Being Human in a More-Than-Human World: Between a Silence Catalyst for (Re) Aestheticization and an Art Catalyst for Relationships

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The contribution moves from highlighting how, in the context of Michel Serres' and posthumanism's proposal of rethinking the human and the world in a perspective of inter-implication and universal co-belonging, silence (of the human word) assumes the function of a catalyst for the recognition/re-aestheticization of the human body in its sensory-aesthetic-cognitive-relational-hybrid dimensionality, and, with and for it, of the world in its agency (including artistic). Within the framework of this perspective, the investigation thus proposes a reading of art as a relation/catalyzer of relations, that is, as a (re)activation of positive relations of the human with and for a world that reveals itself to be increasingly hyper-complex, that is, more-than-human, in the continuity/inseparability of nature and culture. Taking Serresian ideas on artistic practices as non(only) human forms of expression and posthumanist "isomorphic" positions on non-human agency as tools, the research then highlights the "more-than-human" scope of art and the fact that artistic practices are responsive actions. So much so that, the human being emerges as co-agent and, of course, co-owner.

Keywords: silence, re-aestheticization, more-than-human (art), posthumanism, Michel Serres

Introduction: A Canvas of Ideas

Gathering and problematizing instances of eco-ontological (ontological-relational) rethinking of the human and the world, expressed by significant voices in contemporary thought, in various respects isomorphic, such as those of posthumanism and Michel Serres, my inquiry begins by identifying silence (of human speech) as the catalyst for the recognition/(re)aestheticization of the human body in its sensory-aesthetic-cognitive-relational-hybrid dimensionality, and of the world in its agency (including artistic agency).

According to this perspective, my research, therefore, comes to recognize art itself as a relation/catalyst of relations, that is, as a (re)activation of positive relations of the human with and for a world increasingly revealing itself hypercomplex ("more-than-human"), in the continuity of nature and culture. More specifically, then, my inquiry seeks to highlight the "more-than-human" scope of art, that is, the fact that the work of art is not an object, but a process of relations of the more-than-human ("fusion" of the implications of the human and the non-human) agents, as well as a dynamism transformative of the world and propositional of better values to act with and for it; and thus the fact that artistic practices are with and for the more-than-human world and not about it, and are

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responsible actions (ready, when necessary, to take collective action). So much so that the human being, within this artistic cooperation with non-human actors, turns out to be a co-agent and naturally a co-owner.

The toolbox I make use of consists of the Serresian and posthuman proposal of rethinking the human and the world in a perspective of inter-implication and universal co-participation, and, more specifically, of Serresian reflections on the human speech silencing as a "condition" of the re-aestheticization of the body and the world; as well as it consists of posthuman and Serresian ideas of artistic practices as forms of not (only) human expression.

Instances of Silencing Human Speech

"So, I no longer leave my pen, only singing in silence the beauty of landscapes" (Serres, 2020, p. 202, translation is mine). *Adichats! (Adieu!)* by Michel Serres[1], which came out posthumously by the author's will, culminates in this explicit, which, in fact, reknits and unravels some neuralgic thematic threads of Serres' own reflection, such as human language (oral or written)[2], song/musical language[3], human body[4], silence[5], world (composed of landscapes[6]—"beautiful" and making "beauty"—, that is, of varied sets of singularities).

All of this are, in evoking/adopting an attitude participatory of things (on their turn concrete, full, i.e., causes-things[7]), their voice as well as expression—in and through the silencing of the reductionist, opacifying and anesthetizing human speech[8]—of the beauty and/or the making of beauty (artistic agency) of the various sets of singularities. The emerging plexus of ideas is thus a radical rethinking of language, which detects its dimension of universality and ubiquity, and, with that, relativizes the human speech (Watkin, 2020, pp. 213-269), as well as it points to the silencing as a function of the recognition/re-aestheticization of the body, and of the world, world

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[1] Sophie Bancquart, Serres' historical editor at Le Pommier, in the initial *Avertissement* (Serres, 2020, pp. 7-9) recalls the editorial vicissitude of this text, which, consisting of Serresian writings from different periods and sources, in its general plan and in some of its parts, had been sketched out, as early as 2001, by Serres himself, who, however, expressly wanted it to be published only after his own death (*adichats* in the Gascon dialect of Agen, Serres' town, means *adieu*, farewell), perhaps because, as Bancquart guesses, it deals with the passage of time and lets out nostalgia, releasing an uncommon image of himself, who described himself as a "pugnacious optimist".

[2] As I will have occasion to repeat and point out, the human word/language juts out from the Serresian re-bending complex as, so to speak logo-de-centristically, an anesthesia of the senses and thus of the body, as well as a hegemonic factor that, a-cosmically, tends to elide/elide things, reducing them to representations of man. On this cf. also *infra*. This rethinking of human language constitutes one of the declinations of Serres' general intent to enfranchise things and living things from the subalternity, exclusion, and oblivion to which acosmist perspectives have condemned them.

[3] Singing is Serres' effort to exceed philosophies devoted to language, turning to that pan semiotic universal, that mosaic of voices of the world, that common language of the world and of the living, which for him is music, which rings with the dimensions and the knowledge of the world (Serres, 2024). *Cf.* also *infra*.

[4] On the Serresian rethinking of the body *cf. infra*.

[5] For Serres, silence, unlike human speech that expels and excludes, removes borders, dilates, liberates, shows. *Cf.* also *infra*.

[6] For Serres, landscapes are those of the world and the universe, those inhabited by the living, the genetic ones of cells and molecules, the organic ones of flora and fauna, the cultural or historical ones; each different, but, together, isomorphic, according to a continuity of natural world and cultural world.

[7] Serres, in a sleight of hand with words, to which he is particularly prone, hopes for and points to, in his cosmist perspective of return to things, the slippage, the overlapping, the coincidence between *causes* (cause) and *chose* (thing), an expression of the intent to divest de-realizing approaches of attention to causes, to turn/adhere instead to the cause(made)-thing. *Cf.* Serres, 2014.

[8] Serres locates the source of language in the rhythms and pathways of nature, in the original background noise (noise, cacophony of multiple forms of energy-informational exchanges in which stones, rivers, animals, etc., are involved) of the universe, from which genealogically emerges primarily music, as said universal, pan-semiotic language, from which precisely human language springs, from which scientific knowledge derives (*cf.* Serres, 2024). These positions in a certain way echo, as well as in many other places in Serres' work, in the close of *Adichats! (Adieu!)*, in which Serres (2020, pp. 201-202) expresses his three main regrets: not having been able to be an explorer because the Earth has already been fully explored; not having had the chance to be a composer, since music evokes meanings other respect than words and syntax; not having had the courage, in his youth, to become a cloistered monk, since silence restores a universe of which language and music only hatch two or three dimensions.

indeed, of whose sets of singularities can thus be grasped, expressed, and left to emerge beauty and capability of making beauty.

The detection of human language in its claims to uniqueness, as a defining, dividing, and exclusivist aptitude is thus inter-implicated with its relativization as one of the many different forms of language emerging from a universal language (music) as well as with the manifestation of the cogency of its reduction to silence, that is, to that expansive, liberating, unifying dimension (Serres, 2014, pp. 224-228) that, as such, (re)leads to the world, in a process of participation from within and of bodily aesthetic collaboration in which the beauty of landscapes emerges, in the sense that the world emerges and is recognized as a mixture, a variegated complex of singularities, "beautiful" and agentively making "beauty".

A thing, moreover, that does not mean making birds, wind, or sea artists, but rather recognizing artists as birds, wind, sea, i.e., letting emerge/participate in the (artistic) agency[9] of the world. Hence, as I will say, singing the beauty of landscapes comes to be ultimately singing on the part of landscapes the beauty and capacity to make beauty; and thus, for the human, to sing as landscapes do, to intercept, to share, bodily, this beauty and this making of beauty in the context of a processing (reception, emission, preservation, transmission) of information proper to all entities, and diverse only quantitatively.

Silence (of human speech) as a catalyst for the recognition of the body, in its sensitive-aesthetic-cognitive-relational-hybrid dimension, and of the world, with and through the body in and for this very dimension, is then the *envoi*,[10] which, among other things, rewinds/unwinds some of the threads of the weave of Serresian reflection on the body, interwoven with the theme of *hominescence*, the epochal change in the human condition triggered during the 20th century, whereby the body itself, for centuries perceived and treated predominantly as an instrument or encumbrance, emerges as a constitutive/constructive dimension of the human.[11]

To get into the ropes of this *envoi* is thus first and foremost to focus on the essential features of the Serresian rethinking of the body.

If the Senses Regain Body, the World Regains Sense

Serres' expression/declination of the bodily side of *hominescence* begins with a journey of rapprochement to the body undertaken by returning to what he understands as the senses (the skin, the auricular pavilion, the two non-chattering languages of tasting and kissing, the moving visitation of the world's landscape) (Serres, 2008).

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[9] I think it is appropriate at this point to point out that Serres unties agency from the general and generalized meaning, so to speak, of human conscious intention to think of it instead as a general information processing, proper to all entities.

[10] *Envoi* often recurs at the end of Serres' books as the closing/opening of the circle, i.e., as a brief survive, now metareflective, now interlocutory, of the nodal passages of the path taken, intent on bringing into focus its blind spots, the paths not taken, and to launch contextually the suggestion of their exploration. See in this regard Watkin, 2020, pp. 379-380.

[11] *Hominescence* expresses and thematizes the emergence of unseen relations with the body, with the world, and with other men (Serres, 2019). It says, that is, on the subjective level, the emergence of a liberation of and from the body, in the sense of new expectations of life, a new relationship with pain and death and therefore new forms of responsibility towards the duration of life and its quality; as well as, above all, new relationships with the body itself and new roles of it, which becomes a companion, a double of man, an anthropo-poietic dimension. On the objective level *hominescence* then expresses the emergence of an emancipation from dependence on things, whereby man, by virtue of the dizzying progress of technoscience, becomes naturant, that is, as it were, creator of a new nature. Finally, on the collective level, *hominescence* says the emergence, with the advent of the digital, of a disempowerment of relationships and communications from spatial conditions, whereby one inhabits a space that is not physical, but qualitative, topological, in which concentration (of resources, information, etc.) is yielding the sensory at the turn of the rebalancing of the sensible and the intellectual and of looking at the human from the "point of view" of the world, and thus the reinsertion of the world itself into philosophical reflection.

In fact, it is *The Five Senses* that conveys the idea of the rediscovery of the senses anesthetized by speech, the language of science, and computer codes. The reduction of the sensible to word or code as well as the loss of the world, reduced, too, by the acosmism of science and philosophy, to word or representation of man, are precisely the motives of this operation of recovering the senses and the world, which takes on the characteristics of a revaluation of the universe.

Through this proposal of the return to the senses, Serres intends distancing himself as much from the privilege traditionally accorded by philosophy to sight (in an equivalence between seeing, knowing, and saying; between sight, science, and language) at the expense of hearing, touch, and smell, as from abstraction, in the original sense of dissection of the sentient body (analysis) and suppression of taste, smell, and touch, and he points first of all to a shift from sight to touch and skin,[12] of which he recognizes the cruciality, first because in it, synesthetic, flexible, adaptive, implicating, explicating, he finds the ground of the psychophysical mixture, whereby the soul, not localized, emerges in the contact, in the common tangency of the body, in and through the skin precisely, with itself and with the world; and, secondly, because it is a sense common to all senses, their synthesis, their connection, the model because of which each one, bouquet of the others, can enact this synesthesia.

By identifying in the senses the ways by which the body exceeds, comes out of itself, and mixes with/knows things in a cognitive and anthropo-poietic dynamism, of which it turns out to be a neuralgic space, Serres then induces himself to a revisiting of them, informed by an instance of recombination aimed at discovering their functioning, at revising their attributions of superiority or subalternity and their traditional separation. It is so that, in addition to skin-touch, he grasps feeling (as hearing/listening) of a blended nature, as the power/function of transforming the hard (matter, high energies) into the soft (low energies, information) and as openness to things and integration of them.[13] He then detects taste and smell as inter-implicated in the opening of the mouth of taste—hitherto second precisely to that of language, which has always outclassed and anesthetized it—that opens to the world, to its beauty and to its make beauty; and recovers them in their cognitive dignity as wisdom and sagacity. Finally, he revives sight, endowed with the negative charge, so to speak, constituted by the inclination to division and separation (analysis), which, however, turns out to be counterbalanced by the valence of visitation (*visite*), that is, of vision in motion, of going to see, of moving to see, of changing sense, necessary to intercept the world.

From this perspective, Serres believes that only the *visiter* (to visit) the *visite*, refraining precisely from dividing/sectioning the sense of that term, allows one to see the compact cognitive capacity of the senses beyond undue separations between them. Therefore, in the *visiter* he ultimately sees the peculiarity of the senses as expressing themselves, as precisely conditions of the body's possibility of coming out of itself, of feeling the world, of participating in it, of blending with it, thus constituting itself as a hybridizing space, and thus as a cognitive dimension of the construction of the human, as well as of the re-aestheticization of the world.

The senses are, therefore, what Serres primarily points to in complexly rethinking the relationship between man and the world according to a hybrid continuity via precisely a re-estheticized body "re-estheticizing" the world: If the senses regain body, the world regains sense; it is therefore necessary to return to the senses of/and to the body in order to regain the sense of the world.

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[12] In explaining feeling Serres draws on information theory as well as topology and works on notions such as that of edge, variety, invariance through variations, etc.

[13] In *Music*, Serres (2024) declines the idea of a universal acoustics and a musical epistemology as a way of access to the world, in the belief that the ear, not having the aptitude to divide, "informs" better than the eye, which instead precisely tends to separate/analyze.

The re-aestheticization of the body is then altogether the recognition of its being traversed and of its traversing things by virtue of the (unveiled) senses in their synesthesia, and for that matter of its intercepting, letting/emerging sense of things themselves, as well as of its, in all of this, constructing the human in and for such relationality, which is a hybridizing co-partnership, inter-implicated with a process of human decentralization, and with the emergence of principles common to all entities—different quantitatively but not qualitatively—whereby precisely everything as it were processes information, stores, calculates, decides, encodes, makes beauty, writes, paints, etc.

In few words, the senses resume body so that the world resumes meaning, and the catalyst of this process is silence.

Through and *Within* Silence: Beautiful Landscapes That Make Beauty

Silence heals, repairs, soothes, rests, fills, shows the source of meaning, mutates the in-self into per-self and vice versa, at will. It knows no boundaries and expands, while tongue weakens the "me". Silence frees the "me" and leads it into the world, while tongue imprisons the "me" and makes it a self. The word/speech imposes the limit and definition; logic invents first the outside and the inside, the limit that separates the inside from the outside, inclusion, exclusion, expulsion, belonging. The word expels, silence makes peace by removing all limits (Serres, 2014).

Excess, flexibility of "points of view", relativization, recognition, re-aestheticization are, at this point, the passages, inter-implicated and catalyzed by silence, which primarily fosters healing from linguistic anesthesia, whereby sight returns/is visiting the world, olfaction returns/is shrewd, taste returns/is sapient, touch returns/is contact, the body appears in its synesthetic-cognitive, recognizer-of-things, conjugative-hybrid valence, and therefore in its anthropo-poietic dimensionality. In other words, silence first and foremost induces the discover of the senses as excesses, intentionality, thresholds of passage, channels/places of hybridization, whereby there is (no longer) a unique reference, nor a center, nor the exclusive uniqueness of the subject, nor a frontier between thing and subject, nor subject or object; that is, exclusion is excluded, or rather negation is contrasted without negation, and universal co-belonging (re)emerges.

This approach/process of opposition by generalization[14], catalyzed by the thaumaturgical silence, so to speak, reveals altogether the fact that all entities know how to do, albeit according to quantitative differences, what we believe we are the only ones who can say and do. That is, precisely receive, emit, store, transmit information/energy.[15]

> The wind writes its musical score on sea waves and desert dunes; flowing water weaves the copious coppices of river arborescence; dust etches the cliffs already sculpted or drawn by erosion; thanks to the stylus of earthquakes, tectonic plates mark reliefs; magnetism remains etched on soft rocks in the process of crystallization, to indicate the time of their hardening;

[14] I.e., of resistance to foundationalist, monist, unifying perspectives, without denying them but rather considering them particular examples of a more general tendency. It should be pointed out that in Serres' thinking, the so-called figures of thought, one of which is precisely the opposition by generalization, have the distinctive features of operators (sort of algorithms, complex functions apt to produce an infinite variety of outputs from infinite possibilities of inputs); of natural phenomena (the universe with its explosions of changes lators of novelty); of inventions (introductions of changes in the world); of bodily manifestations (jumping, bearing, postures, gestures, movements); of literary characters (Ulysses, Don Quixote, Don Juan, etc.); of characters with mythological or literary names (Hermès, Harlequin, Pierrot, etc.) or generic (parasite) or proper (Thumbelina, etc.) that express the complementarity of local and global; of synthesis of multiple aspects; of horns of plenty with respect to which abstract concepts come as it were always late and are reductive. *Cf.* Watkin, 2020.

[15] Referring to L. Brillouin's positions on the nexus between thermodynamics (entropy/negentropy) and information theory, Serres advances the idea of the equation between energy and information, whereby the latter is novelty, rarity.

climate leaves traces in dust buried in ice; evolution can be read on organisms, more disparate than systemic; living things leave remains, even if they are only bones. We are not the only ones who can count or memorize—trees calculate their years in haloed wood …—nor the only ones who can encode […] (Serres, 2015b, pp. 201-202, translation is mine)

But at this point if everything chooses, decides, counts, encodes, then everything also makes beauty: Everything paints, everything makes concerts, that is, (beautiful) landscapes make beauty. The message that Serres gets across is thus, as anticipated, that it is not a matter of making birds, wind, trees, sea, etc., become artists, but rather of recognizing, by silence and in silence, artists as birds, wind, trees, sea, etc., and therefore of recognizing that we do as the world does, and that therefore the highest art consists, on our part, in capturing, intercepting, being impacted, corresponding, emitting, returning this universal agency.

Everything Is Eyes: Toward a More-Than-Human Art

The above observations deserve, in my opinion, to be expanded a bit in their implications.

In his work *Eyes*, Michel Serres (2015a, p. 81) states that Klimt's eyes looked at the poppies in the field as if eyes-flowers gazed at him and at us, and that Monet's eyes looked at the lilies in the Giverny pond as if those eyes-flowers gazed at him and at us (p. 78).

Although art is one of the threads that weave the entire network of Serresian reflection, standing out on multiple occasions that from time to time, at different times and from a variety of interests and theoretical intentions, have illuminated its tones, nuances, knots, and junctures—just think of the works on Carpaccio (1975; 2007), the reflections on the meanings/roles of statue and sculpture (2014), those on music (2024), those also on architecture (2011), and those on painting (2015a)—, I choose to focus on the aforementioned observations, because they seem to express the idea of a "detachment", which is such with respect to a "naïve" anthropomorphism, to a humanist conception of the artistic process, and, upstream and overall, with respect to an anthropocentric and dualist perspective, and which, as such precisely, as it were intercepts, as sometimes happily happens to ideas in their "percolating"[16], instances of post-anthropocentric and post-dualist repositioning of the human as well as instances of post-humanist rethinking of the artistic process (I have in mind notably Wolfe (2003), Sorgner (2022), Stępień (2022), Micali and Pasqualini (2021), Galati (2021), Doove (2021), Marchesini (2019), Marchesini and Andersen (2003), even if many other are the names I could recall).

However, I want to proceed step by step. To speak on Klimt's and Monet's part of looking at flowers as eyes gazing at them (and at us) means not simply to project the human organ and sense of sight onto poppies and lilies (i.e., onto the nonhuman) nor to peg the substance and efficacy of the artistic process and the essence and value of the work of art to the fidelity of the "representation" and reproduction of an object (the poppies in the field and the lilies in the pond), but rather precisely to detach from these positions by opening up faults of "conscious" anthropomorphism, as well as of relationality and (artistic) entanglements of a more-than-human kind (to borrow the term David Abram (1997) coined to refer to nature, and which I employ here to indicate the hybridization and blending of the implications of the human and the nonhuman).

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[16] Percolation, a physical term designating a transition of state, plays a crucial role in the Serresian conception of time, according to which the latter does not precisely have a linear path, but flows according to different rhythms, sometimes gets stuck in knots, merges into a multiplicity of directions that open up a plurality of possibilities and bifurcates unexpectedly, in the manner of the twists and turns of a tale (*cf.* Serres, 2006; 2016). And it is precisely according to this percolating trend that it seems to me that themes such as post dualism, post anthropocentrism, post humanism, etc., seem to "move" *between* posthumanist reflection and Serres' thought.

With respect to "common" or even naive anthropomorphism, as an attribution of *homo sapiens*' peculiar characteristics to other animate, inanimate beings or phenomena, and thus as an expression of an exclusivist anthropocentrism, Serres derives an area of maneuvering that, in the maturation of awareness of the acceptance of anthropomorphism itself[17], consists in recognizing and pointing to a "communicative corridor" (*cf.* Vecchi, 2021), a "translation"[18], a commonality, and a co-belonging, according to the perspective that "gazing of flowers" and "blooming of eyes" (to push the image in question to the limit) come to "correspond", to meet, to intertwine, and exchange and that the culmination of art ultimately lies in expressing this.

In other words, with statements such as "we do as the world does", "everything is eyes", "things enjoy vision", "you see the sky looking at you", Serres seems to me to enact a detachment from the anthropocentric process of anthropomorphic projection, interrupting its "automatisms" on the one hand and suspending its "condemnation" on the other in order to critically review it and arrive at a conscious re-declension and "usage". Hence, statements as "you see the sky looking at you", in precisely detaching themselves both from the tendency to assimilation, flattening, and projection, and from the demonization of the attribution of human behavior to nonhuman otherness in honor of scientificity, objectivity, etc., emerge in their inter-implication with an art, as I mentioned, relational, not (only) human but more-than-human.

So, anthropomorphism is there and, if and insofar as it is conscious and critical, it is likely to constitute a corridor, a translative process, a communicative bridge between human and nonhuman, not to say a break from anthropocentrism, in the perspective of the recognition of the continuity of nature and culture and of a hyper complex more-than-human world.

Relational Art and More-Than-Human (Re)Discovery of the World

In the context of this eco(nto)logical/more-than-human (re)discovery of the world, not prevented precisely by anthropomorphism but rather fostered by its conscious and critical employment, the artistic work whatever it may be emerges in its relationality and in its not-only—or more-than-humanity: It is gaze and gazing, it is active looking, and "the painter's supreme art would then consist in representing those views that give the world a strange power to act" (Serres, 2015a, p. 11).

The Serresian "detachment" from anthropocentric humanist humanism and its consideration of the artistic process, object, and work is therefore precisely broad. If, (even) *via* anthropomorphism, it comes to light that ultimately it is relation that creates the being that is relation, that, as Serres repeatedly points out and emphasizes, everything, albeit with different graduality, processes information (receives, emits, preserves, transmits information—in the broad sense of novelty—)[19], and therefore nonhumans are producers of meaning and "subjects" of ethics, aesthetics, politics etc.; this implies in a negative sense that art practices are not manipulations and transformations of a passive matter so to speak, works of art are not objects nor do they merely reflect the world, and art is neither human expression nor external representation or projection of contents of the human mind. And vice versa in an affirmative sense it implies that art practices are with and for the more-than-human world, co-operations of the artist with nonhuman agents, and processes that feed on the layering,

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[17] On the issues of anthropomorphism see especially Coccia, 2022.

[18] It is necessary to point out that Serres' work is overall informed by the effort to "relate things" (fields, contexts, sciences, etc.) that are in themselves heterogeneous, which means exchanging, negotiating, taking the other's side, and precisely translating. That is, enacting an "operation" that makes it possible to "measure" the transformations of a "message" and the range of variations between the extreme limits of the "pull" that lies below the threshold of what is invariant. *Cf.* specifically Serres, 1974.

[19] According as it were to an "algorithmic materialism". *Cf.* Serres, 2017, p. 13; Dolphijn, 2019, p. 7.

contaminating, and joining of multiplicities in relation; and therefore it also implies that the work of art is active, relational, and more-than-human, and thus on the whole that art, to use Lorimer's term, is more-than-representational[20] and more-than-human. And as such it is relational/catalyzing virtuous relationships with and for the more-than-human world.

Therefore, returning to the specific case, when Serres states that the painting actively floods the room with light and the viewer with enchanted understanding, perhaps just an image, but actually more like a fiery gaze (Serres, 2015a), he has in mind a work (painting but also other) that is relation and process of multilayered relations and agent of (reconfiguration of) thought, knowledge, recognition, through practices of "implication between": The painting is active, it is less image than gaze, and it "illuminates" in a broad sense the viewer and the surrounding space, pointing to new meanings; in other words, the work of art is not an object to be contemplated or admired, but a field and catalyst of forces (thought, knowledge, information/newness, meanings), a relational interweaving and catalyst of more-than-human interweaving; and, in the case of the painting, it is, anthropomorphically, a face in the sense of what can see and at the same time be seen.

Art and "Recognition"

As a process of blending the implications of the human and the nonhuman and more-than-representation insofar as precisely its culmination consists in expressing the multilayered agency and relationality of the world[21], art ultimately is a dynamic of recognition, (re)activation, and transformation. It makes one see what is not normally seen, that is, the world scattered with billions of eyes looking at us, the gaze of the universe; that is to say, itself relation, it captures, intercepts, catalyzes, and expresses universal agency and relationality. And in doing so it promotes, (re)activates, and shares this very relationality, fostering in the human the awareness of the relational and processual character of the more-than-human world, in which organisms, forces, things intersect, intertwine, and contaminate each other; and therefore, also fostering the awareness of one's own co-belonging[22] with this context.

Serres' reflection on art practices thus has an anthropological ontological ethical scope that is expressed in the call to return, to be, and to become with, for, and in the world as an interweaving of the implications of the human and the nonhuman; indeed, the idea is that of a (re)activation, *via* "conscious" anthropomorphism and relational art itself, of a multilayered relationality whereby and in which the human grasps, from within and in the entanglements, itself and/in the world, becoming response-able (capable and facilitator of responses) *with* otherness.

In other words, in the Serresian view, the artistic process in its relationality validly contributes to reinforcing the (anthropo-eccentric) sense of our implication with the more-than-human world, showing that this connection is inter/intra-implication, an intrinsic condition of all entanglement, which can be an ethical driver and catalyst for responsible actions by human and nonhuman actors.

Acting, *lato sensu*, with and for nonhuman agents, is, in the final instance, the general message that Serresian reflection (artistic and otherwise) launches and that in a certain way, as said, intersects and intercepts with that

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[20] The term "more-than-representational" is in fact from Hayden Lorimer, 2005, who introduced it to indicate that "more-than" is more effective than the prefix "not" in expressing openness to differences that move away from representation.

[21] As, for example, Magritte's *Les Belles Relations* which is not a face or an eye or even a balloon but "the ecstasy when you see the sky seeing you" (Serres, 2015a, p. 187).

[22] Which one might say, according to Haraway (2003), "response-able", i.e., "capable of response and making response possible".

of posthumanism, synthesizable in the incisive statement repeatedly employed by Rosi Braidotti (2020, p. 52; *cf.* also Stępień, 2022, pp. 127-128), for whom "we're all in this together, but we are not one and the same". This assumption in fact can be seen as a kind of motto in which post-anthropocentric and post-dualist visions converge, tending, in clear caesura from essentialist and exceptionalist models, to dissolve the boundaries between human and nonhuman animals, biological organisms and machines, soul and body, and to suggest changeable and relational non dialectical and non-anthropocentric positions of the human within the more-than-human world (a more-than-human "us" yet to be constructed), in which differences are productive and creative added values of novelty and change, nonhuman agents are producers of meaning, and, by extension, the artistic process looms as a relational dynamic of human repositioning: an ontological anthropological ethical reconfiguration through practices of relational engagement, hybridization, and contamination between human and nonhuman, beyond anthropocentric and binary resistances.

I give in this regard only a few examples. Edith Doove (2021, p. 18) invites us to see artists and curators as birds. Alberto Micali and Niccolò Pasqualini (2021, p. 91) speak of an artistic process that from an expression of the human, an external representation and projection of the inner contents of the human mind, and a demiurgic manipulation of a passive and inert non-human matter, transmutes, becoming the enactive and emotional repository of the layering, contamination, and joining of multiple otherness in relation to each other. Justyna Stępień (2022) devotes an entire volume to posthuman and nonhuman entanglements in art.

Ultimately, then, Serres and posthuman reflection, in a certain way intercepting themselves in their general instance of a more-than-human repositioning of the human, also intercept precisely in identifying in artistic work suggestions and catalysts of virtuous perspectives that at the same time engage nonhuman actors with their practices and make the human capable of making responses, so to speak, adequate to what it has learned and will learn to "see".

In its being and operating relationally with/in the world, art, therefore, can, more-than-humanly, implement world-specific actions *at* the turn of realizing positive relationships with and for the more-than-human world. To make us see, in collaboration with a "healthy" anthropomorphism, the world littered with eyes looking at us it means for art itself to express and operate in such a way that we realize that we are not unique or exceptional; that we cannot be self-referential; that someone else, whom we did not suspect, is looking at us; that we are within and for the dynamism of seeing and being seen; that we are in and for relationship and we are all response-able.

I close by recalling the answer that Michel Serres, interviewed by Hans Ulrich Obrist in May 2014, gave to the question of whether he thought it was possible to link art with ecological justice, and which sounds like this: "It could very well be today's fundamental evolution of art, which means coming back to an inspiration that was quite a traditional one, but also anew—to open oneself up to living species, to open up to life and to nature". That is precisely (returning to) being relational and catalyzing relationships in a more-than-human world…

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