects on those communities who have seen and those who might yet hear

about such images” (Flanagan 2022, 87). What Derrida strives to do with his affirmation, then, is to defeat the witness and its claim of immediate truth: *I have been there*. According to Sandomirskaja (2011), what Derrida defines as the poetics of witnessing is its singularity: singular act, singular event, singular relationship to language. Related to these singularities, witnessing becomes responsible witnessing which includes this poetic experience of language (poetics and politics of witnessing). Responsible witnessing, again according to Derrida, is only guaranteed by their awareness in three modes of attentiveness: presence to the self, presence to the event and presence to the listener. This triple “answerability” (2011, 252) should also be abided by the listener, who is also the witness that makes the testimony of the witness, and thus makes the testimony itself, the truth by answering their *you have to believe me*.

Therefore, what Derrida emphasizes with his complicated argumentation is both the inescapability and the impossibility of bearing witness: the listener, the *you*, the testes of the testimony cannot escape their position of bearing witness, while the superstes, the survivor, the one who is here and there of the event becomes again the impossible witness, as in “no one (can –Z.S.) bears witness for the witness”. For the latter, Derrida does nothing but complicating what we have discussed through Agamben: the incompleteness of the survivor and its inability to bear witness to death (see Chapter 3.2: The Hope of Ruins). I have discussed a way that we can pave through a theory of wit(h)nessing that minds the “living” and acknowledges also the landscape and living archives that are embedded in the space-time of wit(h)nessing. The problematic is resolved into what we will theorize into wit(h)nessing, as focusing on the ontology of the accident, the event-ality of the occurrence. Survival itself, by the impossibility of fleeing, becomes the act that/of witnessing. This is never the singular act of seeing or eyewitnessing, this event-ality is always bound to the landscape and archives that figures memory in its affective force. What about the you of the testimony? What makes the testes, the you of the testimony, so apart and also the crucial point of testimony? Who howls back to the dog, as I asked at the beginning of the sub-chapter? As there is also the inescapability of the witnessing for the listener of the testimony as a witness, making the listener undeniably the answering agent. What is answering back if testimony is a dialogue, rather than a speech act that produces knowledge and counts as evidence?

The duality of superstes and terstis is bound to the temporality of the event that is seen chronological, which always results in seeking the historical truth, truth that is composed of language that is already regulative and not generative. However, the very statement of testimony, or rather a dialogue, can itself constatare the object of belief. The chronological order that is the constructing paradigm of the legal testi-

mony makes testimony necessary as it is simply reporting and a trial for reproducing the event. Here at this point Derrida makes his remark, it is because of the singularity of the event and because of its irreproducibility, testimony becomes impossible. This argument hits to a point that is different than Agamben's argument on the impossibility of witnessing. Although Agamben and Derrida may agree on the "in-completion" thesis, Derrida's impossibility of witnessing focuses on the singularity of event. Here, I want to re-emphasize and even interpret Haraway's criticism of Derrida; Derrida focuses on affirming the problematic of witnessing theoretically so much so that it is evident that there is no relation to justice in any of his arguments. It is clever as it is no use. However, it is possible to play with three modes of attentiveness that guarantees the witnessing. What is needed through this interpretation is remembering that event-ality is never singular but rather affective and multiple in their natureculture. As I will be getting back to this fact with its ethnographic examples, and its relation to a more-than-human witnessing, wit(h)nessing, it is also already discussed in Chapter 2.2.

What Derrida deconstructs, he does not reconstruct. The modes of attentiveness in which he makes the responsible witnessing, the presence to the self, the event and the listener, can be interpreted into an act of attunement when we consider the multiplicity and the affect of the event. I am discussing the multiplicity and affect in the event-ality of witnessing, not with the parts of mediation or meaning making parts of wit(h)nessing. As I will be detailing its characterization, wit(h)nessing requires not only attentiveness to the event but also, and most importantly, attunement to its affects and repercussions. Framing environmental catastrophe and multiplicity of *how* it becomes, one is always attuned to its happenings, not to its singularity of event, but rather the multiplicity and plurality it consists. Where attentiveness implies a focus, of attending in good faith to the act of bearing witness, attunement implies and emphasizes harmony and becoming with. Such acts of attunement that makes up the unfolding act of wit(h)nessing implies the curiosity that cares to look back, looks for responses, acknowledging the positionalities of agents in their relationalities.

Therefore, Derrida's affirmation of the problematic of witnessing that strives to tackle the poetics and politics of witnessing re-appropriates the impossibility of witnessing. Instead, what he resolves is the subject of *historical truth* in testimony. If Derrida insists that testimony is indeed a dialogue, then there is no way out from the problematic that he appropriates. Although the witness stands alone and irreplaceable, and is somehow always unreliable, the truth of the witness becomes truth when the listener believes it. However, impossibility of witnessing in Agamben plays out through his theory of subjectivity and language, respectively: The I is

whoever says *I*, underline the *I*; The *I* is whoever *says I*, underline saying. Here, the impossibility born out of the incompleteness, the impossibility of survival of the material body, and incapability of speech of the inhuman for the latter. As *I* will be talking about its aspect with language under the next heading, (Im)Possible Testimonies, we have already discussed witnessing and subjectivity through the chapters 3.1-3.2. However, this sub-chapter makes itself only with the next one as they complete a discussion on dual impossibility of witnessing, through the concept of testimony that is so embedded to the theories and discussion on witnessing.

3.4 (Im)Possible Testimonies

Looking for the mosquitos' agency in the intertwined histories of violence and affectual relationships between tanks, parasites and synthetic nitrate, Timothy Mitchell asks the questions that named his famous chapter in the book, *Rule of Experts* (2002): "Can the Mosquito Speak?". Emphasizing how techno-science rearranges nature and its expertise emerges from "process of manufacture whose ingredients are both human and nonhuman" (12), Mitchell tells the intertwined stories of the Malaria endemic, DDTs, capitalist enterprise of Rockefeller Foundation and Abud, militarism and war in Egypt. What Mitchell's question can be interpreted to is asking if the mosquito can testify, hereby bear witness, to these intertwined histories where human agency and intention are only a partial product of these interactions. As he searches for mosquito's agency and explain how the mosquitos play a part in such history not only as affectual forces but also as agents and actors, Mitchell also brilliantly criticizes the humanistic perspective in sciences that appropriates the anthropocentric complex: "Social science, by relating particular events to a universal reason and by treating human agency as given, mimics this form of power. The normal methods of analysis end up reproducing this kind of power, taken in by the effects it generates" (22).

As this thesis is built around to change such perspective in our studies of politics, I aim to tackle Mitchell's question in its literality. Through Mitchell's narrative, it is openly discussed that the mosquito bear witness to such intertwined histories of violence and although Mitchell does not openly discuss it, he points to specific knots where we can actually unfold the agency of the malaria carrying mosquito(s). I further ask, how can the mosquito *speak* of its bearing witness? How the living, *animals* not the *animal*, specifically, including our expanding re-grounding of *the human*, testifies to such histories, by narrating stories, outside of testimony's solely

legal connotations? Through this mission, firstly I return back to my discussion on Derrida's shame, which became the shame of philosophy (see Chapter 1.4, 27), Derrida's criticism of Lacan and the semiotic power of animal, and how we can notice the multitude of ethos. Following the previous sub-chapter, I further aim to search for more-than-human grounds for testimony in order to place it into a more-than-human theory of wit(h)nessing, and thus, interpreting testimony into its more-than-human connotations. Referring to the impossibility of bearing witness which I have also discussed in the previous sub-chapter, I am now referring to its "impossibility" not through the incompleteness of witnessing for the survivor or testimony's narration but rather through discussing language, meaning making, communication and response.

Making the traumatized survivor, the drowned, an incomplete witness to death and generalizing a theory of impossibility of witnessing from this particularity, Agamben makes the survivor an incomplete (un)witness to the multitudes of events too. As I have discussed before in Chapter 3.2: The Hope of Ruins, what makes the drowned an incomplete witness is not only their inability to fully experience death in Auschwitz but also their incapability of *speaking* of their own bearing witness. As I have already referred to the first by discussing that survival of the material body does not fulfil the requirement of being an incomplete witness to an event, I now aim to discuss its (im)possible testimony by further discussing what would testimony mean for a more-than-human, or in the Drowned's case, a "less-than-human". I believe that Agamben's commentary on the drowned and their impossible testimony is good to think-with since Agamben describes The Drowned as a threshold between life and death, between human and inhuman (Remnants of Auschwitz, 47). However, The Drowned becomes many things throughout the book: an extreme situation, the example of a constant state of emergency, a threshold, infant, etc. Whatever they come to be, what the term "inhuman" characterizes becomes *a way of being* for the Drowned, some phenomena that opposes "an ethical life". Human, here, is a *potential* to be fulfilled but it is an ethical potential indeed. As Agamben also emphasizes: "human being exists in the human being's non-place (the camp -Z.S.), in the missing articulation between the living being and the logos" (134), the inhuman becomes the object of studying ethics and politics of human. Through his theories of subjectivity and language, I argue that the Drowned becomes a divide between nature and culture.

However, what Agamben mainly introduces by problematizing the Drowned and their so-called inhumanness is a problem of recognition, rather than communication. The Drowned is unrecognizable. Unable to sense and insensible too. In other words, what mainly characterizes the Drowned is not their inability to react but to respond, or to be analogues to our dog in the painting and in the poem, not to *howl*, but

rather to *howl back*. Through this divide between howling and howling back, or rather, between reacting and responding, what Agamben is willing to problematize is the infamous nature-culture divide through a discussion of testimony and its relation with language and logos:

“The human being is thus always beyond or before the human, the central threshold through which pass currents of the human and the inhuman, subjectification and desubjectification, the living being’s becoming speaking and the logos’ becoming living. These currents are coextensive, but not coincident; their noncoincidence, the subtle ridge that divides them, is the place of testimony.” (Agamben 1999, 135)

Nevertheless, for Agamben, the Drowned does not become a separate specimen either, not openly. The Drowned does not possess a specific and particular ways of *communication* or even reactions amongst them, rather, what characterizes them, as again and again underlined by Agamben, is their inability to sense and then to testify, and thus, to bear witness. Boldly underlining these two arguments I am making now criticizing Agamben, I am now underlining his conceptualization of the Drowned: I want to emphasize that I am not making an analogues argumentation where I relate the Drowned directly into a more-than-human perspective. Rather, I aim to acknowledge that the incapability of the Drowned is related to Agamben’s theory of language that also affectively makes the Drowned so less-than-human. Agamben relies heavily on a discourse that Derrida dealt with, which I will be referring to in a couple of paragraphs, and that became popular even before the post-humanist turn in philosophy and anthropology. In relation to such arguments, Deranty (2008) argues that for Agamben, “the semiotic order in itself does not contain the explanation for the possibility of semantic use” (169). Hereby, as they are different abilities, semiotic order designates the order of *language* while semantic order designates the order of *discourse*. Being outside of language use, being prior to language use and not the language itself, means infancy. The I, is whoever says I, requires a shift from language to discourse. Furtherly, the I, whoever who (cannot) say I, does not possess a subjectivity, hereby the capacity, to refer to itself in the first person, the ego position.

Beyond Agamben’s heavily Lacan-inspired position to infancy and the *language*¹⁵, his position to bearing witness also stands very much Hegelian in which language of the testifying “voice” is born out of: “the non-language to which language answers, in which language is born” (38). However, Agamben does not conclude in any argument

¹⁵Reader must mind what Agamben means by “language” and how I argued the term from his perspective

about this relation. “What a former Muselmann to do” as one of the former prisoners of Auschwitz asks in a seminar about witnessing and the seminar fails to provide an answer (Sandomirskaja 2011, 255). In Remnants of Auschwitz, in relation to both the inability and the impossibility of testifying, the relationship between semantics, which make the discourse, and semiotics, which make the language according to Agamben, never coincide or come alive. If they are to give birth to such differentiated concepts, which would make us assume that discourse and language is severely separated from each other, once the semantic use is recognized then, how can it turn back? Furtherly, and most importantly, is it possible to derive the two so apart from each other? How can one be possible without the other? It can be argued that while indexical and iconic modalities do not, symbolic modalities are context dependent (Kohn 2013). However, making representation and telos a solely all-too-human mental affair, that belongs to ones that are completely human and into Lacanian symbolic, seems an inadequate commentary to relate semiotic and semantic processes. In order to testify, to bear witness, we have to make meaning and communicate such meanings with each other. We have to respond to each other as testimony is a dialogue rather than an evidence of reality. How does the living do that? Or more precisely, how can the animal testify?

If we turn our faces to Lacan and speak accordingly, *the animal*¹⁶, the inhuman, cannot respond since it lacks speech. Speech begins only with the passage from “pretence” which is in the order of the signifier “and that the signifier requires another locus – the locus of the Other, Other witness, the witness Other than any of the partners—for the speech that it supports to be capable of lying, that is to say, of presenting itself as Truth” (as cited in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, 2008, 131). For the speech to be capable of lying means it needs to present itself as Truth – to testify, to witness, not to speak *of* reality but *speaking reality*. However, fixed in Cartesian fixity, Lacan persists that the animal does not have unconscious, language nor the Other; the bee reacts and does not respond. Between reaction and response, what Derrida finds so problematic is that Lacan finds *responsibility*, and thus psychoanalytic *ethics*, on the distinction between these two concepts; further argues that Lacan even finds *subject* from the distinction between the two, Derrida quotes Lacan: “Henceforth the decisive function of my own response appears . . . simply to be received by the subject as acceptance or rejection of his discourse, but really to recognize him or to abolish him as subject” (125). Here, *the animal*, and never *an animal* in Lacan, is a non-subject that is lacking the “deception of speech”

¹⁶Lacan never specifies a certain animal or an animal species for his observations. Criticized with making delusional observations by Derrida, Lacan talks about animals by making them a non-subject of the human subject, thus, the animal. “The inhuman” for Agamben as a term stands similar to such naming and categorization in Lacan.

and can only achieve the “strategic pretense”. For Lacan, it is all a *monkey see monkey do*¹⁷, animal is the non-subject of the human subject.

According to Lacan, ‘the animal’ is within the first degree of pretense/trace: able to leave a track, to track, but not to distract the tracking or lead the tracker astray by erasing its trace or covering its tracks. To be a subject, the animal should have been able to do so, to cover up its tracks. This emphasizes, if you cannot deceive, you cannot speak the reality too. Logos, here, what Agamben referred to as discourse produced by semantic ability, is bound to the possibility of deceiving or being deceived. Criticizing Lacan, Derrida (2008) discusses reaction and response, showing the inadequacy of the conception “language as a sign”, to actualize what Lacan makes up the relationship between “signs and reality”. According to Lacan, signs take on their value from each other, thus, there is not just a fixed correlation between signs and reality. However, Derrida says that Lacan always insists on the dominance of the signifier over the subject, and over the symbolic order which is constitutive for the subject. Still Lacan insists that the animal *pretends*, and Derrida emphasizes that he picks the word dancity to refer to this pretend: “capacity to pretend by means of a dance or lure... hence all the forms of the ‘I am (following)’ or ‘I am followed’ that we are tracking here” (128).

Let’s breathe here for a moment: why is this discussion so crucial? Between Agamben, Lacan and Derrida, and between response, reaction, language and speech, what becomes so important in the case of (im)possible testimony? Testimony is not crucial because it is the *speaking part* of bearing witness but rather, it is crucial because it is the being *here* of witness. Especially outside its legal paradigms, when interpreted to superste’s meaning of being here and there at the moment of event, testimony is the dialogue that unfolds the agent into the present moment. It is the temporal bounding of constant happening where witnessing becomes an unfolding process also. Therefore, all Lacan’s ruminations about the animal rather becomes a theory of subjectivity that is born out of his arguments on speech, an ability to refer to itself, to know, to come across, to recognize, to sense, to make meaning, which eventually evolves into a theory of witnessing. Luckily, I believe that Derrida sense this too as he emphasizes that “re-inscribing the *différance* between reaction and response” is re-inscribing the historicity of ethical, juridical and political responsibility “within another thinking of life, of the living, within another relation of the living to their ipseity, to their autos, to their own autokinesis and reactional automaticity, to death, to technics, or to the mechanical” (2008, 126). Hereby, these discussions ground

¹⁷“Monkey see monkey do” is a saying, originated from Jamaica according to Oxford Dictionary, that refers to monkeys’ habit of mimicry, most usually of a human person, and the act of learning or doing without being concerned with consequences

themselves in central point as they relate to a certain re-inscription, re-definition, re-grounding of responsibility (hereby as response-ability) for testimony to be the dialogue of the happenings of the epoch we are living in.

Response-ability here becomes the crucial point of the argument as Agamben also relates to the term etymologically: “to become the guarantor of something for someone (or for oneself) with respect to someone” (1999, 21). In respond to this description, or at least as I place it, Lacan argues that: “An animal does not give its word, and one does not give one’s word to the animal, except by means of a projection or anthropomorphic transference” (as cited in Derrida, 2008, 129). Giving one’s word, becoming a guarantor of something for someone, both of these descriptions can be interpreted into “the ethical, juridical and political responsibility” that Derrida refers to. What I aim to explain here is the relationship between inter-species relationalities, responsibility and thus, “testimony”. As I have mentioned inter-species relationalities and discussed them thoroughly in Chapter 1.4, now I want to discuss its semiotic presence as I delved into the possibilities of testimony. How do we, animals, in inter-species relations, testify to the happenings we are entangled in? In *How Forests Think* (2013), Kohn uses Peircean semiotics and goes after to find out how forests think, offering a new understanding of relationality that is not approached not only through difference and otherness, rather through what he describes as “open wholes”. These open wholes are where selves are built semiotically, where life is intrinsically semiotic, living beings share representational processes (semiotic processes) that are not unique to humans. This is how the forests think, this is *how* the living makes dialogue.

In his ethnography that consists an expansive anthropological theory that uses semiotic theory, Kohn argues that the living differentiates for they do things for the sake of a future, by re-presenting it in the present. Although symbolic reference is what makes humans unique, even symbolic references are an “emergent dynamic that is nested within this broader semiosis of life from which it stems and on which it depends” (2013, 50). Therefore, while symbolic modalities that bases most of our abstract thinking are context dependent, iconic and indexical signs are shared by all forms of life. The latter modalities are what makes communication possible; as all signs do something in the world, selves, that all the living have, are starting points for new sign interpretations. How the living thinks, makes meaning, then, is always entangled in these open wholes. Kohn (2015) named his anthropological theory “the anthropology of life” before landing on the name “more-than-human anthropology”. This is the anthropology I have described to be ontological and remains bounded to its principles in Chapter 1.4. This anthropological perspective sees human as a part of the semiotic processes that is life; just as we discussed in memory, accepts

human culture as an extension of living memory.

Latour criticizes Kohn in using Peirce's semiotic theory and reflecting that there are many other semiotic theories that would not focus on the triad of signs; Kohn answers that this was the paradigm that suited him well... Here I also recognize such a criticism, however, both anthropological theory and Kohn's anthropology has so much to offer in the case of wit(h)nessing. Kohn's field experience and how he figures and re-figures semiotics in his ethnography with Runa people, and formulating *how* forests think as an open whole of selves promises formulating wit(h)nessings in further field works and ethnographies. It changes how we make meaning of making meanings, thus, disfiguring testimonies, refiguring witnessing. Considering the temporalities and complexities of environmental catastrophe as it consists multiplicity of events, such acts of figuring and refiguring we may need to build ourselves resilient in the affects to come. This provides not only sustainability but also awareness because as Morton emphasized, such events of the environmental catastrophe are not easy to make meaning of (see page.45): hyperobjects are phased, there is an inevitable distance between them and their indexical signs. Therefore, understanding how we communicate in inter-species pidgins as Kohn names them, can be helpful for us to tell each other stories of demise and regeneration. Basing this on Derrida's awareness, the fact that re-inscribing the difference between reaction and response may give us a chance to re-inscribe responsibility can drive us to re-inscribe it as response-ability. It is not only humans that make meaning and communicate such meanings with each other.

Concluding this chapter where I described and theorized a process of becoming wit(h)ness, wit(h)nessing, I want to return to my drowning dog and its wit(h)nessing. As I reflected in the beginning of the previous section, The (Un)reliable Narrator, Salazar wrote of "the dog howling like a god learning the word for light" and for me, this sentence echoed a Biblical reference that would be interpreted into the power of wit(h)nessing, a becoming with the *good*. Holding onto the promise of wit(h)nessing, I aim to talk about the ethics and politics of such more-than-human witnessing that is recalibrated accordingly to the environmental catastrophe of the Anthropocene. In Remnants of Auschwitz ending the chapter of "The Witness", Agamben almost argues against himself and emphasizes that the "impossibility of bearing witness, the 'lacuna' that constitutes human language, collapses, giving way to a different impossibility of bearing witness that which does not have language" (1999, 39). Further underlines a necessity of describing a possibility that is contrary to such impossibility: "the speech of language is born where language is no longer in the beginning, where language falls away from it simply to bear witness: 'It was not light, but was sent to bear witness to the light'" (ibid.). Quoting John 1:14

from the Bible, Agamben's quote is followed by "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us". Describing Messiah's humanization in order to reflect his light for humans to bear witness, I argue that there may be something to unfold in these words for our howling and drowning dog. We wit(h)ness in such ways that position us between -phobia and -philia, between 1, the creator, the light, and the "2", who would represent an Other, a drowning dog. Staying always in between, standing in inter and trans-modulations and refusing to disappear (Haraway 2010, 1991), more-than-human wit(h)nessing promises an ethics that will build ways of living well on Earth and take care of each other. Not only howling for learning the word for light, but also and always, howling back.

There are ways of storytelling and listening in the world that is more-than-human; what we are inquired to do is to figure out such ways. Although Lacan uses the term "dancity" to refer to the "pretense" he explains how the animal be, Haraway emphasizes: "an embodied communication is more like a dance than a word" (Haraway 2008, 26). Context that make stories happen may require symbolic references; we need to inscribe wit(h)nessing and thus, understand how we tell stories that will build us resilient. Because stories also come alive in collectivities, in inter-species pidgins. They happen because "significance is not the exclusive province of humans" (Kohn 2013, 31), because all species make meanings that construct stories embedded in their landscapes. To accept that life is intrinsically semiotic is to accept that significance "emerge in a world of living thoughts beyond the human in ways that are not fully exhausted by our all-too-human attempts to define and control these" (Kohn 2013, 72).

4. MORE-THAN-HUMAN POLITICS AND ANTHROPOLOGY

4.1 Ethics, Vulnerability and Response-ability

Agamben discusses irresponsibility, spelled out, as Levi calls it “the gray zone”, “the zone in which the “long chain of conjunction between victim and executioner comes loose, where the oppressed becomes oppressor and the executioner in turn appears as victim” (as cited in Agamben, 1999, 21). This zone of irresponsibility is what Agamben interprets of Arendt: “the lesson of the terrifying, unsayable and unimaginable banality of evil”. Analyzing Eichmann’s “inability to think” according to the common interpreter, Haraway (2016) argues that what Arendt had to say about the evil of thoughtlessness brings into question of the Anthropocene. “Arendt witnessed in Eichmann not an incomprehensible monster, but something much more terrifying” says Haraway, “she saw commonplace thoughtlessness” (36). This ordinary thoughtlessness is what makes Anthropocene *unthinkable*, it is truly the *banality* of evil. “Function mattered, duty mattered, but the world did not matter for Eichmann”, he became terrifying, someone “who could not entangle”, “could not cultivate response-ability” (Haraway, 36). What makes this thoughtlessness make come true in the multiplicity of events of the environmental catastrophe, of the Anthropocene? Is the “gray zone of Auschwitz” still can be a reference for “thoughtlessness” in an epoch where the distinction between victims and perpetrators, and, the bystanders and victims are blurred? How do I not become an Eichmann? How do I be *thought-full*?

Here, I want to think through ethics, as I place it in this anti-Eichmann morality, into responsibility, as in response-ability. I place it not necessarily *beyond* good and evil, but definitely not *before* them too. This ethics is where I drive from a wit(h)nessing, that is embedded into the “politics of wit(h)nessing”. To become wit(h)ness is to accept the responsibility to be affected. But response is incapable as life is semiotic. We respond, thus, we keep response-ability. Through pain and life,

there are no escape but only numbing to it. A certain giving in to vulnerability, the inescapable violence of our positionalities and acknowledging these positions in this responsiveness, is the solid foundation which becomes response-ability. As agents in wit(h)nessing become implicated and culpable embedded in the event-ality, every meeting involves something irreducible. This coming acrosses can sometimes even mean detachment; in multispecies co-flourishing, outcomes are never certain and they always co-constitute violence. “Some prosper at the expense of others” where death and life are not polar opposites (Ginn, Beisel ve Barua 2014). Re-emphasizing my ontological perspective, van Dooren, Kirksey and Münster (2016) underline the fact the worlds are *made, not made up*, they are no make believes; in the multiplicity of these crafted worlds, we are to “recraft modes of living and dying”.

Formulating response-ability, Haraway argues that vulnerability is to remain at risk and the solidarity in that risk: “How else could necessity and justice (justification) be evaluated in a mortal world in which acquiring knowledge is never innocent?” (When Species Meet, 70). In this act of sharing suffering, mattering that always comes with the necessary response that enables it, these relationalities need to be broken down, of course, if not to be only objectification and oppression remaining. Lien (2022), in an ethnography of care, curiosity and commitment between salmon and human counterparts, emphasizes the affective care that can sometimes involve relations of exploitation and domination. Because respect is “an ontological choreography” (Haraway 2008, 101), it relies on the ontological openings born out of the ways of learning to share other’s pain non-mimetically. Lien argues that by following these relationalities as the ethnographer, we may decide whether these complex care relations changes anything regarding to the day-to-day welfare as they always depend on the context. Our ways of living are not always beautiful, they are messy, dusty, muddy and not always aesthetically enchanting. Living involves many species knotted together, “working with and against other multispecies assemblies” (Ginn, Beisel ve Barua 2014).

In their ethnography with honeybees of the alternative apicultures, Green & Ginn (2014) focus on vulnerability and how it is embedded in these multispecies knots and co-habiting. Beekeepers of these alternative apiaries reshape honeybees’ resilience and vulnerability to CCDs while making themselves vulnerable to the honeybee by not following many of the normative methods of domestication and beekeeping. Focusing on this reciprocal capture, Green & Ginn analyze this co-emergence from the currency of gift, a capture with an underlying belief that echoes of honey: poison becomes a currency for these beekeepers who refuse to gear up for the work of keeping the bees. Although there is domestication involved no matter how the beekeepers insist they apply natural methods, there are also certain kind of enchant-

ment that provides day-to-day welfare. Just like Lien's (2022) cautionary argument in the ethnography of Norwegian aquaculture that focuses on care and commitment between Norwegian salmon farmers and salmon: it all depends on the context. This context, which, remember, can be regarded through symbolic meaning-making processes, is embedded in the stories we tell of our relationalities, a set of "largely unwilling interdependencies". Ethics, here, is a question of being curious enough about the world "to know and feel something at the end of the day that we didn't when we crawled, leapt or groaned our way out of bed that morning" (Green ve Ginn, 153). It is not always symmetrical, it is deeply embedded in the positionalities of the agents, but it "brings light to suffering that is both ordinary and forgotten" (154). Living *well* involves taking care of others, human and nonhuman.

Deborah Bird-Rose writes at the edge of extinction, when the worlds that one loves are being thrashed: "it is a burden to bear witness to the shimmering", "lively powerful, interactive worlds that ride the waves of ancestral power" (2017, 55). Shimmer, taken from its Aboriginal Yolngu use of the term *bir'yun*, means brilliant and shimmering, is susceptible to a "reciprocal capture", "an immanent mode of existence in which neither entity transcends the other or forces the other to bow down". Similarly, van Dooren proposes that mourning is important for response-ability, to cultivate ways of caring for each other: "Mourning is about dwelling with a loss and so coming to appreciate what it means, how the world has changed, and how we must ourselves change and renew our relationships if we are to move forward from here" (as cited in Haraway, 2016, 38). The ongoing process of the environmental catastrophe and the catastrophe to come are not chronologically bounded, they are chaotically lived through in their complexity. In the multiplicity of events of this catastrophe, we need to form dialogue that tell the stories of the Earth. Unmaking Anthropocene through these relationalities, giving into the vulnerability of positioning ourselves in the co-flourishing of species as we go on to make worlds in their multiple.

Making meaning is not only about presence. As we make meaning of this Earth, life of signs that are embedded in life that is intrinsically semiotic, is not just in present, they represent a future (Kohn, *How Forests Think* 2013). This representation is related to absence; they also represent what is not present: "living futures are indebted to the dead around them" (24). Making meaning of loss, of absences, is only possible with being vulnerable, to learn to die better. We need to be attentive in this way, Haraway emphasizes that without such vulnerabilities and openness it is impossible to nurture living: "I do not think we can nurture living until we get better at facing killing. But also get better at dying instead of killing" (2008, 97). We are to re-inscribe, re-define and re-figure responsibility as response-ability, embedded in our responses, in order to realize ways of living that are compassionate

and resilient. This is the only way to keep living. Being vulnerable and telling each other the stories of *us*: this is our only way of survival.

4.2 The Political Animal

In the Introduction to Politics class in my undergraduate years, a midterm question triggered a series of dreams where I debated with animals. I talked to animals other than my own species, I listened to their forest stories. In the midterm, we were questioned to analyze Aristotle's proposition, "man by nature is a political animal" and my failure to respond evoked an interest in the question of *the political animal*. What makes (hu)man a political animal by *nature*, although Aristoteles thinks other animals also congregate, or in Aristoteles' words: "And why man is a political animal in a greater measure than any bee. . . man alone of the animals possesses speech" (as cited in Steeves 2020). What Aristoteles indicates with speech, later in this quote, is how it is designed to indicate a certain evaluation of the outside phenomena and thus, the right and the wrong. This is the distinction of human from other animals, the quality and the perception of right and wrong, the good and the bad, and the partnership they form through these perceptions ("that makes a city state") (*ibid*). *Logos*¹⁸, here, what makes the human-animal *political by nature*. What we can refer to as logos, is what provides the testimony, the storytelling and communication in inter- and trans-species relations. If we are to accept politics as the ways of decisions regarding living well, creating lives in multiplicity, can we refer to the human as the only political animal by nature?

In Two Lessons on Animal and Man (2011), Simondon teaches us that Aristoteles actually do find a certain logos in the way an animal and a plant develops and constitutes itself. Through observation and judgement of reality, Aristoteles prepares an almost *biology* of life; remember when Derrida said Aristoteles was the first to politicize *life*. Aristoteles emphasize that ants or bees (animals hereby) do not have imagination and does not work their life through that imagination, human animal, according to him, does has this capacity. However, human is an animal nevertheless; all animals make habits. Therefore, Simondon underlines that we have to admit "that according to Aristotle reason is properly human and specifically characteristic of man, there exist continuities and functional equivalents within the various levels of organization between the different modes of living beings" (Simondon 2011, 49).

¹⁸In her book *Vibrant Matter*, in the chapter of Force of Things, Jane Bennett describes logos as study or story and further describes ecology as "the study or story (logos) of the place where we live (oikos) or better, the place that we live" (2010, 365)

All species live: “life is the same everywhere. In an oyster, in a tree, in an animal, or in a man, life has the same demands” (52). Simondon seems to be favoring Aristoteles against the likes of Sokrates, Platon and Descartes in these lessons, as he celebrates Aristoteles with his idea of continuity of ontological being in nature, while differentiates Sokrates, Platon and Descartes to be arguing on the base of *difference*. In his own ontology, Simondon does not differentiate animals and humans with ontological borders, rather, he emphasizes the ontogenesis of elasticity (Timofeeva 2018). What can be referred to as subjectivity, thus, are potentials of a becoming, or different possibilities of what Simondon calls *phase shifts*. Therefore, the one that *lives*, does not adapt through changing their environments only but rather it provides and creates new ways of sustaining the ability to live by coming across each other and becoming one another: this process is called individuation. Termites become termites because they form their species-being by their responsive becoming-in common, which is the thing that individuates them (as cited in Colebrook, 113).

Political, in this discussion and in many other, can be defined by the *polis*, as relations constitute the agents and “the social whole has no existence independent of the ongoing self-making of each of its collectively reflexive parts” (*ibid*). What does logos mean, then, according to these descriptions of politics? As honeybees also make decisions by dancing longest to choose the best nesting or swarming site, they chose accordingly to this choreography. Steeves recalls this process:

“As long as a bee initially dances longer for a better site, the longest dance will win. To put it another way, it would seem that the bees are not thinking about which site is actually better than the others. Instead, they are simply doing whatever most other bees are doing at any given time. Eventually, everyone is doing the same thing. The outcome looks democratic, but the process does not involve what we typically think of as democratic procedures.” (Steeves 2020, 69)

Therefore, what Steeves focuses on, instead of humanistic descriptions of what goes as democratic, is the *Propolis*. First is a visit to Rousseau’s autonomous reason of individuals: to be human is to be capable of rational choice. To be able to communicate political thought and making it deliberately is a human act. Influenced by Rousseau, many of the democratic processes of the nation-state is constructed out of the idea that the best interest of the group, thus, the best way of living, is determined by the general will. If individual’s decision, hereby mostly their vote, does not match the general will, Steeves emphasizes that in this scheme, that individual must have been *wrong*. The fetishization of voting under liberalism, and through the

absolute certainty in human animal's capability of using the *logistikon*, humanistic decision making creates the good. If decision making through political tools such as voting creates the common good, what causes destruction? What makes life so unbearable on the face of Earth with all the catastrophes that passed and more to come? We have to keep asking, recalibrating our focus, what it means to possess *logos*? What does it mean to live together?

What it means to be political, to be an "I Am", to address and to be addressable, to possess *logos*, to witness? Here, Bennington draws my attention to his interpretation of Aristoteles: *logos* provides "namely deliberative phrases bearing on questions of the useful and the harmful, and thereby the just and the unjust" (Bennington as cited in Anderson, 2020). Anderson refers to Derrida's deconstruction of the assumption that subject or self is solely human and courageously asks "what makes us so certain that we as humans have them"? Furtherly, beyond this logocentricism, what can we find? Or rather, Massumi (2014) chooses to seek answer to "What Animals Teach Us About Politics" and focuses on play. Humanism is in error, according to Massumi and this error can only be understood if we are to look at animal life and play, only if we are to acknowledge the misrecognition of humanism. It is play that builds life; play create discrepancies that life profits from: "the surplus value of life produced by play, converted into survival value" (29). A politics that reties the human to their animality "cannot be based on a normative ethics of any kind" according to Massumi (38). It is a politics that is built around and on animality as an ongoing whole and as Colebrook (2020) summarizes of Massumi: "humans are political because they are animals, and animality is political because it is creative and always other than or irreducible to mere being" (116).

However, beyond animality, Steeves warns us again that we may be mistaken from the start if we are to assume that humans do possess what *logos* is, or possess what politics require. Steeves looks up to honeybees and argues that they make it possible for us to think politically: for honeybees, the political can only manifest itself in the polis, in the local community which is the microcosm of the Earth. Propolis contains:

"50 per cent resin, 30 per cent wax and oils, 10 per cent bee salivary secretions, 5 per cent pollen, and a 5 per cent mixture of amino acids, vitamins, and minerals ("What is"). It is a community of different forms of life (animal and plant) as well as nonlife (rocks). It is a microcosm of the local world." (Steeves 2020, 14)

In this local world, sisters feed each other in an act that humans termed trophallaxis.

Steeves emphasizes that bees do not call it anything “because they know *that is simply what it means to live together*” (12). Therefore, deciding on ways of living *well*, we have to look for ways of living together. Deciding on how to live well together could be possible by giving in to chaos rather than assuming humanistic ways of representation. Giving in to the play that creates discrepancies that make life possible, we have to play with our grief and joy to get beyond the excruciating pain of that is living. To play and to discover ways of being with each other rather than trying to always discover anew.

4.3 Anthropologist as Wit(h)ness

Remembering our conversations on ontological anthropology, or anthropology of ontologies as Kohn refers to it, what I aim to propose in this chapter is to try placing anthropologist in the theory of wit(h)nessing. As I articulated many of my discussions theorizing wit(h)nessing through anthropology and its contemporary new materialist theory, I have also provided an insight on anthropology’s potential to melt the “Great Divide” that separates nature and culture, and nature and society etc. (see Chapter 1.4). Latour also emphasizes that it is anthropology that has been so competent in tackling the “foreign collectives”. Latour reminds me the capability of contemporary anthropological theory to be “symptomatic” and “diagnostic” especially to contemporary conceptual challenges. Therefore, relying my back on my previous discussions on Chapter 1.4 and 1.5., I aim to appropriate the anthropologist as a wit(h)ness of the multiplicity of worlds and plurality of modes of being. Just as Latour places the anthropologist as the diplomat between different worlds, many different ways of existing in the world, I also imply a response-ability of the anthropologist that comes from our framing of our theory of wit(h)nessing.

In parallel to our theory of wit(h)nessing, Frichot (2022) uses Deborah Bird-Rose and van Dooren’s (2017) re-formulation of “witness” as “becoming witness” and argues that “encounter with scarred trees in Australian context in the process of mobilizing the positionality of “becoming witness”. Frichot investigates on her position of a non-Indigenous ethnographer as a “becoming witness” and how scarred trees as landscape events can become a process. As I acknowledged and described memory in its retentions and inscriptions and remembering that landscape of the living is a formation of the life-processes (Ingold 1993), Frichot’s ethnography may lead us the way into our discussion. In her brilliant article on the future of the witness, Sheik (2018) argues that “witnessing is not just a memory of the thing

that now disappeared but an unfolding experience”; Frichot (2022) meditates on this and further argues that there are things that a “way of knowing can and cannot see that are built into the way of knowing”. As Sheik redefines that witness must be but one within a collectivity, Frichot succeeds this thought by accepting her position as a modest witness who does not possess Indigenous ancestral knowledge yet an ethnographer who is willing to learn. In Frichot’s ethnography, her “testimony is something that burdens and encumbers the subject” (Richardson ve Zolkos 2022). Therefore, Frichot explains that she chooses to “stay with the landscape events”, interpreting Haraway’s staying with the trouble, and re-positions herself in the co-constitutive and dependent relationship between landscape events and “the witness” of them. Furtherly, Frichot takes memory as retention and inscription as she acknowledge the scarred trees as witnesses that was “culturally modified” which consists Indigenous knowledge practices.

In this particular way, Frichot recalibrate her own testimony by conceiving wit(h)nessing as two intertwined ongoing processes that are the “simultaneous registration of experiences (witnessing) and representation to public (bearing witness)” (Sheikh 2018). The crucial part to recapture of Frichot’s work is the argument that “the witness does not arrive pre-formed at a constructure point of view that is prepared in advance”; arriving to the landscape is always hardwork, so the witnessing will take place again and again, and again with variation (Frichot 2022). This formulation of a dynamic witnessing depends on encounters and open processes of learning, processes of learning with, either landscape events, the Country¹⁹, or any other agent. Frichot provides an example of ethnography where wit(h)nessing always becomes with many, where in its multiplicity it is possible to excavate intertwined stories of violence and knowledge practices, coming across inscribed in the landscape where the anthropologist both acknowledges and also accepts its positionality. She positions herself, as the non-Indigenous ethnographer, a “modest witness”. Frichot, as the anthropologist, is produced in multiplicity: she is constantly positioning herself, constantly companied by arts of noticing while constantly re-producing them, telling the stories of Indigenous knowledge practices and environmental change. However, the story Frichot is telling is not constructed solely by her, it is a story made possible with all the events embedded in the landscape. Sheik (2018) emphasizes that more-than-human agents can represent themselves, thus, from my interpretation, we can also pluralize the expression of these memories, which are wit(h)nessings. What Frichot articulates as the modest witness of the Indigenous lands is telling the story with the landscape, as I quoted before in

¹⁹Frichot (2022) refers to the geography of her study as “The Country”, recalling the Indigenous naming of “the habitat” or the land that one lives on and becomes with.

Ingold's words: "not like weaving a tapestry to *cover up* the world, it is rather a way of guiding the attention of listeners or readers *into* it" (Ingold 1993, 153). Becoming attuned to these encounters, relationalities of the landscape, Frichot acknowledges the multiplicity of wit(h)nessing by becoming a further agent that partake in them.

Act of bearing witness makes and breaks a promise, a promise of returning to a same world, says Laub (1992); a witnessing also enforces a certain failure of this promise. Frichot focuses on the scar-wound of trees as she seeks to acknowledge the trees as agents of wit(h)nessing: "what happens when the Country speaks back?". The anthropologist has the response-ability of its engagement, going into the field, to respond back. Dynamism of politics is born out of a relation between agents on how they survive, when anthropologist carries the response-ability to pluralize and communicate such knowings, being a diplomat between different worlds and world makings. Pluralizing and communicating such coming acrosses, anthropologist can actually succeed to become worthy of what happened to us, and then the will and release the event.

4.4 Methods for More-than-Human Wit(h)nessing(s)

Relying on my previous discussions in this chapter and on the arguments in the previous sub-chapter, I believe that it is important to propose methods of being such a diplomat, or to develop methods we may think-with. Politics that is inherent to the process of becoming wit(h)ness, that the anthropologist is acquainted with especially arriving at the field, needs a perpetual re-invention of coming acrosses that we called "arts of noticing" accordingly to our new forms of aesthesis. Remembering Swanson's ethnography with salmons and salmon otoliths (see Chapter 2.3), considering scientific-analytic methods that are seen as not mastered by long legacy of social sciences and to befriend some of these methods we acknowledged. Swanson did not use focus on fishing or cooking, or ways of domestication, or even an analysis of scientist positionality and scientific methods in the ethnography, as Science and Technology Studies became accustomed to; Swanson acknowledges and befriends a method that gets to know salmon through a microscope, looking at its otoliths. Acknowledging ways of knowing salmon, Swanson also pluralizes the ways of knowing salmon, finding the "animism" in scientific observation, further arguing that providing background information with scientific papers are not enough, "multi-species anthropology requires more intimate negotiations with science" (Swanson 2019, 93). What else do multi-species anthropology require? Considering our dis-

cussions on theory of wit(h)nessing and anthropologist as a wit(h)ness, what can be argued in the subject of methods for such anthropology?

Bearing the vulnerability and response-ability in the process of wit(h)nessing, van Dooren, Kirksey and Münster (2016) propose to “learn to be affected” and “transform noticing into attentiveness” for multispecies studies. The anthropologist must know that “ethics is not about response to a radically otherized other but about accountability for the lively relationalities of becoming of which we are a part” (Barad as cited in *Multispecies Attentiveness* 2016, 15). Therefore, as Bird-Rose iterates and as I argued about wit(h)nessing, ethics is a practice of recognition that is embedded in wit(h)nessing. For the anthropologist, choosing and mapping zones of contact is always bound to this ethics and it is affected by it. Considering their positionality as the human animal, the anthropologist must also acknowledge a position of the “gatekeeper” in their own research. Although relying on human counterparts of more-than-human relationalities might also be tracked and questioned, just like Swanson’s perspective on the issue and position of biologists in salmon research, the crucial point is to acknowledge that understanding non-human selves and how to interact with them is not a choice between animal bodies and human meanings (Kohn 2015). Our theorization of wit(h)nessing has the potential to reflect such perspective and to re-iterate this crucial point in methodologies to use and methods to come. In their article for discussing methods for animal geographies, Hodgetts and Lorimer argue that while investigating such geographies of contact animal lives experience and social lives demand more than the inferences that can be drawn from observing, tracking, monitoring etc. Since “we cannot ask animal directly what their lifeworld is like” (Hodgetts ve Lorimer 2015, 287), they emphasize, anthropologists/geographers have to invent ways of being in these spaces. However, the aim is not to compensate our “inability” to speak or get a verbal testimony from animals, but rather to pluralize our ways of being and living in this world following the living and learning ways to wit(h)ness their creativity in mortal play.

Multispecies ethnography and its methods have to respond to contemporary challenges and has to be dynamically diagnostic. In other words, “ethnographic research and writing that is attuned to life’s emergence within a shifting assemblage of agentic beings”²⁰ (Ogden, Hall ve Tanita 2013, 6). Compiling the ethics of arriving and being at the field/scene of events, anthropologist has the response-ability to achieve such methods and realize their importance. These methods, arriving at healthier and livelier conditions, aim not to create “better case studies” but to be responsible agents in the face of affective events. Ethnography, that is rooted in direct

²⁰By "beings" we are suggesting both biophysical entities as well as the magical ways objects animate life itself.

participation to other lives, is not the celebration of “squeeze the testimony out” from our interlocutors but rather a celebration of the cherishing and flourishing of the landscape and its inhabitants, no matter how blasted it is. Anthropologist finds hope, becomes the hope the particular zone, despite of themselves, despite being the gatekeeper and another disturbance. Our methods should be in line with our positionalities, acknowledged through our interspecies relations embedded in the landscape. Acknowledging ontologies, different world-makings, the anthropologist becomes the diplomat between worlds, noticing their own being together.

In order to play-with ways of doing ethnography and finding creativity within such efforts, not only our ways of thinking but also our academic environments must thrive. Wit(h)nessing is never easy, never pre-formed. Whether it is using scientific methods as humanities researchers and finding the animality and animism in such scientific methods or using technological tools to appreciate senses in the most ecstatic ways or delving into a dusty archive, our methods may be contaminated but “imperfect tools are the only ones we have” (Swanson 2019, 93). To be reflexive and open about our methods as anthropologists, we have to revolutionize our ways of being in the academic life. In an era where the academic job market is collapsing gradually and graduate students pay most of their stipends to cover conference fees, we have to maintain anthropologists an environment that is cherishing their creativity and opens up possibilities to play. To play and to think-with such creative tools requires not only to fight the bureaucratic and capitalistic enterprise of academia but also to demolish an “either-or” understanding about our tools: “anthropology needs to bring back the ‘both-and’ rather than intensify the ‘either-or’” (*ibid*). Even in aquacultures when possibilities of directly observing social worlds are almost slippery, anthropology can wit(h)ness the multiplicity of life by being in play with its own methods and knowing other methods.

CONCLUSION

“My heart is moved by all I cannot save:
so much has been destroyed

I have to cast my lot with those
who age after age, perversely,

with no extraordinary power,
reconstitute the world.”

Adrienne Rich “**The Dream of a Common Language.**”

Theorizing a more-than-human witnessing was born out of a need for me as an anthropologist who needed to develop ways of conflict resolution in contact zones where there are not only human agents involved in histories of violence. It also born out of a need to make meaning of dying in an era of multiple and complex webs of death and extinction. There is a certain trust in this theory, in the politics of witnessing, hereby wit(h)nessing. It is not a political theory in itself, of course, it is rather a study of political recognition and its naturecultures. There is a promise that the politics of wit(h)nessing gives us but it is not a “politicization of witnessing”, rather, it is underlining that every coming across, every wit(h)nessing, is inherently political. Here I am hoping that when I underlined the fact that when we discuss the promise of its politics, figuring (and re-figuring) ways of living, discussing ethics, and hereby vulnerability and responsibility, is inescapable.

I find it important to repeat and conclude our theory of this more-than-human witnessing, wit(h)nessing, as this is some sort of a *coda*, an exit piece: To become wit(h)ness is always to become wit(h)ness with many. It is always multispecies. Always contested. Always multiple. It consists many more-than-human relations and it reflects the positions of all agencies involved. It always happens in such collectivities. As a process, it is always unfolding, a process that consists many coming across(es) and recognition. This unfolding process relates to networks, assemblages,

relationalities, of agents where their space-time matters of intra-actions. Therefore, wit(h)nessing is always about these positionings and relationalities. Different nature-cultures as a continuation of living memory.

As it is an unfolding process, wit(h)nessing is not chronologically recognized but rather it recognizes different temporalities of the Anthropocene. Catastrophe is the things *that has been keep happening*. Figuring such complex temporalities, we need to re-figure and queer our temporalities. Therefore, wit(h)nessing does not focus on historical truth or historicity; wit(h)nessing consists storytelling in inter-species pidgins, storytelling for survival amidst the catastrophe. Similarly, and in the promise of breaking the duality of being *there* and *here* of witnessing, Wit(h)nessing is not solely witnessing to the (testimonial) Truth, rather, it is the story of life processes that are embedded in the landscape of such relationalities. Considering that it does not focus on historical truth, the bearing witness, testimony of witnessing, is not about speaking *the* reality (or telling the truth and nothing but the truth), but rather, about *speaking of reality*. Breaking the divide between being *here* and *there*, wit(h)nessing acknowledges the affectivity of events, hereby, focuses on the ontology of the accident, something that I have been referring to as *event-ality*. Thus, it also transcends the superstes-testis divide and strives to be expansive between being and bearing witness. Focusing on the event-ality, ontology of accident and happenings, wit(h)nessing understands the space-time of Earth and how landscape reflects stories of such events. It further strives to understand the hope in blasted landscapes, considering plasticity and considering trans-corporeality.

Although epistemic orientation of witnessing is knowing, wit(h)nessing does not stand in the duality between knowing and not-knowing. Our theories of becoming more-than-human make efforts to acknowledge not-knowing as a coming across too. Wit(h)nessing relates to recognition, recognizing and *other* forms of knowing. It actively participates in discovering new forms of aesthesis, thus, sense-abilities and acknowledges such forms of knowing. Its ethics minds its inter-generational becomings and I believe that it is important to emphasize that, in relation to Earthly memory, wit(h)nessing forms inter-trans-generational becomings. Through *living* that is always semiotic, and through semiotics that is outside the framings of humanistic interpretations and descriptions, the promise of politics of wit(h)nessing (which inhabits politics inherently) is to build and maintain a particular labor by formulating ethics and justice beyond anthropocentric law. It promises to build resilience and sustainability, acknowledging precarity in the face of multiplicity of events, in the face of the environmental catastrophe of the Anthropocene.

As a theorist who interpreted through and commentated on many anthropological

theories in order to explain wit(h)nessing; designating anthropologist as a wit(h)ness in result of these theories is not aimed to be a conservative approach but rather designating the field researcher as a maker of monographs with response-ability. There is also a certain promise of the ones studying to tackle networks, assemblages, relationalities of agents who are intertwined in overlapping histories. We need to tell stories to each other but *the anthropologist* can be a role designated for the ones who work particularly for recording these stories. This might be a humanistic interpretation and a very humanistic role-designation but I never claim to be not-human. My aim can never be to tackle every knot I discover or find the secret amber under every rock on a field; I can never *extract*, for that is the way of capitalists, the heirs of Eichmann. If there is a politics of us and if we are to discover this politics, I have to discover the positions that has hold violence along generations. I aim to be more-than-myself as human, learning and following the ways of living as they lead me the way in our politics.

Extinction and dying in the Anthropocene is difficult to bear, however, the effort to tackle it started with my own meaning making of particular deaths. When my best friend's father died, I tried to promise her hopes of finding a way to get through the feeling. She did not need any. There were many times that we sat down and talked about the same events, feelings, emotions that shook our grounds of living in this world or what it meant to survive another day. What it means to *survive* another day when it is not certain that we will live by tomorrow? What it means to survive another year when it is certain that the Earth is burning and that although this is the hottest summer by record, it will be the coldest summer ever of the rest of our lives? As I am writing these sentences, there is another drilling for a mine where the inhabitants of Southern villages of Turkey are pulled down with police brutality and violence. I talk about death, not to make it into the sole subject of this thesis but rather to acknowledge that if politics is about how we are to survive, it is inescapably about violence and death too. The living owes so much to the dead, so much to dying. When I mourned for the drowning dog, I was certain that I do not know of death, however, not-knowing can be a contact too. Not-knowing can find us open, maybe not like a hand offering help but like a fish. Living in this world amidst a catastrophe, amidst burning, is messy, dangerous and painful but nevertheless, it is living.

Wit(h)nessing, its theory and its tackling of different forms, does not aim to perpetuate further violence. Rather, it aims to dis-figure such violent positions to interpret them into living *well*. To figure what that consists of, we need to structure how to live together. Politics that is built on shame and guilt evacuate what it means to live well and keep on living well. Gentleness can be scary and active too, it "does not

faint with disgust/will not be driven off/keeps bearing witness calmly/against the predator, the parasite”²¹. Figuring, re-figuring and structuring communities that are resilient and sustainable can be possible through learning the ways of being an animal. We might fail in our missions; we might fail to accomplish certain ways. Politics that is promised with more-than-human recognition, of wit(h)nessing, is not about hope or hopelessness. It is about struggling to figure out the world we imagine to live in, actively and presently: it is pre-figurative. Death reminds us how to unmake and disfigure the past-presents; we become wit(h)ness to death so that we can re-figure our present futures. Wit(h)nessing aims to play with such temporalities, queering them to understand our bonds, how to live with each other. The seas are rising, so must we. Striving to live in a flourishing Earth until the last tree falls. I made meaning of living by wit(h)nessing death, in the hope of becoming a transient and slightly wounded visitor.

²¹Excerpt From: Adrienne Rich. “The Dream of a Common Language.”

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