Geophilosophies: towards another sense of the earth

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Abstract
The relationship between ‘philosophy’ and the ‘geo’ has received renewed attention with the rise of the terrestrial and the planetary as leitmotifs for thinking about the collective subjectivation of particular kinds of world. In some of these conversations, this relationship is developed to consider how social collectives emerge with the production of particular kinds of territorial abstraction. Three decades since Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari published What is Philosophy?, book that has a lasting legacy in developing geophilosophy as a particular mode of transcendental empirical enquiry, this special issue revisits the relationship between geophilosophy and the production of an alternative sense of the earth. In this introduction, we approach geophilosophy in its pluralism by showing how the concept does not only concern the question of how to retain a sense of difference and contingency in thought, but also concerns a mode of enquiry that presents opportunities to experiment with alternative forms of collective subjectivation. Assaying the legacy of Deleuze and Guattari’s geophilosophy on contemporary forms of earth-thinking, the article identifies the unique demands and geophilosophical possibilities taken up by the contributors to this issue that question how to recuperate another sense of the earth.

Keywords The geo- · Terrerrestrial · Earth · Deleuze and Guattari · Anthropocene · Inhuman

Introduction: what is geophilosophy?

Writing over 30 years ago in What is Philosophy? Deleuze and Guattari (1994) dedicate a chapter to the concept of ‘geophilosophy’ to consider the way thought takes place out of a relation between concepts and a particular milieu. Examining
the modes of abstraction produced in certain histories of philosophy, they argue for a conception of philosophy as a machine that creates concepts through the relationship between territory and earth. As others have noted, however, Deleuze and Guattari developed their geophilosophy beyond that specific text, particularly in the geographical notions deployed in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* (Protevi and Bonta 2004; Saldanha and Stark 2016). As such, geophilosophy might be better thought as evocative of Deleuze and Guattari’s specific mode of transcendental empirical enquiry (Alliez 2004; Viveiros de Castro 2015), and as a process of ‘earth-thinking’ that is sentient to the contingency, rather than universality, of thought.

Perhaps in part because of this tendency to apprehend geophilosophy as both an overarching philosophical ethos and mode of transcendental empiricism, geophilosophy remains today a particularly opaque Deleuzoguattarian concept: seeming to resist utilitarian logics of application, thinking philosophy as geophilosophy would be at once an approach to creating new abstractions of thought freed from their grounding in subject–object categories whilst, at the very same time, announcing that it is today that one needs to understand how thought is founded within certain kinds of territory in order to summon an earth and a people to come (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, p. 109). If Deleuze and Guattari, who affirmed thinking as itself a form of “voyage” (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 482), seek to articulate philosophy as geophilosophy, then it comes with the proviso that this philosophy has no interest whatsoever in founding thought in any kind of *a priori* abstraction nor any conventional sense of a geographical territory as a bounded place on earth. As Gasché notes:

>The earth with which philosophy from early Greece on is concerned is both intrinsic to philosophy as philosophy and at the same time something that, rather than being given in advance, needs to be constructed. If D&G’s philosophy, as some have held, is one that brings philosophy down to earth, it is paradoxically earth as we do not know it. (Gasché 2014, p. 17)

How, then, does this enigmatic image of ‘earth’ continue to challenge us to reimagine the practice and production of philosophical concepts? In bringing philosophy ‘down to earth’, how has the concept of geophilosophy given rise to multiple departures in earth-thinking? Moreover, what possibilities for remaking practises of thinking besides subject–object logics are revealed though the geophilosophical connection between philosophy and the earth?

We arrive at these questions about what it means to think thought in its relationship to the earth at a critical juncture: numerous other forms of earth-thinking are now prominent in contemporary political and cultural theory, from the politics of earthly and terrestrial concerns (Latour 2018), to the Anthropocene and its numerous critical re-articulations (Stiegler 2018; Haraway 2016; Chakrabarty 2012; Caluya 2014), to earthly multitudes (Clark and Szerszynski 2020), to geopower (Grosz et al. 2017), geokinetics (Nail 2021), the geo-political (Lambert 2021), and geontopower (Povinelli 2016) to name but a few. Often developed as a way of understanding the diverse ecological crises brought on through
Western extraction from earth systems, the promise for some of these forms of earth-thinking is the sense that a renewed attention to the earth may provide the possibility of thinking differently by attending to inhuman durations of the earth and the alternative forms of subjectivation produced therein. As Saldanha and Stark (2016) argue, in prioritising a politics of difference some of these conversations are thus indebted to the radical conceptual and political impetus of Deleuze’s geological writing, as well as Guattari’s ecosophical and cartographic approaches. Likewise, they resonate with a ‘radical naturalism’ that has long been characterised as a key dimension of Deleuzian thought (Hayden 1998). One ethical demand incited by this genealogy of thought, Saldanha and Stark (2016) suggest, is the need to mobilise theoretical work in addition to scientific environmental research in order to address the necessary social and cultural dimensions of understanding, responding to, and critically rethinking the place-less, universalising tendency of the Anthropocene.

In conversation with these recent forms of earth-thinking, this special issue opens up an enquiry into practices of doing geophilosophy. To be clear, we are cautious of overstating the similarities between recent forms of earth-thinking and Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of geophilosophy. Instead, we are motivated by what appears, in and beyond the discipline of Philosophy, to be a continued recognition of the importance of understanding thought in its immanence as something impossible without the geographical milieux in which it occurs. In recognising the relationship between thought and its milieu, it perhaps comes as no surprise that geophilosophy has already been defined in conjunction with Deleuze and Guattari’s array of geographical and spatial terms (Woodward 2017; Saldanha 2006; Dosse 2011), notably with the concepts of smooth and striated space, re/de/territorialisation, mapping, milieu, lines and planes, and nomadic and sedentary spaces. Indeed, the originality of Deleuze and Guattari’s work, and A Thousand Plateaus in particular, is often attributed to such spatial logics. To prise apart some of the nuances between geophilosophy and other notions from Deleuze and Guattari’s broader geographical vocabulary, in this introduction we begin with the contention that geophilosophy is not denoting a spatial operation, but rather implies a specific transversal mode of philosophy distinct from conventional notions of the spatial and geographical (see Dosse 2011, pp. 264–266).

Our aim in this introduction is thus to propose some entryways for approaching geophilosophy in its pluralism, as something concerning not only Deleuze and Guattari’s (1994) pursuit of the creation of concepts, but as an outcome of a contemporary question: namely, how does Deleuze and Guattari’s formulation of geophilosophy alter how we conceive of thought today, what demands are made of it and, in posing these demands, what geophilosophical thought is able to possibly think? In posing this question, we propose geophilosophies as one way to recognise those multiple lines of thought that are today at work in the relationship between territory and earth. Our focus in tracing these demands of geophilosophy in this introduction is not to judge certain forms of earth-thinking as more or less inferior. Rather, we are interested in the notion of demand as a limit that gives rise to the possibility for remaking the conditions of thought. In the following sections, we identify two trajectories of geosophical thinking in contemporary cultural theories: the
**The geo-**

In one of the opening pages of their chapter on geosophy, Deleuze and Guattari (1994) perfectly describe two reasons why one must understand philosophy as geosophy: on the one hand, they note that there is no “internal necessity to philosophy” (p. 93) since thinking does not presuppose philosophy for its existence and so there are no grounds for assuming any intrinsic reason for philosophy to exist. On the other hand, they note that philosophy, as the creation of concepts, is defined by the “principle of contingent reason” (p. 93) since philosophy emerges with an encounter between the concept and a particular territory or milieu. Illustrating this encounter, they consider the Greek origins of philosophy as an anticipated and unpredictable “contingent event, one that could not have happened as well, an event, in short, that occurred without anything having made its occurrence absolutely necessary” (Gasché 2014, p. 12). Geosophy qua philosophy happens because thought always inhabits a time and place, and thus must be considered as a relation of territorialisation. This is not to say that philosophy had to emerge out of, and remain causally bound to, a localised event; “[o]ur authors in no way intended to argue for any geographical determinism that made the birth of philosophy in the Greek world inevitable” (Dosse 2011, p. 254; also see Zourabichvili 2012, p. 166; Colebrook 2022). As a relation of territorialization, Greek philosophy could “also have happened somewhere else” and is “capable of being repeated” (Gasché 2014, p. 13). In this way, the relation between thought and territory is mobile, such that “its continuous movements of development and variation unfold new relations of materials and forces” (Hayden 1998, pp. 114–115).

Understanding philosophy as geosophy, therefore, means not only to suggest that the history of philosophy could have been different, since there are many other forms of conceptualisation “that could have been, with different neighbourhoods” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, p. 93), but that today many other modes of doing philosophy are unactualised and remain open to recuperation. As Woodward (2017, p. 3) reflects, geosophy is therefore to explore how “the hallowed questions that guided Western philosophy’s search for truth may well be the products of historical accidents and contingent geographic proximities”. The exceptional contribution of geosophy is in invalidating universalising philosophical claims and insisting, instead, that thought is an event that emerges out of a relation between concepts and a milieu that is both contingent and plural. It is worth considering the implications of the linguistic choice of ‘milieu’ here in contradistinction to environment, situation,
world, or place. As Günzel (2009, p. 269) highlights “[w]ithin an environment a person is still someone in it, with nature or the social world around it. By contrast, ‘in’ a milieu (which literally means ‘middle’ or ‘medium’) implies that there is no outside and, hence, no inside: A milieu by definition is absolute, extensive, and embracing”.

It is in thinking about the wider contributions of Deleuze and Guattari’s geophilosophy that one can note the way this relationship between thought and a milieu is detectable in recent theoretical work engaging with the Anthropocene and the geo- (Bosworth 2017; Glowczewski, 2021). If, with Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of geophilosophy, the geo- prefix refers to a sense of the “earth as a milieu that determines philosophy from within” (Gasché 2014, p. 16), then recent theorisations of the geo- take on a slightly different emphasis insofar as they appear less to develop philosophy as a principle of contingent reason, and more as a way of heightening attention to the way thought relates to inhuman durations and singular forces of the earth. For example, Povinelli (2016, p. 4) approaches the relationship between the Anthropocene and the geo- through the notion of geontopower, describing “a set of discourse, affects, and tactics used in late liberalism to maintain or shape the coming relationship of the distinction between Life and Nonlife”. Critiquing the human exceptionalism and organicism ushered in by the turn to the Anthropocene, geontopower emerges as something that reconfigures the boundaries between Life and Nonlife as an outcome of a particular injunction of late liberal capitalism. This injunction states that the modes of thought that come to distinguish the living from the nonliving only have meaning insofar as they relate to concepts of time and the earth that support the life of the organism. For Povinelli (2016, p. 176), remedying the reduction of the earth and geological time to the organism requires a new appreciation of the way “Life is merely a moment in the greater dynamic unfolding of Nonlife”. Recognising the ontologically primary role of Nonlife to the living means also to acknowledge that “how you know the world, the moods of the world, and your relationship to it may or may not be part and parcel of the forces of late liberal geontopower” (Povinelli, 2020). This is precisely to understand the geo-—variously conceived through nonhuman qualities of geological strata and the long durée forms of temporality evoked by geological Nonlife forms—as something engaged in wider affective processes that transform how the subject comes to understand a sense of the world. Understanding the affective powers of geontopower is, for Povinelli, also about risking a certain exposure of the subject to durations of geological time—an exposure wherein a subject becomes capable of recognising “a form of death that begins and ends in Nonlife…which takes us to a time before the life and death of individuals and species, a time of the geos, of soulessness” (Povinelli, 2016, pp. 8–9).

In *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, Yusoff (2018) also engages the relation of the geo- and the Anthropocene through a focus on the durations and qualities of nonhuman and inhuman materiality, but in doing so goes in a different direction by critically reconceptualising geology as a set of techniques and technologies of dispossession, violence and epistemic erasure of Black bodies. Thinking besides those extractive and colonial logics hard-wired into geology is, for Yusoff (2018), about developing an “insurgent” geology capable of thinking racialised forms of geological matter. Elsewhere, Clark and Szerszynski (2020, p. 9) reflect on the
significance of the Anthropocene to social theory in its capacity to instil “engagement with earlier geological intervals, earlier moments in human and Earth history”. Acknowledging the interconnectedness of forms of destruction at the level of the environmental systems and the various forms of ecological harm caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, they develop the notion of ‘earthly multitudes’ as one way to theorise how human and nonhuman collectives can be understood to be producing forms of knowledge and experience out of unfamiliar geological conditions, which, in turn, help imagine new alliances and opportunities for collaborating with inhuman forces of the earth.

Of course, theoretical attention to geological perspectives of time in relation to ecological change is not necessarily new. As with other work that question vitalist distinctions between life and nonlife through cognate notions of the inhuman, inorganic and the viral (Colebrook 2019; Roberts and Dewsbury 2021; Thacker 2010; Grosz 2011; Brassier 2007), this recent engagement with the geo- can be seen as an extension of a line of thought developed in twentieth-century European philosophy that seeks to rethink the status of the living in response to certain kinds of technological change (Canguilhem 2008). Whilst acknowledging the critical problems associated with linking Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy of difference to the actualised qualities of given geological entities (Roberts and Dewsbury 2021), the through line between these recent theorisations of the geo- is an emphasis on attending to geological timeframes to gain a perspective on both inhuman and infrasensible durations of the earth. Responding to the Anthropocene as a symptom of Western humanist anthropocentrism and climate catastrophe, as well as the sense that today biopolitics would be something ill-equipped to understand contemporary capitalist governance (Povinelli 2016; Yusoff 2018), the question of the geo- emerges in this work as a shared concern with unsettling dominant abstractions of time and individuation. As with recent interventions in geopoetics (Engelmann 2021), such theorisations of the geo- suggest attending to indiscernible durations of time and space can help transform, or even destroy, anthropocentric modes of thought, or what Yusoff (2017, p. 122) describes as a process of “reigniting a stratigraphic imagination in social theory”.

Terrestrial thinking

What, then, does the rise of geo-related concepts demand of philosophy and the social sciences? Relatedly, what does the recent tendency to rearticulate the Anthropocene in terms of any number of different ‘–cenes’ tell us about the specific kinds of collective subjectivation structuring theoretical engagements with the geo-, the earth, or the geological? In this introduction, we would like to caution against any lingering human exceptionalism that is retained in these arts of giving voice to imperceptible or indiscernible forces of the earth. Intersecting writing on the geo-, it is here that one can note the way geophilosophies are also discernible in work theorising how the terrestrial can mobilise the collective subjectivation of alternative worlds besides any claims towards human exceptionalism and access to transcendental forms of Reason. For instance, in Cannibal Metaphysics Viveiros
de Castro (2017, pp. 91–92) turns to Amerindian metaphysics in pursuing what he describes, with a degree of irony, as a “field geophilosophy”. Central to Viveiros de Castro’s engagement with Amerindian metaphysics concerns a question of how to generate a “permanent decolonization of thought” (p. 92) as something invariably tied to the creation of concepts. Thinking with Amerindian perspectivism, which places concepts on the same metaphysical plane as the human subject or being, is for Viveiros de Castro one way to generate a sense of the world no longer over-determined by certain transcendental categories of subject–object and Nature (see also Debaise 2022; Wiame 2016). Approaching the question of the production of worlds through Deleuze’s (2004) formulation of the Other as an irreducible expression of difference, Viveiros de Castro turns to Amerindian thought as something that enacts a singular expression of the world that need not be resolved into dominant abstractions and contemporary modes of evaluation. Evoking a famous passage from What is Philosophy?, Viveiros de Castro (2017, p. 196) concludes “we cannot think like Indians; at most, we can only think with them” since to ‘think like’ would be to attempt to internalise the singular expressive world of the Other into a preconceived representational form, thus reducing these singular ‘expressed’, as Deleuze (2004) terms it, into the domain of the realisable, calculable, and the actualisable.

In Down to Earth Latour (2018) also considers how new forms of collective subjectivation are produced through the emergence of certain kinds of ‘world’, but in doing so focuses on how this question of world-building today requires new attention to the bipartite problems of globalism and nationalism. As Latour explains:

‘How can the feeling of being protected be provided without an immediate return to identity and the defense of borders?’ And we can now envisage an answer: ‘By two complementary movements that modernization has made contradictory: attaching oneself to the soil on the one hand, becoming attached to the world on the other’ (Latour 2018, p. 92).

Pursuing a new politics of the Earth, Latour turns to the materiality of the soil as one way of highlighting a capacity of the subject to enact collective attachments to the earth without slipping into either a nationalistic fervour for territory, or a globalist celebration of earthly detachment. Intersecting other attempts to engender alternative earthly attachments (de La Bellacasa 2017; Debase and Stengers 2021; Connolly 2019; Haraway 2016; Åsberg 2022), soil takes on a certain import for Latour insofar as it disrupts conventional understandings of agency and action normally allotted to the human subject: “The ground, the soil…cannot be appropriated. One belongs to it; it belongs to no one” (Latour 2018, p. 83). Belonging is no longer founded on a collective identity or a prefigured sense of the subject, but would be something inculcated through a certain proximity and material imbrication between, on the one hand, the strata of the earth as the material milieu of a territory, and, on the other hand, what he terms human and nonhuman “terrestrials” (Latour 2018, p. 83) capable of forming certain kinds of planetary collectives. Using the example of the cahiers de doléance (‘ledger of complaints’) drafted at the beginning of the French Revolution, Latour sees the emergence of terrestrials with a renewed sense
of proximity to the earth as a form of collective subjectivation that is linked to the creation of earthly “descriptions”:

What to do? First of all, generate alternative descriptions. How could we act politically without having inventoried, surveyed, measured, centimeter by centimeter, being by being, person by person, the stuff that makes up the Earth for us? Without doing this we could perhaps utter astute opinions or defend respectable values, but our political affects would be churning in a void (Latour 2018, p. 94).

For Latour, it is only by developing certain kinds of ‘alternative descriptions’ that one might begin to act in accordance with a much wider variety of political affects capable of enacting revolutions to this system of production. If ecological politics often fails to grasp the connection between ‘the need to form collective networks of actors across national borders’, and ‘the need to maintain a commitment to defending and caring for territory of the other’, for Latour it is because this politics is not able to survey and describe all those minute aspects of a world that have become invisible to it. What is instead needed is a politics that would be able to tread carefully between the situated and the collective—that is, the individual and the transindividual (Simondon 2020)—in producing alternative collectives capable of enacting what Connolly (2019, p. 61) terms those “cross-regional, pluralist assemblages of politics”.

However, this recent form of terrestrial thinking is hardly the first to recognise the relationship between a renewed sense of a ‘world’ and the associated powers of collective subjectivation. The idea that the human subject needs to recognise its imbrication with the world is at the heart of Heidegger’s formulation of dwelling and Being-in-the world, understood not merely as a descriptive proximity to territory but how human being is prefigured with an ontologically primary habitation and indebtedness towards the world. Likewise, advancing his sphereological philosophy, Sloterdijk (2014) examines the human’s primary relation to world, but in doing so charts the organisation of certain classical societies who, in their collective pursuit of the cosmological “Whole”, invariably produce subjects that experience a profound sense of separation from the world. As Rossi (2021, p. 85) explains, for Sloterdijk it is in these societies that the “search for a model of social cohesion in the abstraction of geometrical order ensued from the dissonance between the world and the subject”. Linking to Sloterdijk’s theorisation of a metaphysical dissonance between subject and world, one can also recognise how recent theorisations of the end of the world also contribute to a reformulation of the role of subjectivation as immanent to certain singular moments when worlds fall apart (Tsing 2015; Morton 2013; Danowski and Viveiros de Castro 2016; Colebrook 2019). In some of this work, the question of the ‘end of the world’ takes on a specific political import, such as in the way that for certain Amerindian collectives the end of the world is something that has happened in its multiplicity (Danowski and Viveiros de Castro 2016, pp. 120–123). Differently, we can also note the way Lapoujade (2021) mobilises Philip K. Dick’s science fiction as something less interested in invoking a collective sense of the world as
it is concerned with producing a sense of unstable worlds, which are susceptible
to alteration and on the brink of collapse.

Yet, theorising the ends of worlds is not without its dangers, as Colebrook (2019) makes clear, since it raises the question of how to think ‘world’ without invoking a generalised human relationality based on a Western epic tradition:

The production of a world and a single humanity is the result of a general-
ity that can only imagine relations from the single point of view of a single history. Think of how Western post-apocalyptic cinema imagines the end of urban affluence as the end of the world and—in turn—how that same humanity imagines a condition of dispersed nomadism as the loss of humanity, as the absence of any futurity whatsoever...Such “end of world” imaginaries are not at all the end of the world but might be thought of as the opportunity for other worlds or might be lived not as fear of technological immaturity and existential risk but as the immediate pressure of local annihilations that take the form of famine, genocide, or any of the other catastrophes that have always taken place within the world (Colebrook 2019, p. 191).

Across much of this theoretical attention to the terrestrial, the world, and its end, is a shared interest in the construction of a milieu of thought that encounters some-
thing of its nonphilosophical contingency. Different in emphasis to the way the geo-
invokes inhuman durations of time and materiality, writing on the terrestrial often attends to how a renewed sense of the world, or even the palpable experience of a world falling apart (Lapoujade 2021), can create opportunities to think concepts tinged with nonphilosophical logics of abstraction. If Deleuze and Guattari (1994, p. 109) posed the question of nonphilosophy as something central to geophilosophy, this is because they sought to develop geophilosophy as a whole approach to the cre-
ation of concepts without any prima facie sense of what the human being is, or what its proper relationship to the world should be. If there remains something distinct with these recent theorisations of world, it is in the promise that nonphilosophical thought might itself produce a response to certain kinds of ecological degradation. Concerning as much environmental as social and cultural milieux of thought (Guattari 2005), such engagements with the notions of terrestrial and world start with the idea that responding to ecological problems must also include the task of developing modes of thought that no longer bifurcate nature into primary and secondary quali-
ties. For Debaise (2017), such a task requires forms of speculative thinking pertaining to the gestures of contingent events that could be otherwise. Indeed, this is what Debaise (2017, p. 52) terms, after Whitehead, a “genuine actualism”, or the way actualised feelings and experiences are inscribed at the level of the real by the traces of contingent possibilities. The cutting edge of this line of thinking is that it poses alternative questions around the role of worlds and worlding in the creation of pos-
able events: how to imagine alternative worlds besides transcendental logics and the bifurcation of nature? How to think a world without falling into the trap of merely imagining a ‘world without us’, and the forms of human exceptionalism implied by this manoeuvre (Danowski and Viveiros de Castro 2016, p. 25)?
The collection

Recent attention to forms of ‘earth-thinking’ thus ask renewed questions about how collective subjectivation emerges through the production of particular kinds of territorial abstraction. Insofar that the relationship between territory, thought and the production of abstractions is becoming reconfigured by these manifold forms of earth-thinking, geophilosophy emerges as a question of how to pay closer attention to the immanent contingency of thinking as something that occurs in relation to particular milieu. Surveying two expressions of geophilosophical thinking—the geo-, and the terrestrial—in this introduction we approach geophilosophy in its pluralism: as something at once indebted to Deleuze and Guattari, and taking on other directions in the context of new demands being made of philosophy—a philosophy that would seemingly struggle to keep apace with the problems posed by manifold planetary crises (Latour 2018). Engaging with both the demands of Deleuze and Guattari’s geophilosophy, as well as the problems incited by recent research into the geo- and the terrestrial, this special issue on Geophilosophies comprises five papers.

In the first paper, Didier Debaise (2022) approaches geophilosophies through the writing of William James and his pursuit of earthly stories in a world of composition. Focussing especially on James’ Pragmatism, Debaise considers the way stories might resist deadening forms of statutory knowledge, and affirm instead the production of ambulatory knowledge capable of expressing the singular contingency and precariousness of earthly things. Debaise (2022) follows Tsing and Latour in posing the question ‘how to engage in practices of earthly stories without reproducing the distance Nature places on the nonhuman?’. His response is to pay attention to the inaudible qualities of terrestrial things—a manoeuvre that requires an alternative approach to storytelling capable of distinguishing between telling ‘stories about things’ and ‘stories within the things’. Geostories, as Debaise apprehends this latter mode of storytelling, would be a practice of inventing alternative abstractions of thought that intensify our sense of attachment to the co-dependencies and fragility of earthly things.

Thinking with Nietzsche’s influence on Deleuze’s geophilosophical writing, in the second paper Aline Wiame (2022) develops the necessary role of shame as an affect capable of producing a future philosophy to come. Shame, for Wiame, is necessary for a future (non)philosophy precisely because it is only through the affects of shame that the subject is able to recognise the intolerable and, thus, unthinkable conditions of the present. Shame, as an affect and nonhuman becoming, functions as a way of revealing modes of thought that have been excluded by majoritarian structures of Reason. Yet, this is not to say that being shameful is an end onto itself: in the second half of the paper Wiame develops how, far from affirming shamefulness as an ontological condition of being, Deleuze and Guattari (1994) see shame as a way for the subject to recognise contemporary forms of stupidity that might otherwise go unnoticed. Drawing on Stengers’ reading of stupidity as a celebration of false problems, the argument details how a primary affect of shame reveals to the subject certain forms of stupidity and intolerable thought that limits what philosophy is able to think. As Wiame (2022) summarises in this issue: “Engaging oneself...
in the future form of philosophy, once shame has made the present one intolerable, is letting oneself be touched by the myriad of real but virtual possibilities of life that our clichés, our apparatuses of power – our very own stupidity – have made invisible’.

In the third paper, Tom Roberts, Andrew Lapworth and JD Dewsbury (2022) turn to geophilosophy as a unique means for complicating dominant understandings of subjectivity and, in doing so, contribute to the enduring concern within the social sciences and humanities to construct alternatives to the subject–predicate mode of thought. In this regard, Roberts, Lapworth and Dewsbury (2022) stage a keen distinction between geophilosophy and phenomenology, highlighting how Deleuze and Guattari’s use of ‘geo-’ “as an earthly plane of deterritorializing forces [...] cannot be contained within the horizon of a subject’s phenomenal ‘world’”. Seeking to recuperate a ‘nonphenomenological’ approach to subjectivity, the authors emphasise Deleuze and Guattari’s engagement with a diversity of aesthetic practices—from literature, music, cinema and visual arts—as privileged sites for the production of mutant forms of subjectivity. Engaging with one particular example, this paper draws on Deleuze’s analysis of Michel Tournier’s literature, articulating how it challenges phenomenology’s basing of perception in the figure of the human subject and its relationship to a world by dramatising how the Earth is an immanent plane capable of producing its own affects and percepts, and thus a subjectivity distinct from the affections and perceptions of a subject.

In the fourth paper, Anna Hickey-Moody (2022) introduces the concept of geophilosophy to consider the construction—through re- and de-territorialization—of systems of belief and faith. Drawing on an extensive multi-sited ethnographic study that explores systems of cultural value within religious communities in Australia and the UK, Hickey-Moody (2022) addresses the shortcomings of Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy as missing a critical investigation of race. Yet, developed in tandem with her feminist ethnographic practice, Hickey-Moody finds important contributions of geophilosophical thinking for emphasising the aesthetic and territorialising qualities of faith, such that it becomes possible to conceive of faith in nonessentializing, fluid, and empirical terms. For Hickey-Moody, faith and religion are expressive of creative geophilosophical forces of de- and re-territorialization precisely because they offer insights into the production of shared values whose consistency and strength takes shape through their relationship to a particular empirical milieu.

In the final paper, Claire Colebrook (2022) counters the temptation to see the Anthropocene as a component of geophilosophy by heightening the sense that thinking geophilosophy after Deleuze and Guattari would resolutely be a task of placing thought within the rhythms and inhuman forces of the Earth. The task of placing thought as an outcome of inhuman force is not only about confronting the sense that philosophy has no internal necessity and access to absolute Reason, but to say that, if philosophy is to become geophilosophy, it must itself be willing to approach its own nonbeing and inherent contingency within a history of the earth that could have been otherwise. Recognising the contingency of philosophy is, for Colebrook, not merely about grounding concepts within a specific context and situated territory; concepts, for Deleuze and Guattari (1994), have a capacity for de-territorialization that need not be resolved into any pre-given milieu. Instead, as Colebrook (2022)
argues, there is a contingent history of philosophy that might be better understood as a ‘counter-history’ whose function is to think “philosophy as a power beyond its actual history”.

**Geophilosophical possibilities**

Besides the “[a]bysmal aporia” (Stengers 2013, p. 178) of Anthropocene concepts, through this special issue we see geophilosophies differently as a way of recuperating other forms of earth-thinking and a people to come. To conclude, in this final section we highlight a number of possibilities that geophilosophy and broader commitments to earth-thinking bring to the fore. Whilst each of these possibilities trace something of the demands posed by Deleuze and Guattari’s writing on geophilosophy—that thought must refuse subject–predicate modes; resist communication; and create new modes of existence through radically immanent styles of thought—we highlight how such possibilities open plural opportunities and considerations for undertaking geophilosophical research.

The first emerges out of a geophilosophical refusal of an oppositional conception of thought, that is, an image of thought as merely an activity that takes place between subject and object. Such an image of thought evokes philosophical appeals to transcendent rationalities, constricting the act of thinking to the internal musings of an individual capable of reflecting on an external world. Indeed, for Deleuze and Guattari, if “reflection is always about something, and without exception about something that is already fully accomplished” (Gasché 2014, p. 6), then philosophy cannot be equated with reflection if it is to retain its creative function. Instead, Deleuze and Guattari famously write that “[subject] and object give a poor approximation of thought. Thinking is neither a line drawn between subject and object nor a revolving of one around the other. Rather, thinking takes place in the relationship of territory and the earth” (1994, p. 85). One of the striking implications of this dimension of geophilosophy is that it stages a direct problematisation to phenomenology and the dualistic opposition it presents between subject and object, which itself is a problem of abstraction (see Debaise, 2022) given the tendency of the subject, as Deleuze (1998, p. 51) reminds us, to “abstract a reflection from the physical world of flows, a bloodless double made up of subjects, objects, predicates, and logical relations”. This first possibility is one explored in depth by Roberts, Lapworth and Dewsbury (2022) who negate the phenomenological concept of ‘world’—as an environment encircling and existing for a subject—in favour of the semantic choice of earth by Deleuze and Guattari as a deterritorializing and deterritorialized force that would unground the structure of a world on which phenomenology depends. For Elizabeth Grosz, thinking thought differently requires recognising that all forms of life—not least human—are products of earthly forces that exceed and continuously destabilise those same forms. As she writes, “[the] ‘geo’ is an inversion of the ‘ego’! It leads us to understand what may have an agency or force on forms of life and on material objects: the earth itself, while ‘unliving’ as chemical elements and forces, can be understood as having a kind of life of its own when it is understood as a system of order and organization that is continually changing, never fully stable,
dynamic” (Grosz et al. 2017, p. 132). Similarly, Colebrook (2022) presents thought as an outcome of inhuman forces of the Earth, but crucially draws attention to the way those outcomes, and thus histories, can always have been otherwise. Geophilosophy, therefore, makes possible situated and, since such situations can always have been otherwise, speculative styles of research (Williams and Keating 2022) capable of attuning to an inhuman production of thought that is disruptive of the subject’s conventional habits of thinking.

A second possibility of geophilosophy is to make more of thought than as a means of communication. Indeed, communication is problematic insofar as it implies a logocentric model of philosophy, one in which philosophy becomes a mode of discursive reflection within pre-defined terms of debate, and thus one whose ends remain inherently self-referential. As Deleuze and Guattari write, “[we] do not lack communication. On the contrary we have too much of it. We lack creation. We lack resistance to the present” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, p. 108). To move beyond the philosophical trappings implied by thought as communication—that is, to produce a style of thought that would be genuinely creative and capable of resisting the present—involves the invention of concepts capable of constructing new relations in thought, alternative avenues for thinking, and therefore minor experiments in different ways of living. “[The] creation of concepts in itself calls for a future form, for a new earth and people that do not yet exist” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, p. 108). This second possibility is one taken up by Didier Debaise (2022), who considers how creating concepts—in this case as part of a practice of writing geostories capable of expressing the contingency of earthly things—is not a question of putting new words into circulation but about contracting new habits. The geophilosophical possibility is, after Debaise, of replacing social scientific models premised on the application of empty, transcendental principles to immediate and practical problems concerning ambulatory forms of knowledge production.

Third is the sense that geophilosophy involves some degree of philosophical renewal and the production of alternative modes of existence (see Wiame 2022; Hickey-Moody, 2022). By participating in a renewal of philosophical thinking, geophilosophies present a certain refusal to the status quo or a modification of dominant belief systems: as Hickey-Moody and Laurie (2015, p. 1) note “geophilosophy could be a way of not doing philosophy while practising located, embodied thinking”. If geophilosophy has always been a question of how philosophy thinks its prephilosophical and nonphilosophical others, then this opens up a question of how to develop habits of attention to and care for alternative modes of thought, and with it a becoming of the earth. Geophilosophies are thus resolutely not about bringing theory down to earth as a pre-given territory; there is a theoretical and empirical ordering implied in this manoeuvre. Instead, geophilosophies would be a recognition that thinking only takes place in a theorectico-empirical milieu produced through the participation of contingent, and indeed nonphilosophical, others.

By foregrounding the “power of the milieu” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, p. 96), these geophilosophical possibilities, therefore, stage a radical critique to transcendental, universalising habits of thought. Crucially, because geophilosophy is not limited to any actualised milieu it positions territory as something with a specific existential
quality to remake subjective thought: as Zourabichvili (2012, p. 166) writes, “[b]orrowed from ethnology more than from politics, the concept of territory certainly implies space, but it does not consist in the objective delimitation of a geographical location. Territory has an existential value: it circumscribes for a given person the field of the familiar and the captivating, marks distances from others, and protects against chaos”. We see this as a crucial starting point for doing geophilosophies as an attention to the inhuman durations of the geo-, and for constructing plural modes of terrestrial thinking: to substitute the reduction of geophilosophy to a geographical determinism for thought, for the task of recognising the contingent powers to remake thought inherent to a territorialised milieu.

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