

The Kleinian Subject in the Anthropocene:  
Posthumanism, Narration of Crisis, and the Ethics of Reparative Care

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## Abstract

This dissertation utilizes psychoanalytic theory to understand the anxieties that construct narrations of and demand intervention into the Anthropocene, a period marked by crises associated with human impact. I specifically bring Melanie Klein's theory of object relations to this contemporary sociopolitical context by analyzing the role of subjectivity in posthumanist theorizing, focusing on new materialism and object-oriented ontology. In response to feminist, queer, decolonial, and critical race concerns for the intersectional human within the posthumanities, this research questions the sociopolitical impact of human desires, fears, and defences on conceptions of repair in anthropocentric crisis and subsequent calls for care-taking in our more-than-human world.

First, I explore how the foundational arguments of the posthumanities resonate with the anxieties of Klein's paranoid-schizoid position and the subsequent defence mechanism of manic reparation. I humanize the drive of posthumanist theorizing through Klein's subject and its constitutive formation around a fear of annihilation, positioning the desire to be posthuman as a collective negotiation of threat and security in the face of crisis. Next, I discuss Klein's conception of non-manic reparation and the sociopolitical import of reparative aspirations for the Anthropocene. I specifically focus on the nature of reparative desires in the face of ecological crisis and climate change and argue for the critical necessity of reconciling with reality's ambivalence. Finally, I speculate on how the individuated conceptualization of Kleinian subjectivity can be brought to notions of collective care in the context of the Anthropocene. I provide a close reading of reparation as a matter of care, politicizing Klein for this contemporary sociopolitical moment and contemplating both the psychic life of engaging in ethical obligations of care for ecological crisis and the critical role of narration in fostering care.

Throughout, I illustrate the sociopolitical consequences of calls for caretaking in the Anthropocene through reference to museology as an exemplary realm for the public interpretation and curation of narratives of external reality. I analyze how storytelling practices are tethered to ontological conditions and consider how the perception of crisis impacts the activation of different capacities for engagement or intervention into crisis.

## Dedication

In memory of Connor O'Callaghan (1990-2018), a friend and colleague who never got the chance to finish his dissertation.

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## Introduction

This dissertation takes the human relation to crisis in the Anthropocene as its object of analysis. In particular, I focus on how contemporary crisis becomes a story of anxieties – the way crisis gains its affective position and demands forms of intervention, which can be considered modes of care or care-taking. I emphasize the dialectical relationship of individual and collective, human and more than human, internal and external reality, and its entanglement with affective attachment and correlated storytelling. I utilize the posthumanities and psychoanalysis as my two central lenses. Critical museology – as the philosophical foundations and motivation for museum practices – enters as a tool for broadly illustrating the application and significance of my analysis beyond its substantive theoretical intervention and contribution. I am interested in the development *towards* stories of crisis and engagement, as opposed to the proposition of modes for intervention. While the latter is undeniably of critical importance, the stakes at play or of consequence for this analysis here are the relational formations of perception and the fragility of such recognition. I ask: in what ways do anxieties, fears, and desires act as defences that narrate relationships *to* and potential for engagement *in* crisis, especially when marked by an impending threat to human life, to the world that makes living possible? In other words, I address the underlying drive *towards* collective claim, the foundation on which narratives ignite various forms of response, such as care.

The Anthropocene is now a widespread term deployed to identify the contemporary period marked by human impact on Earth’s geology and ecosystems, such as anthropogenic climate change. At its core, the concept of the Anthropocene renders human impact as negative and thus arguably separate from – or in binary relationship to – nature and natural development. More recently, the term Capitalocene was proposed as arguably more accurate – that global contemporary crises are in fact due to our living in the age of capital (Moore 2). This impact is largely understood to be negative, wherein capitalist processes distributed across geopolitical landscapes have caused severe damage to our ecological environment and potentially the future of humanity. Both concepts are tethered to the so-called “sixth extinction,” which entered more general use and articulation through Elizabeth Kolbert’s book *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* (2014), which won the Pulitzer Prize for General Non-Fiction in 2015. This threat encapsulates what has been called the “horror of a ‘world-without-us’” (Neyrat 35).

In many ways, the Anthropocene is positioned as our contemporary human condition now and it is not reversible or salvageable through mere individual will. Rather, these concepts all say quite the opposite – that human control, extraction, and use is at the very root of causing the damage and thus risking futurity. I acknowledge that it is not strikingly original to wonder about the role of anxiety in facing (the threat of) catastrophic crisis. At the bare minimum, the threat of human extinction is, of course, an anxiety-inducing thought let alone a scientifically hypothesized fact. But, how does anxiety – as manifest through fears, desires, and defences – specifically affect the formation of repair, as both the desire to intervene, the story-telling of salvation or redemption, or the defence of an alternative or reoriented reality?

In this project, I discuss the Anthropocene largely through the lens of the posthumanities. Rosi Braidotti – a founding theorist of the posthumanities as a disciplinary field – situates “the posthuman condition as the convergence of posthumanism on the one hand and post-anthropocentrism on the other, within an economy of advanced capitalism” (*Posthuman Knowledge* 8). In this way, posthumanism acknowledges the ranging attribution of our contemporary moment as Anthropocene and Capitalocene. The concept of the posthuman emerges as a navigational tool, a way “to help *us* re-think the basic unit of reference for the human in the bio-genetic age known as ‘anthropocene,’ the historical moment when the Human has become a geological force capable of affecting all life on this planet” (Braidotti, *The Post-Human* 5; italics added). The term was first deployed in 1977 by the literary theorist Ihab Hassan gaining resurgence in the late 1990s upon the publication of Katherine Hayles 1999 text *How We Became Posthuman* (Ferrando 2).

The posthumanities mark a fracture within and with the humanities – or, rather, as Braidotti puts it, “the humanities have proved perfectly capable of re-inventing themselves” (*Posthuman Knowledge* 76). Humanism is understandable as “a transhistorical technique that considers human as the product of a becoming that leads to an abyss between humanity and a dispensable rest-of-the-world” (Neyrat 38). In shifting from the traditional humanities, Braidotti situates the “first generation” of critical studies – that which brought intersectional critique to the study of the (hu)Man – as paving the way for the posthumanities, a “second generation” of critical studies and its central critique of anthropocentrism (*Posthuman Knowledge* 79-83). Put simply, Braidotti is describing the movement from thinking with or from a situated humanity – as constituted by fields like critical race theory, queer theory, and crip theory – to thinking with



the more than human or inhuman, a traversing across the nature-culture divide. Both, though, are a movement to the excluded or marginalized (Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge* 84).

Genealogically, “the radical deconstruction of the ‘human,’ which began as a political cause in the 1960s, turned into an academic project in the 1970s, and evolved into an epistemological approach in the 1990s, resulting in a multiplication of situated perspectives” (Ferrando 2). In other words, posthumanism is “a second generation of postmodernism, leading the deconstruction of the human to its extreme consequences by bringing to its theoretical revision speciesism, that is, the privilege of some species over others” (Ferrando 2-3).

This entanglement of the humanities and the posthumanities is articulated by Cary Wolfe through a differentiation of posthumanism from “humanist posthumanism,” wherein the former emphasizes the need to change the nature of thought itself rather than merely the object of thought (357). In other words, there is a difference between an epistemological reorientation towards the concerns threatening the Anthropocene and a more comprehensive contemplation of the ontological disposition constructing and constructed through epistemological narration. To address this relationality to both analytical approach *and* object of analysis, a wide range of sub-fields developed and were largely retroactively consolidated under the broad umbrella term of the posthuman (Ferrando 1). I focus on the two sub-fields of object-oriented ontology (OOO) and new materialism (NM). Given my academic background and analytical interest in the field of museum studies, I was particularly drawn to their respective emphases on objects and materiality.

OOO was conceived by Graham Harman first in his 1999 essay entitled “Object-Oriented Philosophy,” which emerged as one of four different positions within the realm of speculative realism and became object-oriented *ontology* specifically at a conference in 2010 (Harman, *Towards Speculative Realism*). In OOO, Harman renders reality as made of objects, which are “any entity that cannot be paraphrased in terms of either its components or its effects” (*Immaterialism* 3). At its core, OOO asserts a rejection of correlationism, of dominant philosophy’s foundational belief that “knowledge of the nonhuman world had to be correlated with or mediated by a priori human categories” (Grusin xii). Objects are, therefore, always already more and less than – “more than its pieces and less than its effects” (Harman, *OOO* 53), and thus “a surplus exceeding its relations, qualities, and actions” (*Immaterialism* 3-4).

NM, on the other hand, was first deployed as a term by both Manuel DeLanda and Rosi Braidotti in the late 1990s, building on feminist science studies broadly and specifically Donna Haraway's landmark "Cyborg Manifesto" from 1985 (van der Tuin, "Neo/New Materialism" 277; Dolphijn and van der Tuin 93). In 2003, Haraway expanded her analysis in *The Companion Species Manifesto*, in which she coined the concept of naturecultures, a disruption of humanist dichotomies of nature versus culture, of matter versus meaning (Van der Tuin, "Neo/New Materialism" 277). NM intervenes into the poststructural and social constructivist theories of the so-called linguistic turn in feminist theory, which are critiqued for dematerializing reality (Bruining 149). Reality is repositioned in NM, therefore, as varying scales of matter, as made up of lively materiality that holds agential capacity.

In both OOO and NM, the posthuman is encapsulated in rendering the human as just an object or material being amongst other objects or matter, offering theoretical critiques of anthropocentric logic along with proposals for reoriented lenses that decenter the human and consolidate it within a wider world of objects and matter. These two theoretical realms, as I explore substantively in Chapter 1, are commonly tethered together within critical analysis of the posthumanities. Despite their differences – and, at times, explicit defences against the other – OOO and NM are mutually "militating against the excesses of correlationism" (Sheldon 196). Rebekah Sheldon argues that, in relation, they reproduce the classic binary of form versus matter that overlooks "the space that holds them both" (209). Their differences are rather just a result of "the radically different ways in which these two fields treat human knowledge systems" – that is, "the *causal effects* assignable to knowledge-making practices" (Sheldon 195). In this way, OOO and NM render differently "the ontological status of epistemology," "legible as the result of the structuring privilege accorded to *form* in object-oriented ontology and *matter* in feminist new materialism" (Sheldon 196).

In considering OOO and NM, I was struck by the ways in which *human* ontological functioning is overlooked in the production of OOO and NM's epistemological propositions. Within critical interrogations of the posthumanities over the past decade, which I outline in Chapter 1, there is a growing reckoning with the ways the human in the posthumanities is not only prevalent in theorizing but also representative of – particularly in the foundational arguments of OOO and NM – a *specific* humanity, one that has always already been rendered human as opposed to being dehumanized through social, cultural, and political systems of

oppression. As a result, Colebrook claims that posthumanism enables “business as usual” through its fetishization of the human world as man-less, “a continuation of the humanities, which had always refused that man had any end other than that which he gave to himself, in the posthuman notion that man is nothing but a point of relative stability, connected to one living system that he can feel affectively and read” (160). As Chapter 1 will explore, OOO and NM implicitly presume that objectification or (re)materialization will be largely *liberating* from the shortcomings of humanist discourse and for addressing anthropocentric crisis. In response, foundational OOO and NM have been more recently scrutinized through feminist, critical race, queer, and decolonial lenses.

In addition to the critical importance of incorporating intersectional politics into posthuman analysis and its interventional propositions for the Anthropocene, I was curious about how psychic life and disposition – how human anxieties, desires, and fears – impact posthumanist theorizing. That is, in what ways do human attachments and defences provide an undergirding layer to the ways our relations to anthropocentric crisis are formulated and, in turn, articulated as limited or limiting forms of repair or intervention? If a concern for intersectional subjectivity is necessary within the posthumanities, what can be learned from explorations of psychic life? How can psychic life be understood within the crisis of the Anthropocene? In this way, I am interested in studying what Colebrook describes as the “fantasy of human near-disappearance and redemption” (197), which I consider through a turn to psychoanalytic inquiry and its applicability to the contemporary moment of the Anthropocene. Psychic life for, in, and of the Anthropocene confounds the nature-culture divide through its foundation upon both corporeal capacity and material relations as well as sociopolitical structures and lived experience. The lens of psychic life as articulated by psychoanalysis is therefore a mode of orienting with attachments and defences that form through nature-culture and their complex dynamics across questions of life and death. Psychic life in the Anthropocene or for the posthumanities centers the question of human anxiety and its influence on perceiving and narrating crisis. In this way, it explores the ontological foundations that impact the approach to meaning-making in epistemological narrations.

Psychoanalytic inquiry is, perhaps for obvious reason, quite blanketly rejected by the posthumanities as an anthropocentric discourse. Harman critiques psychoanalysis as being unable to “take us very far beyond the sphere of human culture, and it leaves the inanimate world

largely untouched” (OOO 39). And Braidotti frames psychoanalysis as reliant upon “the primacy of culture and of signification over subject formation” (*The Post-Human* 188). Despite being categorized as strictly understanding the subject as “self-contained and clearly bounded” (Blackman 78), I believe this disregard overlooks not only the way in which psychoanalytic object relations bears critical resonance with a turn to objects – and not merely linguistically – but also the way it develops a deeper grasp of how posthuman desires and anxieties fuel attachments to particular formulations of a post-anthropocentric reality, to particular reparative ideations. Such attachments to cure or repair in OOO and NM – the possibility of a reoriented philosophical solution or salve for addressing the Anthropocene – overlooks what the back cover of Colebrook’s text describes as the impossibility of a “redemptive posthuman future”. In fact, Colebrook connects this explicitly to Sigmund Freud’s notion of *fort/da* and its anxious rehearsing of return, a rehearsing of resolve or redemption (the object is okay), which in OOO and NM involves an absorption of the subject into the object and matter, a rehearsing of near but salvaged annihilation (199). As a result, my analysis across these two purportedly disparate fields contributes an understanding of the ways such attachments fuel questions of care-taking in the face of crisis, how the perception of anthropocentric crisis influences demands for reparative intervention.

In my findings, object relations have only been invoked explicitly within Bill Brown’s work on thing theory, a yet-another sub-field of the posthumanities. In his proposition of “a story of object relations in an expanded field” (291), Brown critiques psychoanalytic object relations as denoting “only an intersubjective relationship, not the human relation to the inanimate object world” (181). In very definitive terms, Brown states that “the object, whether constituted through projection or introjection, is never not another human subject” (182) and, thus, “the traditional script of object relations fails to permit a subject to have intense relations to objects...that signify themselves” (183). My project here directly responds to this simplistic critique of psychoanalytic object relations by first providing a close reading of Melanie Klein’s theory of object relations in relation to OOO and NM and second considering how her notion of reparation is a *matter* of care.

I turn to Melanie Klein (1882-1960) because she is the founder of the school of object relations, creating a psychoanalytic framework that is then utilized and expanded upon by many other psychoanalysts. Furthermore, her theory is suited to my project’s focus because it is not

only founded upon the “epistemophilic impulse” (188), our original desire for meaning by constituting our “first and basic relation to the outside world and to reality” (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 221), but she also introduced a shift in psychoanalytic work towards the mother and child, a lens that centers care-taking dynamics. In this way, Klein’s developmental framework centers the process of meaning-making through a focus on epistemological desires and, in turn, their foundation upon both our originary (ontological) structures of care and our capacity to engage in dynamics of reparation.

Melanie Klein’s framework was formed in response to her work as a contemporary of Sigmund Freud. Freud’s foundational development of psychoanalysis has been broadly connected to OOO and NM. His framework was positioned as disrupting anthropocentric dualism by working across the body and mind (Kirby 43; 52), opening up new ways of thinking, interpreting, and connecting (Grosz 28). In particular, Freud’s concept of transference grounded analyses of projective relations (Wilson 288), of anthropocentrism within relational living. Anthropocentrism within a psychoanalytic lens has in fact been understood as an avoidance of our uncanniness, ignorance of “the extent to which our daily lives are composed of endless and ultimately fruitless measures to remain unaware of the body’s vulnerability and of the imminent death that portends our return to nature, whence fantasies of personal identity are swallowed up by omnipotent, if purposeless, matter” (Orlie 120). In other words, psychoanalytic inquiry has been positioned as cutting across the nature-culture dichotomy and as immersed in material powers beyond human disciplinary powers. And, specifically, Adam Phillips has highlighted the ways psychoanalysis brings together both science and storytelling, nature and narration, forming stories of life and death that propose versions of reality or realistic possibility. In many ways, then, psychoanalysis disrupts the Cartesian humanist subject by rendering the subject as split, as arising specifically from a lack of wholeness (Barrett, Bolt, and Kontturi 2-3).

In a 2010 special issue of *Paragraph: A Journal of Modern Critical Theory* on “Psychoanalysis and the Posthuman”, the editors emphasize that “critical posthumanism and psychoanalysis have a great deal in common” (Dow and Wright 303). That is, both participate in “a certain critique of *rational* humanism”, both “map transformations in subjectivity”, both “challenge the boundaries of embodiment”, and “both target monistic or self-sufficient accounts of consciousness” (Dow and Wright 303). As echoed above, the editors of this special issue even claim that Freud’s *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930) can be characterized as an example of

critical posthumanism (Dow and Wright 304). They state that, “for Freud, as for critical posthumanists, ‘posthuman’ is something we have indeed always been,” albeit characterized for him through “the libido-driven unconscious” (Dow and Wright 305). Yet, like the several other limited deployments of psychoanalysis to specific sub-fields of the posthumanities,<sup>1</sup> this special issue predominantly explores the ways a Lacanian orientation can contribute to “a psychoanalytically informed critical posthumanism” (Dow and Wright 308). In fact, Kleinian object relations is comprehensively overlooked – this work is described as a “return to Freud’s own critical ‘posthumanism’ refracted through a Lacanian perspective on the technologically-mediated discontents of twenty-first-century civilization” (Dow and Wright 315).

My turn to Klein’s psychoanalytic framework is, however, linked to some of the insights in these explorations. For instance, Jerry Aline Flieger highlights the ways different attachments to posthumanist possibility construct different modalities of repair or intervention. Flieger identifies three dominant deployments of the posthuman – “celebratory posthumanism dreams of the absolute control of the Master’s discourse, whereas doomsday posthumanism, in its deep pessimism about the scientific Other, resembles the hysteric’s discourse; critical posthumanism, meanwhile, tries to occupy the structure of the analyst’s discourse” (Dow and Wright 312-313). Similarly, the concept of the posthuman is positioned by Véronique Voruz as a symptom that attempts “to find an imperfect discursive solution to the constitutive problem of human being’s ineradicably *un-natural* condition” (Dow and Wright 314-315). In this way, the posthumanities are explored as a particular manifestation of human anxiety and desire, “sustaining a community of (mis)understanding, or discursive space in which to air inchoate anxieties” (Dow and Wright 314). Psychoanalytic inquiry therefore facilitates an investigation into what Nina Lykke in *A Feminist Companion to the Posthumanities* (2018) labels as her desire in her research to be “passionately posthuman” (23). While Lykke only deploys the concept in the title of her article, it resonates powerfully with how Klein’s framework is described – as “an account of the passions” (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 13), as orienting “drives as relational passions” (Allen, “Are We Driven?” 319). Simply, Lykke’s articulation makes explicit the question of the human within posthuman theorizing.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to this special issue, there are various texts that use Lacanian psychoanalysis to think about the posthumanities broadly, including in *Reinventing the Soul* (2006) by Mari Ruti, *The Democracy of Objects* (2011) by Levi Bryant, *What is Sex?* (2017) by Alenka Zupančič, and throughout the anthology *Lacan and the Posthuman* (2018). Julia Kristeva’s psychoanalytic work is also used by Estelle Barrett (2015; 2017) to think about NM.

Like this previous literature on bringing (largely Lacanian) psychoanalysis to the posthumanities, I turn to “psychoanalytic interpretation as simultaneously a clinic of contemporary culture *and* an on-going interpretation of psychoanalytic theory itself” (Dow and Wright 315). Klein’s psychoanalytic work marks a critical shift from Freud’s foundational psychoanalytic theorizing. Klein’s turn to caretaker dynamics not only marked a feminist turn within the psychoanalytic field broadly but also instigated a shift from Freud’s more rigid and hierarchical development stages to a more fluid pendulum swing of affective states. Klein studies the formation of attachments and how they justify certain actions or defend against potential threats. In a way, then, Klein analyzes the ways the human implicates its relational perceptions in its understanding and consequent engagement with external reality – in other words, the impossibility of objectivity. I will explore the specificity of Klein’s framework across Chapters 1 and 2 and, therefore, how the posthumanities benefit from Kleinian insight. My analysis across these two fields marks a response to Amy Allen’s (2020) argument for why critical theory needs psychoanalysis. That is, I explicate how and why posthumanist theorizing – a newer realm of critical theory – needs psychoanalysis, which in turn brings Klein to bear on contemporary politics, as characterized by the Anthropocene.

As opposed to claiming the possibility of a *post*-humanity, Klein offers “a realistic conception of the person” (24), not through categorical diagnosis per se but through providing “a rich and resonant vocabulary for talking about certain logics that continually re-emerge in and shape politics in the present” (Allen, *Critique on the Couch* 193). A Kleinian psychoanalytic consideration of posthumanist theorizing enables the address of “some of its problematic tendencies and blind spots” (26), of its tendency towards “normative idealism, developmentalism, utopianism, and rationalism” (Allen, *Critique on the Couch* 187). I explore the bridging of Klein’s analysis of individual subjectivity to the collective group or culture, which I subsequently link to the culture of posthumanist theorizing, how the posthumanities reflect stakes in certain outcomes of reorienting humanity within the Anthropocene. As Mari Ruti describes, “every social theory presumes – explicitly or implicitly – something about the kinds of creatures we are” (Allen and Ruti 105), and here I theorize the implicit human within the foundational arguments of OOO and NM through Klein’s developmental framework.

At first glance, Kleinian psychoanalysis may seem to only resonate with the posthumanities due to its articulation, linguistically, as *object* relations, which is in turn

presumed to only encapsulate intrapsychic and intersubjective relations. But, object relations addresses the ways in which our attachments to varying aspects of ourselves *and* our world – our fear over their loss, our concern for their future – fuel our engagement, as manifest for instance as a form of care-taking or preservation. In other words, psychoanalytic frameworks consider the ontological (i.e., developmental) underpinnings of human tendencies and capacities that in turn impact the epistemological perception of the more than human, which will always already be articulated from that human lens. As Colebrook describes in her analysis of posthuman aspirations, “this stain of non-erasure or the awareness of our geological mark...may enable us to think a future that is neither posthuman nor human” (229). Through Kleinian psychoanalysis, I believe we gain a better understanding of “this history of the human as an oscillation between self-formation and self-destruction rather than the joyous and blind declaration of the posthuman provides a thought for the future beyond our assumed right to life” (Colebrook 229). The posthumanities are, to put very simplistically, a human knowledge-making practice. I do not, however, seek to (re)center the human or humanist discourse, but rather consider through Kleinian psychoanalysis how desires for and claims of *truly* decentering the human manifest *from* our very own theorizing of futurity *and*, in turn, consider the ways such claims – as rooted in human anxieties, desires, and fears – can be considered beyond the logic of the *post*. The more I read these fields in tandem, the more I find deep resonance.

Both posthumanism and psychoanalysis reflect attachments to relational formation – or reorientation therein – as well as an implicit reckoning with the impact of human activity or action, which in turn narrates the so-called state of things – in this case, as crisis – and thus demanding and facilitating a notion of repair or intervention. I view both, therefore, as seeking to make conscious the unconscious, that which has been marginalized or overlooked from human perception, that which negatively impacts reality beyond ourselves and, in turn, our potential futurity as well. Through Klein, I demonstrate how, in the Anthropocene, the fear of unconscious impact and its threat to futurity is literalized. Psychoanalysis facilitates an understanding of “the relations between conscious and unconscious processes, making space for the presence and influence of psychic negotiations with conflict, distress, contradiction, and ambivalence” (Lertzman 130).

Specifically, within my chapters, I ground anthropocentric crisis broadly through the threat of ecological crisis and climate change, bridging psychoanalytic inquiry to the concept of



the Anthropocene through the placement of psychoanalytic object relations broadly in the context of negotiating climate change. For instance, Frédéric Neyrat describes the concept of a “planetary unconscious” (36), which is characterized as the pervasive repression of our relational ontology across “worlds-without-humans theories” (37), i.e., posthumanist theorizing. Likewise, Renee Aron Lertzman articulates “environmental object relations” that consider how, in the context of ecological crisis, “psychoanalytic approaches – such as attention to unconscious processes, defensive mechanisms such as denial, projection and splitting, and nuanced understandings of anxiety, loss, mourning, and grief – can help us bring back into the frame the potential presence of concern, anxiety, worry, fears, desires, aspirations, and hopes” (Lertzman 118). By turning to Kleinian psychoanalysis for my project, then, I consider how “to insert such sensitivities into how we understand the (often) painful confrontations with ecological issues” (Lertzman 130), as represented by OOO and NM as posthumanist sub-fields.

In the chapters that follow, I will exhibit these so-called sensitivities and painful confrontations through both psychoanalytic insight as well as its folding into practices of storytelling and memorialization, in both broad cultural scripts (i.e., governmental or social responses to the threat of climate change) addressed in psychoanalytic inquiry and in the practice of museology (i.e., the pedagogical negotiation of so-called difficult knowledge like climate change). The implications of this theoretical explication and argument are made concretely and actively present through, for instance, the launch of a search for an inaugural Curator of Climate Change at the Royal Ontario Museum in September 2020 as well as the 2021 online conference entitled “Matters of Care: Museum Futures in Times of Planetary Precarity”. I reference several concrete examples and happenings from the sociohistorical development of museum practice through the lens of critical museology throughout as a way to ground and illustrate the implications and significance of what is at stake in the narration of crisis, a central concern of my project.

Critical museology complements an analysis of posthumanist narration because it is a realm for visualizing this structuring according to different ontological principles.<sup>2</sup> In the

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<sup>2</sup> Critical museology is a subfield of museum studies that “interrogates the imaginaries, narratives, discourses, agencies, visual and optical regimes, and their articulations and integrations within diverse organizational structures that taken together constitute a field of cultural and artistic production, articulated through public and private museums; heritage sites; gardens; memorials; exhibition halls; cultural centers; and art galleries” (Shelton 8). The museum studies literature that I invoke in this dissertation is part of this specific subfield.

*Posthuman Glossary* (2018), Fiona Cameron proposes “posthuman museum practices,” wherein museums are “ideally placed to concretely re-work human subject positions and frame and promote posthuman theories and practices of life” (“Posthuman Museum Practices” 349). Put simply, museum practices can play a critical role in our human negotiation of the crisis of the Anthropocene. Through curatorial practices, museums act as “custodians of cultural memory” across nature and culture and therefore “enact particular ways of conceptualizing and acting in the world” (Cameron, “Posthuman Museum Practices” 349). Museums negotiate a tension between their curatorial lenses – which are reconstituted through different ontological frameworks over time – and their museum collections – how their objects are “much more than just products of the human imagination; they are also the emergent effects of contingent and heterogeneous enactments, and performances comprising both human and non-human actants” (Cameron, “Posthuman Museum Practices” 349). Critical museology therefore engages in the narration of a sense of the world, a form of meaning-making, which illustrates sociohistorical values and beliefs through the practices of collection, preservation, interpretation, and curation, and in turn promotes – or prevents – engagement and action. I posit museums as a realm of curated object relations – both in their reflection of human attachments and in their literal selection, arrangement, and representation of objects. The latter can either be a form of objectification or, in posthumanist practice, engage an “ontological refashioning” of objects, a reworking of “the humanisms that hold...objecthood and interpretation in place” (Cameron, “Posthuman Museum Practices” 350). That is, museological object relations have the potential to shift the narratives that the humanities maintain, offering more complexity to our engagement in contemporary sociopolitical concerns, such as anthropocentric crisis.

Put simply, museology is an exemplary material and object realm for the treatment of human knowledge systems. Since its inception, the public museum – which gained a new form of *publicness* in the aftermath of the French Revolution, after its origination as exclusive royal collections and cabinets of curiosity – deploys what Tony Bennett (1995; 2015; 2017) famously termed the “exhibitionary complex,” “instruments for acting on and shaping the civic attributes of their newly extended publics” (Bennett, *Museums, Power, Knowledge* 19). The exhibitionary complex – its apparatuses and knowledges – rearticulates relations according to different rationalities across sociocultural history (Bennett, “Thinking (with) Museums” 11). Cameron’s bridging of posthumanism with museum studies explicitly seeks “to revitalize this quest for

relevancy” (“The Liquid Museum” 346). As a result, her propositions reflect an attempt to bring the complex uncertainty of the contemporary Anthropocene to what is widely understood as the *new* museology of the post-(modern)-museum – a concept proposed by Eileen Hooper-Greenhill in 2000 that introduced a strategic reorientation from the so-called *old* modernist museology of the original 19<sup>th</sup>-century public museum. And, for illustrating the application of my Kleinian reading of the posthumanities, where better to concretely see this discursive manifestation of anxiety, desire, and fear than in museology as an exemplary sociocultural institution since the 19<sup>th</sup> century that seeks to collect, preserve, and narrate a sense of both nature and culture, sustaining therefore a sense of this community of (mis)understanding, a space to articulate emergent anxieties. The museum is a place and space that negotiates and, subsequently, educates a public on our human relationship to nature and its (dis)connections with culture.<sup>3</sup>

As a result, the museum’s range of practices – collection, curation, interpretation – implicitly construct stories of our world’s ontological foundations and thus narrate its own epistemological understanding of nature-culture. Museums emerge as holding power and potential to impact engagement and intervention, for narrating a sense of care and care-taking, which is extendable to, as Cameron initiates, the posthumanist turn. As widespread pedagogical tools in society worldwide, they can participate in what Colebrook describes as the “panicked (or joyous) apprehension of self-loss” (20), as embodied in the threat of extinction in anthropocentric crisis and interventional propositions of decentering (or losing) the human within objects or matter in OOO and NM. The museum illustrates the concrete consequences of narrations of crisis, the material repercussions of how storytelling formulates crisis and instigates human engagement and intervention. Meaning-making practices have ontological significance, and storytelling through the framework and medium of museology illustrates why it truly *matters* and is intimately tethered to matters of care and cure.

Throughout my speculative analysis across the posthumanities and psychoanalysis, I aim to hold both fields in tension “without collapsing their significant differences” (S. Todd 13). While Sharon Todd deploys this approach in a different theoretical context – in her study of and propositions for education through a dialogue between Kleinian psychoanalysis and Levinasian ethics – I believe her articulation of their mutual resonance amidst difference – in premise and in outcome – is strikingly resonant with my dialogue here. Specifically, I read S. Todd’s use of *the*

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<sup>3</sup> See Ritchie (2021) for a concentrated Kleinian reading of the public museum.

*Other* below as transposable to the posthuman or more than human, and her focus on education to storytelling or narration wherein the museum is understandable as a pedagogical institution:

Both discourses offer education a way of thinking through the relationship between self and Other that refuses to ignore affect as significant not only to learning but to engagements with difference. Moreover, both view the fragility of the self as the source of traumatic wounding when it encounters difference, acknowledging that the Other disrupts one's self-identity. And, finally, both view the relation between self and Other as basically nonreciprocal and asymmetrical...Although these similarities are precisely why I draw upon both discourses here, I nonetheless read the tensions between Levinas and psychoanalysis as not something to be dissolved but something to be mined for the way in which they offer different temporal perspectives on learning from the Other: one gesturing toward the future promised by the Other, the other recognizing traces of the past in present encounters with difference. In this regard I am not trying to integrate these two views theoretically but to work within and through their very differences.

Investigating the importance of relationality for ethicality means, then, exploring the ways in which people come together, both with definite histories that shape the reception of and response to the Other, and with the kind of surprising openness that exceeds these histories. (S. Todd 13)

My project utilizes Klein to illustrate the pervasive presence of human affect within the theoretical propositions of foundational OOO and NM. A Kleinian reading of the posthumanities elucidates the desire to narrate the Anthropocene in or through particular ways, which in turn demand or claim certain ethical implications. In dialogue, these fields elucidate the complexity of grappling with our more than human reality *from* the human experience. Klein helps ground posthumanist desires within our human disposition and the posthumanities help bring psychoanalytic object relations to the crisis of the Anthropocene. I illustrate the ways in which this dynamism constructs attachments to notions of reparative care and how it *matters* the ways we narrate such crisis. As S. Todd describes, this “double view paints a more complex picture of what occurs” and one that informs ethical engagement (13). In centering this tension, I analyze the grappling with being both of consequence in our or this world, in the past, the present, and

for the future, and also being inconsequential to this world and its future. At stake is the question of guarantee or certitude for our selves and the future of the Anthropocene, that as humans we both have impact through our existence with (our psychic life and the ways it impacts our actions, engagements, denials) and do not truly matter at the end of the day (our anxious attachments, for instance, will not matter in the face of ecological destruction that cannot sustain human life).

This dissertation contains three main chapters. In Chapter 1, I provide a close reading of the foundational arguments of OOO and NM and their more recent intersectional critiques through the lens of Klein's concept of manic reparation. As a whole, I illustrate the initial resonance between Klein's psychoanalytic framework and these two sub-fields of the posthumanities as well as how Kleinian object relations is extendable to the culture of the Anthropocene as a contemporary crisis. In Chapter 2, I focus on the nature of Kleinian reparation, which is often considered the culmination of Klein's framework. I explore the role of ambivalence for the Kleinian subject and how it connects to the negotiation of climate change, an exemplar of anxiety in the Anthropocene and for the reparative desires of the posthumanities. Overall, Chapters 1 and 2 situate the Kleinian subject within the Anthropocene, as represented by the posthumanist concerns of OOO and NM. In Chapter 3, I transition from conducting a Kleinian reading of posthumanist theorizing to considering the ways that Kleinian reparation orients as a form of care and repair in the Anthropocene – a reading of Kleinian psychoanalysis for our more than human reality. I accomplish this task through a close reading of María Puig de la Bellacasa's conceptualization of *matters of care* in dialogue with Kleinian thought. This analysis elucidates how Klein's psychoanalytic framework is applicable to and insightful for the question of reparative care in the Anthropocene, focusing on the speculative ethics of how to care as humans in our contemporary affective ecologies. Throughout this dissertation's analysis, I draw connections to narrative and storytelling practices within posthumanist theorizing and how this constructs material consequences for our understanding of reality and subsequent capacity for engagement or intervention.

## Chapter 1

### The Kleinian Subject in the Anthropocene: A Psychoanalytic Reading of the Posthumanities

In this chapter, I assess the query that, if we accept the Kleinian reading of the subject, what does this mean for the posthumanities?<sup>4</sup> In the introduction, I touched on how the general ethos of the posthumanities is to decenter the power of human psychic life and, therefore, to both reckon with the human's persistent negative repercussions in being *of consequence* and expose the limits of this capacity, the grounding condition of being likewise *inconsequential* to the future of the planet and its ability to sustain human life. In this chapter, I utilize Kleinian psychoanalysis to demonstrate how this foundational desire to be posthuman, how its persistent emphasis on human presence – its anxieties, desires, and defences – are a central cause and necessary companion to the anthropocentric moment and its call for crisis intervention. Klein's framework not only makes sense of the problematic refusal of any sense of the human in the foundational arguments of OOO and NM, but also facilitates an understanding of the role of psychic reality within the desire for a reparative approach to the negative consequences of the Anthropocene. Consequently, the Kleinian subject provides insight into the psychic life of socio-political mobilization around crisis – the crisis of the Anthropocene at present – that not only places the human at the center as at issue but also threatens the potential annihilation of human life (or life in this world as we, the human, know it). Put simply, I argue that Kleinian psychoanalysis orients how the human – its psychic life, its relational attachments and affective processes – can and must be part of a posthuman approach to anthropocentric crisis.

First, I turn to Klein's concept of the paranoid-schizoid position and how this initial developmental stage in Klein's framework aligns with the foundational principles and methodologies of OOO and NM. Subsequently, I explore Klein's articulation of the defence mechanism of manic reparation and how it resonates with the intersectional interrogations of the foundational stances of OOO and NM along feminist, anti-racist, and decolonial lines,

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<sup>4</sup> This question is inspired by Amy Allen's similar question around "if we accept the psychoanalytic theory of the subject, what implications does this have for our understanding of critique, progress, and emancipation?" (Allen and Ruti 199).

demonstrating how the desire to be posthuman is implicitly intertwined with anthropocentric concern. I show how psychoanalysis is capable of addressing the more recent acknowledgement of the presence of human interpretation in the posthumanities (Barnwell; Clare; Kaiser and Thiele; Mudde; Sullivan) by considering the human *motivation* – i.e. drive or desire – for the posthumanities. To the “question of returning to the human” (Kaiser and Thiele 1), I pose the Kleinian subject. Therefore, I conclude this chapter by turning to the broader underpinnings of the Kleinian subject and its developmental dispositions and defences to consider how they impact the human capacity to respond to and engage in anthropocentric crisis. I explicate how certain relational dispositions emergent from Klein’s articulation of psychic life construct a culture of the Anthropocene that is tethered to very particular forms of meaning-making – how the ontological dispositions of Klein’s framework contribute to the construction of certain sorts of stories or forms of cultural memory.

#### *Kleinian Psychoanalysis & the Anthropocentric Position of the Posthumanities*

Klein’s psychoanalytic framework reorients Sigmund Freud’s foundational structure by shifting focus to the mother and child. Exploration of the mother’s (or caretaker’s) body and action (i.e. care) in infancy grounds our “epistemophilic impulse” (188), our original desire for meaning by constituting our “first and basic relation to the outside world and to reality” (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 221). This impulse forms, in other words, our first object relation. Klein asserts that the nature of this meaning-making is directly affected by our capacity to move through the two developmental positions. Introduced as two positions first in 1935 and cemented in 1946, the early ego begins in the paranoid-schizoid position and gradually (and hopefully) develops capacity to reach and work through the depressive position, which sets the stage for reparative possibilities. The two positions are characterized by their different forms of anxiety – paranoid versus depressive – and the subsequent defence mechanisms that seek to enforce a semblance of security and thus coping in the face of one’s perceived sense of reality and its affiliated threats. They demarcate the variation within the “ego’s capacity to bear tension and anxiety, and therefore in some measure to tolerate frustration”, a “constitutional factor” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 68) that circles around a desire for integration and thus a defence against disintegration.

Structurally, Klein's paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions exist on a pendulum, reflecting a more fluid developmental model wherein different types of anxiety persist throughout life, as opposed to Freud's more rigid and linear hierarchy of developmental stages (Segal xi-xii). As Klein describes, "some fluctuations between the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive positions always occur and are part of normal development... moreover, modification is a gradual process and the phenomena of the two positions remain for some time to some extent intermingled and interacting" (*Envy and Gratitude* 16). I use Klein's conception of the positions to consider the role of the human in the posthumanities – how the anxieties, desires, and defences of the fields that make-up posthumanism construct the overarching narratives told by each proposal of an alternative *post* humanist approach and can purportedly *repair* or *reorient* the logic of the Anthropocene and the future or continuance of its violence.

Through Klein's framework, I posit OOO and NM's foundational methodology as paranoid-schizoid.<sup>5</sup> The anxiety of the paranoid-schizoid position "takes the form of fear of persecution," "the fear of an uncontrollable overpowering object" (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 4). For Klein's purposes, this fear is fueled by the early ego's experience of both frustration and satisfaction as embodied in the mother's breast, which subsequently leads the splitting of the perceived world, of internal and external objects, into part-objects that are either good or bad, loved or hated (*Envy and Gratitude* 2; 5). Splitting enables a dispersal of the destructive forces and thus the source of danger by projecting the bad externally and introjecting the good (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 5-6). In this way, splitting emerges as a mode of self-protection that defends against our deepest fear and feelings of persecution (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 6). A phantasy is constructed, then, about the state of our internal and external worlds wherein the object and the self *can* be split, causing very real implications that cut off the connection between our internal perceptions and external reality (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 6). The paranoid-schizoid position gains security through idealization and denial, through the omnipotent creation of an ideal object/situation and the omnipotent annihilation of a persecutory object/situation (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 7). In other words, these defence mechanisms facilitate a false sense of control

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<sup>5</sup> In bridging Klein's terminology of paranoid and reparative to critical theory, my argument here is inevitably connected to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's argument against paranoid and for reparative reading practices in the realm of queer-affect theory. In this chapter, however, I focus directly on Klein's original texts and psychoanalytic framework, which have been viewed as absent from Sedgwick's work (Lewis; Stacey; Wiegman). In Chapter 2, where I turn to Klein's concept of reparation, I address the intersections of my project with Sedgwick's work explicitly.



and security and thus enforce a mode of making sense or meaning as a way to help the ego overcome anxiety through the celebration of autonomy and control and the denigration of dependence or need. Yet, such defences leave the ego weakened and impoverished due to an incessant cycle of splitting wherein projection leads to introjection then back to projection and so forth, leaving anxiety unresolved as one's fear of disintegration continues to persecute because it is never witnessed to fruition (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 11).

For my argument, therefore, the paranoid-schizoid position frames an ontological state of being that produces a particularly anxious and thus paranoid epistemological narration or approach to meaning-making. This state of being relies on the projection of persecutory anxiety, which manifests in the persistent fear of both anthropocentric practices and its dangerous consequences. In turn, one introjects the idealized good object – the possibility of a world wherein the human is decentered, as exemplified through OOO and NM's turn to broader concepts like objects or matter as their central organizing principle. Through the process of splitting, then, I illustrate below how the posthumanities, at least foundationally, construct a clear and precise division between their idealized desires and oppositional drive, a lens that connotes what is good and bad, loved and hated. Towards the hated and dangerous anthropocentric theories or realities, OOO and NM inflict aggression through their insistence on the neutrality of their abstracted and reoriented frameworks that need not acknowledge the human therein. As I illustrate below, OOO and NM respond to this feeling of persecution by the human *as well as* the guilt of being always already a human persecutor by presenting neutralized abstractions wherein the human is just an object among objects, just another material, agential being among others. Further, through the projection of the bad, the hated anthropocentric discourses are emphasized as part of external reality and thus isolatable from one's own internal reality, from influencing the theorization of a posthuman framework (from a human perspective). In Klein's terms, this effect is scotomization, the denial of psychic reality and its human impressions (*Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 262), which, here, manifests within both the theorizing and content of OOO and NM's propositions. Such paranoid-schizoid denial is the result of the desire for omnipotence over the persecutory situation, as reflected in the posthumanist assertions, at least foundationally, of autonomous control and comprehensive knowledge by prescribing the purportedly *right* framework for reorienting our approach to the diagnosed anthropocentric situation. Therefore, I

seek to illustrate how these methodological bases of OOO and NM reflect, in part, the phantastically distorted reality of the paranoid-schizoid position.

My alignment between Klein's paranoid-schizoid position and the foundational position of OOO and NM fits specifically with their mutual reliance on the logic of reason and its Enlightenment subject. For instance, though OOO's method of speculation was intended to expose the inherent limitations of "the powers of pure reason" and reject the "self-enclosed Cartesian subject" (Bryant, Srnicek, and Harman 3), speculation in fact lays "at the heart of Western rationality...an extension of the patriarchal Symbolic" (Kolozova 12). Not only has the "speculative turn" posed provocations that have already been articulated in feminist philosophy, but feminist work has also already critiqued the subject-object binary for its patriarchal nature (Kolozova 13-14). OOO's succession story – not dissimilar from the psychoanalytic tradition prior to Klein<sup>6</sup> – enacts a patriarchal reductionism "both for its casual and apparently unwitting embrace of patrilineation,<sup>7</sup> but also, and more incisively, for the distortions it relies on to produce such a clean line of descent" (Sheldon 203). The speculative turn is shown to be in fact a speculative *return*, wherein OOO, as part of the sub-field of speculative realism (SR), reproduces dualism, absolutes, and a-historicity through asserting the possibility of a pure undisturbed reality that can overcome situated positionalities and gain neutral direct access to a realm where feminists have already been (Åsberg, Thiele, and van der Tuin 162-163). As a result, despite OOO's premise on a rejection of correlationism, a rejection of the Enlightenment subject's correlation of knowledge to its a priori human categories, "the subject of the speculative mind mirrors the object and posits it as the real instead of the real" (Kolozova 13). OOO is accused of constructing its own "macro-imperialism" of calculation and instrumentality because of its emphatically reactionary approach to the anthropocentric philosophical canon (Avanessian and Malik 2; 6). Consequently, OOO is critiqued for resuscitating capital T truth in its assertion of ontologically "correct" master theories (4) that "profess completeness and suggest neutrality"

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<sup>6</sup> Klein is widely celebrated for her feminist contribution to psychoanalysis through her recognition of the role of the caregiver in development, which is, of course, historically gendered and counters Freud's focus on the father, male lineage vis-à-vis the Oedipus complex, as well as the constitutional lack of those assigned female at birth through the concept of penis envy. Klein was also oft-overlooked within the broader use of psychoanalysis for critical inquiry, in comparison, for instance, to her male counterparts, such as Lacan (Alford; Allen; S. Todd).

<sup>7</sup> For instance, Timothy Morton co-opts Karen Barad's work across his writing – in "Here Comes Everything" (2011), *Hyperobjects* (2013), and *Realist Magic* (2013), Morton presents quantum physics and specifically Neils Bohr as a rich realm to excavate for OOO, completely disregarding Barad's canonical turn to these fields in *Meeting the Universe Halfway* (2007). Morton only situates his project within feminist scholarship and Barad's foundational work in "Treating Objects Like Women" (2016), a text that explicitly addresses identity politics.

(Behar, “An Introduction to OOF” 19). And likewise, OOO’s tone “often appears somewhat too elated” by its purportedly unique and radical “discovery” of a world of objects that can provide a “sense of liberation from the shackles of subjectivity” (Behar, “An Introduction to OOF” 5).

Like OOO, NM similarly asserts a reactionary and purportedly new stance that proposes a turn to science and the study of matter as a way to disrupt the correlationist anthropocentrism of mainstream metaphysics and its ruling dichotomous logic of Cartesian dualism (Bruining 158, 166; Dolphijn and van der Tuin 90, 97). NM’s oppositional fervour is embedded in its own purported and expansive radicality – that it “traverses and thereby rewrites thinking *as a whole*, leaving nothing untouched, redirecting every possible idea according to its new sense of orientation” (Dolphijn and van der Tuin 13). This radicality is accomplished through neutralizing and essentializing the sciences, by rendering matter as a priori and thus “transhistorical, transcendent, and universal” (Bruining 154) as well as defending a field – the sciences – that has already been lauded with extensive valorization both within the academic institution and the public sphere (Ahmed 32). As a field purportedly fueled by reason and objectivity, the presentation of contemporary scientific research by NM as an imperative cure resuscitates the false idea of “the impartial scientist...implying that scientists can willfully choose to approach matter from a cultural perspective, a non-cultural perspective, or a combination of these perspectives” (Bruining 163). NM forms an oppositional logic that reinforces a discourse that is “always-already established and decided” (155), forming a “differentiating (and hierarchizing) rhetoric of moralization” (Bruining 156) that, like OOO, implicitly renders one position as right and the other as wrong.<sup>8</sup> As Sullivan explicitly notes, NM’s intervention “functions in and through the rearticulation of a culture/matter split, and, by association, the (constitutive) appropriation of both the (bad) feminist other and the (good) nonhuman other” (310), a division premised on their designation and critique of anthropocentric feminist discourse. In this way, NM’s scientific approach “often bears a note of sincerity, of reverence for something that is, in some way, yet pure” (Behar, “An Introduction to OOF” 14). Both fields, as foundations of the

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<sup>8</sup> Notably, I do not, in turn, claim that Klein’s framework is distinctly correct or right but rather offers a strikingly resonant and insightful perspective for the conditions of the Anthropocene, especially as characterized by posthumanist theorizing. As I illustrate in Chapter 3, Kleinian reparation as a “matter of care” vis-à-vis María Puig de la Bellacasa is not about being “on the right side” – rather, “it can be about a speculative commitment to think about how things could be different if they generated care” (60). And Behar, who explicitly builds on Puig’s work, argues that “only in willingness to be all kinds of wrong can we arrive at being in the right, in the ethical sense” (“An Introduction to OOF” 18).

posthumanities, construct a split narration of good and bad, loved and hated, a paranoid imposition of omnipotent control, that seeks their phantasy of a pure and true reality.<sup>9</sup>

Klein's paranoid-schizoid position is in fact understood as her framework's origin for instrumental reason – the Enlightenment subject experiences a stuckness in this early position (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 137-138). Instrumental reason's formation of meaning reflects a paranoid-schizoid epistemology as it tends “to force reality into prefabricated categories”, failing to accommodate “all we could about the world because we force it into a framework determined by our phantasies and needs, giving the world less of an opportunity to modify these phantasies” (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 149). In this way, our desire to know and make meaning, our epistemophilic instinct that forms the basis of Klein's framework, is driven in the paranoid-schizoid position by “categories associated with ownership, possession, appropriation, manipulation, and control” (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 151). As a logic of reason, then, paranoid anxiety adheres to a far more severe “symbolic equation” (150) that mimics “the most rigid, aggressive, and fragmented aspects of nature itself in order to control it” (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 137), in order to control nature and the world around us. Consequently, “human nature becomes a second nature, a virtual copy of what we have projected onto nature” (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 151).

The significance of this paranoid-schizoid disposition on narration and, in turn, the centrality of human anxiety within storytelling (even within theory as a form of storytelling) is clear through a Kleinian reading of foundational structure of the museum, an institution premised on what Klein calls the epistemophilic impulse.<sup>10</sup> In Tony Bennett's seminal text on *The Birth of the Museum* (1995), the museum is tethered to the Enlightenment subject as a tool for liberal education. While originating as exclusive royal collections or cabinets of curiosity, the museum gained a form of *publicness* in the aftermath of the French Revolution when the Louvre was seized in the name of *the people*, i.e., the working class (Bennett, *Museums, Power, Knowledge* 4). This newly public museum in the 19<sup>th</sup> century deployed an accumulation of sovereign,

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<sup>9</sup> It is also notable that psychoanalysis is a field plagued by a history of being labelled as a pseudo-science, while also providing analytical insights into the nature of developmental and affective impacts on the construction of social, political, and cultural structures. The dancing of psychoanalysis along a blurred and, in fact, speculative line between truth and narration marks it, I believe, as a particularly suitable lens for my project here.

<sup>10</sup> See Ritchie (2021) for a more substantive Kleinian reading of the public museum.

governmental, and disciplinary power dynamics through what Bennett famously terms the “exhibitionary complex” (1995; 2015; 2017). That is, museums became “instruments for acting on and shaping the civic attributes of their newly extended publics” (Bennett, *Museums, Power, Knowledge* 19). I posit this complex as a paranoid-schizoid defence by the museum’s stakeholders against the perceived threat to ownership and control over its collections and histories from these “newly enfranchised democratic citizenries” (Bennett, *Museums, Power, Knowledge* 181). In other words, the public museum emerged originally through a projective manifestation of persecutory fear, of the potential destruction of the museum as the loved and good object. In turn, the museum is situated as offering its alleged *goodness* to its new public in a way that seeks to protect the museum’s curated sense of reality. That is, within the stakeholders’ split internal reality that separates good and bad, loved and hated, the museum becomes a tool that maintains this phantasy in external reality, providing a sense of security through idealization and denial. The museum is, simply, an instrumental tool for a particular reality.

Such omnipotence affects the museum’s curatorial narratives – its possession and interpretation of its objects across nature-culture, constructing what Alford explains as the forcing of reality into prefabricated categories as determined by our human needs and desires. As Bennett describes, museological practice enacts “a totalizing order of things, forms of life, and peoples” (*Museums, Power, Knowledge* 6). As a result, the museum’s main significance emerged as “allowing for organic life to be conceived and represented as a temporally ordered succession of different forms of life” (Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* 77), a goal that bears resemblance to the paranoid *posthumanist* reorganization of life – as objects or matter – across OOO and NM. Such paranoid narration consolidates nature-culture across the sciences and humanities in order to form a “universal time” that “links together the stories of the earth’s formation, of the development of life on earth, of the evolution of human life out of animal life and its development from ‘primitive’ to ‘civilized’ forms, into a single narrative which posits modern man (white, male and middle class...) as the outcome and, in some cases, *telos* of these processes” (Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* 39). In fact, Bennett explicitly describes this “regime of representation” as “the manifestation of a specific form of epistemic desire” (*The Birth of the Museum* 40) – a desire that, to me, resembles a paranoid-schizoid epistemology, a patrilineation that is embedded in imperialist and colonial histories. And, in the original conception of the public museum, the desires of its stakeholders to know and make meaning is

deployed through its newly public architectural space that enlists its public into a new practice of “show and tell” (Bennett, “Thinking (with) Museums” 4), a practice that reflects the paranoid-schizoid attachment to omnipotence, idealization and denial, in the face of persecutory fear.

As a result, the meaning-making from the paranoid-schizoid position – as illustrated through the so-called *old* museology of the foundational public museum – highlights the ways in which human anxieties play a role in storytelling and constructs very real and visceral understandings of reality, ones that have material influence and consequence. Such control and imposition of meaning emerges in OOO’s quite literal application of a new ontological equation for Harman’s “theory of everything,” “a philosophy to tell us about the features that belong to everything” (*Object-Oriented Ontology* 55), wherein reality is simplified into the symbolic structure of a fourfold that contains real and sensual objects with real and sensual qualities (Harman, *Quadruple Object* 95). And, in NM, since “science is usually conceived as the epitome of instrumental reason” (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 149), its neutral celebration of scientific knowledge resuscitates the Enlightenment subject.

Evidently, Klein’s psychoanalytic framework and her conception of the paranoid-schizoid position resonates with the broader critiques of the grounding principles and methodology of both OOO and NM. Despite their attempt to shed subjectivity and its damaging legacy of human exceptionalism, claims for an objective reality by both OOO and NM reproduce the same domineering and anthropocentric logic of reason that they both sought to move beyond – their commitment to “a specific *order of rationality*” and maintenance of “the Enlightenment subject’s claims to mastery, autonomy, and dominance” (Jackson 671), their “curious return of the god-trick”, “the modern god-trick of relativism *and* universalism (transcendence)” (Åsberg, Thiele, and van der Tuin 164). As Rebekah Sheldon describes, OOO and NM’s mutual “militating against the excesses of correlationism” reproduces the classic philosophical binary of form/matter and thus restages structural privileges to the affiliated yet abstracted antinomies therein (196). In their opposition, OOO and NM reconstruct a binary between masculinist abstraction and universalization and the prescriptive and corrective feminist response as located and embodied (Hinton, “Situated Knowledges” 106). Consequently, this resuscitation of the autonomous, omnipotent subject and its logic of reason cause both OOO and NM to overlook the dynamicized space “in which” and “from which” they are both contained (207) and thus the question “of *the space* that holds them both” (Sheldon 209; italics added), the space that blurs

their division and categorical difference. OOO and NM both assert an omnipotent opposition to anthropocentric correlationism *and* a paranoid rejection of each other despite their similar fight to be posthuman. That is, OOO and NM deploy the reductive foundational gesture of simplifying and homogenizing the theoretical position of the other (Bruining 154).

Through a Kleinian lens, this space, I believe, contains the abstraction and neutralization deployed by the omnipotent desire for a reasoned logic, for a way to make sense of and secure solace in the face of anthropocentric crisis, the driving motivation for asserting a reorientation of our understanding to provide posthuman capacities. Both are driven by a perceived need to repair the damaging effects embodied in the other, in addition to that of anthropocentric crisis, which is most obviously demonstrated in Harman's axioms of immaterialism that are constructed in direct contrast to NM's axioms of materialism (*Immaterialism* 15-16). OOO and NM's reactionary relationship to each other not only reflects a sense of mutual persecution that encourages the paranoid splitting between good and bad but also defends against the melancholia of potential failure, constructing a theory that provides a retreat from crisis and thus defends against the demand of accountability. Even though OOO and NM both narrate their logic or reorientation through "the radically different ways in which these two fields treat human knowledge systems," a different narration of "the *causal effects*" considered "assignable to knowledge-making practices" (Sheldon 195), I believe their approaches are driven by the same desire – the driving desire of the subject in Kleinian thought for a sense of security, which, in other words, is a defence against the fear of disintegration, the fear of ecological crisis, human extinction, or more minorly a destruction of the way of life as it is known now. Such fear facilitates a paranoid relation and its defences of splitting, omnipotence, idealization, and denial, which consequently defend against the depressive position and the subsequent capacity for non-manic forms of reparation – what in Chapter 2 I explore as a more generative relational capacity. I explore next this driving desire for security through the resonances between Klein's psychoanalytic framework and the founding theoretical propositions by and subsequent intersectional critiques of the posthumanities and, specifically, within the tension between OOO and NM.

### *The Desire to be Posthuman as a Manic State of Reparation*

The drive for security and solace in theorizing the *right* framework that *truly* decenters the human is, through a Kleinian lens, a reflection of not merely paranoid anxiety in the

posthumanities – a defence against persecution and dependence – but also a state of manic reparation, a defence against the depressive position and its assertion of limits and loss. In this way, the paranoid maintenance of this implicit logic of reason aligns with Klein’s framework of epistemophilic development as a whole. In addition to seeking solace from the paranoid-schizoid position, this manic defence guards against the melancholia of the depressive position<sup>11</sup> – of mourning the loss of the idealized good object, of the possibility of truly theorizing a posthuman perspective or framework for being and/or knowing from the human position – by asserting its capacity to repair the Anthropocene. This is repeatedly exemplified in OOO and NM’s attempt to simply erase the human and its complex dynamicism by believing in the possibility of neutral and insightful objectification and scientific analysis, an abstraction and narration deemed necessary for gaining a sense of solution or repair in the face of crisis, in the face of dissolution or disintegration.

As described by Klein, manic states allow the ego to seek “refuge not only from melancholia but also from a paranoiac condition” (*Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 277). While paranoid anxiety is characterized by the feeling of persecution and the defence of splitting, depressive anxiety leads to melancholia over the perceived loss of the loved object and the guilt of playing a violent devouring role therein (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 266). As a state that wards off both forms of anxiety then, manic defences seek “to build up omnipotent and violent phantasies, partly for the purpose of controlling and mastering the ‘bad’, dangerous objects, partly in order to save and restore the loved ones” (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 349). The dual strategies of omnipotence and denial therefore continues to assert control and mastery but also begins to disparage and express contempt for the object, allowing for a claim to independence from one’s objects, both good and bad (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 277-278). In mania, one protects oneself and one’s objects from the dangers of disintegration (278), constructing a sense of security to defend against unpredictable, unknowable, or uncontrollable factors – in other words, against characteristics of crisis. Manic reparation is the manic fantasy of reparation through projective idealizations (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 349). Reparation emerges from “the ego’s capacity to integrate itself and to synthesize the contrasting

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<sup>11</sup> I discuss Klein’s depressive position more comprehensively in Chapter 2. As noted above, though, the depressive position is the second position along Klein’s pendulum of development and a necessary experience for making non-manic forms of reparation possible. In this chapter, I focus on manic forms of reparation.



aspects of the object” (36), from a “greater tolerance towards one’s own limitations” and, subsequently, “a clearer perception of internal and external reality” (232) that embodies a “more realistic attitude towards frustration” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 76). In manic form, then, reparation reflects an inadequate means to deal with the guilt and anxiety of depressive anxiety, which turns into an obsessional defence, a defence against reparation’s failure (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 350-351). Klein describes manic reparation as taking on the form of “triumphing” wherein the subject resuscitates its persecutory inner world and disturbs the possibility of reparation by triumphing over its objects and necessarily implying their wish to triumph in return, a reproduction of persecutory anxiety and distrust (*Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 352).

Manic reparation is unmistakably a seductive defence mechanism. Referred to as “mock” reparation at times, manic reparation intervenes into an anxiety of helplessness by disrupting the feelings of losing control over our (collective) lives (94-95) and then leading to a narcissistic retreat into “phantasies of being able to repair the damaged object magically...phantasies of total independence and autonomy often coupled with phantasies of omnipotence” (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 92). That is, it insists on the capacity to act with rational omnipotence. This performance of reparation tends to be “grandiose, imagining that all losses can be readily repaired, or they didn’t really happen” (Alford, “Groups Can Hardly Mourn” 3), a performance pervasively present in the grand claims of OOO and NM’s purportedly radical interventions.

For the posthumanities, then, because its founding constituents seek a sense of security in the face of potential disintegration, I argue that manic reparation manifests as a defence against the fear of not being able to preserve the good, idealized object (our world) through decentering the bad denied object (the human, our selves). And yet, the fear that drives this potential loss – a loss of ourselves, a lack of our very own preservation – is our human entanglement with the good object, the entanglement of the bad object with the good. In a manic state, the guilt of being of consequence, of being destructive, and thus not being able to simply decenter ourselves as human, becomes ungrivable. Rather, the foundational drive of the posthumanities manically seeks to triumph over through an idealized potential for repair as opposed to mourning its perceived sense of loss, a loss of the potentially pure and logical solution to anthropocentric crisis. In fact, the methodology of the posthumanities is specifically identified as producing a

“triumphalism of negative critique and dismissal that can too easily motor and justify” (Kirby ix). In fighting this fear of disintegration, then, the foundational assertions of the posthumanities narrate a phantasy of reparation wherein one’s own importance can be denied, disparaging the insights of anthropocentric work like psychoanalysis that provide insight into the human contribution or effect on the processes of the Anthropocene.

The effect of manic reparation on narrative and its attachments to repair are visible within what Beverly Butler terms curative museology. Manic reparation manifests, I believe, in *new* museology’s reliance on the same “motifs of ‘heritage as cure’” that *old* museology implemented in its “Euro-Western (and distinctly colonial) grand narratives” (Butler 355). In many ways, the foundational claims of OOO and NM present their own variations of a grand narrative that seeks a sense of security for some and not others – a manic necessity that I illustrate through my analysis below of the critical intersectional interrogations of the foundational arguments and methodologies of first OOO and then NM through feminist, anti-racist, and decolonial lenses. New museology reflects the desire “to expose, exhibit, or reveal the exhibitionary complex” (50) through a postcolonial and postmodern self-reflexivity and transparency that emerged in the 1990s turn to diversity and inclusivity frameworks (Message, *New Museums* 35-37). Yet, critical museologists continue to interrogate the ways museums are merely engaging in the “rearticulation of the relations between a particular set of knowledges and the apparatuses of the exhibitionary complex” (Bennett, “Thinking (with) Museums” 11). This forms what Butler describes as the sheltering of “elite colonizing Western-centric rhetorics within the metaphorical mega-project mantra of ‘culture as cure’” (361-362) or what Message describes as the reconfiguring of the museum’s show-and-tell from “nineteenth-century discourses of national unity, class reform, and imperialism to twenty-first-century discourses of multiculturalism” (13), i.e., the “the regulation of racial otherness” (*New Museums* 14).

In other words, there are material and ethical consequences to narration, wherein intersectional complexity is consolidated into a purportedly neutral rhetoric. The museum’s stakeholders are, here, defending against the threat of disintegration, the potential loss of their loved museum in the face of its widespread critique as a patriarchal, colonial, and imperialist institution, as well as the guilt over complicity in such histories of violent acquisition and representation. Posthumanism represents a similar approach, wherein, in response to the shortcoming of the humanities, there is an “incessant demand” for the narrative to be

“deconstructed and reconstructed so as to achieve a greater degree of representational adequacy in relation to the norms of universality” (Bennett, “Thinking (with) Museums” 7). Yet, as I illustrate below, this claim for the (manic) repair of the Anthropocene “primarily appears to be the effect of language – and a language that is often paradoxically disconnected from any direct reference to the objects and stories that it pertains to represent or speak about” (Message, *New Museums* 51). That is, manic reparative storytelling – as reflected in OOO and NM below – maintains what, in the public museum, is described as an “insatiable discourse of reform” (Bennett, “Thinking (with) Museums” 7). I show next how this deployment of narrative – as exemplified in museology as a concrete and materializing discourse in the public sphere – illustrates how human anxieties, desires, and fears influence the story told and the impact it can have, both on the perception of reality and the potential for engagement, such as consciousness-raising and activism.

### *OOO in a Manic State of Reparation*

OOO exemplifies this reparative desire in part through purportedly neutral abstractions that assert the possibility of reorienting anthropocentric reality, a narrative of salvation. For instance, through Katherine Behar’s critique of OOO and subsequent proposal for an “object-oriented feminism (OOF)”, I identify OOO’s manic reparation within its reliance on objectification, utilitarianism, and instrumentalization. At its foundation, OOO purportedly rejects the subject for objects, viewing subjects as objects among objects – yet, because the subject in OOO is “primarily a white, male, hetero, abled, rational heir to Enlightenment humanism,” a rejection of “subjecthood, as in culturally and legally viable personhood” only proceeds for some human-objects (Behar, “An Introduction to OOF” 7). Consequently, to reject subjecthood presumes you had it in the first place, marking objecthood as “something to be questioned not prized” (Behar, “An Introduction to OOF” 7). Harman’s claim for “the relative independence of objects from their constituent pieces or histories” (*Immaterialism* 19), a so-called “non-contingent constitution” (Kolozova 12), is rather a perpetuation of a long tradition of abstraction and silencing (Behar, “An Introduction to OOF” 21). OOO naturalizes these universalizing and generalist practices of white, male, and Western philosophical traditions by refusing to acknowledge the intersectional complexity of the human, reproducing instead their “fixed, ethnocentric standards of reason” and, thus, “the putatively ‘civilizing’ missions of

Western European colonialism” (Avanessian and Malik 6). After all, “too many humans are well-aware of being objects, without finding cause to celebrate in that reality” (Behar, “An Introduction to OOF” 5). Rather than “risk leaving the Western liberal human intact, making the ‘human’ in ‘post-human’ stand in for all of ‘us’” (Ravenscroft 354), OOF emphasizes the fraughtness of being objects – how power articulates itself in every arrangement of objects (Behar, “An Introduction to OOF” 19).

OOO attempts to grapple with this distribution of power through yet another abstraction – that is, Harman seeks a “flat ontology,” “an ontology that *initially* treats all objects in the same way, rather than assuming in advance that different types of objects require completely different ontologies” (*Object-Oriented Ontology* 54). However, in his most recent consolidation of his framework in 2018, Harman asserts that OOO “rejects all claims to political knowledge” (145-146) – it is not sympathetic to radical politics or “any form of human-centered politics” (*Object-Oriented Ontology* 146). Likewise, Levi Bryant seeks “a democracy of objects” through OOO, which opposes the purported “monarchy of the human” (39), reflecting an ontological egalitarianism that seeks a “subjectless object,” “an object for-itself that is not an object for the gaze of a subject, representation, or a cultural discourse” (*The Democracy of Objects* 19). By refusing any conception of politics that has “too much to do with human beings and too little to do with everything else” (Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology* 151), OOO clearly believes in its ability to completely split objects from the subject (or subjective influence), suggesting their ability to save objects from the political baggage of subjectivity and idealizing objectivity as good. And, since the primary four OOO philosophers are four white men (Behar, “An Introduction to OOF” 6; Kolozova 13; Taylor 205), their self-proclaimed radicality that is not matched by a radical politics becomes a *choice* that simply reflects, according to Behar, their position of privilege (“An Introduction to OOF” 6).<sup>12</sup> In celebrating democracy as flat, OOO overlooks the power relations inherent in democratic structures – “notions of democracy are complicated by uneven power everywhere that objects are systematized into arrangements” (Behar, “An Introduction to OOF” 18). In this way, OOO performs manic reparation through narrating “a happy-go-lucky flat, or flattening, ontology” that exists “in a vacuum or a totality” (Hinton and van der Tuin 6) – an exemplary retreat from reality and defence against the melancholia of the complexity of power relations.

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<sup>12</sup> It has also been noted that there is a lack of female authors in SR and OOO (Behar; Kolozova; O’Rourke).

Consequently, OOO leaves the intersectional power differentials intact within its framework while simultaneously implementing language that is embedded in histories of objectification, instrumentalization, and fetishization. In other words, OOO reflects a manic reparation in its attempt to disavow the substantive importance of such rhetoric by continually asserting a paranoid omnipotence through its ability to articulate a lens of knowability and thus claim independence from both the good and bad object. For instance, emerging in Harman's foundational articulation of OOO through "tool-being", the "present-to-hand" are broken tools or, in Kleinian terms, bad objects that are fetishized in their description as they escape human intention; they "confront their masters, hinting at the depths of their full, glorious, uncolonizable strangeness" (Behar, "The Other Woman" 33). Good objects, on the other hand, are "a world of exploitation, of things ready-at-hand," which is ultimately "the world to which women, people of color, and the poor have been assigned under patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism throughout history" (Behar, "An Introduction to OOF" 7). Good objects, therefore, make up the idealized world for the Enlightenment subject, a subject persecuted by that which is not knowable or controllable through a logic of reason. The unknowable "bad" likewise becomes knowable in OOO through "allure" and "withdrawal", a reproduction of essentialized feminine traits as objects of availability as either flirtatious or frigid (Behar, "The Other Woman" 28). In fact, Bryant and Morton both celebrate withdrawal explicitly as a feminine trait (Morton, "Here Comes Everything" 176) that necessitates its "groping, grasping, handling, and turning" (Morton, "All Objects are Deviant" 68).

Evidently, OOO constructs "economies of access and having," wherein objects are there "to be *had*" (28), are knowable or controllable as "reticent, 'withdrawn' objects" that can be "coaxed into 'connection' in order to fertilize change or 'vicarious' incidents" (Behar, "The Other Woman" 30). In this way, OOO denies the possibility of "a thing capable of reworking the sexualized norms of abjection" (Taylor 210), such as the femme fatale's escape of the male gaze, by instead fetishizing a "capacity to surprise when it refuses to be had" (Behar, "The Other Woman" 37), a form of instrumentalizing bad or withdrawn objects "irrespective of their utility or unusability" (Behar, "An Introduction to OOF" 23), a tactic described as an "'assaultive' process of objectification" (Aristarkhova 26). Not only is OOO "overflowing with unacknowledged feminine metaphors (and patriarchal baggage)" (Behar, "The Other Woman" 36), but OOO additionally seeks to recuperate the concepts of essence and essentialism. Despite

the long history of critique of essentialist ideas, Morton argues that “treating objects like women” enables women and objects alike to be more than “simply the sum of their relations or instantiations of a process” (“Treating Objects like Women” 58). Harman likewise claims that the withdrawal of essence from human knowability enables a break with the possibility of oppression by rendering reality as not for someone through inaccessibility (“The Well-Wrought Broken Hammer” 188). Yet, this omnipotent denial is clearly complicated by the continual use of patriarchal and colonial language of the Enlightenment subject, language that provides the comfort of familiarity and knowability to a specific human subject.

This tactic continues extensively throughout OOO, including descriptions, such as Morton’s “weird essentialism” (wherein weirdness becomes sexy (Behar, “The Other Woman” 28)); Morton’s declaration that “all objects are deviant” (a celebration of deviancy, which has historically targeted queer and/or racialized folks); Morton’s “dark ecologies” (which returns “‘darkness’ to the question of racism” (Behar, “An Introduction to OOF” 23) in the context of necropolitics); Morton’s description of object-to-object relations as “shadowy, queer” (“Here Comes Everything” 173); the “strange stranger” (Bryant, *Democracy of Objects* 167; Morton, “Here Comes Everything” 165); Harman’s “guerilla metaphysics” (which fetishizes violent warfare); Harman’s depiction of “a gold rush of further speculations, a Wild West of philosophy” (*Guerilla Metaphysics* 95). Such phantastically-distorted narration that appropriates politically imbued language while simultaneously claiming benign impact clearly reflects the white male colonial privilege of the logic of reason, a logic that soothes anxiety over the melancholia of loss and denies persecution, asserting omnipotent power over dependence on the good or bad objects.<sup>13</sup> While still splitting in response to persecutory anxiety in relation to the “bad” and unknowable object, manic reparation assures through the construction of a fixed and absolute knowability – and, most importantly, in anthropocentric rhetoric arguably too familiar to and knowable in the dialectics of power and privilege, tethering OOO to “capitalist systems of value generation, labor, and utilitarian possession” (38) and thus “biopolitical histories of use,

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<sup>13</sup> Language notably plays an important role in psychoanalysis as well, as exemplified by its more colloquial positioning as “the talking cure”. The in-motion articulation of free association, dream analysis, and (counter-)transference is critical to Freud’s foundational conception of psychoanalysis, which is in turn present in Klein’s study of symbol formation. Lacan most prominently positioned language as part of – though not merely equated to – the Symbolic order and argued that the unconscious is itself like a language. The formulation of linguistic articulations between the analyst and analysand are very much embedded in developmental disposition and, thus, embedded in or tethered to anxiety, both its induction and prevention.

exploitation, and resistance” (Behar, “The Other Woman” 33), wherein such securitization of knowability provides solace for those with greater access to variations of security. Harman consolidates these assertions within a “theory of everything”, enacting a paranoid combination of denial (of succession, of politicization) and idealization (of innovation, of intervention) that asserts a reparative retreat into an omnipotent phantasy of security and solace wherein one has effectively defended against disintegration. OOO’s emancipatory and thus reparative claims appear as “a bad joke” (Gržinić 111), wherein declarations that “girls are indeed welcome” (172) are followed with confusion over how to construct an object-oriented feminism (O’Rourke 183).<sup>14</sup>

### *NM in a Manic State of Reparation*

NM is likewise in state of manic reparation – defending against both paranoid anxiety through omnipotence and the melancholia of depressive anxiety through denial and idealization – through its foundational turn to the Sciences as an already available and developed lens of repair for this anthropocentric moment. In part, NM defends against OOO’s categorical critique of its contributions – not only does OOO’s assimilation of “feminist theories of matter with cultural construction elide the way that matter functioned as an internal critique of cultural construction,” but also this assimilation situates “matter as the reverse side of cultural construction through the auspices of the correlationist’s ‘co-’” (Sheldon 204). The foundational theorists in NM routinely present themselves as intervening into feminism, due to its reliance on the anti-biological or social constructionist interpretations (24), reflecting a “habitual anxiety that feminism and poststructuralism have reduced ‘everything’ to language and culture” (Ahmed 25). This premise on rejection performs what Sara Ahmed describes as a forgetting of feminist science work, arguing instead in defense of a field of authority – the sciences – and maintaining a *split* worldview, a reproduction of the mind/matter binary (27; 32; 34). In fact, these accusations by Ahmed triggered a schism within NM itself (Ahmed; Hinton, “The Quantum Dance” 173; van der Tuin, “Feminist New Materialisms” 272; “Neo/New Materialism” 278), an internal splitting that perpetuates a retreat from reality through the delineation between right or wrong, good or

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<sup>14</sup> For more information, see Behar’s account of “ontological slut shaming” at the first OOO conference in 2010 (“An Introduction to OOF” 1), as well as O’Rourke’s account of an online blog debate over OOO’s connection to queer theory, also in 2010 (172).

bad. NM's constitutive gesture, therefore, constructs, like OOO, a patriarchal reductionism – it involves idealization through a “turn to the voice of authority (in the guise of science or male philosophers) in order to see clearly” (308) in addition to denial through accepting that poststructural feminist work was willfully blind to the “all-important truths” that scientists are able to see (Sullivan 301-302). NM tells “a particular story of feminist theory,” a story that repeats and cements an exclusionary narrative in order to assure its claim to “new-ness” (Clare 60) – a retreat from grappling with the complexities of its claims.

This retreat into the Enlightenment subject and its logic of reason is exemplified through the assertion of science as a form of security and solace. And yet, this assertion far too easily – or, rather, omnipotently – denies the destructive colonial roots of science. Deboleena Roy and Banu Subramaniam's critical analysis of NM emphasizes how “Western scientific knowledge was not just a tool, mechanism, or logic, but developed alongside and was thus co-constituted with colonialism” (28). Science was – and continues to be – understood as a mode to designate the biological body with universalism and, yet, just as “there is no generic ‘universal woman,’ then there can also be no universal or generic ‘biological body’ or ‘matter’” (Roy and Subramaniam 28). Consequently, a retreat into the idealized possibility of being truly posthuman through the concept of materiality for NM, like the object for OOO, reproduces the implicit judgements of Western epistemologies and its Enlightenment subject – “thinking in terms of more-than-human entanglements might simply replace the idea of an undifferentiated humanity with another abstract universal” (Schulz 130). Not only does this drive the overlooking of its patriarchal foundations but this logic also too easily justifies NM's “apparent reluctance to engage race and ethnicity” (Lòpez 373) – the “*whiteness* of (new) feminist (materialist) *theory*” (Hinton and Liu 134) – and its embeddedness in colonialism, a critique lauded against NM and OOO extensively (Hinton, Mehrabi, and Barla; Huang; Jackson; Jolly and Fyfe; Lòpez; Shomura; Ravenscroft; Roy and Subramaniam; Z. Todd; Tompkins).

Despite NM's attempt to decentre anthropocentrism through abstraction and belief in its discipline's so-called “anti-representationalism” (Dolphijn and van der Tuin 98), the posthumanities broadly overlook the critical differentiation between the human and the figure of Man. Zakiyyah Iman Jackson explains how “Man” is “a technology of slavery and colonialism that imposes its authority over ‘the universal’ through a racialized deployment of force” (670). By not addressing any complexity within the concept of the human, ontological work within



posthumanism reproduces a seamless and patrilineal reproduction of the Enlightenment subject of poststructuralism, wherein “the racial and colonial practice of silencing non-Western epistemic systems and philosophies” is prioritized over confronting the ways in which slavery and colonialism are inextricable from Enlightenment humanism nor any theorization premised on, even if decentering, *that* human (Jackson 681). That is, because “*some* humans have always been considered outside the realm of Society, and were thus perceived to be closer to an objectified and malleable Nature that is ready to be mastered, appropriated, and exploited” (131), “the historically instituted *fracture lines of inequality*...still pervade contemporary biosocial relations” due to “a long history of violence, racism and discrimination that is related to western industrialization and colonial appropriation” (Schulz 128). Or, put simply, by overlooking “the historical locatedness of its representations of materiality, its implicit critique of the subject may, in effect, inaugurate one” (Clare 67).

As a result, any claim about “how humans should be defined – what in fact constitutes the human – must be (arguably already is) kairotically bound,” bound by “the subject’s embeddedness in time, in a particular time, and its resilience in prevailing despite the times” (López 374). NM’s anti-representationalism functions as “a kind of ontology-centered hermeneutic [that] suppresses the question and problem of difference” (Tompkins n.p.). NM consistently represents despite its attempt to abstract – “in our epistemic economy, any attempt to bring the material back in, or to acknowledge the agency of matter, *always is a representation*, an act of a specific subject with a specific political commitment” (Meißner 51). Such an attempt by NM “to overcome representationalism leads to a ‘better’ representation” (Meißner 50), a continual desire to surmount its persecutory opposition and provide a sense of security and control. I argue that this evasion of its own politics of representation reflects, like OOO, a manic state of reparation, a denial of its dependence on both the good and the bad, on the entanglement between our capacity to theorize beyond and our pervasive human presence. NM’s disregard for the intersectional distribution of power and privilege within its assertion of being truly *post* the human is, therefore, a defence against paranoid anxiety, a manic desire for repair.

This manic reparative defence of NM is perhaps most explicitly represented in its denial of distinction, its rendering of distinction as negative, which mirrors OOO’s desire to “flatten” difference or the very material intersectional power relations of our world. Caroline Braummühl demonstrates how NM’s aim of transcending dualism fails to acknowledge the ethical and

political problematic of dualistic thinking – “its enmeshment *with relations of domination and exclusion*” (227). In collapsing such dichotomies, NM “does not necessarily rescue us from reproducing the hierarchical arrangement underpinning the opposition concerned” (231) and, rather, risks reproducing supremacist discourses by privileging either pole or avoiding the relation between (Braunmühl 228-229). This is, for instance, reflected in Karen Barad’s foundational NM proposal for “agential realism”, which devalues passivity for the sake of elevating matter as active. Such devaluation, Braunmühl argues, feminizes passivity according to the status quo of “hegemonic, male-supremacist discourse” and its celebration of activity (231). Instead, Braunmühl argues for the necessary differentiation between “a *hierarchical opposition* enmeshed in relations of domination and exclusion from a *distinction* which turns on a criterion unrelated to notions of an intrinsic superiority versus inferiority” (233). NM is, therefore, exposed here as not offering a reparative, let alone feminist, alternative to the anthropocentric lens through erasing dualism but rather reproduces a logic of evaluation based on worth (Braunmühl 233), an ideological and omnipotent distribution of value, such as good or bad, according to the reigning logic of reason.

This purportedly neutral flattening of distinction is, in fact, identified by Alyson Cole and Hanna Meißner as a resuscitation of capitalism’s already prevalent destabilization of the subject/object binary. As the dominant value system of Western societies, capitalism demands not only the occupation of “two subject positions (sometimes alternatively, at other times concurrently) as desiring subjects and/or docile objects,” but also for objects to be both “commodified as complete, autonomous entities, but in the process they somehow additionally assume a life (or subjectivity) ‘of their own’” (Cole 168). Like OOO and NM, then, “capitalism thrives on concurrently producing and erasing subjectivities” (168), on “the production of divisions” and “the dissolution of boundaries” (177), which alters “the ontological boundaries distinguishing subjects and objects, life and nonlife” (Cole 173). Consequently, Cole highlights how the transformative potential of NM is limited to its shared participation in a practice that enabled “capitalist destruction and dehumanization of all forms of life” (Cole 177). Furthermore, not only does this alignment with capitalism resonate with the paranoid logic of this foundational desire to be truly post human – they both rely on relations of competition, ownership, and utility (Meißner 53), tendencies that Klein describes as a manic defence of “triumphing” – but also Meißner emphasizes how the broader context of historical materialism accounts for the “socially

constituted limits that configure the possibilities of becoming,” while NM merely focuses on “the processes of becoming and the potentiality of their openness” (46). Building on the above concern for the dangers of sociopolitical erasure, then, Meißner asserts that “engagement with matter and material conditions should be seen as a specific desire of a specific historical subject” (5). The subject plays a critical “yet mostly not adequately acknowledged” role in NM’s desires: “it is the focus of hope that human-made problems can be solved by emancipatory action, and it is the focus of a critique of humanist presumptions that the world is shaped by human action” (Meißner 50). In other words, it is necessary to acknowledge and grapple with how the desire to be rid of the human, the bad object, exposes the deep care and concern over that very hated object.

As the driving concern and thus motivation for posthumanist theorizing, the Anthropocene emerges, according to Zoe Todd, as a critical narrative tool for telling a particular story (“Indigenizing the Anthropocene” 244). The Anthropocene falsely puts forward a questioning of “the material, epistemic and ontological fabric that ‘we’ have created,” which is easily folded into subsequent queries about how *we* will *transform* (Schulz 137). It overlooks the fact that there have always been many ways of being and knowing (Schulz 138). For instance, the posthumanities have failed to engage with Indigenous materialisms (Ravenscroft 356) and to “credit Indigenous thinkers for their millennia of engagement with sentient environments, with cosmologies that enmesh people into complex relationships between themselves and all relations, and with climates and atmospheres as important points of organization and action” (Z. Todd, “An Indigenous Feminist’s Take” 6-7). Such neglect reinvigorates the installation of the *white* Enlightenment subject as a sovereign authority (Ravenscroft 356-357) and the simultaneous continuation of denying Indigenous self-determination (Z. Todd, “An Indigenous Feminist’s Take” 10). The efforts of the posthumanities for the sake of the Anthropocene is, evidently, not a neutral cause – it perpetuates “underlying heteropatriarchal and white supremacist structures that shape its current configurations and conversations” (Z. Todd, “Indigenizing the Anthropocene” 247). The narration of anthropocentric crisis reflects uniquely human desires that vary across sociohistorical formations of difference.

### *The Kleinian Subject in the Anthropocene*

Through this examination of the manic reparative defences within OOO and NM through the lens of Kleinian psychoanalysis and specifically her conceptualization of the paranoid-schizoid position, I begin to illustrate here the unique utility of psychoanalysis for considering the impact of the human and its narration on the theorization of the posthumanities. While “strongly rooted in a liberal cultural and economic [sociohistorical and institutional] setting,” psychoanalysis counters the rigidities of reason by sustaining the “egalitarian force of an emphasis on human capacities for feeling” (Rustin, *The Good Society* 28). It deals with what constitutes the bounds of human rationality by serving as “a realistic check on the tendencies towards excessive rationalism and moralistic idealism” (Allen, “Are We Driven?” 312). Or, put more simply, psychoanalysis is claimed to be “the most sophisticated and systematic study of human irrationality” (Allen, “Are We Driven?” 312-313). In breaking with a liberal individual rights framework (Rustin, *The Good Society* 23) and providing an analysis of its paranoid character, Klein’s work uniquely exemplifies the ability of psychoanalysis to offer “an understanding of the developmental foundations and the continuing social preconditions of rationality” (Rustin, *Reason and Unreason* 113). As a result, my utilization of Kleinian psychoanalysis directly responds to Birgit M. Kaiser and Kathrin Thiele’s concern for “Returning (to) the Question of the Human” in their 2018 special issue of *PhiloSOPHIA*. Through Klein’s concept of manic reparation, I elucidate how hastily seeking to overcome or jump outside the human risks repeating the exact same system of human exceptionalism, “the risk of blindfolding onto-epistemological complicity and entanglement” in a way that fetishizes a “Man-less” posthuman (Kaiser and Thiele 6). By turning to Kleinian psychoanalysis, I demonstrate how the human still inflicts “a very specific form of agency” (Kaiser and Thiele 5).

Consequently, I understand Kleinian psychoanalysis as *humanizing* the drive and desires embedded in the theorizing of the posthumanities. Kleinian psychoanalysis – and specifically her paranoid-schizoid position and the defence of manic reparation – provide insight into the psychic life that drives the foundational demands and desires of OOO and NM. The human subject does not need to be centred to be simultaneously a necessary part of our *human* investigation and proposition for tackling anthropocentric crisis. In fact, critical interrogations of the posthumanities have more recently tended towards engaging the human component embedded therein. Stephanie Clare describes OOO and NM as theoretical fields whose “audience and

authors remain human” (67). Their development reflects, altogether, frameworks that Meißner believes inhere how “‘something’ is radically other, or *inaccessible*, in a particular way to or for a particular ‘someone’: to the subject committed to deconstructing philosophical oppositions of a logocentric economy from within” (49). And, I emphasize, the influence of this *someone* is critical to understanding the reparative gesture of the posthumanities. As Claire Colebrook describes, “when man is destroyed to yield a posthuman world it is the same world *minus humans*, a world of meaning, sociality and readability yet without any [explicit] sense of the disjunction, gap or limits of the human” (164). In turn, as Ashley Barnwell notes, the human need not be framed as a parasite interfering with some underlying natural balance of reality (35). In Kleinian terms, the human need not be the bad and hated object and the nonhuman or our environment as the good and loved. Rather, “human intentions – to acknowledge, appreciate, be modest, and so on” may become “what will ultimately *matter*” (Barnwell 36) – there are material consequences to our ontological and epistemological constructions. Through invoking Kleinian psychoanalysis, I engage “the very things that will complicate our project: we must include ourselves and our intellectual inheritance, with all its awkward and conflicting desires and the values that inform, and are informed by, our social acts of self-observation” (Barnwell 37). The psychic life of the (human) drive – its desires and defences – are our complicated inheritance that necessitates acknowledgement and exploration. At its core, psychoanalysis facilitates a form of self-awareness.

Such awareness is exactly what Cameron claims of posthuman museums practices – that they “raise[] questions of cognizance” (“The Liquid Museum” 353). And, specifically, Cameron argues that the rules of practice in old museology (and, I note, its re-packaging as *new*) must be reworked – that of “classification; the desire to represent the world; the objectification of things...and forms of authority associated with all these methods” (“The Liquid Museum” 353). In other words, a posthuman approach to museology must seek to “disrupt the stolid and solid imaginary of the modern museum and its hard, disciplinary, authoritative powers and reformatory agenda” (Cameron, “The Liquid Museum” 355). Klein’s articulation of manic reparation and its impact on epistemological narration, in turn, illuminates the dangers of “how and why newness itself is always being redefined, reinvented, or revitalized” (Message, *New Museums* 12). Despite OOO and NM’s overarching claim to inclusivity through what they perceive as a more comprehensive form of recognition for the humanities, they reflect a

“disinclination to deal with contentious or particularly politically provocative histories” (Message, “Museums and the Utility of Culture” 245). OOO and NM, in this way, contribute to the same sort of narratives present in what Message calls the “new museum-as-cultural centre,” which seeks to neutralize the political nature of museum work by advocating for broader cultural dialogue (Message, *New Museums* 198-199). In other words, there is a failed neutralization through purportedly new terminology, which reflects a manic reparative approach that separates “‘social responsibility’ from ‘political action’” (Wrightson 40).

Manic reparative tendencies, as reflected in the foundational arguments of OOO and NM, narrate what Butler calls the “redemptive formulas” (368) of curative museology. In other words, the storytelling in this posthumanist theorizing plays into the potential redemption of the human, into the omnipotent phantasy of a cure in the face of threat and crisis. The critical intersectional interrogations of OOO and NM through feminist, queer, critical race, and decolonial lenses illustrate how this curative approach the storytelling becomes either “aspirational models at best” or “artificial or cynical systems of regulation at worst” (Message, *New Museums* 37). Through my Kleinian lens, though, I contribute a way to ask: “who is being reformed...and to what end” (Message, *New Museums* 14), or more specifically “who or what is being cured? By whom, and with what intended and unintended outcomes?” (Butler 362). Museology, therefore, facilitates a bearing witness to the type of curated storytelling OOO and NM contribute to, to how human attachments – anxieties, desires, and defences – always impact the ways in which the threat of crisis are understood and, in turn, imply or incite response. If anything, curatorial work is a form of optics.

In turn, psychoanalytic inquiry provides clear insight into the very human construction of narration. Within posthumanist literature, the strongest resonance with my use of psychoanalysis is Peta Hinton and Xin Liu’s brief invocation of Homi Bhabha’s rereading of Frantz Fanon’s concept of the “abandonment neurotic” and its reliance on splitting (138). Hinton and Liu extend Fanon’s original psychoanalytic concept to the context of the posthumanities and the contemporary moment of anthropocentric crisis, emphasizing how “the neuroses of abandonment” in fact enact a “paranoid desire to occupy and possess” in addition to “reaching outward in the demand of an Other” (139). In this way, despite seeking abandonment of that which persecutes, there is a persistent impossibility of splitting from the persecutory bad object

(i.e. the human or the self), of full identification with the good object alone.<sup>15</sup> This identification is “never self-present or finally achievable, but its gravity is compulsively substantiated by continuous demand and desire, the subject and object of abandonment are simultaneously rendered im/possible—both available yet unavailable” (Hinton and Liu 139). According to Hinton and Liu, then, the posthumanities perform a “perverse ontology” because they enact “the paradoxical gesture of both abandoning yet refusing to abandon” (130), of seeking an erasure of anthropocentrism while refusing to grapple with being perpetually at stake, of never being able to reach full integration. In fact, posthumanism is diagnosed in Claire Colebrook’s text on “death of the posthuman” as “‘delusional,’ ‘symptomatic,’ and ‘psychotic,’” “a willful denial of humanity’s destructive capacity,” “a symptom of psychosis that protects us from the truth of man’s irretrievable imprint” (Sharp 272).

Due to this “im/possibility of abandonment,” Hinton and Liu claim that it is necessary to analyze how abandonment reflects our conception of “loyalties, intimacies, conflicts, as well as the very ontological iterations that materialize critique and reproduce its strategies for intervention” (140). Kleinian psychoanalysis, I argue, offers exactly this – a lens for gaining insight into the pervasive possibility of the “(human) perceptual schema” and “its ordering gaze” (Hinton and Liu 140), the way it permeates the demand and desire of both the subject and object of abandonment, of both the possibility of repair in the face of being persistently at stake in reparation’s execution. In this way, Klein facilitates a study of the both/and of being inconsequential and of consequence, the im/possibility, as opposed to Claire Colebrook’s claim that the Anthropocene simply exposes the purported “truth of Cartesianism” or Hasana Sharp’s counter that it merely reflects man’s failure to master nature (Sharp 275). As illustrated above, posthumanist theorizing cannot merely “relinquish and transcend anthropocentrism” because the “conventional logics of separation” reinscribe and naturalize anthropic privilege, our entrapment in the conditions and vitalization of human difference, the “iterative reinscriptions of human privilege – the sovereign subject” (Hinton and Liu 141). Rather, “the perceiving, intending

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<sup>15</sup> Hinton and Liu notably invoke this framework of abandonment with regards to race: “the abandonment of race is simultaneously the performance of race” (137). Consequently, it facilitates my claim that the abandonment of the human is simultaneously the performance of not only the human, but also a specific human. Like the phantastically-distorted language above invoked by OOO and NM, the role of anxiety in the unconscious developmental position influences the construction of conscious life and thus sociocultural formations – psychoanalysis, again, as a mode of considering the underlying drive or desire, the motivation for concern or care, that which implicit in approach or articulation.

(human) subject necessarily *reemerges* and re-emerges” as our reality “ultimately confounds any purity of its identity” (Hinton and Liu 141).

Nikki Sullivan labels this specifically in NM as “a particular, situated optics: a somatechnics of perception which engenders what it purports to merely ‘observe’” (300). As opposed to the assertion of omnipotence under the guise of the posthuman, human perception is recognized as “both the vehicle and effect of a particular situated somatechnics, an orientation to the world in which the I/eye is always-already co-implicated, co-indebted, co-responsible” (Sullivan 302). Similarly, Anna Mudde critiques OOO for flattening ontology to the point of only hearing the human voice (61). As opposed to rejecting this implicit human influence, “ontological response-ability” demands that decentering the human, individually or collectively, is not possible “without escaping one’s status of being perpetually ‘at issue’ in one’s own prehensions” (Mudde 63). Posthumanist theorizing must, therefore, reckon with the human as more than “self-as-knower/thinker” but rather as “self-as-already-active-presence” (Mudde 69), as “always already a co-constitutive ‘seeing-with’ that shapes the seer and the seen, the knower and the known” (Sullivan 303). There is no true “giving up and moving beyond” (132), no performance of “a ‘pure’ cut that creates the possibility for absolute separation” (Hinton and Liu 137). Consequently, I turn now to the deeper elemental foundation of anxiety and fear in the Kleinian subject to more concretely situate Klein within the unique contemporary moment of the Anthropocene and the makings of a paranoid relation to our current conditions – that is, the human death drive and our subsequent fear of annihilation illuminates this impossibility of abandonment.

### *Anthropocentric Crisis and the Fear of Annihilation*

Kleinian psychoanalysis offers insight into our relationship with anthropocentric crisis through its foundation upon the fear of death. The subject’s “primary cause of anxiety” that structures our response to threat and vulnerability is the death instinct – in other words, anxiety has its origin in “the fear of death (or fear for life)” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 28) and the positions represent different modes of responding to and thus developmental capacities for this fear. For the posthumanities, this “fear of annihilation of life” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 29) becomes, quite literally, the fear for our own life or life *as we know it*.



In the paranoid-schizoid position as demonstrated above, the death instinct “takes the form of fear of persecution,” “the fear of an uncontrollable overpowering object” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 4). Splitting between the ideal and the persecutory is an attempt to soothe the perceived threat of this precarious future. Identification with the internalized good object through splitting strengthens the ego’s belief in saving its good object and thus being one with its loved object because the ego has projected a portion of the death instinct into its split off bad and hated object (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 240). The good object “is felt to be indispensable for the preservation of life” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 30), which, in the Anthropocene, is literalized in the face of ecological crisis. That is, if our good object (our world) collapses from the possibility of sustaining our lives or, in the least, sustaining *our lives as we know them*, of maintaining our current mode of life within life-sustaining practices that indirectly destroy our world, then the threat of annihilation is felt to be imminent and fuels the fear of that vulnerability and its inherent exposure of dependency. Manic reparation, then, represents the desire of the posthumanist theorizing to be saviours of the anthropocentric crisis, to find solution and/or redemption. As Klein concisely describes, “the stronger the anxiety is of losing the loved objects, the more the ego strives to save them, and the harder the task of restoration becomes, the stricter will grow the demands which are associated with the super-ego” (*Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 269).

However, while splitting attempts to help the ego “overcome anxiety by ridding it of danger and badness” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 6), this foundational anxiety is never eliminated because complete annihilation is never witnessed – the posthumanities do not see, at least at this point in time, some sort of absolute destruction due to anthropocentric crisis or comprehensive and successful implementation of proposed epistemological and ontological reorientations. In this way, the Kleinian articulation of the death drive turns our attention to the “anxieties of disintegration and the defences against such,” as opposed to the tendency in critiques of psychoanalysis to frame the death instinct as merely “some transpersonal propulsion towards evil or destruction” (McIvor, “The Cunning of Recognition” 255). Put simply, through the subject’s premise on the death drive, Klein provides “a complicated conception of the subject and its tendencies toward irrationality,” intervening into the way “critical theory [like the posthumanities] risks assuming too high a degree of rationality and autonomy in its addressees” (Allen and Ruti 190).

I argue, therefore, that the fear of annihilation from the death instinct situates the foundational posthuman approach to anthropocentric crisis as a response to “the feeling of chaos, of disintegration” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 144). The invocation of manic reparation is a defence against the threat and vulnerability of disintegration by seeking control over persecution, creating what Karl Figlio describes as a “delusional reality” filled with delusional enemies.<sup>16</sup> That is, to avoid the perceived sense of chaos, we “retreat into an enclave in which, externally, one appears to act rationally, while maintaining, internally, a delusional world, [which] creates an imaginary but stable structure” (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 82). This delusional reality provides stability by projecting into an external social structure and thus designating the problem as over *there* or in *that*, “to seal this psychic reality in the other, and to destroy it there” (91), a harmonizing of the external that demands continual reinforcement (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 90). When occurring in lived realities of crisis, Figlio argues that this phantasy of rational authority may literalize splitting through an emphasis on delusional difference that in fact reflects an unconscious dread of sameness (*Remembering as Reparation* 80). While this conflicts with the common-sense and dominant belief that difference is what is truly hated, foundational OOO and NM’s reactionary argument – which seeks difference from anthropocentric thought *and* each other through an emphasis on newness and radicality – can be easily seen as an implicit hatred of sameness *through* an emphasis on difference. Despite their apparent denial of difference in their mutual decentering of the human through the object or matter – that is, a desire for sameness under the guise of objecthood or the nonhuman, a desire that fails under feminist and intersectional analyses, as described above – the posthumanities foundationally reinforce “a defence against self-examination, a self-examination that could reveal a hated similarity or, more fundamentally, the hatred of the similarity that is, in the limit, oneself” (Figlio, “The Dread of Sameness” 8). In the face of anthropocentric crisis, this hated similarity is arguably the shared position of humanity, of being unavoidably human, and thus always of consequence in contributing to such crisis, of being unable to theorize truly beyond an anthropic lens, and of being potentially inconsequential to the futurity of one’s world.

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<sup>16</sup> Karl Figlio’s text utilizes Kleinian psychoanalysis to assess reparation in the aftermath of WWII with regards to post-war German memory and memorialization. Therefore, my deployment of his concepts and argument here illustrates a wider application of his insights around Klein and storytelling to the contemporary context of damage and reparation in the Anthropocene.

In asserting a purportedly stable and rational structure, OOO and NM both retreat into their own delusional reality, in Figlio's terms, that takes objectification or scientific analysis as *the* accurate logic of ontological and/or epistemological *posthumanism*. In both, "phantasy imbues the external world with delusion, in the sense that 'reality' no longer moderates, but conveys phantasy as reality with the conviction of rational authority based on 'evidence' and common sense" (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 66). In posing the drive to be posthuman as a delusional state of manic reparation, I show that the posthumanities are directly tethered to the "fear of disintegration as the deepest human anxiety" (Alford, "Hate, Aggression, and Recognition" 68). Posthuman theorizing is a manic defence against the death instinct and "what the accompanying disintegration and feeling of chaos amount to" – what effectively "results in a feeling akin to death" (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 144). Foundational posthumanism perpetuates a phantasy of "utter autonomy" (95) that denies the human's root fear of utter disintegration, defending against the guilt of depressive anxiety by manically denying dependence on the good object (our world, our planet) nor its destruction by our own greed or selfishness (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 91-92; 95-96). The so-called delusion of the foundational approach of the posthumanities is a response to anthropocentric crisis that evades the melancholia of guilt of the depressive position – the next developmental stage in Klein's framework – by instead regressing into the human's psychotic core, a mechanism intended to "assuage guilt" by deflecting and projecting aggression onto others and "thereby creating hateful, threatening, aggressive enemies, over which they omnipotently triumph" (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 110). In other words, posthumanist theorizing is "tempted to opt for a manic solution, which confirms their omnipotence, rather than face the pain" (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 111) – which, rather than recognize their human disposition, they instead take control of the fear by asserting, in phantasy, a protective (and projected) stable structure for one's own reality.

The foundational arguments of the posthumanities enact "the twinned illusion of omnipotence and helplessness" (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 83), then, wherein one's drive to theorize a logical and rational True lens for reorienting our mode of understanding is both an attempt to control, a defensive response to vulnerability, and a reluctance to examine one's own human capacity to be of consequence *and* inconsequential. As Klein describes, the manic defences are "a deflected drive to control the self" (13), marking the projection of hated

difference as an internal conflict of self that is driven by our dread of our own vulnerability and persecution – a manic reparative defence that manifests through what Klein identifies as “detached hostility” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 18). Figlio explains that “the narcissism of small differences implies a dread of dissolution stabilized by concocting a world of imagined differences, delusionally mistaken for external realities” (*Remembering as Reparation* 101). Manic reparation is, therefore, embedded in “the narcissism of feeling good” (194), a world of phantasy that reflects “a making-better ego,” a paranoid and manic ego, as opposed to “a making-better object” (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 199), an ego that reckons with guilt and accountability. This directly reflects Klein’s original claim that devaluation of the object (217) is a defence of the paranoid-schizoid position while devaluation of the self is a defence of the depressive position (*Envy and Gratitude* 218).

Accordingly, the foundational arguments of the posthumanities emerge clearly, I believe, as a defence against melancholia over the perceived destruction and loss of the loved good object, of the world that constructs our life and capacity to live, as well as against the guilt of being of consequence, of contributing to such destruction, of not being able to *truly* fix these consequences, and fear of being potentially inconsequential, of not being able to take control and thus impact any possibility for repair or matter as an integral part of that world’s future. This dynamic resonates with Figlio’s description of the “dread of (non)existing” (102), which functions along two major currents: “(1) getting inside the object *and* having it inside; and (2) at a more primitive level, destroying the very notion of an inside to the object from which one could be outside” (*Remembering as Reparation* 103). OOO and NM both reflect these currents – they both dissolve the human into the object or material world, which contains the object and material world within its own anthropocentric narration of objective or scientific reality, *and* simultaneously they destroy the possibility of difference that constitutes an inside and outside, a denial of varying distributions of capacity along intersectional lines, for instance. Or, more simply, the foundational posthumanities dissolve the human into the object (or matter), destroy other modalities of an inside (or reality), and likewise rescind the human interior (or psychic life).

Through Figlio, then, I assert that the human response to anthropocentric crisis through posthumanist theorizing creates unconsciously “an intimacy of total confusion with the object” and its stakeholders can “only tolerate this intimacy by also attacking it in order to limit his

dissolving into it” (*Remembering as Reparation* 103). They become stuck in “a confusional state” (110) of dread and ambiguity that faces “contradictions in the sense of survival itself, between dissolving through an internal collapse and persisting in existence through creating an external object to overcome” (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 104). This state of confusion notably involves “the loving and hating of the good object *without* the structure of the depressive position, without the amelioration of destructiveness by reparation, and without the protection of the psychic organization of the paranoid-schizoid position” (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 107; italics added). There is “no appeal to an external reality that might limit it” (111), enabling manic reparative facilitation of one’s (desired) reality, “a primal state that adumbrates another reality, one that combines the deepest yearning with the deepest dread” (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 112). Put simply, it is “a state of elemental terror” (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 108) in the face of impending catastrophe, contemporarily the crisis of the Anthropocene.

The delusional reality of manic reparation is evidently “a defence against a primal catastrophe” (101), a state of being “plagued by an imminent catastrophe” (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 104). And, in the contemporary moment of anthropocentric crisis, I argue that defending against catastrophe literalizes Klein’s framework, wherein catastrophe quite literally threatens one’s primal self. When transposed to the realm of museology, this fear of annihilation and the vulnerability it necessitates is apparent in what critical museologists have termed *difficult knowledge*. Emergent from the psychoanalytic work of Deborah Britzman and Alice Pitt in the realm of education, Roger Simon subsequently employs their concept towards exhibitionary practices. That is, difficult knowledge in an exhibit “confronts visitors with significant challenges to their museological expectations and interpretative abilities,” “demanding they complicate their desire for relatively straightforward and conclusive ways of telling a story” (Simon 432). As a result, such exhibits may elicit “the burden of ‘negative emotions’” or “heightened anxiety” (Simon 433). The difficulty here lies within “the provocation of affect, that is, affect’s relation to the possibilities of thought” (Simon 433), which is, in turn, a facing of crisis or catastrophe, of that which may feel threatening.

Simon explicitly frames this as a threat to self – that is, “when knowledge appears disturbingly foreign or inconceivable to the self,” it brings “oneself up against the limits of what one is willing and capable of understanding” (433). That which is difficult – such as the

pervasive reality of bearing our human role that is both of consequence (i.e. destructive) and inconsequential (i.e., peripheral) – arises “when one’s conceptual frameworks, emotional attachments, and conscious and unconscious desires delimit one’s ability to settle the meaning” (Simon 434). Angela Failler assesses the negotiation of difficult knowledge within her critique of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. In fact, Failler references Britzman’s articulation of hope through Melanie Klein, wherein hope functions as a strategy for smoothing over the pain of loss (236), a form of manic reparation in Kleinian terms. Such “curative or consolatory versions of hope” (234) idealize, forming instead *lovely knowledge* wherein affective outcomes are split into good and bad and evading “the capacity not only to bear frustration, fear, despair, or hopelessness but to value these affective responses as a basis from which to learn” (Failler 236). And, specifically, this facing of difficulty is an “*experience* where coming into awareness presents a *crisis* in learning for the learner” (Failler 235; italics added to crisis). As seen in the shortcomings of foundational OOO and NM, manic reparative narrations in response to crisis offer “consolatory promises and moralizing injunctions” (Failler 246). Curative approaches, therefore, console threats to one’s sense of mastery and thus entangles itself with confusion and disorientation, with the certainty of fear and diffusion of anxiety (Simon 434). In other words, the deployment of curative museology specifically consoles the threat of catastrophe and disintegration, what Figlio describes as feel-good outcomes.<sup>17</sup>

Kleinian psychoanalysis clearly elucidates the human response to the threat of the Anthropocene – how fear and vulnerability in the face of crisis – or, as otherwise termed as annihilation, chaos, or disintegration – trigger defences that inhibit the development of human relational processes and thus its capacity for an ethics of (or engagement with) care. This “irrational ‘organization’” of the foundational stance of the posthumanities signs OOO and NM up for “an unconscious contract to maintain this difference as a defensive system organized around paranoid-schizoid splitting and projection, rather than risk a descent into catastrophic undifferentiation” (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 90). The reactionary approach of the posthumanities – the splitting from similarity through emphasis on difference and the decentering of one’s own human role and thus responsibility for and within anthropocentric crisis – becomes the constructed mode for “managing the endogenous unease in human society”

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<sup>17</sup> In Chapter 2, I extend this curative framework to the museological representation of climate change as difficult knowledge – a literalization of the crisis of the Anthropocene as a threat of annihilation.

(Figlio, “The Dread of Sameness” 8), of managing the fear of annihilation in the face of anthropocentric crisis. It is a mode of ensuring security and survival. The Kleinian subject in the Anthropocene is filled with an “anxiety of extinction” (12) wherein “the ego is threatened with extinction by the replica other” (Figlio, “The Dread of Sameness” 13), by that which can replace or render our elimination inconsequential. And, by removing this fear from the metaphorical context that Kleinian psychoanalysis is so often limited to, I demonstrate how the Anthropocene renders this state as our literal reality – in the contemporary moment of anthropocentric crisis, the subject is quite literally facing the fear of extinction.

### *The Anthropocene as a Culture of the Death Drive*

In turning to Kleinian psychoanalysis to grapple with the human desire for the core theoretical promise of the posthumanities, then, I am able to understand the Anthropocene as a contemporary culture of the death drive. That is, I do not claim that the reality of anthropocentric crisis is merely a construction of human psychic life, but I do seek to extend Zoe Todd’s framing of the Anthropocene as a narrative tool by considering how our narrative construction of the Anthropocene as a catastrophe that demands intervention and repair is a product of a particularly human nature in its specific contemporary organization, which Klein illuminates through her developmental model and its subject’s foundational formation upon a fear of annihilation. The threat of the death drive in the Anthropocene is not merely a fear of our own annihilation, of being potentially inconsequential to the futurity of one’s world, but also a fear of our unavoidable humanity, of always being of consequence in contributing to such crisis. In other words, our human destructiveness, which is externalized through splitting, takes on literal external form in the Anthropocene – destruction that is inevitably tethered back to *us* as human. Consequently, as shown above, Kleinian psychoanalysis facilitates an analysis of the foundational position of the posthumanities as “an attempt to alienate psychotic anxiety (that is, anxiety that threatens to annihilate the core self)” (Alford, “Hate, Aggression, and Recognition” 66-67) by rendering it escapable, if not also redeemable, through its very escapability.

Conceiving of the death drive as culture is rooted in the original conception of the death instinct by Freud and his analysis of its sociohistorical impact on the formation of ‘civil society’ in his text *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930). C.F. Alford created a Kleinian version of Freud’s analysis in his book *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory: An Account of Politics*,

*Art, and Reason Based on her Psychoanalytic Theory* (1989). And, more recently, Esther Sánchez-Pardo's *Cultures of the Death Drive: Melanie Klein and Modernist Melancholia* (2003) utilizes modernist literary discourses and narratives to focus on "the atmosphere of anxiety, insecurity, and transformation of the period between the wars" (10), a period that contextualized if not highly influenced the formation of Klein's theoretical framework. While this time period is a century prior to the contemporary moment of the Anthropocene, Sánchez-Pardo demonstrates how "cultures of the death drive" highlight the way a certain sociopolitical moment is pervaded by "elements of anxiety, fear, and aggression," reflecting a loss of "metaphysical assurances" and "an urgent battle between the public sphere and the private domain" (10). I employ Sánchez-Pardo's demand for uncovering "the social and political implications of the melancholization (or, in more general and current terms, depression)" in order to understand "a contemporary culture of the death drive" (154) by centering the foundational arguments of the posthumanities as manic reparative responses to anthropocentric crisis and thus defences against remaining in a melancholic state wherein we must face destruction and potential annihilation and reckon with being of consequence and the demand for taking responsibility while simultaneously being to some extent inconsequential. In other words, the human response to this melancholic moment of anthropocentric crisis as encapsulated in the posthumanities represents a culture of the death drive. And, in turn, cultural practices like museology incorporate and represent stories that are influenced by its stakeholders' anxieties, desires, and fears. Consequently, like Sánchez-Pardo, I seek "to rethink the role of melancholy in the constitution of the subject, not only in psychoanalytical terms but at the crossroads of psychoanalysis and politics" (154), wherein politics is defined through the contemporary moment of anthropocentric crisis and the catastrophic role of human life therein. In application, this translates into a question around the ways melancholy is a necessary component of difficult knowledge versus its manic reparative obfuscation through so-called lovely knowledge.

To situate this defence as a *culture* of the Anthropocene, then, is to situate the Kleinian subject in the context of the social group and thus how a Kleinian analysis of the sociocultural context impacts or shifts the nature of the individual. Kleinian readings of group life largely understand the group as dedicated to containing anxiety (Alford; Figlio; Sánchez-Pardo), identifying it as a structure that assists in our defence against our deepest fear of annihilation and disintegration. The coalescing of individual subjectivities into the subjectivity or culture of a



group assimilates anxieties to form social processes and, subsequently, social guilt and reparative measures (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 49; 52). Or, simply, as the bearer of individual anxieties, a society or group's culture forms an anxiety of its own (53), wherein social order becomes "a defensive structure that garners and appeases catastrophic anxiety" (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 61), anxiety that feels catastrophic but is also, in the Anthropocene, a real material catastrophe, as exemplified for instance through climate change. While not creating the anxieties, collective belief or culture organizes the meaning of this anxiety, providing explanations that form a locus of meaning to make life more manageable (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 62-64). Curatorial practices can be seen, as a result, as a very literal organization of such meaning. Thus, the way phantasy is worked through makes a world (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 62). Any threat to the status quo – the world as we know it – becomes a marker of danger and irrationality, causing the group to not only amplify the social consolidation around phantastical projections that capture anxiety but also to become, quite simply, a haven for paranoia (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 61).

The culture of the Kleinian group, therefore, legitimizes and reinforces paranoid-schizoid defences. The group "intensifies the schismatic pressure to divide into conflicting groups, and, therefore, works towards stabilizing the primal catastrophe" (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 111). Alford describes this through three steps: first, "the group helps the individual defend against his [or their] own paranoid-schizoid fears" (1989 58), which is initially affirming as the group holds the individual, like the mother or care-giver, providing love and care and thus becoming the good object through its internal cessation of unease. In this way, the group simply lessens the individual's experience of anxiety (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 44) – its ideology is felt as good and gratifying. Subsequently, though, paranoid-schizoid anxieties become held by the individual "only as a member of a group" (59), maintaining such persecutory anxiety through their extension to and sustenance by the group's life. In this way, the group reinforces splitting – "by transforming private anxieties into shared ones, the group helps the individual project his anxiety outward", rendering the external again (or still) as bad, as threatening "the goodness of the group" (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 59). And, third, the group helps the individual defend against depressive anxiety, against doubts about being able "to foster and protect the values that he and the group cherish" (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 59). In other words, the group facilitates the defence against

melancholia, against mourning the loss of the loved object, coalescing together as a group then around “unprocessed mourning” (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 53). And, notably, idealization through splitting is understood as the best indication of a group’s paranoia, “an attempt to protect the good object from aggression by isolating it” (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 88). As a culture of the death drive, then, group ideology has the tendency to soothe and manage what is threatening at an individual level.<sup>18</sup>

The posthumanist response to anthropocentric crisis, such as through OOO or NM, constructs its own group culture and mentality, then, through their organization around a mutual fear of annihilation of the good object (our world, as we know it) and subsequent denigration of the bad object (the human, the self, the basis of anthropocentrism). That is, the stakeholders in these fields, the theorists invested in constructing an effective and accurate object-oriented ontology or new materialist framework or approach for decentering the human, are defending against melancholia, I believe, through their shared desire to foster and protect their values and belief in object-ivity or scientific matter as reorienting anthropocentric practice and saving that which it consumes. As illustrated above, while OOO and NM claim opposition in relation, these fields reflect a shared intervention into the Anthropocene, an approach housed under the field of the posthumanities, that exemplifies, I argue, a paranoid-schizoid relation and manic reparative desires and thus forms a shared collective culture, a desire to prevent melancholic recognition of their own human impact, the guilt of not being able to avoid their presence and impact, and the potential of not being able to fully repair or secure redemption against the identified anthropocentric crisis.<sup>19</sup> This is no more apparent than in the critical interrogations of the foundational posthumanities through feminist, anti-racist, and decolonial lenses, outlined previously.

With this resonance between the extension of the Kleinian subject and its formation of a culture of the death drive, then, I believe that the analysis of the Kleinian group provides further insight into the *human* nature of the posthumanities and the powerful influence of the culture of

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<sup>18</sup> In Chapter 2, I discuss the ways in which the Kleinian group can work differently – how it can facilitate mourning and offer the potential for ethical relation.

<sup>19</sup> While I do not mean to imply that academic disciplines contain their own disembodied agency per se, I do seek to emphasize how the stakeholders that participate in academic disciplines contribute to that discipline’s construction of an overall ethos that maintains its own beliefs, expectations, and desires. In this way, a group is both the product of and creator of a culture, a culture born from the death drive, because it forms meaning and value upon anxieties that already persist, anxieties that find form through the sociohistorical context.

the Anthropocene as a way of understanding the contemporary moment. The Kleinian group is understood as struggling more than the individual in tolerating depressive guilt (Alford, “Hate, Aggression, and Recognition” 69; “Groups Can Hardly Mourn” 1; *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 43-44). The group struggles to escape the paranoid-schizoid position as it is “an arena in which it is considered appropriate to express anxieties” (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 74). The self becomes fragmented and dispersed into the group’s perceived capacity to carry the individual, losing a sense of control in this formation of a dependent relationship (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 66-67). In this way, the individual in the group is stuck in, as mentioned earlier, a state of confusion that is not soothed by the structure of either position, neither the paranoid-schizoid nor the depressive position.

This is reflected, for instance, in Michael Rustin’s description of a “borderline state” in the contemporary approach to “peace processes” that reflect an “insufficient momentum to proceed with reconciliation and reconstruction” in Western culture (*Reason and Unreason* 130).<sup>20</sup> That is, there is a habitual complacency wherein becoming “aware of the damage and devastation which surround them, and their own complicity with it, would be psychologically too costly” (Rustin, *Reason and Unreason* 130). Borderline societies are in a state of paralysis – “trapped between paranoid-schizoid and depressive structures of feeling” and “unable to move forward in a depressive direction, for fear of the limitless pain, guilt, and anxiety” (Rustin, *Reason and Unreason* 130). And, ultimately, the shared projections of group members end up creating “what it most fears” – “the world in which its members live”, a paranoid and persecutory reality (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 74) or, as Figlio articulates, a delusional reality, a stuckness between the stability (albeit limited) of the two positions when faced with imminent or perceived catastrophe. The culture of the group, therefore, provides a retreat into a sense of security (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 67), a retreat for the foundational posthumanities into its delusional reality of solace and redemption through manic reparation.

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<sup>20</sup> Rustin deploys this term with regards to various examples, including the illegal Occupation of Palestine and post-apartheid in South Africa. Therefore, I am extending its applicability to the contemporary moment of the Anthropocene. I also expand on the concept of reconciliation and its relationship to reparation in Chapter 2.

Likewise, as I illustrated through museology throughout this chapter, curative museology reflects this seeking of security for and of the museum and its stakeholders. The reformulation of the public museum's always already show-and-tell framework through various lenses across old and new museology reiterates still the celebration of "culture as cure" and "heritage healing" (Butler 355). This deployment of the museum is no more apparent than in its new incorporation into social prescription projects. Specifically, an Ontario pilot project entitled *Rx: Community* by the Alliance for Healthier Communities in 2018/19 involved the prescription of museum visits, such as free passes to the Royal Ontario Museum. By situating the museum's exhibitionary spaces as part of preventative and remedial health care, the museum is not only presented as already redeemed from its histories of ownership and possession but also as containing inherent goodness for its public. As a result, museology as a form of (health) care clear evades its potential to challenge its audience and grapple with difficult histories by in turn acting as a holding environment for social well-being, becoming curative for anxieties or fears. The potentiality of curatorial and interpretative narration is, therefore, limited by defences against the growing critique of heritage institutions and, in turn, asserting a yet-another renewed and revised value and relevancy to the museum's public good. Storytelling – even within the realm of theorizing – is guided by human anxieties, desires, and fear.<sup>21</sup>

The museum, as a product of a broader culture, is therefore exemplary of a *psychic retreat*. This defensive social organization conceived by John Steiner forms "a structure into which the psyche can retreat to escape the impact of depressive anxiety," becoming, Figlio argues, "havens from a primal catastrophe" (*Remembering as Reparation* 112). Any given sociohistorical cultural structure can act as "a safe, but unstable enclave" because it encourages the use of others as "repositories into which they deposit their anxiety of disintegration" (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 112). Therefore, "beneath the social order lies the catastrophe of psychotic anxiety" (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 61) and this emphasis on catastrophe brings the psychic retreat directly to anthropocentric crisis. Since catastrophe is "to be overwhelmed by anxiety...caught somewhere in a spectrum of psychic states organized around the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions", a psychic retreat offers "a haven from impingement by internal and external reality" (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 109-110), from catastrophic anxiety and the quite literal fear of annihilation in the face anthropocentric

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<sup>21</sup> See Ritchie (2021) for a full analysis of this pilot project and a Kleinian analysis of museums on prescription.

crisis. The construction of “social defence mechanisms, psychic retreats and havens” (101) exist from the origin of psychic life and the pervasive presence of the death drive, marking our state of being and sociopolitical organization as always-already a response to “an ever-present catastrophe at the centre of society” (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 101). The cultural superego, therefore, soothes unease by acting as “an internal agency to manage it, allowing society to survive” (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 101) and the museum, as evident through its continual return to similar motifs across museology’s sociohistorical development, enacts a form of cultural superego. Individuals, like the museum’s public, are “clustered under a common superego” that form the social group and culturally encouraged defence mechanisms against catastrophic anxiety, or anxiety in the face of (potential or immanent) catastrophe (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 102). The Anthropocene as a concept that identifies the current moment and the issues to organize around and intervene in, therefore, becomes also a soothing narrative tool specifically for this anxiety, addressable if the *right* posthumanist framework can be articulated for reorientation and repair.

Culture’s narration of catastrophe thus facilitates the particular nature of a collective psychic retreat, a retreat from the presence of the human and its impact, for instance, in the foundational arguments of OOO and NM. Defences and cultural constructions around fear and threat ensure narratives that both soothe the fear of annihilation and designate the distribution of catastrophe in a way that maintains a sense of continuance for our (human) life and living. That is, in the face of catastrophe, there can be a “collective act of forgetting” that enacts “the very process – in the memorializing – of remembering and rebuilding a collective identity” (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 156). Memorialization is, after all, a storytelling product of mourning or melancholia, of grappling with or denying the guilt of destruction and lack of omnipotence. In a group setting, “public mourning” can distort memory through manic reparation (207), a form of “a triumphal repudiation” (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 214) of the narrative at stake that largely reflects group affirmation (Alford, “Groups Can Hardly Mourn” 3). Evidently, the application of Kleinian psychoanalysis to group dynamics and narrative practice exposes a tendency towards disavowal as “reality can only be tolerated, if at the same time, it is replaced by omnipotence” (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 157). Figlio labels this as “remembering false,” wherein manic reparation seeks to control memory through such “defensive, narcissistic memory organization” (*Remembering as Reparation* 185). The

“dread of dissolution” becomes embodied in “the dread of remembering” (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 174). To lose this narrative is not only a loss of control, but also a “loss of an orientation in the world of reality and of the delusion of defining and sustaining national identity” (178), or another variation of the “shared ego-ideal,” the “sacred core” that defines a group in relation to others (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 225).

As a result, a culture’s practice of mourning – what Figlio calls “public mourning” – defends against the collapse of its collective ego-ideal (*Remembering as Reparation* 226), defends against, in posthumanist theorizing, the inevitable presence and impact of the human theorist therein. Such narrative formation through museology, memory, and memorialization works through the past into the present and future, forming “a paranoid-schizoid retreat from the depressive reality of damage to its actual good objects, embodied in remembering” (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 166). In this way, memory and its narration play a critical role in the cultural form(ul)ation of the death drive and the way it enables a “dispersal of anxiety” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 144). While being a geological epoch, I demonstrate here how the Anthropocene is additionally a mode of memorializing and narrating particular attachments and concerns, such as the desire to be truly *post*-human, reflecting a sociohistorical culture of the death drive that provides “a locus and a focus to our dread of disintegration” (Alford, “Hate, Aggression, and Recognition” 68). And, consequently, I turn in the next chapter to how Klein conceptualizes non-manic forms of mourning and, in turn, how this contributes to a different relation to crisis, as exemplified through museology.

### *Conclusion*

Premised on the posthumanities as a field seeking to repair anthropocentric crisis, I assessed in this chapter how Kleinian psychoanalysis offers insight into the human processes that influence our very relationship to and thus capacity to grapple with a reality of anthropocentric crisis, of a crisis that directly threatens our own human lives (or lives as we know them). Next, I turn to Klein’s subsequent developmental phase of the depressive position and her concept of reparation to explore what her psychoanalytic framework can offer to the posthumanities in regards to the desire for repair. In other words, how can a recognition of the human in the posthumanities through Kleinian psychoanalysis facilitate potentiality for our human approach to the Anthropocene, for the desire of reparation in the face of the fear of annihilation? In

particular, I consider the sociopolitical implications of reparative care in the context of ecological crisis and climate change.

## Chapter 2

### Reparation and the Culture of the Anthropocene: Kleinian Prospects for the Ambivalence of Anthropocentric Reality

Counter to the defence of manic reparation explored in Chapter 1, I now ask: how does Klein's concept of the depressive position facilitate a grappling with the fear of annihilation? How does the depressive position facilitate the Kleinian subject's move towards non-manic forms of reparation? Upon first outlining Klein's depressive position and its components and outcomes below, I explore the centrality of ambivalence to the culmination of her psychoanalytic framework and how this resonates with the foundational desires and subsequent critiques of the posthumanities, as seen in Chapter 1. Next, I explore contemporary applications of her thinking towards sociopolitical concerns and, specifically, as embodied within the so-called reparative turn in critical theory in order to elucidate the stakes of reparation for the Kleinian subject, specifically for recognizing and responding to crisis in the Anthropocene. Finally, I connect this analysis to Kleinian considerations of ecological crisis, the closest resonance, I believe, between psychoanalytic inquiry and the concerns of the posthumanities. I provide an extension of Renee Aron Lertzman's concept of "environmental object relations" (126) to the contemporary theorizing of the posthuman and the larger crisis of the Anthropocene, situating the desire to be post-human as in fact a desire for the acknowledgement of and reckoning with our own ambivalence. In this final section, I also illustrate the implications of this argument through reference to museological practice and its representational grappling with climate change, connecting reparation to Chapter 1's reference of curative museology. Klein's developmental framework ultimately illustrates a necessary reconciliation with the very *human* attachments and desires embedded in grappling with and narrating a relationship to crisis, how the depressive position and its mourning of one's complicit role within and upon crisis fuel the desire for posthumanist theorizing and necessitates ethical care. In conclusion, I consider how reparation articulates ethical relation for the posthumanities, the foundation for Chapter 3.



### *The Depressive Position and the Integration of Ambivalent Reality*

Within the pendulum swing of Kleinian psychoanalysis, the depressive position offers a different developmental response to the same “primary cause of anxiety” – the death instinct (*Envy and Gratitude* 28). As noted in Chapter 1, the anxiety of the depressive position emerges as an overwhelming and melancholic experience of guilt. That is, after omnipotently defending oneself against destruction in the paranoid-schizoid position, the depressive position ushers in initial fear over “the ‘loss of the loved object’” (286) due to the projection of one’s “own uncontrollable greed and destructive phantasies and impulses” (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 345). As a result, depressive anxiety marks a weakening of the paranoid defences of omnipotence, denial, and idealization as one moves from a domineering sense of self to one that fears the harmful effects of one’s own actions (Klein, *Envy & Gratitude* 15; 34). The Kleinian subject realizes not only their love of the internalized good object but also their inability to omnipotently protect it because it is a real object out in the world (*Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 270). The melancholia of the depressive position, therefore, initiates the next critical developmental process – that of mourning.

Mourning is characterized by reality-testing as “not only the means of renewing the links to the external world but of *re-establishing the disrupted inner world*” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 77). One’s internal perception is reconciled with external reality and the coexistence of objects (good/bad, loved/hated) across both realms. Counter to the paranoid defence of “*scotomization*, the denial of psychic reality” and thus “denial of external reality” (262), Klein positions the depressive position as “a renewal of life” (361), the renewal of a link to external reality, wherein, despite a fear of loss or destruction, one realizes that “life inside and outside will go on after all, and that the lost loved object can be preserved within” (*Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 360). Or, more simply, the depressive position facilitates the development “from a partial object-relation to the relation to a complete object” (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 264). Mourning enables, according to Karl Figlio, the potential of “remembering ‘true’, a form of repairing the good object” versus “remembering ‘false’, an attack on the good object” (207), highlighting the impact of mourning on our narration of reality and crisis. The subject mourns “love, goodness, and security” (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 345) as static, stable, and pure entities preservable in some original or idealized form. The depressive position’s guilt and remorse transform the hostility and hatred of the paranoid-schizoid position, enabling a pivotal

reconciliation with one's dependence and an acceptance of *shared* suffering – that is, the identification of one's suffering with the suffering of the loved object, wherein the survival of the self becomes synonymous with preservation of the good object (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 264; 273; 360). Klein's developmental framework already begins to illustrate here the need to reconcile with our human role within and impact upon our world, how our desires and attachments can construct very different conceptions of that reality and the crisis at hand.

In so-called normal and healthy development, Klein describes this reconciliation with reality as a necessary reckoning with the world's ambivalence – how “the loved object is at the same time the hated one; and, in addition to this, that the real objects and the imaginary figures, both external and internal, are bound up with each other” (*Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 286). In contrast to paranoia's dispersal and weakening of the ego, the ego is strengthened through the depressive position's resignation to both loving and hating the world (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 144). Through mourning, one is able to recognize and bear the imperfection of the world and thus regain a modified sense of trust through a stronger internal sense of self and stability (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 355; 360). Reparative tendencies are grounded upon this toleration of ambivalence, wherein one developmentally matures from concern for oneself, the internal world, to a wider concern for the external world,<sup>22</sup> to which one is tethered. In a way, Klein is emphasizing that reparation is premised first on a recognition of our entanglement, between self and other, internal and external. And, entanglement, in many ways, is the purportedly central yet overlooked posthumanist concern, wherein everything is entangled as objects or matter but, as exemplified in Chapter 1, the relations between are simplified and neutralized for the sake of (manic) reparation.

“Making reparation” is “a mechanism acquired from the preceding depressive position” (278) and contributes to a persisting tendency that is critical to overcoming the depressive position and more manic forms of reparation (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 288). While reparation is always at first omnipotent (75), the guilty self that is filled with an “over-riding urge to repair, preserve, or revive the loved injured object” (74) must reconcile with ambivalence to gain a sense of balance – not as harmonious and curative or as a means of avoiding conflict, but rather as “the strength to live through painful emotions and to cope with them” (Klein, *Envy*

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<sup>22</sup> This so-called “wider concern” – of what and how – forms the basis of my argument later on in this chapter and, more substantially, in Chapter 3.

*and Gratitude* 270), a demand for capacity and responsibility. In a way, then, reparation represents “a more realistic response to the feelings of grief, guilt, and fear of loss” (*Envy and Gratitude* 14) because it is a mechanism that seeks to address what it can repair, as opposed to the often “quite unpractical and unrealizable nature” of manic reparation (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 278). Klein frames this as a persistence of the life instinct over the death instinct – reparation is the life instinct’s mode of expression, which is only made possible through integration and thus the synthesizing of the contrasting aspects of the object (*Envy and Gratitude* 36; 41). It is the result of “a deep attachment, a capacity for mutual sacrifice, a sharing – in grief as well as pleasure” (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 313). Reparation is not a permanent state, but rather comprises actions premised on a more realistic attitude towards frustration (*Envy and Gratitude* 75). Here, one has the capacity to displace love beyond the idealized good object (326) and thus be able to create a “satisfactory balance between ‘give’ and ‘take’,” founding a good relation to ourselves and the conditions for love and tolerance for others (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 342). In the posthumanities, I understand this capacity as enabling a good relation to our humanity and its entanglement with our world.

Consequently, well-being or mental health for Klein is a “well-integrated personality” (268), which is founded upon “an increased understanding of psychic reality and better perception of the external world as well as for a greater synthesis between inner and external situations” (*Envy and Gratitude* 14). The process of integration “gradually leads to a climax in the depressive position, depends on the preponderance of the life instinct and implies in some measure the acceptance by the ego of the working of the death instinct” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 245). Simply, it is a toleration of the entanglement of life and death, good and bad. Integration is never complete and is rather an always ongoing and painful process that triggers the splitting impulses of the foundational paranoid-schizoid position and its desire for omnipotence, denial, and idealization (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 274). The “capacity to cope...is the foundation for mental health” (272), marking integration as a sense of cohesion and resilience (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 10) in the face of our greatest fear and driving anxiety – our fear of annihilation, the threat of disintegration or dissolution. Klein’s depressive position, therefore, facilitates the ego’s “capacity to integrate itself and to synthesize the contrasting aspects of the object” (36), forming a “greater tolerance towards one’s own limitations” (232) and a “more realistic attitude towards frustration” (*Envy and Gratitude* 76).

I identify two key components of the depressive position that distinctively resonate with and extend my positioning of the Kleinian subject in the Anthropocene – that is, the entanglement of internal/external and the subsequent (and necessary) reconciliation with this ambivalence. As my starting point, I take the psychoanalyst Thomas Ogden’s framing of these developmental characteristics as Klein’s “decentering of the subject” (615). He describes the Kleinian subject as a “dialectically constituted subject of human experience” that displaces “man from his position at the leading edge of what he believes to be his ‘progression’” (Ogden 615). That is, “the Kleinian subject is decentered from itself in that none of the multiplicity of components of the ego and internal objects is coextensive with the subject” (Ogden 616). Psychic life is understood in Klein’s psychoanalytic framework as not equivalent to the subject’s role and capacity in external reality. This *decentered* constitution – a human subject that is more than the sum of its perception or its impact while still being a human constituent therein – contextualizes the developmental goals of Klein’s framework and its relevance to the posthumanities because it both considers the impact of the psychic life of humanity while rendering it neither the original nor an all-encompassing omnipotent force. Ogden describes the subject as “not located in any given position, but in a space (tension) created by the dialectical interplay of the different dimensions of experience” (619). Klein’s *pendulum* of positions illustrates the interaction of these experiential and relational modalities, an important break from Freud’s categorical and rigid hierarchy of linear developmental phases and their reconceptualization as fluid positions that persist as different types of anxiety throughout life (Segal xi-xii). There is no clear division between the two positions but rather gradual modification and intermingling over time (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 16), wherein “each of the positions is understood as a fiction, a non-existent ideal that is never encountered in pure form” (Ogden 613-614). By embracing the Kleinian subject, the human is able to be understood through its complexity – “not only split (dispersed) among the phantasized internal object relations constituting it; the splitting process itself represents part of a dialectic of dispersal and unity of the subject, a dialectic of fragmentation and integration, of de-linkage and closure, of part-object relations and whole-object relations” (Ogden 616). As a result, the Kleinian conception of subjectivity is characterized by an impossibility of being truly and completely *post*-human or isolated in a monolithic and bounded notion of the human – rather subjectivity is

an interactive disposition, characterized by movement, interaction, and entanglement, as both part of and impactful upon and yet not central to its world and relations.

The contemporary Kleinian philosopher Amy Allen extends this interpretation, reading Klein as articulating how “intersubjectivity is always entangled with intrapsychic phantasy and projection” (“Are We Driven?” 321), how phantasy bridges the intersubjective and intrapsychic (Allen and Ruti 24). Klein offers “a realistic conception of what people are like” by taking seriously “the fragmented, decentered, and deeply ambivalent nature of the psyche without thereby glorifying rupture or psychotic incoherence” (Allen and Ruti 190). Put simply, Klein’s framework incorporates the fact that “we can never experience an external other except through the lens of our own phantasies, anxieties, and projections, all of which are impacted by the drives” (Allen, “Are We Driven?” 321). The processes and outcomes of the depressive position, therefore, illustrate conclusively Klein’s unique suitability for analyzing the tendencies in the posthumanities – how the intrapsychic and intersubjective manifest within the drive to be posthuman, how phantasy impacts posthumanist theorizing, “how inherently inchoate, amorphous, and unstructured drives can be” across different socio-political circumstances (Allen, “Are We Driven?” 324).

As a result, I believe Klein’s developmental framework – its insight into the formation and persistence of human projections and defences across the *human* theorizing of and interventions into the Anthropocene – calls on this capacity to understand our very own humanity within posthuman theorization, especially because the posthumanities implicitly seek a world that will also host the future of human life. That is, Klein’s conceptualization of developmental progress offers a reorientation of our desires for and expectations of our capacity for engaging in the work of change or transformation, what in Kleinian terms may be called *reparative*. Klein demonstrates, according to Allen, that “harmonistic illusions” and “wishful thinking” are “an impediment to progress (understood as a forward-looking moral-political imperative) precisely because they blind us to depth of the challenges that we face” and thus only serve “the interests of the status quo” (“Progress and the Death Drive” 130). Instead, Klein’s integrated or strengthened ego “isn’t about establishing rational mastery or internal dominance, but rather about developing a greater tolerance for ambivalence” (Allen and Ruti 9), which is “entirely different from the autonomous Enlightenment self” (Allen and Ruti 19). Klein’s integrated ego offers “a conception of subjectivity that occupies a productive middle ground

between the rational, autonomous, and transcendental subject of Western metaphysics and the embrace of a radical desubjectivation” (Allen and Ruti 20) – two sides, I argue in Chapter 1, embodied within the foundational claims of OOO and NM. The necessary integration of ambivalence in Kleinian subjectivity provides a “deconstruction of the myth of autonomous individuality” and subsequent redefinition of the nature of the individual in a way that challenges liberal individualism (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 13). Integration enables us “to tolerate ambivalence, ambiguity, and conflict without resorting to splitting,” accepting that “there’s no good object that can cure you because the good object can only be wholly good by being split from the bad object” (Allen and Ruti 56).

Klein’s advocacy against splitting is not, therefore, a search for wholeness, but rather a demand to grapple with the always intertwined coexistence of phantasy and reality (Allen and Ruti 56-57). For Klein, “because of the centrality and ineliminability of the death drive, there’s no getting over or beyond ambivalence, and therefore no possibility of ultimate resolution...the best we can do is to learn to tolerate and manage that aspect of the human condition” (Allen and Ruti 28). Any sense of wholeness was in fact a phantasy in the first place – there is no salve to return to, the Kleinian subject is always containing a strain of tragedy and melancholy (Allen and Ruti 27; 30). Klein therefore provides an “understanding [of] progress in a forward-looking sense that doesn’t rely on the possibility of a cure” (Allen and Ruti 201). The death drive becomes an inherent component of progress, as opposed to being presumed as incompatible with progress and thus, through its persistent presence, maintaining “the futility of all attempts to improve the human condition” (Allen, “Progress and the Death Drive” 109). In this way, the death drive – and its interpellation by Klein’s framework as our fear of annihilation – is in fact a critical component of our capacity to engage in and shift the status quo. The dynamics of the psychic life and its entanglement with the ambivalence of reality are critical components of engaging in change, in seeking a different story about our relation to our circumstance or what is encountered as crisis.

In a way, then, Klein provides a framework for deploying Peta Hinton’s critique of Rosi Braidotti’s foundational claims for the posthumanities and its emphasis on *zoe* – life – by calling for death to be “recast as something active and generative, the potentiality of what life can become” (“A Sociality of Death” 226). Because developmental progress necessitates an integration of ambivalence, of life and death’s entanglement, Klein’s framework illustrates how

“the generative possibilities of life itself may already be found in and with death” (Hinton, “A Sociality of Death” 225). In the depressive position, “finding death within life forces us to think with death, rather than against it” and thus it reorients death as “not an obstacle or bystander to social change, but of the order of inhuman intensities that propel life in(to) its sustainability” (Hinton, “A Sociality of Death” 230). The death drive in Klein maintains “death as politically and ethically *constitutive*” (Hinton, “A Sociality of Death” 225). Klein enables the human to grapple with “death as radically interior to life,” impacting “the tendency for life’s dissolution,” which in Kleinian terms is the threat of disintegration, “at the same time that it also makes possible life’s myriad forms and processes: in effect, death registers as life’s/matter’s necessity, as much as its contingency” (Hinton, “A Sociality of Death” 231). Through the concept of ambivalence and its critical centrality to the Kleinian subject’s well-being, Klein renders the death drive with ontological importance – “death itself is also the *already* and *ontological* opening of life” (Hinton, “A Sociality of Death” 242).

Ambivalence is “the key to the depressive position” and one’s capacity for reparation, rejecting the “manic form of (spurious) reparation,” a “false reconciliation” that denies reality and the severity of loss (Allen and Ruti 191). Reparation is arguably *not* the (only) critical climax of Klein’s theoretical framework. Rather, “Klein’s account of reparation is immensely complex and ambivalent...there’s no reparation without guilt, remorse, anxiety, aggression, and the fear of persecution” (Allen and Ruti 99). Or, simply, there is not reparation without destruction because we live in an ambivalent reality. The “danger of sliding back to the paranoid-schizoid position is ever-present,” just as the death drive always tinges life and *goodness*, creating the continually blurred line between destruction and reparation and marking attempts to “improve” or repair humanity as always, in part, coming up short (Allen and Ruti 99). While manic reparation relies on denial, reparation maintains an “inevitability of fundamental antagonisms,” “a respect for the inerasable nature of antagonisms as well as for the deep psychic ambivalence that ensues from this state of affairs” (Allen and Ruti 212) – there is a necessity to reckon with what is within and beyond control. As Klein describes, “splitting under the stress of ambivalence to some extent persists throughout life and plays an important part in normal mental economy” (*Envy and Gratitude* 75). As a result, “reparation is always an incomplete, compromised process at best” (Allen and Ruti 98) because the Kleinian subject is fundamentally torn between “*two competing modes of sociality or social relatedness*” (322), being driven “*both*

by a desire to connect with others *and* by a drive to control, overpower, or destroy the other” (Allen, “Are We Driven?” 319). The centrality of ambivalence in Klein’s psychoanalytic framework demonstrates that “there’s no elimination of conflict and disharmony; rather, there’s simply the ability to tolerate one’s internal fragmentation without falling into incoherence and breaking up into bits” (Allen and Ruti 191). This so-called development, progress, or integration is “a fragile achievement – one that can and often does break down” (Allen and Ruti 191).

Though Klein frames her developmental framework as critical to “the development of culture and civilization as a whole” (*Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 326), she does not specify *what* exactly comes after the depressive position, albeit emphasizing the critical development towards this *after* (Allen and Ruti 5). To bring the Kleinian subject’s capacity for ambivalence to bear on the conditions of the Anthropocene and posthumanist theorizing, then, I turn next to the limited ways in which Kleinian psychoanalysis has been brought to bear on sociopolitical concerns in critical theory – that is, through the so-called reparative turn.

### *Reparation and its Discontents*

In order to translate Klein’s conception of tolerating ambivalence to the context of the Anthropocene and the concerns of the posthumanities, I must first consider how Klein’s framework has been considered in relation to sociopolitical concerns more broadly, which has been largely limited to a celebration of its so-called reparative possibilities.<sup>23</sup> What has become known as the “reparative turn” was instigated by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s work in queer-affect theory. Sedgwick brought Klein’s psychoanalytic framework to critical theory to interpret different methodologies of critical reading practices, which developed across three essays from 1996, 1997, and 2003 (Wiegman 17). Broadly, Sedgwick was addressing the trend in critical theory towards a “hermeneutics of suspicion” that relied on what she framed as “paranoid reading practices,” arguing instead for “reparative reading practices”. Yet, despite this implementation of Klein’s psychoanalytic framework of positions broadly and the subsequent deployment of Kleinian concepts as more recognizable and celebrated modalities within critical theory, Sedgwick’s work becomes the site of various critiques from a psychoanalytic vantage

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<sup>23</sup> Kleinian psychoanalysis is widely considered to be lacking the influence it deserves within critical applications of psychoanalysis (Alford; Allen, *Critique on the Couch*; Allen and Ruti; Rustin, *Reason and Unreason*).



due to its departure from Klein's original framework. These critiques demarcate the nature of Klein's resonance with sociopolitical concerns and the ethical implications of repair.

In the opening essay of a 2014 special issue on the reparative in feminist theory, Robyn Wiegman argues that this resurgence of the reparative reflects a general misunderstanding of Klein's framework. That is, Sedgwick avoids "grappling at length with the less salvific implications of reparation" (Wiegman 17). Instead, the reparative is deployed in a way that seeks to secure its "intent or power to save or redeem" (Merriam-Webster). Additionally, Wiegman identifies "how little of the work that cites Sedgwick's use of the reparative reflects on the way that, in Klein, the paranoid position is not the sole scene in which the subject encounters anxiety and aggression; both the paranoid and the reparative positions are responses to the same environmental conditions of ambivalence, risk, and dependence" (17). The reparative turn is therefore haunted by this attempt to sidestep its own complexity by pinning the undesirable on the paranoid approach, which ends up "obscuring the differences between clinical states and developmental processes" (Wiegman 19), an obfuscation of the pendulum of processes in Klein.

In response to Wiegman, Jackie Stacey and Gail Lewis both argue for a necessary return to Klein's psychoanalytic work directly to understand the nature of repair, a return that I have clearly embraced. There needs to be "a more extensive, less selective use of Kleinian concepts and theory" as a way to enact a more "ethical scholarship" (Lewis 37). Sedgwick's interpretation of Klein and the extensive deployment of reparative readings in response to her call led to a perpetual echoing of Sedgwick's maintenance of this split, which "leaves behind the crucial ambivalence at the heart of Klein's theory" (Stacey 46). This "wishing away of ambivalence" (42), which is "enacted by the desire for the reparative more fully" (43), re-installs opposition by continuing to split good and bad, love and hate (Stacey 47). This splitting risks recentering a narcissistic ego that reflects the triumphalism of the neoliberal subject – or, as I argue in Chapter 1, the manic omnipotence and triumphalism of the foundational posthumanist subject – because their interpretation of Klein disavows "the enduring dynamic between separateness / difference, dependency / autonomy" (Lewis 31). Reparative readings through Sedgwick, then, have tended to be "mobilized to stake out new territories that might banish ambivalence (both theory's and the subject's) to the past" (45) and to the paranoid position, "forgetting Klein's central psychoanalytic arguments about how reparation works" (Stacey 46).

Consequently, reparation in critical theory initially installed “a non-ambivalent subject, removed from its psychoanalytic grounding and thereby losing some vital insights about how our conflicted relations to objects might continue to inform our attachments to culture” (Stacey 42). Yet, as outlined in the previous section, reparation is *not* “a process born solely of love, or as promising a straightforwardly restorative desire for reconciliation” (43); it is not simply compensatory or secure, but rather, while inviting “a phantasy of repairing the imagined damage done...it is necessarily accompanied by the conflicted ambivalence of such restoration” (Stacey 44). The subject that reckons with ambivalence – rather than being ambivalent – on the other hand, can “recognize and accept difference without resorting to conceiving the human population as comprising a series of incommensurable and discrete constituencies” (Lewis 31). Reparation seeks a reckoning with our separateness, difference, and dependence, which has become all the more necessary in “these times in which the logics of neoliberalism masquerade as post-racial, post-feminist” (Lewis 37), a logic of the *post* clearly manifested in foundational OOO and NM wherein decentering the human involved not only a simplification of the human as a monolithic entity but also overlooking of the ways in which objects and nonhuman categories are racialized and gendered in the dominant milieu.<sup>24</sup>

Premised on these shortcomings, David Eng makes an important and stand-out attempt at reconsidering the sociopolitical implications of Kleinian psychoanalysis by situating her original framework within her sociohistorical context. Eng highlights how Klein’s framework relies heavily on Freud’s death drive, a concept embedded in a genealogy of unacknowledged colonial history due to its emergence in the traumatic aftermath of WWI and thus its premise upon “the *psychic* dissolution of the liberal human subject and its storied history of consciousness” (2). Klein then developed her approach in the interwar period when “the dream of Enlightenment dissolved into the nightmare of total war and genocide” (Eng 5). As a result, the concept of the death drive was conceived through the effects of a very specific sociohistorical moment – that of war and the creation of “weapons of mass destruction” – reflecting both a condition of colonial modernity and the threat of annihilation to liberal subjectivity (Eng 2-3). Eng believes, therefore,

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<sup>24</sup> Celia Roberts in *A Feminist Companion to the Posthumanities* (2018) in fact touches on the need for “practising ambivalence” within the posthumanities. In this only reference to Klein in my findings, Roberts references Judith Butler’s use of Klein as well as Wiegman and Stacey’s critique of Klein’s simplified use within the reparative turn to emphasize the need to synergize the strengths across feminist work in science and technology studies and the posthumanities, the need to cross-fertilize and produce new hybrids as opposed to wishing away ambivalence (206-208).

that Klein's theory is seeking "to rescue a besieged liberal human subject in the midst of utter destruction" (5). Eng interrogates the sociopolitical implications of Klein's notion of reparation, positing it as not a neutral and celebratory concept, as Sedgwick insinuates, but rather a distribution of love and hate across a field of good and bad objects, constructing a colonial morality that regulates the "affective contours of liberal reason" (Eng 3). In Eng's opinion, then, Klein articulates "colonial object relations".

However, Eng overlooks the role of manic reparation, which, as I illustrated in Chapter 1, is a critical component of paranoia and its investments in liberal reason. In part, this is the result of Eng's limited focus on Klein's essay "Love, Guilt, and Reparation" (1937). This essay is unique in Klein's oeuvre – not only is it considered by many as her only essay implicating sociopolitical concerns (Chambers-Letson; Laubender; S. Todd), but it was also written as a public lecture for a wider audience in 1936 (O'Shaughnessy, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 435; *Envy and Gratitude* 332), reflecting a likely simplification of its psychoanalytic concepts for application and illustration. Additionally, it was written as a companion lecture with Joan Riviere's "Hate, Greed, and Aggression," a formatting that in fact *splits* the otherwise "constant interaction of love and hate" (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 306) and a split that Eng extends in his critique of the distribution of love and hate to "good *liberal* and bad *colonial* objects" (11). Furthermore, Klein only introduced the concept of the depressive position one year prior in 1935 and further solidified this concept in 1940, deploying this initial conceptualization here as a "non-technical exposition" to discuss a "wide range of human situations" (O'Shaughnessy, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 435), which I interpret as identifying how it is more experimental, a more brief work-in-progress. In fact, the explanatory notes about this essay emphasize how her conceptualization of reparation "was later different" and centered around "the more integrated states of the depressive position" (O'Shaughnessy, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 435).<sup>25</sup>

Eng's argument is partially built upon Joshua Chambers-Letson's critique of Klein's very own glossing over of a primary component of her own theory in this essay – that of guilt, "namely, the guilt born of destructive phantasy, or in this case, real violence against the colonized" (Chambers-Letson 175). And yet, I argue, that it is exactly this absence of guilt (and

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<sup>25</sup> Sharon Todd likewise notes how this essay by Klein lacks clarification about the dynamics of reparation, as conceptualized by Klein more broadly in her oeuvre (102).

mourning) in this essay's conception of reparation that cues the reader to understand this particular moment as a state of manic reparation. That is, the colonizer in Klein's narrative is defending against depressive anxiety, a condition that Klein is still very much developing at the point of delivering this lecture. As outlined in Chapter 1, a manic state of reparation entails reparative measures that are inadequate for dealing with the guilt and demands of depressive anxiety, resulting in a defence against reparation's failure (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 350-351). Even though the guilty self is always at first omnipotent and filled with an overriding desire to repair (74-75), reconciliation with ambivalence is necessary in order "to live through painful emotions and to cope with them" (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 270). I believe that Klein's expansive articulation of ambivalence and reparation beyond this essay, as described in the previous section, demonstrates the broader complexity of reparation and enriches the potential for Kleinian object relations to be implicated in sociopolitical meaning-making, which in this case is in regards to colonial logic. For instance, when considered within the context of museological meaning-making, the acceptance of ambivalence within and for the museum (as guided by its stakeholders) may involve reckoning with the irredeemability of its (ongoing) colonial and imperial histories. As opposed to seeking redemption through the museum's prescribability – that is, its capacity to facilitate preventative and remedial health care, as exemplified within the recent social prescription of museum visits in *Rx: Community* referenced in Chapter 1 – Klein illustrates the impossibility of claiming an all-encompassing goodness through an institution consolidated around stolen objects or white-centric lenses. In other words, what would it mean for the museum to discard attempts at manic reparation – what Butler describes through curative museology – and instead genuinely reckon with the melancholy of its irretrievable loss as an authoritative and celebrated narrator?

I focus on Eng's notion of colonial object relations here not for what it teaches us about colonization specifically – which is, undeniably, a very important concern – but rather for what it teaches us about the Klein's concept of reparation and the role of repair in sociopolitical crisis more broadly. In Klein's original lecture, colonization is described as "ruthless cruelty against native populations" enacted by "people who not only explored, but conquered and colonized" – "in the explorer's unconscious mind, a new territory stands for a new mother...the 'promised land'" (*Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 334). Reparation is subsequently presented as "wished-for restoration" to the damage from early aggressive tendencies, which is expressed through

“repopulating the country with people of their own nationality” (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 334), the oft-cited remark that fairly receives outrage and triggers Eng’s critique of reparation as a colonial construction of object relations.<sup>26</sup> While the implications of this violence are indeed reflected in the very real history of the genocide of indigenous populations, I emphasize that Klein specifically frames this restorative desire as *wished-for*. Wishes predominantly appear in her work in reference to paranoid-schizoid defences against the depressive position in connection with omnipotence (*Envy and Gratitude* 65), triumph (*Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 352), and envy (*Envy and Gratitude* 220). When situated within her broader and more developed framework in the years after 1936, the year this lecture was given, this wished-for restoration is more clearly understood as a form of manic reparation.

As described in Chapter 1, manic reparation is a collective psychic retreat that seeks disavowal of a “reality [that] can only be tolerated, if at the same time, it is replaced by omnipotence” (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 157). Eng in fact describes Klein’s framing of reparation here as “the *disavowal* of responsibility in a history of colonial war and violence” (12; italics added). Eng’s articulation of “a psychic roadmap on the distribution of love *and* hate that creates a framework of colonial morality” (10) describes, I argue, colonial object relations as a state of *manic* reparation. Reparation in Klein’s 1936 description of colonization is manic because it distributes liberal value by selecting only some objects as worthy of repair and thus “also psychically constituted as *human*” (Eng 11). The psychic reconfiguration of “a long history of indigenous dispossession and death...as ‘restoration’” (Eng 13) is the work of delusion,<sup>27</sup> a psychic retreat from paranoid and depressive anxiety, from one’s inability to ever truly secure omnipotence and independence or engage in and mourn the guilt and loss. Reparation’s authorization of violence towards the other, as Eng describes, is still reflective of “an aporia of liberal reason” (13), but in *manic* form, as a defence against responsibility and accountability. In fact, Eng explicitly describes reparation as the “willing away of ambivalence” (Eng 13), exposing its manic nature.<sup>28</sup> Through a broader grasp of Kleinian psychoanalysis, then, I

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<sup>26</sup> Klein also concludes this brief section by noting how “various impulses and emotions – aggression, feelings of guilt, love, and the drive to reparation – can be transferred to another sphere” (*Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 334), highlighting how this specific example is a brief – albeit violent – attempt to demonstrate the applicability of her framework.

<sup>27</sup> See Chapter 1 for more on Figlio’s concept of delusion.

<sup>28</sup> The term ambivalence is in fact not even utilized by Klein in this essay. The concept is still in development and only alluded to as “a mixture of feelings” (310), how “feelings of guilt and distress now enter as a new element into

demonstrate that Eng is describing an omnipotent state wherein there *is* an ethical shortcoming within “this segregation of affect, the sorting out of love and hate between the colonist and native, or the production of a colonial morality that allows the colonial perpetrator of violence to assuage his guilt” (14). It is in this delusional state that (manic) reparation is only designated to the good objects, guided by a logic of liberal reason and its investment in the colonizer’s redemption – a splitting of good and bad and defending against “an awareness of loss, a feeling of guilt, an apprehension of dependency” (Eng 9). Ambivalence is erased as the necessary foundation of manic reparation.

Eng’s intervention into the reparative turn and subsequent sociohistorical analysis of Klein is useful for how it highlights the necessary components of reparation. Eng explicitly builds his argument on Chambers-Letson’s critique, who contextualizes this colonial guilt through Frantz Fanon’s emphasis on how “the negotiation of guilt and violence in the reparative process does not belong to the colonizer alone” (176). While “the sublimation of guilt in this scenario that allows the colonizer to leap directly from violent destruction to repopulation as a form of restoration is something of a colonial phantasy itself” (175), it is necessary to not merely sublimate guilt through acknowledgement of historic (and ongoing) distributions of violence, but rather “a working through of this violence and a coming to terms with this guilt” (Chambers-Letson 183). Chambers-Letson emphasizes the need for a coming-to-terms with the ambivalence of the colonist’s desires – the inability to omnipotently impose reparation in any chosen fashion as a salve for the violence and injury done. Rather, any desire for repair is entangled with the realities of the colonized, with that which is rendered in opposition to the colonizer. This *negotiation* – by whom and how – is critical to reparation’s capacity to be a transformative process against violence and injury, highlighting in Chambers-Letson’s opinion reparation’s value to feminist, queer, and postcolonial projects (176).

Additionally, Eng overlooks how “making reparation, or making good the wrongs done to an other, stems from one’s own sense of guilt about one’s potential to do harm to other people” (S. Todd 100). That is, Sharon Todd explores how defending against the guilt of the depressive position “guards and protects us from inquiring too deeply into whether guilt can have moral or political value” (97). Todd further contextualizes, then, Eng’s critique of “the

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the emotion of love” and influence its quality and quantity, becoming “an inherent part of love” (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 311).

production of a (bad-faith) liberal white guilt” (Eng 14) by exposing how “liberal guilt” performs a “metonymical displacement” (97) and acts as “an individualistic response that detracts from marshaling the energy needed to recognize the larger, systemic factors that promote violence and maleficence toward others” (S. Todd 95). As a manic defence mechanism then, liberal guilt reflects “political indifference at best” (S. Todd 96), which in turn resonates with the seductive value of so-called lovely knowledge as opposed to difficult knowledge in the museum – it evades any grappling with larger systemic structures. The existence of different forms of guilt exposes the “double sense of reparation within Klein’s account of guilt – both in the actual *content* of the account and in the textual *strategies* employed in the account” (S. Todd 103). Such strategies are reflected in Sullivan’s critique of the “white optics” of the posthumanities – how “whiteness-as-humanness is integral to a specific, situated, somatechnics of perception” (303). Furthermore, as referenced in Chapter 1, “the abandonment of race is simultaneously the performance of race” (Hinton and Liu 137), highlighting how, here, the performance of guilt is an attempt to abandon guilt. Yet, such abandonment continues to fail due to guilt’s entanglement with either manic reparation, on one side, and reconciliation with ambivalence on the other. In this way, “the movement of abandonment appears to be more like that of a doubling or enfolding, perhaps a dis/locating of/from something/itself, without ever being able to perform a ‘pure’ cut that creates the possibility for absolute separation, and absolute alterity” (Hinton and Liu 137).

The reliance on splitting, though, as a form of abandonment or disavowal is further reflected in the elision, for instance, of Indigenous intellectual labour and consumption of Indigenous knowledge in OOO and NM (Ravenscroft; Z. Todd). Such neglect reinvigorates the resonance of the split of nature/culture with that of native/colonizer, which allows, Ravenscroft argues, the Western subject to not only re-install its imperialism as the sovereign authority in the discipline but also as the assumed reader (356-357). The metonymical displacement described by Sharon Todd above is reflected in Zoe Todd’s claim that ontology becomes “just another word for colonialism” in its perpetuation of exploitation (“An Indigenous Feminist’s Take” 16). Just as Klein’s two positions articulate two modes of responding to guilt and anxiety and, subsequently, of making sense of the world and one’s role therein, Ravenscroft posits that “if we think of new materialism, then, not as ideational but as a specific material configuring of the stuff of the world, then we can propose that one of its boundary-making practices—its *thingification*—is colonialism and the Indigenous practices that colonialism says are not there but which it takes up

(or takes) anyway” (357-358). Clearly, here, the manic reparation of the foundational posthumanities is inflected with human desires and defences that have sought a particular type of reparation, mirroring again the way the Anthropocene emerges as a critical narrative tool for telling a particular story (Z. Todd, “Indigenizing the Anthropocene” 244), a story that situates the nature of reparative desires. Ultimately, this manic reparative lens and its relation to guilt is “a materialising gaze that is already implicated in what it identifies or renders visible” (135), exposing how “power manifests as and through the visualising capacity—the white anthropocentric optics—of the human subject” (Hinton and Liu 136).

In contrast, the generative potential of reparation has been considered contemporarily through its manifestation in or through Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs), a practice that almost always seeks to navigate and work through the historical (and ongoing) injuries caused by white subjectivity towards Indigenous peoples. David McIvor argues that TRCs maintain a “precarious perch between pathology and democratic possibility” because they “exceed (without transcending completely) both the amnesic politics of manic consensualism and the melancholic politics of endless agonistic struggle” (*Mourning in America* 133). Or, put simply, he believes there is an “inherent ambivalence of truth and reconciliation processes” (McIvor, *Mourning in America* 133). TRCs, *in theory*, are reparative due to their necessitation of the tension between both truth *and* reconciliation, rather than being split. McIvor describes them as “both desirable and disappointing, and desirable in part because they disappoint manic wishes for frictionless belonging only possible among part objects” (*Mourning in America* 134). While TRCs in actuality are not inherently effective (or non-violent) in enacting reparation – they “do not necessarily herald the appearance of a new democratic subjectivity, nor do they inevitably displace political struggles for recognition through ethical discourses of forgiveness, reconciliation, or reparation” (McIvor, *Mourning in America* 134) – they do demonstrate the necessary ambivalence of Kleinian reparation. Reparative acts are “neither salvation nor sham, but are messy, conflicted, yet novel and vital parts of the ongoing democratic work of mourning” (McIvor, *Mourning in America* 134), demanding the negotiation of guilt and mourning in contemporary culture. As opposed to overcoming or triumphing loss, non-manic reparation necessitates “ways of *living with* social traumas” (McIvor, *Mourning in America* 15).

Conceptually, TRCs demonstrate the practical deployment of Klein’s psychoanalytic framework in a contemporary sociopolitical context and the impossibility of eradicating



ambivalence. Their ambivalence constitutes “their greatest promise” (142) – “in weaving together different narratives of the same event, TRCs contest idealized versions of the past and present while disappointing desires for easy consensus and coexistence” (McIvor, *Mourning in America* 143). Reparation necessitates the nurturing labour of mourning, which “opens up a space of mediation between self and other outside the paranoid-schizoid terms of merger or antagonism” (McIvor, *Mourning in America* 26). The depressive position ushers in “a mournful vision of agency, which accepts the difficult copresence of ambivalence and complexity within self and other,” a process of integration that is precarious and never finished (McIvor, *Mourning in America* 29).

This ambivalence notably challenges museological approaches, of dealing with guilt in and through content and strategy. In considering two different approaches to so-called “memory entrepreneurship”,<sup>29</sup> Amber Dean and Angela Failler describe a distinction between how “the ‘gift’ of history and its representations can serve as an opportunity for individual and collective engagement with the ways that the past – including histories of trauma and violence – continues to inform the present” or “become a kind of commodity that functions primarily to perpetuate hegemonic, expected versions of the past (as in lovely knowledge)” (453). Dean and Failler directly tether this to Canadian museological practices wherein curators are seeking to address the 2015 calls to action from Canada’s TRC “by recognizing and acknowledging the role museums have played in the exploitation and marginalization of Indigenous peoples and in perpetuating and reinforcing settler colonialism” (353). Despite these attempts, though, they critique the Canadian Museum for Human Rights – Canada’s newest national museum – for its “business-like approach where difficult knowledge is elided for the sake of framing its contents, including certain representations of Indigenous lives and histories, specifically as ‘amazing gifts’” (Dean and Failler 353). This museological example illustrates the potential impact of Klein’s circulation of manic versus non-manic forms of reparation. Non-manic reparation à la truth and reconciliation is a means by which “communities can form and reform a fractured, fractious, and internally contested – and thus necessarily incomplete and open-ended – whole” (Allen and Ruti 154). In other words, it reckons with the fact that “the only ‘cure’ is to accept

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<sup>29</sup> Memory entrepreneurship is defined as “a broad range of civic initiatives and engagements with memory and memory work” and centers around social recognition and political legitimacy of certain interpretations or narratives (Dean and Failler 353).

that there's no cure" (Allen and Ruti 199).<sup>30</sup> The reckoning of reconciliation comes to mean resisting "a 'narcissistic' relationship to history that serves to split off traumas of misrecognition in the interest of a sanitized version of the past with which we can identify without guilt or cognitive dissonance" (McIvor, *Mourning in America* 136), which, simply, emphasizes the perpetual ethicality of relationality and its narration.

The relationality of reparation as a modality of care emerges, I believe, in the deployment of Klein towards a politics of recognition, which in my Kleinian reading of the posthumanities is situated in relation to crisis. How do we respond and engage in perceived crisis? In what ways is crisis recognized, categorized, and narrated to allow for varying reparative possibilities? Amy Allen (2015) argues that Klein's psychoanalytic framework complicates the notion of recognition. That is, Klein's understanding of human drives – the coexistence of the drive for both love and connection and for control and destruction – demonstrates a way "to rethink recognition through the lens of ambivalence" (Allen, "Are We Driven?" 319). Through a return to Klein's centrality of ambivalence, Allen shifts the focus away from attempts for institutional promises for recognition "by calling into question not only to what extent normative structures of recognition can be fully realized in a society, but also the normative status of recognition itself" ("Are We Driven?" 327). Rather, we gain a realistic conception of human complexity by situating destruction as part of reparative processes, a constitutive part of relationality (Allen, "Are We Driven?" 323). This entanglement addresses Braummühl's concern for the overlooking of the "enmeshment *with relations of domination and exclusion*" (227) in the posthumanities, as referenced in Chapter 1. It counters what Eng describes as "the affective distribution of precarious life, as it constitutes and separates good objects deserving of *care* and redress from bad objects meriting no consideration" (Eng 16; italics added). Ambivalence, the entanglement of good and bad, as opposed to the splitting of such, disrupts what Braummühl describes as "the liberal notion of merit and its flipside: the notion of 'life unworthy of life'" (234), emphasizing instead the ways interpsychic phantasies and intrapsychic projections are entangled. Recognition, as a product of human psychic life, directly orients questions of care and crisis – "reparation is always already constituted within the given frames of reference of the Other as a psychical subject" (S. Todd 106). It is not only "a psychical response to the specificity of another suffering

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<sup>30</sup> In contrast, Mari Ruti notes that "as long as we're hoping for a cure, we remain caught up in the meshes of cruel optimism," as described by Lauren Berlant (Allen and Ruti 203).

but also a condition of the susceptibility to the Other that constitutes subjectivity itself as a suffering” (S. Todd 107).

Furthermore, Klein’s complication of the starting point of a politics of recognition highlights the impossibility of autonomous agency (McIvor, “The Cunning of Recognition” 255). The reparative turn instigated by Sedgwick was celebrated for its “ethical heft...its ability to (nonviolently) assess the dimensions of the object’s injury and proffer adequate restitution,” “a reciprocal relation in which the act of sustaining one’s self also seamlessly sustains the object” (Laubender 52). But, through a return to Klein’s framework more broadly and directly, I emphasize here “not only the fragility of recognition but also deep-seated tendencies towards *misrecognition*” (McIvor, “The Cunning of Recognition” 245), the manic desire towards finding solutions or inserting something as a salve. The purported *choice* of enacting paranoid versus reparative reading practices is far more complicated than Sedgwick illustrates in her initial instigation of the reparative turn. Rather, “the promise of Klein’s work is that the acknowledgment of these dreadful parts is a necessary aspect of the (endless) development of ambivalent autonomy and the (always incomplete) struggle for integration” (McIvor, “The Cunning of Recognition” 260). Reparation is strictly premised on the conditions of integration – “the combination of two divergent narratives of life: a hope for mutual recognition in the name of the full development of the autonomous personality, and a tragic awareness of the fundamental psychic compromises at the root of this achievement and the need to keep in view the conflicts and ambivalence within self, other and world” (McIvor, “The Cunning of Recognition” 257). Consequently, Klein’s framework maintains an essential tragedy – the idealization and omnipotence of the paranoid-schizoid position; “*this falsity grounds the truth of recognition and care*” (251), rendering the achievement of the depressive position and the potential for reparation as indebted to these foundational compromises and defences (McIvor, “The Cunning of Recognition” 257), to what I categorized in Chapter 1 as the impossibility of escaping the human, the bad and hated object, in theorizing the posthumanities.

By turning to this politicization of Klein’s framework through reparative turn, we learn how Klein’s psychoanalytic theory offers critical insight for ethical relation – or, more simply, how her framework resonates with and as a modality of care, which I seek to extend next to my guiding concern: the stakes of reparation for the Kleinian subject in the Anthropocene. As Caroline Laubender articulates, there are “ethico-political dangers inherent in reparative

endeavours,” wherein the perceived objects and its injuries are narrated, “*according only to the perimeters of one’s own self*” (53).<sup>31</sup> Reparation does not inherently constitute an ethical relation to the world in Klein’s psychoanalytic theory – there is no guarantee of doing good despite *human* intentions. Reparation emerges “*not* as an ethical idea (methodologically or otherwise), but as a way of naming the limits of our ability to *ever* fully know or act on behalf of the object’s own good” (Laubender 53). Through reparation’s emphasis on “the assignments of injury and repair” (Laubender 53), Klein’s framework exposes the entanglement of subjective projection in relation to “making reparation”, in the recognition of crisis. As Laubender describes, “the process of determining *what* counts as a problem – a site of injury or damage in need of repair – is perhaps one of *the most* ethically fraught aspects of the analytic process since it is always bound up with deciding *who* has the authority to adjudicate it” (56). As a result, from her theorizing of an escape from the paranoid “straightjacket view of guilt,” Klein’s work traces “how one comes to *care* about the suffering of the Other, and how this leads to a development of one’s moral sensibilities” (S. Todd 104; italics added), wherein the so-called *Other* in my project is not necessarily human.

Klein’s psychoanalytic framework identifies and addresses the precarity of human recognition of crisis, a precarity forged between the fear of annihilation and the capacity to recognize and reckon with its manifestations in or contributions to sociopolitical processes, institutions, and endeavours. In many ways, then, Klein addresses the question of responsibility – for one’s own implication in and impact on the perceived state of crisis, of being both of consequence and inconsequential. A return to Klein’s intended meaning of reparation highlights how ambivalence helps to make sense of reparative practices in their contemporary political manifestations, specifically in the Anthropocene and in the reparative desires of the posthumanities.

### *Reparation and the Culture of the Anthropocene*

I now bring this nuanced understanding of reparation to our contemporary sociopolitical moment, situating the Kleinian subject in the Anthropocene through the closest articulation of

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<sup>31</sup> While I embrace Laubender’s overarching emphasis on the ethical considerations of an injury-repair framework here, I note that her essay, in building explicitly on Eng’s critique, likewise overlooks the *manic* manifestations of reparation and critiques reparation as a *whole* – reparation exists “*only as a means to assuage guilt*” (Laubender 62).

Klein within the concerns of the posthumanities – that is, the utilization of Klein to understand our human engagement with and negotiation of ecological crisis and climate change. The Anthropocene, after all, is the designation for our current geological epoch that is defined by, though not limited to, climate change and thus the possibility of a “sixth extinction” (Grusin vii-viii). The Anthropocene is marked by a very real threat of annihilation, and this ongoing fear and concern is what drives the posthumanities, the desire and necessity for a potential to mitigate the human’s destruction, perhaps through being *post*-human. I consider in this section, then, how Klein’s concept of reparation and the necessity of ambivalence is generative for considering the negotiation of the Anthropocene through the alignments already made between the Kleinian subject and climate change, an exemplary negotiation of crisis.

Sally Weintrobe’s scholarship, both independently and in her anthology *Engaging with Climate Change* (2012), sets the ground for my bridging of a Kleinian framework with the posthumanities.<sup>32</sup> Broadly, Weintrobe’s anthology contains various readings of our relationship with so-called *mother* nature through the lens of Klein’s mother and child dynamic (Keene; Mauss-Hanke; Rustin, “Discussion”; Weintrobe). In a way, this extends from Klein’s own, albeit rare, drawing of connection between her theoretical framework and external sociopolitical reality – Klein in fact mentions our relationship to nature, and particularly the cruel and destructive aspects of nature such as floods and earthquakes, and how it involves relational negotiations with “a grudging and exacting mother” (*Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 337) as we struggle to keep and maintain a livable relation or connection to earth. Our infantile dependence on our mother’s (or caretaker’s) body acts as a prototype for our everyday metaphor of “Mother Earth” and “dependence on the Earth’s resources as well as each other through life” (Rustin, “Discussion” 106). Our infancy is characterized by “maternal provision for urgent needs”, a holding environment that is taken for granted (Keene 146). John Keene describes this “environment mother” as forming our “sense of the world as sustaining and there for us to use without undue concern” (146). If the mother is, then, “good-enough,” Keene argues that we form “the complementary belief that the planet is an unlimited ‘toilet mother’, capable of absorbing our toxic products to infinity” (146). Evidently, our formative attitude towards the mother, as

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<sup>32</sup> All authors cited in this section in regards to psychoanalytic readings of climate change are from this anthology by Weintrobe. While these authors do not all reference Klein explicitly, I inflect my reading of their psychoanalytic arguments with Klein, which I see as implicitly present in their reliance on the field of psychoanalytic object relations broadly, such as the invocation of D.W. Winnicott’s work by John Keene.

embodied in the paranoid-schizoid position, influences our attitudes towards the environment – “the infant’s dependency needs are painful and may be hated, which can lead to wishes to punish, control, empty out, or destroy the mother who is felt to be the wilful source of the infant’s frustration” (Keene 147).

In a state of ecological crisis, then, the posthuman experience implies the immersion in a world “overwhelmed by the infantile anxieties described so poignantly by Melanie Klein,” a world that is, according to Margaret Rustin, “dominated by anxieties about survival and the horror of dependence on unreliable and potentially cruel others” (104). Reliving this helplessness and neediness of infancy is understood as terrifying in adult life, triggering a return to the foundational psychotic anxieties of early life (Rustin, “Discussion” 104-106). Therefore, a denial of climate change can emerge as a defence mechanism not due to moral lack necessarily but rather to “the intolerable nature of the anxiety” – “it generates too great a degree of insecurity and persecution and places too heavy a burden of guilt” (Rustin, “Discussion” 107). In facing the uniquely immense threat of ecological crisis and its subsequent danger in some capacity for human life, then, a tendency towards paranoid-schizoid anxieties and manic defences against both guilt and persecution is considered an understandable result of our inherited adaptive patterns, especially within sociocultural group dynamics. That is, psychoanalysis elucidates the ways in which human development is more accustomed to managing problems on a local or familial scale, not to cooperate in a planet-wide crisis (Keene 144). The posthumanities reflect anxiety-formation in the face of “a diffuse, slowly evolving but potentially serious threat” as opposed to “an immediate response to a sharply defined threat” (Keene 145). Posthuman anxieties reflect the construction of a defensive structure for this catastrophic anxiety, or anxiety over imminent or perceived catastrophe, in the contemporary facing of ecological crisis as a collective condition.

Weintrobe identifies these conditions as a “culture of uncare” – the current globalized economic system of neoliberal capitalism does not merely lack care but rather directly seeks to sever our links with care (“Communicating Psychoanalytic Ideas” 422). This culture, according to Weintrobe, works against the achievement of ambivalent relations, of both caring and not caring, both loving and hating, by incentivizing paranoid-schizoid tendencies and manic reparative defences – an achievement that directly preys on the human desire to defend against – to avoid and protect against – mental pain (“Communicating Psychoanalytic Ideas” 413-414).

Such cultural attachments, however, shift across sociohistorical moments, from the post-war welfare state as the good object of provisions and security to the 1980s divestment of governmental (economic) responsibility and so-called *infallible* and *free* markets (Keene 151-152), through which “neoliberal culture has relentlessly encouraged disavowal in the general population” (Weintrobe, “Climate Crisis” 238). The subject within neoliberalism is, therefore, understood as living in a split reality, wherein dependency and reliance on others is dangerous, wherein, “at its extreme, responsibility for others disappeared, and the only reality to be attended to was that of the individual and his survival” (Keene 152). In other words, a so-called “carefree consumer” is formed as the “modern day manifestation of the death drive” (422) that trickles down from “corporate power, to governments, to social groups, to the individual psyche” (Weintrobe, “Communicating Psychoanalytic Ideas” 413). That is, being free from care is a defensive structure that seeks to maintain a state of feeling-good, a desire to maintain a sense of self-protection that has very real implications for our understanding of reality.

In museology, this lack of care beyond the individual can contribute to the maintenance of curative museology and so-called *lovely* knowledge, a defence against larger scale, anxiety-inducing conditions. The way the climate crisis is related to has real and concrete implications for the way crisis is narrated and consequently responded to. And, since museums are spaces that are intended to narrate reality through documentation and interpretation of the past and present, they contribute to future potentiality. Engagement with climate crisis in the museum is one example of the way museums can grapple with difficult knowledge, with that which confronts, challenges, and provokes our sense of self and world – it presents a crisis to awareness and thus will likely not diffuse anxiety.

In a 2020 special issue of *Museum Management and Curatorship* on “Museums and Climate Action”, Robert Janes discusses how evading care about this global crisis is *suicidal* (595), a quite literal materialization of annihilation. Janes describes how, ultimately, “the climate crisis is about death – the death of some or all of the biosphere, perhaps hundreds of millions of people, and perhaps our way of life” and “extinction of the more-than-human world is already well underway” (590). A Kleinian reading of the subject in the Anthropocene contributes insight into Janes’ demand to *feel*, to not just think this crisis and, in turn the ways public institutions like museums can maintain or disrupt normative stories of and relations to crisis. Like Failler’s critique of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights for its reliance on consolatory hope,

“ignoring the science may allow us to find comfort in illusory hope – abetted by the magical belief that someone else is going to fix this”, but this crisis is a “disaster we are now living” (588), we live in an “age of climate chaos” (Janes 589). Our relationship to this crisis has a direct impact on our storytelling and subsequent instigation of engagement and action, further highlighted by the fact that “there are over 55,000 museums – the largest, self-organized franchise in the world” (Janes 588). Therefore, the stakes of collective care are high – an active investment in *not* caring evades “in a feeling way that climate change is human caused” (Weintrobe, “Communicating Psychoanalytic Ideas” 422).

Psychoanalytic critique of the anxieties of posthumanism highlights the proliferation of a “narcissistic, perverse, consumerist, extractive, entitled, arrogant, psychopathic, instrumental, and manically triumphant, culture,” rewarding cooperation in “an essentially immoral and inherently unsustainable project” (Weintrobe, “Communicating Psychoanalytic Ideas” 412). This individualist logic clearly mirrors the omnipotent splitting and idealization of the paranoid-schizoid position that is characteristic of Enlightenment ideology (and the exhibitionary complex’s formation in so-called old museology), tethering the negotiation of ecological crisis with the Enlightenment’s double-edged sword: the “self-certainty to both liberate objective science and reject the facts it uncovered when convenient” (Hamilton 29). The movement of old museology into new museology represents the implications of this logic – that is, new museology fuels characteristics of a culture of uncaring through the museum’s neoliberalization, its deployment of “discourses of social inclusion and well-being” (Message, “Museums and the Utility of Culture” 245). Like the foundational public museum, the culture industries are *still* utilized for the dissemination of a “regime of self-management” (93), reproducing the same “ethics of self-improvement and self-realization and the objectification and valuation of social values and traditions” that marked 19th century public museums (Message, *New Museums* 94), in all their failed neutrality around intersectional identity politics.

The culture of so-called climate denial – or, as I see it, the denial of human impact on and thus responsibility for climate crisis – seeks “to re-impose the Enlightenment’s allocation of humans and Nature to two distinct realms, as if the purification of climate science could render Nature once again natural, as if taking politics out of science can take humans out of Nature” (Hamilton 29). Just as posthumanism cannot construct a pure theory that is distinctly separate from the human and its desires, climate denial fails to acknowledge and contemplate our



entanglement. A culture of uncare, therefore, “appeals to the part of us that feels especially entitled in an arrogant way to deploy omnipotent fixes to life’s painful problems” (Weintrobe, “Chapter 3” 41). It encourages both “individual pleasure at the expense of others” (58) and “the enlightenment virtue of doubt” wherein “absolute truth is demanded, and in its absence the truth-value of accumulated evidence and theory is annihilated” (Hoggett 62).

This culture of disavowal is in fact explicitly connected to Steiner’s concept of “psychic retreat”, referenced in Chapter 1. The contemporary culture of the death drive and its organization around ecological crisis, as articulated here, constructs a “collective psychic retreat” from the “anxieties and psychic pain about our damaging environmental and social behaviour” (Weintrobe, “Communicating Psychoanalytic Ideas” 423). The denial of (climate) crisis does not merely negate but rather disavows our involvement, a “radical splitting and a range of strategies that ensure that reality can be seen and not seen *at one and the same time*” (Weintrobe, “Chapter 3” 38). The threat of disintegration of our world in the face of climate change is framed as too much, as too catastrophic for survival – literally – and thus disavowal offers an alternative to manic reparation when a sense of repair is felt to be impossible (Weintrobe, “Chapter 3” 40). In museological practice, such a psychic retreat is presented as simply “up for grabs” (Message, 2006 35), the offering of a more pleasant opt-in for certain narratives over others, highlighting the seduction of certain perceptions over others. The curative desires of museology as psychic retreat facilitate the formation of “the museum as ‘mall’” (594) wherein the museum became “devoted to consumption, edutainment, and entertainment” (Janes 595). Simply, through the example of the museum here, the concrete impact of manic reparative retreat becomes visible.

Such response to crisis connects directly, I believe, to Figlio’s articulation of delusional reality by enabling “a psychic retreat from reality where both paranoid-schizoid *and* depressive anxieties can be *systematically* avoided” (Weintrobe, “Chapter 3” 38). In the context of ecological crisis, this retreat cascades the reality of environmental disregard with our constructed cultural ego-ideals as manifest through material consumption and individualized responsibility in the context of neoliberal capitalism (Weintrobe, “Communicating Psychoanalytic Ideas” 413). In this way, climate denial keeps the human within what Cole and Meißner, in their posthumanist projects, describe as the two contradictory positions demanded by the neoliberal capitalist moment – our simultaneous positioning as both a desiring subject and docile object, the instrumentalization of attachments in a way that both calibrates desires and defences in a way

that likewise upholds and maintains a culture of disavowal and uncared, a form of collective docility in the face of the death drive. In this way, a “perverse culture” (56) is constructed to defend against “fundamental aspects of the human condition – our dependency on others, our mortality, the necessary constraints upon our desires” (Hoggett 59), which, like the paralysis of Michael Rustin’s “borderline state”,<sup>33</sup> maintains the “paradoxical gesture of both abandoning yet refusing to abandon” that is characteristic of the so-called “perverse ontology” of posthumanist desires (Hinton and Liu 130). This cultivation of wishful thinking narrates purportedly “benign fictions” that are “comforting in an often unfriendly world” but become “dangerous delusions when they are clung to despite overwhelming evidence” (Hamilton 20).

As a result, this culture of uncared fuels our delusional capacity to disavow our own care for being of consequence as well as inconsequential in the Anthropocene, as reflected in the foundational posthumanities and responded to through manic reparative desires. In other words, the desire to be posthuman participates in the same culture of the death drive that manifests as anthropocentric climate denial – that is, the Anthropocene is characterized by a paranoid, omnipotent, and idealized response to the threat of annihilation. Consequently, I ask how Klein’s developmental framework and the possibility of processing ambivalent reality and engaging in (non-manic) reparative tendencies can be considered in the face ecological crisis.

Renee Aron Lertzman characterizes this cultural moment of “environmental subjectivity” as producing a “myth of apathy,” wherein climate denial acts as a form of “anticipatory mourning” (124). That is, we mourn and move past our capacity to in fact engage in reparative practices before even trying, a form of protection against the guilt over our impact and presumed failure to save the loved and idealized object, our world as we know it. Our apathy towards crisis is a false retreat from experiencing the crisis. David Levine and Matthew Bowker, in contrast, describe this environmental subject as “the guilty self” with a “destroyed-world fantasy” that insists on our current living in a destroyed world “because someone or something destroyed it” (xiv). The guilty self is not merely the self that experiences guilt but is in fact taken over by guilt, “a self that is defined by guilt,” “a self that identifies with its guilt and only exists, or only experiences its existence, when taking on guilt and feeling guilty” (Levine and Bowker 51). The guilty self is, therefore, a defence mechanism that deals not with real guilt but rather “a facsimile of guilt, put in place to protect the personality from a greater threat” (52), from the perceived

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<sup>33</sup> See Chapter 1 for more on Rustin’s concept of “borderline state”.

“loss of a safe space or a safe world” (Levine and Bowker 56). Yet, the Kleinian subject, I note, illustrates the need developmentally to move through *both* guilt and mourning in order to reach reparative possibilities, cementing the necessity to grapple with the “affective and psychic dimensions of contemporary ecological issues” (Lertzman 124).

Counter to the seductive conclusion of simply claiming that this is just “not a world where depressive guilt has any place” (Rustin, “Discussion” 104), I seek to ground Klein’s depressive position and potential for reparative acts within this contemporary state of ecological crisis and thus the conditions of the Anthropocene. The perpetuation of a culture of uncare is geared towards nullifying ambivalence – “the aim of this culture is to break links with care and encourage spatial distancing of the victims of our uncare in the internal world of the psyche...to keep us defended against feeling conflicted and anguished at our collectively damaging way of living” (Weintrobe, “Communicating Psychoanalytic Ideas” 414). Arguing for a return to “business as usual” is a deployment of manic repair wherein “‘repairing’ the damage means restoring things to the idealized state they appeared to be in beforehand,” “to block *felt* awareness of guilt about damage I individually cause” by blaming larger external systems and institutions (Weintrobe, “Climate Crisis” 227). Ambivalence, thus, runs counter to the exceptionalism of narcissistic entitlement, of “feeling entitled to be spared the pain of guilt necessarily treats the caring reality-oriented part of the self as not entitled, not worth it” (Weintrobe, “Climate Crisis” 238). Rather, while “evidence of guilt” may identify “evidence of reparative intention,” it is necessary to distinguish “between concern for the object and the narcissism of feeling good” (Figlio 194).

As Weintrobe describes, “a sense of proportion about personal guilt for climate change” is central to reparation (“Chapter 1” 11). As opposed to the aforementioned manic defences of anticipatory mourning or the guilty self, Rosemary Randall emphasizes the need to grapple with “the ‘no’ of nature” that is so rare in our “culture of acquisition and growth” – the need for humans “to see themselves as part of the hierarchies and history of the natural world, subject to its laws, subject to its finite resources, respecting their place in its systems” (98). In a way, this mimics the emphasis across the posthumanities for seeing and respecting the capacities of the object, material, and non-human world. Through Klein, I believe this post-human desire – for object-orientation or non-human mattering – can be reconceptualized as a desire for the acknowledgement and toleration of our position in an ambivalent reality – the embrace of a

“reality of limits in a world that has denied that such limits should exist” (Randall 98). To live sustainably in a reality that asserts its limits, to respond in a way that does not reproduce the manic reparative tendencies of the foundational posthumanities, Randall articulates the necessity of not merely invigorating the substantial power of objects and the aliveness and entanglements across species, but also grappling with “the complexity of people’s unconscious and emotional responses” (99). Especially given the global manifestations of the contemporary anthropocentric crisis that make it harder to see and assess the expansiveness of its impact, the identification and attribution of guilt and, consequently, mourning and the capacity for reparation in the Anthropocene demands a new attribution of meaning to the toleration of ambivalence.

Reparation in the Anthropocene demands a capacity for global and collective concern and the slower-for-some, faster-for-others movement of crisis on a planetary scale that has not yet been demanded of human developmental pathways. That is, this moment demands an assessment of guilt and mourning for how the world may change for future generations due to our actions now, how individual acts of reparation contribute in a limited way to a larger future-oriented action for change and prevention, that we are in some ways inconsequential to a cause-and-effect outcome *and yet* are very much of consequence.<sup>34</sup> As Neyrat describes, “worlds-without-humans theories” like posthumanism “repress the environmental dimension of the planetary unconscious” (37), a repression of *both* our relational condition (i.e. dependence) and the underpinning state of “its unavoidable *separation*” (36), the fact that there could be “humans-without-a-world” (37). Posthumanist anxieties prevent reparative engagement. Instead, Neyrat poses the question: “does the necessary critique of humanism and anthropocentrism that produces our acosmic situation only result in a rejection of the human?” (38). Kleinian reparation – as opposed to manic repair or curative impositions – articulates a way to counter “the Anthropocenic subject” and its “complicity between the capacity to remake the Earth and destroying it” (Neyrat 47).

The macroscopic scale of ambivalence in the Anthropocene is far more difficult, then, given the extreme limits of its reassurance – that is, the challenge of this sociopolitical moment is

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<sup>34</sup> In many ways, this challenge is visible in the unprecedented conditions in 2020 of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the mass doubt or debate surrounding the necessity of individual precautions, let alone municipal, provincial, or national regulations for providing safety and life to those who are more vulnerable, which, additionally, connects this to the precarious distribution and vulnerability in the construction of good and bad objects.

the possibility for “non-manic forms of reassurance” (McIvor, “The Cunning of Recognition” 251). As Randall describes, “in dealing personally with ecological debt, it is extremely difficult to see the effect of the reparation one makes, to feel forgiven, accepted, or comforted” (99); and such reliance on redemption reproduces “the narcissism of feeling good” (Figlio 194). Consequently, the stakes of engaging effectively and reparatively in the Anthropocene are tethered intimately with ambivalence; in turn, the foundational urge to be posthuman is elucidated through Klein’s psychoanalytic framework: “until reconnection is made with the depth of our species’ dependence on the natural world and the inevitable precariousness of individual lives, there can be no proper engagement with these tragic elements as a public issue” (Keene 154). There is a need to live within being “both overwhelmed by anxiety and not anxious at all” (Weintrobe, “Chapter 3” 36), a need for the posthumanities to engage with both the problems of anthropocentrism as well as the human and its psychic life, a middle ground “between the illusionary feeling of living in a healthy and ‘good-enough’ environment on the one hand and the knowledge that this environment is being threatened even more if we go on to pretend that we are able to stick to this illusion” (Mauss-Hanke 53-54).

As opposed to the absolute decentering of the human in purportedly curative (or redemptive) epistemological or ontological reorientations, Klein demonstrates the need for, as described by Lertzman, “an underpinning epistemology and ontology – that assumes the constitution of human subjectivity as conflicted, anxious, and ambivalent, but also creative, reparative and capable of great concern” (130). Kleinian psychoanalysis directly highlights how to both “*acknowledge* and *offset* anxieties, guilt, and ambivalence,” “how to acknowledge and provide space for contradiction, ambivalence, loss, and mourning,” to disrupt moralization so as to not inhibit mobilization (Lertzman 130). This is in contrast to the more simplistic emphasis and desire for manic quick-fixes, “‘fake’ solutions [that] involve zero inner psychic work” and enable “business as usual to proceed” (Weintrobe, “Communicating Psychoanalytic Ideas” 415) – “as if the messiness of our situation can be avoided and glossed over” (Lertzman 130). It is, therefore, the very pervasive presence of human anxiety, desires, and defences that sets the ground for the possibility of reparative possibilities in the culture of the Anthropocene – it is here that analyses must be refocused in order to ground and orient the potentialities of posthumanist endeavours, as opposed to relinquishing to the belief that “these societies are unable to move forward in a depressive direction, for fear of the limitless pain, guilt, and anxiety that such a

move would induce” (Rustin, *Reason and Unreason* 130). To shift from the persecutory turn and manic reparation, a cultural shift is needed that maintains an “openness to the unexpected, respect for the time it takes to become conversant with a complex system, familiarity with many disciplines and the mental toughness needed to escape the tyranny of the status quo” (Keene 156). Counter to desires to be truly *posthuman* or otherwise bear the critique of maintaining anthropocentrism, this shift demands recognition of ambivalent entanglement “both as a private trouble and as a public issue” (Keene 154). I believe that Klein illustrates how reckoning with ambivalence as always already a part of our living conditions in fact counters the tendencies of *both* anthropocentric and posthumanist theorizing, at least foundationally.

The negotiation of Kleinian ambivalence, as illustrated above, hinges upon “how successfully individuals and groups work with the death drive” (McIvor, “The Cunning of Recognition” 254). In many ways, this negotiation is constructed upon the recognition of ecological crisis and approach to responding, which is dependent upon our developmental positioning in Klein’s pendulum swing. This recognition is a reckoning with the death drive, a reckoning with ambivalence – there is no elimination of violence or destruction, nor is there merely love and ideal goodness; rather, this constitutive ambivalence necessitates a recognition of our “nonnegotiable” dependency and loss (Allen and Ruti 194). Klein herself describes ambivalence “side by side with the destructive impulses in the unconscious mind...there exists a profound urge to make sacrifices, in order to help and to put right” (*Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 311). The integration of ambivalent reality, as opposed to continuing to experience it as a threat of disintegration, is fundamentally about the loss of the idealized version of the good object, not only because of the pervasive reality of our destructive impacts but also because the idealized good object never really existed in the first place – it was only a manifestation of our persecutory defences of splitting. While our phantasized world never truly vanishes, “adaptation to – coming to terms with – this reality is, for Klein, the key not only to the reparative work of mourning but also central to psychic growth and intellectual and artistic creativity” (Allen and Ruti 126). As Figlio articulates, “ambivalence defends the psyche against a collapse” (110), it opens up potential to assess and respond to crisis differently, to counter the “bondage to the illusion of a homogenous entity,” to the wholeness, I note, of truly posthuman theorizations, for instance, “an inherently unstable defence against psychotic collapse” (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 113). It is also “essential to differentiate the fact of the existence of ambivalence, which is there

from the beginning, from the achievement of knowing one's ambivalence, accepting it and working it through" – the latter "is accomplished primarily through recognition of guilt and loss brought about by ambivalence, which leads to the capacity to mobilize restoration and reparation" (Lertzman 128).

Likewise, reparation, counter to its manic form, is embedded in its own paradoxes. It is "an internal reality that can be expressed through an external reality, but cannot be reduced to it," maintaining, "therefore, an observable, social meaning and an invisible subjective meaning" (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 186). Reparation, therefore, manifests externally and socially through various terminologies: "first, there is the idea of taking and returning, of recompense or reimbursement; in the second, there is the idea of injury or damage: something that cannot be replaced" (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 189). In the latter, redemption is conceivably a part of reparation – the desire to "make better" is continually entangled with the destructive past and, perhaps, present. This temporal tension, our inability omnipotently to control its manifestation and outcomes, the movement from intent to impact, emphasizes the inescapable tension between and persistent presence of damage and repair, necessary components of Kleinian reparation. Demands for compensation, such as TRCs, are "forever inadequate" (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 193). Reparation "is not accountability in a juridical sense but acceptance of responsibility in psychic reality" wherein "guilt is intrinsic...the object remains blemished and can never again be as it was, so the reparative process remains incomplete" (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 193). Kleinian psychoanalysis facilitates this fine line – "the ambiguity between, on the one hand, an act and, on the other, a subjective state that registers a change for the better in the relationship between the subject and object," cementing how, despite manic defences, "reparation cannot be engineered" (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 186). Reparation is, instead, always "a retrospective discovery," it is "incompatible with time" (Figlio, *Remembering as Reparation* 200) and thus it is uniquely suitable to the impossibility of solace in the face of the immense scale of crisis in the Anthropocene. In this way, Klein clearly illustrates the necessity of accepting that "there's no definitive cure" – "for Klein, because of the centrality and ineliminability of the death drive, there's no getting over or beyond ambivalence, and therefore no possibility of ultimate resolution...the best we can do is to learn to tolerate and manage that aspect of the human condition" (Allen and Ruti 28).

Through turning to writing on the psychoanalytic negotiation of climate change and ecological crisis, I extended what Lertzman poses as “environmental object relations theory” (126) to the realm of the posthumanities and the larger crisis of the Anthropocene, an extension of the sociopolitical implications of Klein’s developmental framework. The question of sustainability as a response to ecological crisis becomes a question of considering “the ways in which we imbue our object world with associations that may involve human others, sensations, memories, or desire” (Lertzman 126). This is “not to say that objects are ‘only’ a construct of our imagination, but to acknowledge the place of subjectivity in the human-non-human object world,” to explore how “things and events have psychic resonance, and how we relate and respond to them potentially presents another language, one of desires, longings, and unconscious wishes” (Lertzman 126). These neuroses, Weintrobe describes, are “rooted in deep-seated annihilation anxiety resulting from our denial of our real dependence on nature and based on the illusion of our own autonomy” (“Chapter 3” 41).

I demonstrated the sociopolitical importance of recognizing and reckoning with the necessary and pervasive ambivalence of engaging in and seeking impact on crises in our world, a world of humans, non-humans, objects, and materialities. In particular, through reference to the museum, I illustrated the concrete consequence of these varying attachments to crisis through narrative and memorialization. The utilization of TRCs is one realm in which the question of reparation is present in the museological practice. Curatorial work – the processes of collection, arrangement, and interpretation – not only reflects back to a public a certain story, but it also has very real impact on the potential to care – the potential for instigating engagement and activism. The approach to and construction of storytelling opens up a realm to reconcile with our ambivalent reality. This is, for instance, made starkly apparent in the Royal Ontario Museum’s launch of a hiring search in September 2020 for an inaugural Curator of Climate Change. In turn, Cameron’s particular articulation of posthuman museum practices reflects the necessary prevalence of ambivalence and the im/possibility of permanent nor omnipotent security. Klein provides a lens for understanding what posthuman (museum) practices can accomplish – that is, how it “disrupts the stolid and solid imaginary of the modern museum and its hard, disciplinary, authoritative powers and reformatory agenda” (Cameron, “The Liquid Museum” 355). Cameron describes how museum practice is only reworked through its demand for cognizance and acknowledgment of the foundational mind-set and associated rules of practice.



Reparative care is only possible through the mourning of omnipotence and reconciling with ambivalence, a maintenance of the tension or impossibility of a cure for living and participating in a world marked by crisis. This chapter highlighted how the human's response to the conflict of the death drive is central to a capacity for the human to effectively be a participant in making change and seeking any extent of reparative endeavours. The culture of the death is critical for our engagement in the Anthropocene. It is only upon this foundation that a question of reparative steps is possible. Such a reflective and dialogical consideration of the human and its desires is not central but an unavoidable aspect of considering posthuman engagement in the Anthropocene.

### *Reparative Ethics for the Posthumanities*

Upon exploring the central necessity of recognizing and reconciling ambivalence in order to conceive of and engage in a semblance of non-manic reparation, I believe the subsequent concern is its ethical stakes. I take Mari Ruti's query as a starter: "how do we begin to activate the ethical potential that the Kleinian depressive position and reparation might hold?" (Allen and Ruti 193). Or, more simply, "how can reparation ever have a real change?" (Allen and Ruti 193).

The conclusive call in recent contributions of the posthumanities, as I see it, rests upon concerns for the human therein – the impossibility of escaping human subjectivity in thinking about caring for the more-than-human world. My analysis across these two chapters has, therefore, intervened into the proposition that posthuman ethics cannot exclude humanist concerns but, rather, "they are often expressions of, investments in, and pronouncements upon them" (Barnwell 44). This "constitutive contradiction" (44) is at the crux of my turn to Klein – how "the often-underemphasized methodological focus of such proposals implies that human intentions – to acknowledge, appreciate, be modest, and so on – are what will ultimately *matter*" (Barnwell 36). My turn to Klein provides a whole new meaning to object-oriented feminism's (OOF) claim that "only in willingness to be all kinds of wrong can we arrive at being in the right, in the ethical sense" (Behar, "The Other Woman" 18). That is, by reckoning with the failed repair of paranoid omnipotence, a more "modest ethical position" (Behar, "The Other Woman" 3) is made possible through the potential of guilt and mourning.

Kleinian psychoanalysis provides a lens for understanding "ontology as a political arrangement, realism as an arena for self-possession and relation, and objecthood as a situational

orientation,” illustrating “where the modest ethics of self-implication joins the necropolitical erotics of self-sacrifice” (Behar, *An Introduction to OOF*” 24). In this way, my approach, anchored through an implementation of Kleinian psychoanalysis, centers a way to “differentiate itself from competing modes of analysis without the usual masterful inference of graduating to a higher form of intellectual consciousness” (Barnwell 27). My attendance to “the ways human consciousness is a prehensive feature of *human* objects” through Kleinian psychoanalysis is my proposition for a way to “re-establish intellectual space for situatedness and responsibility” (Mudde 72). Counter to the reparative turn and Sedgwick’s so-called “better methods” wherein repair becomes a “proscriptive ideology” (38), I demonstrate through Klein “the possibility of misrecognition, a sense of fallibility, about even those programmes deemed ethical” (Barnwell 39). Consequently, Braunmühl’s insistence that “vulnerability is what is in need of recognition” (234) becomes, here, the vulnerability and shortcomings inherent in recognizing the implicit human in the posthumanities, the impact of our human desires and defences in theorizing, our inherent capacity for *mis*-recognition, as a constitutive vulnerability of subject- *and* object-ivity. My psychoanalytic approach to the posthumanities becomes a way to read OOO and NM as “a project to recreate human subjectivity rather than as a project to reform politics so that it includes more-than-human actors” (Clare 67). Klein essentially provides “a complex route *through* death in order to establish some understanding of the generative mechanisms of life that foreground ethical sustainability and the possibility for different modes of existence, or sociality” (Hinton, “A Sociality of Death” 225). Her psychoanalytic framework “attests to the vulnerability that is life and the tendency towards dissolution that life involves” (Hinton, “A Sociality of Death” 231).

While the posthumanities clearly care about improving the crisis of the Anthropocene, this apparent inertia over the human self, of always already being of consequence and inconsequential at the same time, is arguably identifiable “not as a clear lack of concern but, rather, as a complicated expression of difficult and conflicting affective states” (Lertzman 130). The lesson, thus, becomes: we cannot rely merely on ontological or epistemological reorientations “to cure our psychological make-up when problems exceeding our coping capacity are encountered” (Lehtonen and Välimäki 50), as illustrated I emphasize in the foundational posthumanities. As Mudde articulates, when “the human being is not ontologically primary but companion....my central question becomes an ethically implicated one” (77).

I see the ethical stakes of the posthumanities as directly intertwined with the ethical concerns around Klein's notion of reparation. Carolyn Laubender warns again "the indispensability of the work of critical interrogation that strives, however impossibly, to move *beyond* the subject's own feeling of just or righteous action" (65). That is, good intention to act on the other's behalf, to make better on the other's behalf, must be counterbalanced with also the ethics of deferring to the other to speak on its own behalf – concerns that construct an "injury-repair framework" (Laubender 65). Klein's work addresses this "ethical complexity of reparative projects, which charge themselves not only with the authority to delimit injury but also to select (and exclude) the always already political objects worthy of repair in the first place" (Laubender 57). I bring this concern *from* how it was articulated around reparation in the context of ongoing racism and colonialism *to* the realm of the posthuman and its entanglement with ecological crisis, as yet another realm in the contemporary moment where injury and repair are distributed, where the consequences of good intention or a "good enough environment" à la Winnicott is not sufficient for reckoning with the damage and destruction of our environment and world-systems that we participate in. And, likewise, it is also insufficient or unethical to merely wait for our environments to speak back in order to care, in order to respond, especially when grounded in the global scale of ecological change and uneven distribution (initially, at least) of impact. Thus, our capacity to respond *reparatively* is reliant upon the ethics of the stories we tell ourselves about what is happening, about the nature and distribution of injury. And museums as institutions designed for sociocultural preservation and interpretation, for the so-called public good, act as exemplary spaces of this storytelling. As Laubender states, the processes of constituting injury and repair cannot be depoliticized – it is "a narrative [that] always enforces, however subtly, a normative ideal of health, wholeness, and well-being" (65-66). In this way, "the very imperative to repair can, in fact, be violent," marking interpretation as central to curative endeavours (Laubender 57). There is a need to intervene in repair that has "much more to do with the critic's own sense of self, own self-image, than with the needs of the object" (Laubender 64).

Evidently, as I argue throughout this dissertation thus far, it is critical to situate human desires, anxieties, and defences within any approach to thinking beyond the human's worldview and tendencies for action. The ethical questions around reparation in the Anthropocene emerge from reparation's condition as "an unschooled impulse or desire" that "instructs us to care for others but does not tell us who or how"; rather, it "requires guidance" (Alford, *Melanie Klein*

*and Critical Social Theory* 176). But, in light of the inherent and pervasive presence of ambivalence – how reparation is “the external, relational version of the internal, intrapsychic stance of bearing ambivalence without resorting to splitting or other manic defences” (Allen, “Are We Driven?” 323) – there is a need to grapple with the “better and worse ways to manage this lack of a cure, both individually and collectively” (Allen and Ruti 202). And, when dealing with curative desires with a lack of cure, I believe the necessary focus becomes a question of *care*.

The concept of care emerged previously through Weintrobe’s positing of our contemporary culture as one characterized by an active uncoupling from care – that of uncare. To respond to and counter these broken links with care, Weintrobe asks “what sort of caring imagination we need to dream of to build a sustainable world” (“Communicating Psychoanalytic Ideas” 412). To address this query, Weintrobe believes we need to develop a capacity to care – a capacity that is “not just part of individual character, but depends on these frameworks of care” (“Communicating Psychoanalytic Ideas” 412). In arguing for a “reparative morality” from the depressive position, Alford similarly emphasizes the need to consider the construction and distribution of care and concern for others or objects and how this narration has epistemological implications (169).<sup>35</sup> Alford uses the term “*caritas*” to describe the driving thread in Klein that grounds “the other-directed, other-regarding character of reparative morality” (*Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 176). In fact, *caritas* – our wider concern for other than ourselves – is, Alford argues, the unique contribution of Klein (*Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 176). In addition to a capacity for self-worth, *caritas* is the reparative capacity made possible by integration, by reconciling internal and external worlds. Care as *caritas* is not something done “*in order to* achieve depressive integration. Rather, it is *because* we have achieved this level of integration, and hence this level of consolidation of the self, that we may direct our care and concern” (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 175). In other words, while caring for our world may enrich our life, it is not the leading motive – “Klein never suggests that we care for others *in order to* reduce our guilt” (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 175), as this is only characteristic of manic reparation, a defence against depressive anxiety. Fear

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<sup>35</sup> While Alford employs moralizing language here, I resituate this within the frame of ethicality – as Alford states: reparative morality is “a morality based upon *caritas*, a love and concern for the object for its own sake” (*Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 83).

is thus what spoils caritas (Alford, *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory* 176). As Weintrobe differentiates – “as if care” is a quick-fix or business-as-usual, while “genuine care involves mourning the phantasy...and attempting to address the damage this phantasy has caused” (“Communicating Psychoanalytic Ideas” 415). Consequently, the overarching indeterminacy of reparation is at the will of a framework for an ethics of care.

In order to respond to Weintrobe’s call to recognize a need to care and a framework for care suited to the desires and anxieties of the posthumanities, I provide in the next chapter a proposition of reparation as a “matter of care” by conducting a close theoretical reading of María Puig de la Bellacasa’s *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds* (2017) through a Kleinian lens. In this way, I contemplate how a Kleinian framework for care can be rooted in posthumanist concerns around ethical engagement in our contemporary more-than-human world.

## Chapter 3

### *Reparation as a Matter of Care*

In Chapter 2, I highlighted how Klein's notion of reparation is quite widely acknowledged as lacking attribution to specific concrete form, that Klein maintains a broad and vague attribution of reparative tendencies. In this chapter, I illustrate how Klein's framework provides developmental depth to the human capacity for engaging in reparation through a close reading of María Puig de la Bellacasa's conceptualization of care in *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds* (2017). I understand care here as a realm for understanding the more concrete manifestations of reparative tendencies or relations that, in Klein, maintain a predominant internal articulation. Put simply, care is for my argument a translation of reparative relations to the realm of action and engagement, demonstrating its potential to be driven by both manic and non-manic desires, anxieties, and defences. The juxtaposition of Kleinian reparation with Puig's concept of matters of care renders the former with contemporary sociopolitical meaning, which, as a result, provides ethical implication for reparation within our more concrete sociopolitical moment of the Anthropocene. I illustrate here how matters of care bring the Kleinian subject – and Klein's psychoanalytic framework more broadly – to our more than human world, enabling insight into the psychic life of our engagement in care for ecological crisis and the critical importance of narration for fostering care. Puig explores how care can be more than mere concern or intention and calls for ethical obligations of care reckon with critical questions of agency and capacity. In this way, despite Klein's own vague illustration of reparation, I bring Puig's core contention – about “how the issue is ‘staged’ and, more particularly, how the argument for care is mobilized to protect” (48) – to bear on Kleinian reparation and its implications for crisis intervention, as guided by human perception of anthropocentric crisis. I contemplate, therefore, the sociocultural psychic life of the Kleinian subject within our care-taking of the Anthropocene.

Puig's text *Matters of Care* notably does not reference or engage in psychoanalysis. The connections drawn here with Klein's psychoanalytic framework and particularly between Klein's concept of reparation and Puig's articulation of care are my own original explications. I center Puig's argument in this chapter because of her text's critical importance to the field of the

posthumanities. Puig's text is, foremost, a pivotal intervention for its innovative bridging of feminist ethics of care<sup>36</sup> with posthumanist thought.<sup>37</sup> Joan Tronto, the foundational thinker of feminist ethics of care in the 1990s, endorses Puig's argument on the back cover and describes it as "transformative," wherein "feminists and posthumanists can no longer speak past each other". Puig's work has subsequently triggered extensive engagement with the concept of care across the posthumanities and cemented the bringing of posthumanist concerns to more concrete realms of engagement, such as the 2021 online conference entitled "Matters of Care: Museum Futures in Times of Planetary Precarity" as part of the project "Taking Care: Ethnographic and World Cultures Museums as Spaces of Care".

As a result, *Matters of Care* is particularly suited to my line of inquiry for its "re-imagining [of] posthumanist research and ecological ethics in a world under crisis" (Samanani n.p.). Due to her emphasis on the ethical dynamics of care, Puig engages explicitly with the individual human subject *within* posthumanist discourse, contemplating the *how* of care, the dynamics of engagement in the face of crisis, as opposed to the prescriptive attribution of what or when, and thus offering a speculative opening for positioning the Kleinian subject within the Anthropocene. She specifically contributes "to efforts in critical posthumanist thought to decenter anthropocentric ethics without discharging humans from specific and situated ethico-political response-abilities" (217). Puig's line of inquiry directly enriches my thinking of the Kleinian subject in the Anthropocene and its implication of our response in relation to perceived crisis – in what ways does "conceptualizing more than human relations of ethicality" get impacted by the dis/connection of ethics "from individual self-reflective intentionality" (218). I am, in other words, utilizing Puig's matters of care to speculate about how the Kleinian subject's capacity for reparation resonates with participation in so-called "caring affective ecologies"

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<sup>36</sup> Puig's argument is founded upon Joan Tronto and Berenice Fisher's "much-quoted generic definition of care," originally conceptualized in 1990 and deployed in Tronto's book *Moral Boundaries: a Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (1993). They state: "everything that we do to maintain, continue and repair 'our world' so that we can live in it as well as possible" includes "our bodies, our selves, and our environment, *all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web*" (Puig 3; Tronto 103). Through this definition, Puig's project inherits the three dimensions of care identified by Tronto and Fisher's feminist ethics of care – that of "labor/work, affect/affections, ethics/politics" wherein "care is a concrete work of maintenance, with ethical and affective implications, and as a vital politics in interdependent worlds" (5).

<sup>37</sup> Specifically, Puig's book considers the more than human through posthumanist thought, as formed through transdisciplinary work in the social sciences and humanities, including "science and technology studies, animal studies, posthumanist philosophy and ethics, environmental humanities" (13).

(Puig 219), a speculative bringing of the individuated conceptualization of Kleinian subjectivity to notions of collective care in the context of the Anthropocene.

First, I provide an overview of Puig de la Bellacasa's concept of matters of care, highlighting its resonance with Klein's framework broadly. I then explore how Puig implicates her methodological focus on the speculative and the ethical in matters of care and how this, in turn, reorients the implication of the subject into a reparative form of care. Next, I provide a close reading of two of Klein's late papers – "On Mental Health" (1960) and "On the Sense of Loneliness" (1963) – to illustrate how these grounded applications of her framework resonate with the potential for what Puig de la Bellacasa poses as *alterbiopolitics*. In this way, I highlight how Klein's framework addresses sociopolitical convictions and relations to collectivity in our more than human world. I conclude this chapter through a consideration of what it means for the Kleinian subject to engage in matters of care, as highlighted through Puig's overarching emphasis on obligations of care and their relation to storytelling. In this final section, I turn again to museology as an exemplary realm for grappling with the consequences of my project. This chapter as a whole illustrates the ways human anxieties, desires, and fears impact the potentiality of ethical obligations of care.

### *The Psychic Life of Matters of Care*

In this section, I introduce Puig's formation of matters of care and its resonance with Kleinian psychoanalysis, focusing specifically on their mutual resonance through an exploration of affect, bifurcation (or splitting), ambivalence, and the nature of epistemological construction (as a result of ontological foundations). I illustrate, therefore, the mattering of reparation in and for the Anthropocene.

Puig's concept of *matters of care* emerges from her reformulation of Bruno Latour's concept of *matters of concern*. The latter is also, notably, Latour's reframing of *matters of fact*. Latour's reframing of facts as concerns seeks to call attention to "the ethico-political effects of constructivist accounts of science and technology studies" by rejecting "the representation of science, technology, and nature as depoliticized matters of fact, as uncontested truths" (Puig 18). This critique is also familiar, resonating with the critiques of foundational NM in Chapter 1 for its overly simplistic celebration of Science. Matters of fact maintain "what Alfred North Whitehead called the 'bifurcation of nature', which *splits* feelings, meanings, and the like, from



the hard-core facts” (32; italics added), the maintenance of “bifurcations/gaps/splits between natural facts and social questions” (Puig 33; italics added). Puig’s emphasis on splitting here highlights, I believe, the ways in which matters of fact reflect the paranoid-schizoid subject’s perceptual disposition and its manic reparative maintenance of a split reality, a reality in matters of fact that is described as having very real world-making effect. That is, scientific or natural *facts* become an omnipotent mode of narrating epistemological outcomes based on a specific ontological state of being, a construction of reality premised on purportedly “uncontestable truths” (Puig 32). Puig diagnoses this form of narration around so-called facts as “a recalcitrant problem: we remain trapped in binary oppositions”, “a poor epistemological category born to this modern tradition that reduces the rich recalcitrant reality of proliferating entities” (32).

Matters of concern functions in a way that likewise resonates with Klein – that is, it offers a way to “heal from the *manic drive* to dissect the togetherness that we perceive” (Puig 33; italics added). Latour’s proposal does not merely rename but “alters in a significant way the material-semiotic perception of things” (Puig 35). Concern introduces human affect and effect to these matters, exposing “their modes of fabrication” (35), how they are “both construction *and* reality” (Puig 33). Puig emphasizes that, “by contrast with ‘interest’ – a previously prevalent notion in the staging of forces, desires, and the politics sustaining the ‘fabrication’ and ‘stabilization’ of matters of fact – concern alters the affective charge of the thinking and presentation of things with connotations of trouble, worry, and care” (35). Interests are, instead, approached suspiciously by “the inheritors of agonistic modern politics” (35) due to their reliance on and positing of matters of fact, while concern provides additional emphasis “not only on things, facts, and the world, but *on those who set out to research them*” (Puig 36). Matters of concern, therefore, began to acknowledge the role of human impact. As Puig describes, Latour’s concept highlights the necessity of reckoning with “the weariness of critical constructivism” (35), an address of the perpetual human tendency towards constructing tools for diagnosing and processing a “major *symptom* of critical excess” (36; italics added). And, in many ways, my work in Chapters 1 and 2 assessed such symptoms through psychoanalytic inquiry, the psychic conflict – anxieties, worries, troubles – surrounding perceived senses of crisis or threats of annihilation and their consequent co-creation of reality, of the stories of our external world.

By recognizing our human selves, the lens of matters of concern facilitates the recognition of things beyond ourselves – not only how they can be “misconceived,

misrepresented, or mistreated”, but also the consequences of belief – or disbelief – in “a worrying world” (Puig 38). Such reconceptualization presents matters of fact instead as “processes of entangled concerns” (Puig 39). Matters of concern are not merely intended “to debunk and dismantle” or “undermine the reality of matters of fact with critical suspicion about the powerful (human) interests they might reflect and convey” (Puig 39). Rather, “to exhibit the concerns that attach and hold together matters of fact is to enrich and affirm reality by contributing further articulations” (39), “to convey a more lively perception, understanding and *restaging*, of the misnamed objectified matter of fact” (Puig 33). Just as the depressive position in part marks a reckoning with the lively separateness of objects from ourselves, that there are more articulations of reality due to the schism of internal and external reality, matters of concern is a restaging of facts, a “restaging things as lively” (Puig 32). As seen in Chapter 2, the mourning of the depressive position facilitates the tendency towards non-manic reparation, a reckoning with ambivalence and therefore the impossibility of omnipotence. Klein’s framework elucidates the processing of this fragility of recognition, how subjective projection is intimately entangled with the potential to recognize crisis and make reparation. In other words, this reckoning is the very ethical site of attribution notions of injury and repair.

In constructing her notion of care upon matters of concern, Puig’s conceptual foundation resonates with my deployment of Klein and her psychoanalytic approach to reparation, due to Puig’s reckoning with the more than human while resisting the discharge of the human rendered so central to the foundational arguments of OOO and NM. Puig explicitly situates matters of care in relation to the *more than human* as opposed to other posthumanist neologisms as a way to speak of nonhumans, other than humans, *and* the human in one breath (1). This purposeful choice acknowledges how posthumanist work questions “the boundaries that pretend to define the human realm (against the other than human as well as otherized human), to sanction humanity’s separate and exceptional character” (Puig 12). While the more-than-human terminology “remains unsatisfying” to Puig for being such an abstract and moralizing approach to transcending the human, for starting “from a human center, then to reach ‘beyond’,” Puig likewise affirms “the absurdity of disentangling human and nonhuman relations of care” (2). As a result, counter to *just* striving to be *post* human, Puig articulates how both require “decentering human agencies, as well as remaining close to the predicaments and inheritances of situated

human doings” (Puig 2). In this way, matters of care grapples with the entanglement of internal and external realities.

In bringing psychoanalytic inquiry to bear on the posthumanities, my project here, like Puig’s, is “ready to risk the charge of initiating an anthropomorphist ethics of more than human care” (Puig 219). We both seek “to stay close to the more than human web – that is, to relations in which humans are involved” and contemplate how “thinking the ethicality of care in this way [can] be more than yet another anthropomorphic *delusion* – and even another form of anthropocentrism” (218; italics added). As articulated in Chapter 1, I illustrated how Kleinian reparation is different from what Figlio describes as a psychic retreat into delusional reality, a manic reparative defence against the melancholia of guilt, the shortcomings of our (perpetual) humanity. As Puig describes, “ethics remains a human thought” (218) and “care is a human trouble, but this does not make of care a human-only matter” (2).

Puig’s desire to bring care to our concerns is an attempt to move beyond the mere “critique of humanism” (51) and towards “stronger affective and ethical connotations” (42). While both terms – concern and care – originate from “the Latin *cura*, ‘cure’” (Puig 42), they express different qualities. Even though concern expresses “worry and thoughtfulness” and the potential sense of belonging to a collective of concerned parties (42), Puig believes that it maintains “a sense of self-protection of our ‘own’ concerns” (36). Care, instead, adds “a strong sense of attachment and commitment” as well as an emphasis on *doing*, i.e., its capacity as a verb (Puig 42). Unlike concern, then, care materializes as “an ethically and politically charged practice” (42), providing a critical edge that “a politics of gathering concerns tends to neglect” (Puig 66). Matters of care work alongside more recent calls for the posthumanities to address rather than erase intersectional politics – a wariness around the otherwise monolithic object-oriented or new materialist desire for so-called “symmetrical redistribution” (Puig 40). After all, there is still a need for “approaches that reveal power and oppressive relations in the assembling of concerns” because we still live “in a deeply troubled and strongly stratified world” (Puig 39). Puig argues that turning to care ensures that we do not stop with merely *our* concerns – care extends concern to the formation of a practice, to “something we can *do* as thinkers” and to “more awareness about what we care for and about how this contributes to mattering the world” (41). In this way, matters of care call upon the human subject to *do* something with its concern for the damage of anthropocentrism.

In approaching the question of doing, Puig modifies Tronto and Fisher's definition of care.<sup>38</sup> Puig demands a radical displacement of "the subject-collective behind the 'we': care is everything that *is* done (rather than everything that 'we' do) to maintain, continue, and repair 'the world' so that *all* (rather than 'we') can live in it as well as possible" (161). In seeking to "thicken" Tronto and Fisher's basic definition, then, Puig centers "relations that maintain and repair a world so that humans *and nonhumans* can live in it as well as possible in a complex life-sustaining web" (62). It is this sort of "thickening" that I seek to do with Klein's notion of reparation here, as a way to render its meaning-making potentiality to our contemporary more than human world and the correlated senses of crisis in the context of the Anthropocene.

Puig grounds her turn to care within the inevitable "*ambivalences* of caring" (217; italics added). This articulation explicates the reparative potentiality of care, the complexities of bringing reparation to bear in reality. In both Puig and Klein "care remains ambivalent in significance and ontology" (Puig 1), ambivalent in both its implications (or consequences) and its formation, its coming into being, which in Kleinian language is its varying capacity to be manic and non-manic. Puig considers it "absurd" to try "to disentangle care from its messy worldliness" (10), an absurdity reflected in the manic reparative defences of the paranoid-schizoid position. A critical part of reparative tendencies for Klein demands the reckoning with our ambivalent reality. In emphasizing "the *ambivalent* terrains of care" (5; italics added), Puig highlights the ways in which care can displace "classic humanist categories" (16) or "normative moral and epistemological orders" (125). In embracing care, then, Puig is reclaiming it "not from its impurities but rather from tendencies to smooth out its asperities", to "resist categorizing care" and rather "emphasize its potential to disrupt the status quo and to unhinge some of the moral rigidities of ethical questioning" (11). Like the necessity of reckoning with ambivalence for Kleinian development beyond paranoid or depressive anxiety and defences and towards reparative capacity, Puig incites "the question of how to care in ways that challenge situations and open possibilities rather than close or police" (67). According to Puig, therefore, any call to care is marked by a persistent "nonneutrality" (43) – care "circulates in all its ambivalence" (220). In the face of an ambivalent reality wherein good and bad are always already entangled, there is a sustained understanding that "what *as well as possible* care might mean will remain a fraught and contested terrain" (Puig 220).

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<sup>38</sup> See footnote #1 for earlier reference to Tronto and Fisher's definition of care.

Such lack of neutrality – the always in the makings of care, its capacity to be both good and bad, its ambivalent complexity – grounds Puig’s analysis of and propositions for care. That is, Puig emphasizes concern for how calls to or for care – calls that instigate and authorize interventional action in light of perceived crisis, danger, or damage – can “become arguments to moderate a critical standpoint, the kind of standpoint that tends to produce divergences and oppositional knowledges based on attachments to particular visions, and indeed that sometimes presents (its) positions as nonnegotiable” (49). In other words, calls to care can become omnipotent demands, a concrete manifestation of manic reparative desires. Puig identifies this potential explicitly within attributions of good versus bad care. That is, “‘good care’ – or of as-well-as-possible care – is never neutral” (Puig 6). The conception of matters of care is “different from explaining [an] ethos as ways of behaving according to preexistent norms and conventions that sort out *the good and the bad*, the true and false” (154; italics added). As illustrated by the shortcomings of manic reparation explicated in Chapter 1, “good care is not granted by moral intention” (Puig 165). Puig insists that “it’s important to resist enrolling care for a normative theory of knowledge...it cannot be a theory that would serve as a ‘recipe’ for doing our encounters” (90). Rather, care can only be maintained as “a good trope” if there is “ongoing curiosity with the specifics of ‘how’” (Puig 90). And, as I argued in my previous chapters, Klein’s psychoanalytic framework likewise elucidates the *how* of care through a focus on the internal relations that contribute to different dispositions towards external reality and thus a turning towards or away from the external and questions of repair. I position reparative capacity as the disposition enabling care, in the Puigian sense, which in turn renders categorical emphases on good or bad care as manic forms of reparation, wherein care’s ambivalence is defended against. As a result, Puig’s sense of care in her speculative ethics emerges as a form of reparative care, a form of care entrenched in an ambivalent reality. By bringing Kleinian reparation to Puigian care, we gain a more complex understanding overall – both in regards to the potential of reparation in the context of more than human ethics and to the potential of human participation in caring engagement in the Anthropocene.

My alignment here is especially visible through Puig’s description of what the ambivalencies of care represent – that is, the implicit break with manic reparative desires. Puig describes matters of care as a break with “the too-eager ‘addition’ of ready-made ‘causal’ explanations” (49). Care develops an attunement to “the pitfalls of ready-made explanations,

power obsessions, and the super-imposition of moral or epistemological norms” (Puig 66). Matters of care are, in many ways, oriented against the various paranoid and depressive defences that maintain a split and manic reparative reality, such as omnipotence, denial, and idealization. As opposed to responding to the “bifurcation of nature, a *splitting* of meanings and matter, the social and the natural”, i.e., the focus of matters of concern, Puig presents matters of care as responding to what Dorothy Smith calls the “bifurcation of consciousness”, “the *splitting* of affective involvements from the researcher’s experience” (62; italics added). Puig’s focus here not only reflects a clear reorientation onto the human within the more than human landscape and its impact within the assessment and narration of the perceived situation, but also an emphasis on affective relations, the human’s affective influence on the varying nature of reparation as investigated by Klein.

In particular, Puig touches on how care is often described as a “labour of love” (78). Yet, like the dangers of acting strictly in the name of love within manic reparative defences, “appealing to love is particularly tricky: *idealizations* silence not only the nastiness accomplished in love’s name but also the work it takes to be maintained” (Puig 78; italics added). Rather, “thinking driven by love and care should be especially aware of dangers of appropriation” (Puig 85). As mentioned above, “care is not about the smoothing out of life’s asperities, nor should love distract us from the moral orders that justify appropriation in its name” (Puig 78). While Puig acknowledges that it is not necessarily the case that love is purely incompatible with conflict, matters of care mirror the necessary ambivalencies of love and hate, life and death, within the foundations of Klein’s psychoanalytic framework. That is, our care or reparative desires “also perform disconnection” in the sense that “we cannot possibly care for everything” – we cannot seek repair in and for everything – which Puig explicitly tethers to “the same way that there is *no life without death*” (78; italics added). Care in the Puigian sense – the act of being reparative – is necessarily entangled with destruction; the drive to care must always already be reconciled with its inability to care or cure for all. As a result, like the pendulum of Kleinian development, a politics of (reparative) care necessitates a disruption of “the *bifurcation of consciousness*” because of its maintenance of “knowledge untouched by anxiety and inaccuracy” (Puig 93).

Puig and Klein are, therefore, both reintegrating affectivity into their disciplinary interventions, into the posthumanities and psychoanalysis respectively. In part, of course, Puig

illustrates a response to my critique instigated in Chapter 1 by tethering the affectivity of the human to posthumanist care. I am, in turn, bringing this back to Klein and the implications of her theoretical framework for reparative concerns in this landscape of posthumanist anxiety and desire, in addressing or caring for anthropocentric crisis. Matters of care draw “attention to caring as a form of affectivity in knowledge creation [that] shouldn’t be understood as a plea for some form of unmediated love” (64). In this way, Klein and Puig both emphasize the important role of epistemological construction for engagement in more than human ethics. Puig notes how “to ‘*de-passion*’ knowledge does not give us a more objective world” (64; italics added).<sup>39</sup> Likewise, Klein orients the “drives as relational passions” (Allen, “Are We Driven?” 319). Klein’s theoretical framework is interpreted as “an account of the passions, so as to show how the conflict of love and hate makes a world” (Alford 1989 13). As a result, the Kleinian subject is never thoroughly “a socially constituted self, but a self understood as the locus of the passions of love and hate” (55), rendering the human as “motivated by passions so profound that they will never be thoroughly socialized or co-opted” (Alford, 1989 6). Reparative care is not merely “about individual rationalizations or about a normative identification between the rational and the good” (Puig 138). Klein and Puig both consider “the consequences of relations”, addressing “*how* we enter in relations affects positions and relational ecologies” (72) and thus our “caring affective ecologies” (Puig 219) across the more than human world.

Through Puig’s focus on care, my turn to matters of care also intervenes into Weintrobe’s description of a contemporary culture of uncare amidst climate change denial or apathy. Puigian care is counter to uncare and its value of “the capacity to be self-sufficient, autonomous, and independent from others” (Puig 55). As described in Chapter 2, the culture of uncare is an investment in refusing to know “in a feeling way that climate change is human caused” (Weintrobe 2018 422), which, put simply, is a defence against the strife of ambivalence, against the complexity of caring. Puig, on the other hand, proposes matters of care as, in part, encouraging “attention to the caring dimensions of knowing”, “a nonidealized vision of caring” (64). In fact, “too much caring can asphyxiate the carer and the cared for” (Puig 93), as evident

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<sup>39</sup> Puig’s use of *de-passion* here refers to the attempt to claim objectivity, such as by the Sciences. This mirrors the attempt to erase human impact in the foundational frameworks of OOO and NM – the possibility of being *post* the human and its affective influence. Chapter 1 clearly illustrated the ways in which human presence is pervasive in the posthumanities. Puig proposes to instead pay “attention to caring as a form of affectivity in knowledge creation” (64).

in the manic reparative response to paranoid persecution or the guilt of destructive consequence. Yet, such dangers cannot “prevent us from caring” (Puig 93). Humanity’s affective capacities and impacts are critical to reparative care – after all, “aren’t anxiety, sorrow, and grief unavoidable affects in efforts of paying serious mental attention, of thinking with care, in dislocated worlds?” (Puig 93).

By turning to Puig’s conceptualization of matters of care, I illustrate the important connections across the foundational features of both Klein’s concept of reparation and Puig’s articulation of care – the ways in which “a politics of [reparative] care goes against the bifurcation of consciousness that would keep out knowledge untouched by anxiety and inaccuracy” (Puig 93). As a result, I posit matters of care as a reparative proposition wherein “ways of knowing/caring re-affect objectified worlds, restage things in ways that generate possibility for other ways of relating and living, connect things that were not supposed to be connecting across the bifurcation of consciousness, and ultimately transform the ethico-political and affective perception of things by involvement in the mattering of worlds” (Puig 65). This re-affecting and restaging across bifurcation is what Klein contributes to thinking the posthumanities, as illustrated in Chapters 1 and 2, and now I turn to what Puig’s framework offers in addition, for thinking with Kleinian reparation in the Anthropocene, in light of posthumanist calls and concerns around (ecological) crisis.

### *The Doing of Reparative Care: Ethical Commitments to the Speculative, Speculative Commitments to the Ethical*

In Chapter 2, I highlighted the widespread belief that Klein’s work is largely removed from sociopolitical implication and thus its ethical necessities. Through her concept of matters of care, Puig provides an articulation of speculative ethics that, I believe, resonates in a generative way with Klein’s framework, especially given the aforementioned intersections of Puig and Klein’s theorizing around care and the reparative, respectively, *and* for furthering Klein’s application to the concerns of anthropocentric crisis. Puig’s approach to ethics is speculative – and, thus, in turn an ethically-attuned approach to the speculative – which broadly resonates with psychoanalytic inquiry and its playful approach to analysis. That is, psychoanalysis relies on interpretation and meaning-making. It is not a capital ‘T’ truth practice, but rather a subjective one, impacted by or inflected with sociocultural contexts. Psychoanalysis has been, in one way



or another, labelled as a speculative practice. And, for Klein, as we have seen, there is no true cure or redemptive solace. Rather, reparation is always in process, always immersed in an entanglement of good and bad and thus the potential for more or different nuance, in both interpretation and application.

Notably, though, I referenced in Chapter 1 various critiques of the deployment of speculative methods within the foundations of the posthumanities and, specifically, under the theoretical field of speculative realism (SR). As described by Koložova, speculation lays “at the heart of Western rationality...an extension of the patriarchal Symbolic” (12), wherein “the subject of the speculative mind mirrors the object and posits it as the real instead of the real” (13). In claiming a speculative approach to care, then, Puig explicitly reckons with such histories of the term and its methodological deployment. Puig acknowledges how speculation, in part, reinstates the tiresome habit of critical thought to convey a notion of truth, a “clear and unpolluted observation and reason”, which is “the pride of modern science according to rationalist humanist philosophies” (111). But, in turn, “metaphors of clear vision have been criticized for a reductionist, bifurcated, form of relating, abstracted from the bodily engagement that makes knowing subject relevant in interdependent worlds” (Puig 111). The speculative for Puig enables an alternative to any imposition of moral parameters (19), the unsettling of the aim for any sort of coherent concept or comfortable feeling (67), the disruption of idealization or claims to superior knowledge (117).

In this way, “to speculate is also to admit that we do not *really* know wholly” (Puig 117), which in many ways is a methodological approach that works against the omnipotence and idealization of the paranoid-schizoid position and its demands for manic reparation. The speculative implies here an incorporation of human fallibility by considering possibilities within the careful consideration of the limits on the possible, an imperfect and inconclusive lens. Puig’s speculative commitment works with “care as a way to elicit conceptions and practices that have the potential to disrupt the reduction...to a resource for humans” (170). Such a commitment is instead “attached to situated and positioned visions of what a livable and caring world could be...one that remains speculative by not letting a situation or a position – or even the acute awareness of pervasive domination – define in advance what is or could be” (Puig 60). A commitment to the speculative becomes here a way “to think about how things could be different

if they generated care”, about what care can mean when it is reparative, in situations that cannot be resolved by “ready-made formulas” (Puig 60).

This practice is made visible within critical museology. With reference to Derrida’s concept of the *pharmakon*, Butler speculates on “heritage as pharmakon” to interrogate curative museology, to intervene into “the benevolent and malevolent agendas at play, the *ambivalences* and the overdetermined nature of discourses that institutionalize ‘culture as cure’ and as ‘heritage healing’” (355; italics added). Here, the “the pharmakonic forces of good and bad” (Butler 365) disrupt the manic reparative desires of curative museology. Puig’s call for “a fair amount of fabulation” (219) – i.e., the invention or relating of false or fantastical stories (Merriam-Webster) – therefore emphasizes the need to avoid the omnipotent or idealistic, ready-made or already-available options, that which is already categorically identified as good or bad. As a result, this ensures that “the *anxieties* that the attribution of human modes of intentionality to nonhumans generate in critical thinkers do not paralyze our ethical imagination” (Puig 219; italics added). Puig clearly acknowledges the critical role of human anxiety within our construction of stories and, consequently, potential for ethical intervention. And Puig and Klein contribute to each other in illustrating how our approach to care – the ethical commitments to the speculative – impacts the stories told about our anxieties, our narrative responses to our fear of annihilation, our human capacity in relation to our more than human world.

Likewise, commitments to the ethical are critical – as seen in Chapter 1, for instance, the manic reparative tendencies of foundational OOO and NM theorizations have failed to ethically address the intersectional human within their concerns for posthuman futurity. Puig acknowledges the “elusive omnipresence of ethics” contemporarily, wherein it has become a required “tick box” for “risk management” (131), an institutionalized substitute for social and political justice, “a tool for legitimating”, and thus both “a vaguely moralized domain of research and an empty regulatory framework” (132). Capital ‘E’ ethics connotes this hegemony and normalization of ethics, its colonizing use, its reinforcement, rather than its challenge of the status quo (Puig 132-133). In contrast, matters of care rejects so-called “epistemological moralism” (Puig 91). Puig’s “materialist conception of care” stays close to “the implications of caring...not only as a way of resisting to idealize care as a moral disposition, but also as a normative epistemic stance disconnected from the material doings” (58). As a result, an ethical commitment must here relinquish the presupposition that “there is only one way of caring”, a

disruption of the totalizing effects embodied in matters of fact and strictly humanist questions, an implementation of a knowledge politics that is “all but a feel-good attitude to caring” (Puig 61). An emphasis on the materiality of care – the manifestation of reparation in external reality – enables a closeness to how “the meaning of ‘caring’ can go in different directions” (42), how “caring does not necessarily have the same connotations”, how it is “marked by gender and race politics” (Puig 43). In other words, an ethical approach to care must reconcile with its entanglement with ambivalence. Like the critique of curative museology and its reliance on lovely knowledge outlined in Chapter 1, there are real consequences to aiming for feel-good care, which will likely only feel-good for some and not others.

Puig is emphatic about how “fostering care should not become the equivalent of an accusatory moral stance – if only *they* would care! – nor can caring knowledge politics become a moralism disguised in epistemological accuracy: show that you care and your knowledge will be ‘truer’” (60). In this way, Puig distinguishes care from the term “accurate”, which is derived from care – something is “prepared with care, exact”, “the past participle of *accurare*, ‘take care of’” – but it “reveals a risky ground: the ambition to control and judge what/who/how we are for” (91). Puig is critical of “normative epistemologies” that erase the specificity of knowledge-making practices and overlook how “knowing is not about prediction and control” (Puig 91). A commitment to matters of care – like non-manic reparative capacities – is “not reducible to suspicious debunking,” nor about being “on the right side” (60); rather, the promotion of care demands that critical standpoints – such as the uneven distribution of power and privilege, in both receiving and giving care – cannot be thrown away with “the bath of corrosive critique” (Puig 49), as representable by the shortcomings of foundational OOO and NM.

Rather, Puig understands the ethics of doing as an *obligation*. Puig asks: “what notion of ethics is at work in principled stances that aim to decenter humans’ position on Earth while still stating its specific obligations?” (129). Rather than “discharging humans from specific and situated ethico-political response-abilities” (217), “rather than diluting obligation as we eschew human-centered ethics, can we redeploy it?” (Puig 129). The necessity of obligations of care is conceptualized here as a consequence of our “inevitable interdependence” (Puig 70). Such “interdependency is not a contract, nor [*sic*] a moral ideal – it is a *condition*” of living in more than human entanglement, a concomitant rather than “a rewarding obligation” (Puig 70). Yet,

despite care's necessity, it is not a given, which renders it as a "(nonmoralistic) *obligation*" (Puig 70).

Ambivalence is central to understanding Puig's conceptualization of obligations of care. Care holds "contradictions and complexities together rather than purifying them" (Puig 88). In this way, "responsibility for what/whom we care for doesn't necessarily mean being *in charge*, but it does mean being involved" (Puig 90). In this way, Puig works to denaturalize care (70), especially as a given and its naturalized associations with "the caring mother" (9), a hegemonic origin story for "caring ethical subjectivity in the mother-child relations" (2). As seen in Klein's foundational example, mother-child relations are a complex developmental process of object relations and attachment and there is nothing given or guaranteed about so-called maternal care. Yet, such original relational care stories form the ontological foundations for our subsequent stories of internal and external reality, about capacities for receiving and giving care. Furthermore, Klein articulates reparation upon reconciliation with our inescapable dependence rather than being a natural consequence of development. Reparation is a fragile developmental possibility – a relational capacity that enables matters of care but does not guarantee. After all, manic reparation is a seductive defence mechanism that obfuscates demands to care for the more than oneself.

The ethics of matters of care, therefore, emphasize collectivity, a counter to what Weintrobe described as the neoliberal culture of uncaring, to ethics' reduction to "the private domain, personal everydayness," the overall depoliticization of *collective* social life (Puig 133). In this context, the idea of *collective* care is flattened – that is, "if every personal action is an ethical action, ethical *commitment* or response-ability makes no particular difference" (Puig 135). As represented in my Kleinian analyses in the two previous chapters, ethical life has been, in our contemporary sociohistorical context, extensively "diverted from the social production of 'being'," from "the generic substance of corporeal life and its biological continuation" called *bios* (Puig 134), a diversion from our ambivalent interdependence wherein we as humans – in all our intersectional complexity – are *still* intertwined. Puig's articulation of speculative ethics through matters of care offers a way to contemplate the Kleinian subject relation to more than human collectivity.

*Matters* of care for Puig constitute therefore "a manifold range of *doings* needed to create, hold together, and sustain life and continue its diverseness" (70), a world in which

humans are also immersed. Puig presents care's transformative potential as its embrace of "the tension between the concrete and the speculative" (95). Puig contends that "engaged speculative responses are situated by what appears as a problem within specific commitments and inheritances, within contingencies and experiences in situation" (110). In this way, care is adequate through being "always specific" (Puig 42). The speculative ethics of Puig's matters of care – her methodology for understanding and theorizing caring relationalities – is premised on both the expansive – the not knowing in advance – and the specific – the always being tethered to context, to time and place. Matters of care, thus, intervene into the critiqued shortcomings of Klein's own conceptualization of reparation's specificity by offering a route to think speculatively about its concrete form. This question of the speculative *and* the concrete is embodied in the disposition of non-manic reparative desires, a relinquishment of "explanatory answers" (218) that settle on "a version of care as some immanent or transcendental mystical force" (Puig 219). My exploration of reparation as a matter of care, then, is not intended to "add up to a smooth theory of care with no loose ends" (220); "we do not know how to care in advance or once for all" (Puig 221). Rather, matters of care offer a route to speculate on reparation's concrete applications, specifically within the contemporary context of anthropocentric crisis.

Matters of care facilitate my analysis of the meaning-making of Klein's framework in and for the Anthropocene, for the subject's attachments to notions of care as embodied in posthumanist concern for crisis. The concept intervenes into "how a matter of fact/concern is perceived, prolonged" (52), "the *articulation* of ethically and politically demanding issues" (Puig 57). I have shown that Klein and Puig both claim that "*relations of thinking and knowing require care and affect how we care*" (Puig 69). They reflect a mutual investment in a "relational way of thinking" (72), in "the embeddedness of thought in the worlds one cares for" (75), cutting across the ways in which we are both singularly embedded within "situated contingencies" and at the same time within "always more-than-one interdependencies" (Puig 77). Klein provides substantive insight into the "ontological import" (70) of care, the ways it is ontologically necessary and "cannot be enacted by a priori moral disposition nor an epistemic stance, nor a set of applied techniques, nor elicited as abstract affect" (Puig 90-91). As I claimed in Chapter 1, Klein's conceptualization of the positions articulates ontological states of being, state that contribute to different epistemological dispositions. Through its implications and its

consequences, “care subverts and rematerializes epistemological questions” (Puig 59). In dialogue, then, Kleinian object relations are quite simply “relational ontologies” (Puig 217) that can be considered with more than human mattering.

Now that I have outlined the basic premise and argument of Puig’s concept of matters of care and her methodological approach of speculative ethics, this chapter deploys a speculative approach. That is, I speculate next about how Kleinian psychoanalysis is applicable to our contemporary moment. As I opened with in Chapter 1: if we accept the Kleinian reading of the subject, what does this mean for the posthumanities? I have demonstrated the ways in which Kleinian psychoanalysis provides insight into the shortcomings of posthumanist theorizing for engaging in and making reparative change in the Anthropocene – how it narrates a manic reparative relation to crisis. I now in turn ask: if we accept Puig’s concept of matters of care, what does this mean for re-interpreting Kleinian reparation for our contemporary moment of the Anthropocene? How does Klein offer a reading of psychic life and a collective culture of the death drive in the Anthropocene *within* matters of care? And, consequently, what does this mean for our storytelling practices of crisis? I deploy storytelling here broadly as narrating a relationship to crisis, how practices of articulating our perception create material consequences and realities, that they create matters of care, they enact its ongoing mattering, which have ethical and political implications.

#### *Alterbiopolitics and the Kleinian Subject: Reparation in More than Human Collectivity*

To explore speculatively the ways in which Klein’s framework address matters of care and more than human collectivity, I place Puig’s sub-concept of *alterbiopolitics* in conversation with two of Klein’s late works. “On Mental Health” (1960) and “On the Sense of Loneliness” (1963) are grounded in more concrete and so-called mature – or adult – lived experiences, resonating therefore with “Love, Guilt, and Reparation” (1937), which I discussed in Chapter 2 with regards to its use in critiques of the reparative turn. The former was published the year of Klein’s death and the latter was published posthumously. Yet, unlike her paper from 1937, these two late works are a result of Klein’s fully developed theoretical framework, written and published after the so-called culmination of her core framework around the two positions with her paper “Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms” (1946) (O’Shaughnessy, *Envy and Gratitude* 326). In this way, these two late works provide a level of clarity in their address of the mature

realities of psychic well-being in the face of strife or loneliness. I deploy their insights here towards our contemporary moment of the Anthropocene – through the lens of Puig’s matters of care and the alterbiopolitical specifically – in a way that provides depth and expansion to Klein’s relevance to our current reality of ecological crisis, for instance, and, consequently, counteract the accusations of these late papers’ shortcomings. I ask: in what ways do these late works forecast a sense of the human in or for this more than human landscape and obligations of care in the Anthropocene?

Not only do the explanatory notes for “On Mental Health” claim that “the paper lacks her usual vigour” (335), but they also emphasize that “it must be remembered” how “On the Sense of Loneliness” was likely not considered ready for publication by Klein as “indeed it would have benefited from further work; it seems in place incomplete” (O’Shaughnessy, *Envy and Gratitude* 336). Despite these comments that in many ways discredit the articulations in these late works, Jane Milton provides extensive never-before published material from Klein’s archive in *Essential Readings from the Melanie Klein Archives* (2020) that demonstrates the expansive collection of notes and writing Klein had in fact already compiled for a book-length study of loneliness (“Klein’s Further Thoughts on Loneliness” 209-210). Furthermore, I ground my extension of these works here on the recent questioning of “a commonly held prejudice” that “Klein by no means concentrated on internal to the exclusion of external reality...skilfully analysing the complex interaction between external and internal worlds, particularly in relation to destructiveness and reparation” (Milton, “Editor’s Introduction” xxi). Through a close reading of the two texts in relation to Puig, then, I tease out how the reaching out to the external within Klein’s late articulations resonates specifically with anthropocentric crisis and a speculative ethics of care in a more than human world. In other words, I provide a reading of Kleinian reparation in the Anthropocene. I ask: in what ways is the Kleinian subject inclined to engage in matters of care, in care for alterbiopolitics?

Puig develops her proposed sub-concept of alterbiopolitics through Nikolas Rose’s displacement of bioethics, a concept emergent from the ethical implications of Foucault’s biopower, with somatic ethics, a relocation of ethics into everyday ordinary bodily living (137). Rose claims “two displacements: engaging ordinary personal practices *as collective* and pushing towards a decentering of ethical subjectivity” (Puig 138). These propositions resonate directly with the conflict of the Kleinian subject’s development, with negotiating internal and external

reality and the challenges to reaching reparative capacities. That is, Rose articulates a counter to the nature of the paranoid anxiety, arguing for ethics to be, in Puig's words, "not about individual rationalizations or about a normative identification between the rational and the good" (138). Just as the depressive position reckons with one's own lack of control and omnipotence, one's inherent and entangled dependence, ethical agency is reconfigured here so that "individuals are not at the source of *rational* decision-making...nor are collective clusters of individuals managing the *mastery* of their agency" (Puig 138; italics added). Rather, we "all are embedded in the biopolitical fabric in fairly unpredictable and emergent processes" (Puig 138).

Through the concept of alterbiopolitics, Puig asserts "two additional speculative moves": 1) "to interrupt even further the association of 'personal' ethical engagement with the 'individual' and the 'private'" wherein "personal ethico-political practices of change need to be also rethought as collective" (139); and 2) to conceptualize "a notion of everyday ethics as agency that is invested by collective commitments and attachments", which requires the disruption of "a vision that conceives of human survival and well-being independently from the rest of Earth's beings and thinking care on the grounds of nonanthropocentric, naturecultural ecocosmologies" (140). The *alter* in Puig's concept addresses the contemporary conditions which structure biopolitical relations and consequently ground "the current *worrisome* state of planetary bios" wherein "we are all dealing with *fears*, risks, rights, and protections in order to pursue the *self-preservation* of our own biological life" (165; italics added). I see here a clear indication of the ways matters of care are directly investing in, reckoning with, and, ultimately, *altering* the ways in which *we* as human subjects engage in and respond to our *worries* and *fear* of annihilation, our anxieties over being of consequence and inconsequential, i.e., our capacity to preserve ourselves and world as we know it. In contrast to such "a recalcitrant focus on a humanist and individualistic body" (165), the alterbiopolitics of matters of care seek to teach us how "alternative forms of biopolitical care...do not start from or aim at 'our selves', but neither do they put others before our selves" (Puig 166). I argue that Kleinian development illustrates the challenges and potentialities of learning this perceptual lens, exemplified par excellence in her late works on well-being and the challenges of collectivity in "On Mental Health" (1960) and "On the Sense of Loneliness" (1963), which in turn opens up Klein's framework for extension to matters of care.



While not drastically differing from Klein's general theoretical framework outlined in previous chapters, these texts provide clarity of precision through specific application. I turn first to the implications of Klein's discussion of mental health and thus our capacity for well-being and its impact on our engagement in collectivity. In addition to mental health being "based on an interplay between the fundamental sources of mental life – the impulses of love and hate" (271), Klein describes internal balance as depending upon "insight into the variety of our contradictory impulses and feelings and the capacity to come to terms with these inner conflicts" (*Envy and Gratitude* 269), coming to terms with persistent ambivalence. Klein describes this as "the adaption to the external world" (*Envy and Gratitude* 269). Yet, such adaption "does not interfere with the freedom of our own emotions and thoughts" (*Envy and Gratitude* 269). Rather, it "implies an interaction: inner life always influences the attitudes towards external reality and in turn is influenced by the adjustment to the world of reality" (*Envy and Gratitude* 269). In other words, liability towards emotional well-being or mental health is tethered directly to our relationship to external reality, to our understanding of our internal relations and their extension to the external. Our liability towards so-called illness, poor health, or balance in this regard is correlated to coming to terms with our "deeper conflicts" (*Envy and Gratitude* 270). Klein emphasizes that even people who get by with the appearance of balance – of being okay or having capacity – often rely too heavily on external validation and success, which Klein understands as "avoiding inner and external conflicts", a way of making "life easy for themselves" (*Envy and Gratitude* 269). This evasion of conflicts mirrors Chapter 2 and my reference to the anticipatory mourning through apathy or consumption by guilt in the face of climate crisis. Such defences aim for "what is successful or expedient," which means that "they cannot develop deep-rooted *convictions*" (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 269; italics added).

Conviction is critical for my focus here and is where, I suggest, Klein alludes in her work to sociopolitical or ethical principles. So-called "strength of character" in Klein's terms enables "loyalty towards peoples and causes and the ability to make sacrifices for one's convictions" (*Envy and Gratitude* 269). And such "loyalty towards what is loved or felt to be right implies that hostile impulses bound up with anxieties (which are never entirely eliminated) are turned towards those objects which endanger what is felt to be good" (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 269). Such investment in external concerns in Klein's framework is premised on the perception of "not necessarily a perfect world...but it is certainly a world much more worth while" (*Envy and*

*Gratitude* 269). In a way, then, social investments in the well-being of our human selves sets the stage for capacity to tolerate and reckon with the imperfection of the world and develop the conviction to invest not only in its futurity but also in ways that are possible, that reckon with the limits of our capacity for security or control. Such conditional ambivalencies or conflicts, in both Klein and Puig, are “linked up with our capacity to experience life, that is to feel; and only if we are able to feel unhappiness are we also able to feel happiness deeply and genuinely” (Klein, “The Importance of the Unconscious” 43). While I may not embrace Klein’s more precarious concept of happiness *per se*, it is clear that questions of reparation in the concrete, its manifestation as forms of care as consequence of concern or conviction, are intertwined with the shortcomings of such control, the inability to fix or be a purely positive influence.

Through the lens of conviction and its emergence around conflict, then, the capacity to care is visibly central in Klein’s developmental framework, particularly when examined for its implications for so-called mature or adult life and ethical engagement in sociopolitical crises. In particular, “unsolved conflicts” arise more often at “certain critical phases” of development (*Envy and Gratitude* 270), in more precarious moments of life that reflect great transition or unknowns. I build on Klein’s reference to moments of crisis in human development, such as puberty or aging, and argue for their scalability to larger sociopolitical crises or shifts, including ecological crisis and climate change. In these moments of change, the “avoidance of conflict” disrupts capacity for and “the strength to live through painful emotions and to cope with them” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 270), which can only be exacerbated when conceived at the planetary scale of the Anthropocene. What happens when the world is more challenging? How can human psychic life be brought to the feet of this global crisis in a way that enables capacity to engage in matters of care? While, of course, posthumanist theorizing may claim legitimately that our human capacity to care ultimately does not matter in this more-than-human world, I have throughout this project made my own investment in the mattering of human care abundantly clear and, despite the shortcomings of conceiving efforts as curative, conviction as a participant in the perpetuation of this world is of value, even if it does not ever truly save us.

The potential for what Klein calls balance must be counter to “the avoidance of conflict; it implies the strength to live through painful emotions and to cope with them” (*Envy and Gratitude* 270). It demands taking the risk towards the dangers of being potentially split by excessively painful emotions. Klein claims that internal well-being is possible “when insight is

not stifled by defences” (*Envy and Gratitude* 274) – which, in turn, reflects my articulation in Chapter 1 that, in responding to posthumanist calls for reckoning with the complexity of the intersectional human, the humanity of human engagement is central in impacting our perception of and subsequent narrations of crisis. That is, for instance, OOO leaves intersectional power differentials intact through the unaddressed deployment of language embedded in histories of objectification, instrumentalization, and fetishization, as well as NM’s denial of distinction and thus the distributions of power and privilege across hierarchal oppositions. Human desires, defences, and anxieties construct our interpretation and representation and, in turn, the potentiality of action or intervention. As I highlighted through Figlio’s analysis, a desire for sameness under the guise of objecthood or the nonhuman, a desire that fails under feminist and intersectional analyses, reinforces a foundational “defence against self-examination, a self-examination that could reveal a hated similarity or, more fundamentally, the hatred of the similarity that is, in the limit, oneself” (Figlio, “The Dread of Sameness” 8). Evidently, as argued in my previous chapters, psychoanalytic attunement proffers awareness of anxieties, desires, defences, and fear, and of the impact of human interpretation and narration, which is critical to conceptualizing and approaching engagements in matters of care.

In turn, Puig’s work asks psychoanalytic inquiry – implicitly in my analysis here – about “the possibilities of displacing contemporary biopolitics’ reduction to the preservation of human life” (130). *What happens to posthumanist desires for reparative care when we grapple with the impact of our various sociocultural desires, anxieties, and defences?* After all, as Klein states, it is not that phantasies and desire should not persist but rather that they should be “freely experienced and successfully worked through” (*Envy and Gratitude* 268). In what ways are human anxiety and desire and phantasy reconcilable with our more than human world and Puig’s “a-subjective notion of care” (161)?

Klein identifies reassurance as critical to human capacity for conviction. As discussed previously, common defences against conflicts that prevent or obfuscate engagement with (sociopolitical and ethical) convictions (for Klein) – or obligations (for Puig) – include denial and its correlating effect of idealization. Denial emerges as a defence “of inner conflict and of external difficulties” due to fear of one’s capacity to cope with the pain and the unknown, highlighting the presence and fear of our own insecurity (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 270). As Rustin describes, a borderline state maintains complacency, wherein becoming “aware of the

damage and devastation which surround them, and their own complicity with it, would be psychologically too costly” (*Reason and Unreason* 130). This state of paralysis – what Figlio describes as delusional – is the inability “to move forward in a depressive direction, for fear of the limitless pain, guilt, and anxiety” (Rustin, *Reason and Unreason* 130). And this denial maintains the “paradoxical gesture of both abandoning yet refusing to abandon” that is characteristic of the so-called “perverse ontology” of posthumanist desires (Hinton and Liu 130). The question of reassurance enters, then: what capacity for care is possible in the face of a crisis that is far from reassuring of futurity?

For Klein, “a person who can deeply experience sorrow when it arises is also able to share other people’s grief and misfortune” and, “at the same time, not to be overwhelmed by grief or by other people’s unhappiness and to regain and maintain a balance is part of mental health” (*Envy and Gratitude* 270). In extending these tendencies to the level of collectivity, conviction to care for a specific concern becomes tethered to one’s reliance on reassurance and, thus, whether one can tolerate not knowing, not controlling. The defence of denial and its premise on idealization has “the effect of a reassurance” and “serves the purpose of counteracting persecutory anxieties” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 273). Such fear is “mitigated by increasing the power of goodness of other people” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 273). But so-called *healthy* development that is capacity of reparative tendencies must recognize the difference between intention and effect, in regard to one’s impact on the world. As Klein describes, “normally the better adaption to reality diminishes the feelings that *what has been wished has taken effect*” (*Envy and Gratitude* 273; italics added). As Puig describes, care “goes beyond a moral disposition or *wishful thinking* to transform how we experience and perceive the things we study” (Puig 66; italics added). To position reparation as a matter of care, then, it must break with “moral orders and human individual intentionality” (Puig 141). As referenced in Chapter 2, this demands “non-manic forms of reassurance” (“The Cunning of Recognition” 245), wherein the tension promises possibility – as exemplified through TRCs, reparative acts are “neither salvation nor sham, but are messy, conflicted” (McIvor, *Mourning in America* 134).

In a 2020 turn to never-before published pieces in the Melanie Klein Archives, Claudia Frank addresses Klein’s concerns with reassurance – how there is “an understandable wish for reassurance or confirmation” but “it seeks the avoidance of anxiety or pain” (118). In this way, reassurance has a “tendency quickly to become counterproductive (like the manic defence)”

(Frank 109), like manic reparative tendencies. Frank quotes from Klein's notes directly about how "some people can be greatly influenced by effective reassurance but of course that is not the aim of analysis" (108). In many ways, manic reparative desires are reassurance. But Klein's exploration of the challenges of mental well-being makes clear here how reciprocity is precarious. Within Puig's articulation of matters of care, she describes how "care troubles reciprocity" (120). Ultimately, "there is no guarantee that care will be reciprocated; it happens asymmetrically both in terms of power and because people who care, caregivers, cannot give with the expectation for it to be symmetrically reciprocated" (Puig 121).

Klein, therefore, articulates the internal necessities that set the stage for matters of care, for "remaining responsible to material obligations while eschewing moralism and reductive humanist explanations" (Puig 41). By associating reparative matters of care with momentary acts that shift and change, that experience relapses through paranoid and depressive anxiety, that must be aligned with and negotiate an ongoing sense of external reality, the Kleinian conception of the subject is both an adaptable and useful framework for grappling with the position of "care as a doing rather than a moral intention", "the circulation of care as everyday maintenance" (Puig 219). Klein's framework provides a needed addition for considering the posthumanities, a mode for reckoning with the human and its humanity, its impact on conceptualizing and perceiving and narrating our contemporary moment and sowing the seeds for action, however limited. Even if engagement in crisis is not reducible to intentional agency, as the posthumanities comprehensively point out, Puig highlights the need for and maintenance of "a distributed notion of the material obligation of care," that additionally, "only some should be forced to fulfill" (Puig 120), according to distributions of power and historic (and ongoing) distributions of care labour and so-called care that resulted in violence. For instance, it is not the responsibility of those most impacted by climate change thus far to educate the others – rather, how can a re-envisioning of our affective and ontological relations shift the ways in which care is understood let alone acted upon (i.e., the movement from concern to care in Puigian terms)? This question inherently includes museums, of course, as "the largest, self-organized franchise in the world" (Janes 588), as a widely available space dedicated to public pedagogy.<sup>40</sup>

Consequently, I argue that Klein articulates how human psychic life might come to terms with alterbiopolitics, with obligations of care. In reckoning with the entanglement of our internal

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<sup>40</sup> I turn more fully to the museum again in the next section.

and external realities, “we realize that our care does not belong to us, and that what / whom we care for, somehow *owns* us, we *belong* to it through the care that has attached us” (Puig 167). Reparative matters of care – as opposed to manic forms of care – are “an ongoing collective reimagination of ecological existences that focuses *less on coping* with biopower, adapting or resisting, and *more on creating* alternative forms of collective and caring politics within bios” (Puig 168; italics added). The pendulum swing towards reparation that is ongoing and imperfect throughout life mimics Puig’s call for “ethical obligations of care” – “they are not a priori universal, they do not define a moral, or social, or even natural “nature”: they *become* necessary to the maintaining and flourishing of a relation through processes of ongoing relating” (154). While Klein frames the potential for balance – and, notably, *not* security – as a coming to terms with inner conflicts and thus “trust in oneself and in others” (*Envy and Gratitude* 271), I extend such as obligations of care in the contemporary moment of the Anthropocene – a moment of crisis, a moment inherently incompatible with so-called “peace of mind” (*Envy and Gratitude* 271) – designating the necessity of reckoning with Puig’s central question of how to care, the capacity to move towards a creative *after* of reckoning with ambivalence. The Kleinian subject’s capacity for care is affected by desires, anxieties, and defences, by reckoning with intention versus engagement and effect, with internal and external entanglement, that which is both beyond control and yet enmeshed with everyday living. Furthermore, *ethical* obligations of care are informed by the capacity for *non-manic* forms of reparative – they are not intended purely for the sustenance of self and one’s perceived worldview, one’s own futurity and comfort.

How do the challenges of conviction (in the face of crisis) manifest in collectivity? Klein’s final work – “On the Sense of Loneliness” (1963), a piece published posthumously and largely framed as exemplifying her final theorizing – illustrates, in my opinion, the challenges of collective experience, of reaching capacity for collective conviction, for collective care. Defences against conflict through denial prevent a deeper or more comprehensive perception, a loss of “the ability to give and take – to experience gratitude and generosity” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 270). However, such acts or experiences – of giving, of receiving, of gratitude – are arguably acts of relationality and experiences of collectivity.

Loneliness in this paper is presented as “the inner sense of loneliness – the sense of being alone regardless of external circumstances, of feeling lonely even when among friends or receiving love” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 300). The Kleinian subject’s foundational fear of

annihilation grounds this experience of loneliness: “throughout life the fear of death plays a part in loneliness” (*Envy and Gratitude* 304). It takes on different formulations through paranoid versus depressive anxiety. In paranoia, the instability of a hostile world is threatening (303), causing a focus on fragmentation, on “being in bits” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 305).

Depressive loneliness, on the other hand, is focused on an “incapacity to keep an inner and external companionship with a good object” (305), the challenge of reckoning with one’s own destruction, with hated parts of self, the uncontrollable, the endangerment of the good object (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 304). In the Anthropocene, as exemplified by the anxieties of the posthumanities, such fear of annihilation represents a lonely state, a state of being inconsequential to futurity that is *shared* collectively as a condition of humanity. Is ecological crisis, the threat to human futurity, not a very lonely threat on the collective level? That is, the state of loneliness is something not only experienced within the collective but also that which has external implications for the capacity to engage in a sense of conviction and recognize obligations towards matters of care. Simply, it is an internal state that has sociopolitical implication, which I tether for my project to anthropocentric crisis.

Loneliness challenges potential for collective care by highlighting the flaws in conceiving collectivity as a cohesive and comforting whole for the self. It challenges, in Klein’s terms, “a ubiquitous yearning for *an unattainable perfect internal state*” (*Envy and Gratitude* 300). In the context of the Anthropocene, this condition of impossible wholeness, the lack of curative possibility, threatens our capacity for engagement with the unknown, with engaging in the alterbiopolitical. As made clear in my analysis of Klein’s framework in Chapter 2, “although loneliness can be diminished or increased by external influences, it can never be completely eliminated, because the urge towards integration, as well as the pain experienced in the process of integration, spring from internal sources which remain powerful throughout life” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 313). Likewise, Allen and Ruti emphasize how, in Klein, “the only ‘cure’ is to accept that there’s no cure” (199). Therein lies the difficult and painful nature of integration that makes it so hard to accept: “there is conflict between seeking integration as a safeguard against destructive impulses and fearing integration lest the destructive impulses endanger the good object and the good parts of the self” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 302).

In a way, the possibility for experiencing our world as collective, as more than human, lies not only in accepting a level of loneliness, a level of caring for more than oneself in an

interconnected world that may or may not (need to) serve one's own interests, as well as an alignment of one's own future interests with a larger and perhaps more meaningful, perhaps in turn impersonal futurity. As Klein describes, "*full and permanent integration is never possible* for some polarity between the life and death instincts always persists and remains the deepest source of conflict" (*Envy and Gratitude* 302; italics added). Consequently, "complete understanding and acceptance of one's own emotions, phantasies and anxieties is not possible" (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 302), fueling this ongoing painful schism of loneliness and collectivity, the challenge between protecting oneself in the fleeting now and engaging in broader matters of care wherein life persists in a collective more than human world. There is a feeling of being "not in full possession of one's self, that one does not fully belong to oneself or, therefore, to anybody else" (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 302). These feelings of being "unknown increases the urge for integration" (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 274). Yet, integration does not provide a space of solace or knowability – rather, its painfulness, its forever incompleteness provides greater "insight into his anxieties and impulses", which in turn provides, in Klein's terms, a stronger character and greater mental balance (*Envy and Gratitude* 274) – perhaps, for my purposes, a greater inclination to ethical obligations of care.

As a result, integration "has the effect of tolerance towards one's own impulses and therefore also towards other people's defects" (*Envy and Gratitude* 274) – it enables a level of reckoning with crisis, the threat of annihilation, with both the paranoid defences against instability, of being inconsequential, and the depressive defences against endangering the loved object, being of consequence. And, notably, I re-emphasize here that such reckoning is not about *being* ambivalent towards crisis but reckoning with the ambivalence of engaging in repair in such contexts of crisis. Integration is what enables reparative capacity. Such reconciliation with the ambivalence of reality can cause, Klein notes, "a diminished capacity for hope" (*Envy and Gratitude* 304) if hope is tethered to omnipotence, to a sense of control, which characterizes what I cited from Failler in Chapter 1 on the function of consolatory hope as a form of phantastical, wishful thinking in museological practice. But, in the pendulum swing towards reparative tendencies, Klein describes "other sources of hopefulness" (*Envy and Gratitude* 305) including so-called strength of character, which I interpret as an awareness and attentiveness to anxieties and fears, to the schism they pose between internal and external realities, an attunement to mental health in order to work on being less liable to fragmentation and fear-based defences, a



reckoning with humanity and its flaws. This capacity for attunement leads, more broadly, to a growing “trust in oneself and others,” to a loosening of “idealization – both of the object and of part of the self” that is, though, never fully relinquished because de-idealization is a lonely place (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 305). In a way, then, a level of collective hope, a form of idealization itself, helps soothe the fear of loneliness, the fear of both external hostility in paranoid anxiety and internally caused hostility (and destruction) in depressive anxiety. Yet, “the good object can never approximate to the perfection expected from the ideal one...and even more painful is the realization that no really ideal part...exists” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 305). Like Puig’s emphasis on the specific and concrete, on the entanglement of care with everyday being, hope as a form of idealization for the future must be intimately tethered to reparative relationship to external reality, to one that reckons with the impossibility of curative redemption, with the erasure of crisis and thus the literalized threat of annihilation in the Anthropocene. Part of Klein’s articulation of loneliness is the fact that there is no final or cumulative solace.

I posit Kleinian reparation in its non-manic form as articulating the limits and capacity of care for negotiating “the uneasy inheritances of human antiecolological situatedness” (Puig 122). As Klein describes, the progress of integration leads to a decrease in omnipotence and therefore “some loss of hopefulness, yet makes possible a distinction between the destructive impulses and their effects” (*Envy and Gratitude* 310), a distinction between intention and effect. This “greater adaption to reality leads to an acceptance of one’s own shortcomings” and, thus, a lessening of resentment towards frustrations and sense of loneliness in the world, opening up the possibility for love to “be given and received” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 310). This capacity and acceptance of the personal and the individual – the limits of intention on external reality, the need to be receptive in turn – are central to Puig’s speculative move towards alterbiopolitics and intertwining such personal practices of change within collective. It necessitates a disruption of the neoliberal culture of uncare and the widespread perceptual lens that views human well-being in isolation, in modalities of self-protection. Care that is guided by the desires of non-manic reparation disrupts understandings of human (personal) survival as independent from the more than human (140) and, rather, thinks about participation in “caring affective ecologies” (Puig 219). Puig’s concept of alterbiopolitics substantiates the value of the Kleinian subject’s developmental capacity. The latter’s reparative competence facilitates “alternative forms of

biopolitical care” that “do not start from or aim at ‘our selves’, but neither do they put others before our selves” (Puig 166), a tendency of the foundational theorizing in the posthumanities.

In this section, I speculatively explored how Klein’s late work contributes to thinking human engagement in the Anthropocene as a moment demanding care for alterbiopolitics. It is not a question of ever being able to eliminate our anxieties and fears that leads to defences like omnipotence and idealization. Rather, “the capacity for enjoyment” – which Klein associates with a reckoning with loneliness and its impacts on mental health – is “the precondition for a measure of resignation which allows for pleasure in what is available without too much greed for inaccessible gratifications and without excessive resentment about frustration” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 310). Resignation to reality, to ecological crisis, is a resignation to the belief that “life *may* be preserved” (Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* 310; italics added), but nothing is guaranteed. Next, I explore the sociopolitical implications of this dialogue, of the Kleinian subject’s participation in alterbiopolitics and thus investment in matters of care. In particular, I speculate on the role of museology as a narrative practice that can contribute to this formation of ethical predisposition towards and subsequent participation in obligations of care – the move from storytelling, i.e., the stories we tell ourselves collectively, to the instigation of engagement and action.

#### *Reparation as a Matter of Care: Ethical Obligations of Reparative Care for the Posthumanities*

In my introduction, I posed the question: in what ways do anxieties, fears, and desires act as defences that narrate relationships *to* and for engagement potentially *in* crisis? How does anxiety affect the formation of repair, as both the desire to intervene, the storytelling of salvation or redemption, or the defence of an alternative or reoriented reality? In this way, I oriented my dissertation as addressing the underlying drive *towards* collective claim, the foundation on which narratives ignite various forms of response, such as care and intervention. In this chapter so far, I explored how the Kleinian subject affects a conceptualization of care and engagement in the crisis of the Anthropocene. Through Klein, I considered the subject’s potential towards matters of care as a reparative phenomenon. I built this on my analysis of posthumanist theorizing, the ways in which certain logics continue to re-emerge, maintain problematic tendencies and blind spots, and thus perpetuate what Amy Allen describes as tendencies towards “normative idealism, developmentalism, utopianism, and rationalism” (*Critique on the Couch* 187). I now conclude

this chapter with Puig’s commentary on storytelling – on the “speculative search for critical stories that feed a sense of possibility” (126). In other words, I turn now to how the narration of collective crisis *matters* for the formation of conviction. I return to critical museology as a broad exemplary tool for illustrating the concrete implications and consequences of narrating the Anthropocene for obligations of care. The museum directs this analysis towards the material repercussions of how storytelling formulates crisis and instigates human engagement and intervention, displaying the ontological significance of meaning-making practices. In the end, I return to Cameron’s concept of posthuman museum practices and how it bridges posthumanist theorizing with museums as a matter of care.

Puig explicitly addresses storytelling through a focus on temporality. Concerns for anthropocentric crisis are preoccupied with “linear, ‘progressive,’ timelines” that are promissory or anticipatory (Puig 174). Such preoccupation is pervasive in museological practice – the exhibitionary complex of the public museum, from its inception in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Bennett) to its contemporary construction in *new* revitalized institutions (Message), continues to construct theories of *lovely* knowledge that are grand, progressive, and consolatory. As Puig describes, care is often reduced to “an epistemological stance” that constrains “its obligations into ‘a theory’ of (good) knowledge” (59). For both reparation and matters of care, “an ethos of care in knowledge politics cannot be reduced to the application of a theory of good care; it has to be continuously contested and rethought” (Puig 59-60). Such logic of epistemological *goodness* was exemplified within both Failler’s critique of the Canadian Museum for Human Right’s reliance on consolatory hope through lovely knowledge as well as Ritchie’s critique of the curative capacity of museums-on-prescription as a form of preventative and remedial health care. Simply, these practices obfuscate the discomfort or ambivalence of difficult knowledge. Matters of care are more than “a warm pleasant affection or a moralistic feel-good attitude” (2) and “not reducible to ‘feel good’ or ‘nice feelings’” (Puig 147). These manifestations of curative museology reflect “epistemic cleansing that obliterates these mediations: a willpower for transcendence that erases everyday actual relations in order to sanitize the production of knowledge” (Puig 87). Through their mutual emphasis on ambivalence, my proposition of the reparative nature of matters of care through Puig and Klein marks “refusal of *purity*” (Puig 88). I do not posit a theory of reparative care for the Anthropocene as a theory of good and lovely knowledge to *repair* crisis, but rather speculate on the subjective contributions – the role of

anxiety, fears, desires, and defences – in constructing the perceived crisis and authorizing certain notions of (creative) intervention, which in turn imply meaning to cure or repair, contribute the construction of the *how* of care.

As outlined in Chapter 1, Kleinian psychoanalysis is grounded upon the “epistemophilic impulse” (188), our foundational desire for meaning-making that is constituted by our “first and basic relation to the outside world and to reality” (*Love, Guilt, & Reparation* 221). This foundational instinct grounds the developmental positions and their varying relational capacities – that is, I argued that Klein substantiates the ontological groundings for care, for the human negotiation of and implication into ethical obligations of care. Klein’s articulation of ontological dispositions, in turn, have very real epistemological repercussions that create or limit the potential for disruptive politicized engagement and improvement in the face of the status quo or oppressive symptoms of systemic social structures. For instance, the contemporary dominance of neoliberal capitalism, as discussed previously, fuels a disconnection from collective notions of care. Such a culture of uncare, in Weintobe’s terms, is tethered to what Puig describes as the pervasive human desire for “temporal dominance” (172), wherein “a logic of production overdetermines other activities of value” (184). Such “productionism” understands time devoted to the “reproduction, maintenance, and repair” of affective relations and collective living as “wasted time” (Puig 209).<sup>41</sup> Yet, Puig notes, a critical characteristic of *doing* care is “the recalcitrance of the temporality of care to productionist rhythms” (171), mirroring the ways in which reparation becomes manic or mock when deployed through omnipotence, denial, and idealization.

Productionist rhythms are preoccupied with a specific notion of futurity. Puig in fact describes this relationship to time in terms of anxiety, as “the overpowering atmosphere of ecological *anxieties* so consistent with the hegemony of future-oriented timelines in technoscientific societies” (174; italics added). Within this construction of futurity, “the everyday experience of time is one of permanent precariousness” wherein “an ongoing sense of urgency and crisis calls us to act ‘now,’ while the present of action is diminished, mortgaged to

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<sup>41</sup> Puig notes a particular presence of care in neoliberal frameworks, such as through the commodification of self-care. Even though calls for caring are everywhere in “moral marketing gloss,” such as green products, neoliberal governance renders “caring for *the self* [as] a pervasive order of individualized biopolitical morality” wherein “people are summoned to care for everything but, foremost, for ‘our’ selves, our lifestyle, our bodies, our physical and mental fitness” (Puig 9).

an always unsure tomorrow” (Puig 175). This state of “hype” – a codependence with “fear of doom and hope for salvation” (Puig 175) – recalls Figlio’s articulation of delusional reality, wherein anxiety fuels the securitizing creation and maintenance of a psychic retreat. Manic relations to doom and salvation fuel what was described in Chapter 2 as the anticipatory mourning of apathy – i.e., an insistence on *not caring at all* – and its flip-side, the immobilizing anxiety of the guilty self – i.e., the incapacity of caring *too* much. Rather than reckoning with ambivalent reality and thus the ambivalencies of care (and repair), productionist orientations maintain a “restless futurity” that “renders precarious the experienced present: subordinated to, suspended by, or crushed under the investment in uncertain future outcomes” (Puig 186). The present only becomes a time for the maintenance of “‘output,’ promissory investments” (185), a form of “efficient management” (Puig 186).

The problem here is the overlooking of “coconstructed interdependent relations” (Puig 186) that ground reparative matters of care. As Allen describes, Kleinian psychoanalysis illustrates how “harmonistic illusions” and “wishful thinking” present “an impediment to progress (understood as a forward-looking moral-political imperative) precisely because they blind us to depth of the challenges that we face” and thus only serve “the interests of the status quo” (“Progress and the Death Drive” 130). As Klein describes, in paranoid or depressive defences against these difficulties, *suicidal* tendencies can manifest (*Envy and Gratitude* 305), reflecting the ways in which evading care for this global crisis is *suicidal* (Janes 595), a quite literal materialization of annihilation. By shifting toward the question of how to care, though, Puig claims a break with productionism. As already seen, in this turn towards care, Puig attempts “to question our ambivalent enthrallment with the future,” (175) “an inherent ambivalence...whereby the future is simultaneously hailed as central and ‘discounted’” (185). Instead of adopting an ambivalent position towards our anxiety and fears about the future, reconciling with ambivalence within matters of care – like Klein’s rejection of a curative sense of wholeness, of ever truly gaining control over and oneness with the loved and good object – “cannot be holistic in the sense of aiming to recover ‘a sense of oneness’” (Puig 206-207). Puig shows that – for reparative matters of care – “care time is not a get-it-while-you-can *now*, which ignores the future and obliterates the past” (Puig 207), an invocation of manic defences. Instead, “with regards to *anxious futurity*, feelings of emergency and fear, as well as temporal

projections, need often to be set aside in order to focus and get on with the tasks necessary to everyday caring maintenance” (Puig 207; italics added).

An engagement with the how of everyday caring maintenance for our more than human world demands reconciliation with our interdependent enmeshment, with what Puig describes as the “uncertainty and restless *anxiety* about future unexpected events (207; italics added). And, through Kleinian psychoanalysis, I expanded our understanding of the ways in which matters of care function – I contributed to an understanding of the *how* of care. Such anxiety fuels manic demands to go either forward or backward (Puig 180). These ontological foundations of human relationality fuel epistemological construction – storytelling around past, present, and future creates potentiality for intervention. That is, “time is not an abstract category, or just an atmosphere, but a lived, embodied, historically and socially situated experience...*we make it* through practices” (Puig 175). Klein and Puig both show us “‘how to care?’ about the ways ‘things’ are constructed, presented, and studied, especially when care seems to be expendable” (Puig 19) – they emphasize a methodological approach that has ontological and epistemological foundations and consequences. Through my Kleinian reading of posthumanist theorizing, I illustrated an expansive understanding of the shortcomings of “desituated storylines of Anthropos-centered relations” (Puig 194). In turn, Kleinian theorizing of the reparative articulates a framework for the “displacing of human agencies without diluting situated obligations”, rendering “situated humans a place within, rather than above” (Puig 194). Storytelling, therefore, has the capacity to render obligations of care visible.

For Puig, the term obligation is not utilized for what it “signifies for political theory: justice, contracts, promises, and individual reciprocity” (152). Rather, obligation is invoked as a form of positive constraint, wherein “constraints re-create relational, situated possibilities and impossibilities” (153), offering “material and affective constraints rather than moral orders” (Puig 152). Obligations of care exist because of interdependence. That is, “care *obliges* in ways embedded in everyday doings and agencies; it obliges because it is inherent to relations of interdependency”; there is “an obligation to reciprocate attentiveness to others” without moral or normative enforcement (Puig 120). When “caring for and taking care, or having something or someone to care for us, particular actions become *obligatory*: they create and re-create demands and dependencies, they become necessary in a specific world to subsist and thus somehow *oblige* those who inhabit that world” (Puig 155). Such awareness to and acceptance of dependencies,

either towards or upon, reflects developmental progression in Klein. And, to use Klein and Puig's re-affecting language from above, such obligations are more visible when knowledge and its production are *not* de-passioned, as reflected in the foundational posthumanities. Such relational obligations are entangled with intersectional and asymmetrical relations of care – “when we commit to care, we are in *obligation* towards something...that might have no power to enforce this obligation upon us” (Puig 156).

An ethical obligation to reparative care is acceptance of these interdependent relationalities *beyond* oneself and yet *tethered* to oneself, the unavoidable embeddedness within being both of consequence and inconsequential. Reckoning with our entanglement in an ambivalent reality is “to be entangled with the recipients of (our) care in a relationship that not only extends (us) but obliges (us) to care” (Puig 167). Ethicality is in the making, it “resides in messy, muddle, concrete situations in which *an obligation of care* becomes at stake” (Puig 166). Matters of care problematize such “neglect of caring relationalities” (56) by rejecting the prevalent reinforcement of “interdependency as expendable” (57), demanding instead, then, reconciliation with human desires and attachments, with ambivalence, and, thus, to reach out in webs of care. Kleinian reparation as a matter of care, then, enriches Puig's critique of “altruist self-erasure or sacrifice (of humans),” as exemplified in the foundational arguments of OOO and NM, how “care for ‘the environment’ – as something surrounding ‘us’ – wouldn't be a good way to conceptualize these ethics” (149). Instead, extending Kleinian insight to the queries of the Anthropocene, the anxieties of the posthuman turn, the intersection of internal and external realities, and the construction of perception through human desire and fear become all the more relevant as “without caring for other beings, we cannot care for humans...without caring for human we cannot care for the ecologies that they live in” (Puig 149).

This entrenchment in obligations of care is visible through the growing use of what I will term as psychotherapeutic or, more colloquially, self-help rhetoric in the mainstream amidst recent calls, for instance, for white folks to take personal accountability in their own unlearning and relearning, especially in response to the Black Lives Matter movement and TRCs. Conversations emerge here around the differentiating webs of care – and the asymmetrical relations of reciprocity with regards to who to ask to facilitate such labour – as well as the work of vulnerability. One example is Robin DiAngelo's concept of *white fragility*, which designates “white people's responses to racial discomfort”, “triggered by discomfort and anxiety” but “born

of superiority and entitlement” (2). A central component of white fragility’s capacity to persist is its reliance on splitting of good and bad (DiAngelo 71). This concept particularly recalls my reference to Sullivan’s discussion of white optics and Hinton and Liu’s impossibility of abandonment in Chapter 2. That is, white fragility illustrates the central impact of certain human anxiety and fear in constructing narratives around reality and the correlated politics of care, both within relational awareness and through systemic structures.

In the museum, taking care likewise reproduces these attempts of self-erasure across power differentials, wherein the purportedly objective authority of the museum curates – again, purportedly – neutral narratives about neutral objects that facilitate some sort of benefit for the visitor, i.e., value for the public *good*. As I touched on in my previous chapters, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the original public museum presented this *goodness* to the working class, a form of indoctrination into a so-called sophisticated culture of the upper or noble class. In the face of critiques for its imperialist, colonial, and patriarchal histories in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the museum rebranded its benefits for the public good, deploying the neoliberal rhetoric of inclusivity and diversity, which critical museologists have continued to critique as falling short in both re-envisioning museum practices and breaking with status quo progress narratives of good knowledge. This prevalence of *curative* museology, as Butler terms it, becomes no more explicit, I believe, than in the emerging practice of museums-on-prescription, wherein the museum’s exhibits are quite literally prescribed to the public as a form of preventative and remedial health care. Albeit a very brief summary here of a long and nuanced history of museology, I ask: how can ethical obligation of care be seen, then, within the framework of museology, as an exemplary space for sociocultural storytelling and public pedagogy?

Through the lens of curative museology, which I aligned earlier with manic reparation, museums are exposed as more so about anxieties, desires, defences, and fears, than things and objects. As described by Subhadra Das in her keynote talk on “What is a Museum For” on May 19, 2021 within the conference series entitled “Matters of Care: Museum Futures in Times of Planetary Precarity,” museums are presented as not really about our care for things but rather about the way we *use* things towards a certain purpose. Das highlights the proliferation of the idea that the culture in and through a museum will care for the public and improve it, yet claims that “museums continue to do what they have always done,” acting as facades upon histories of violence and power. Consequently, Das asserts that “the purpose of a museum is to continue to



enact violence in our society”. She identifies fear as a guiding factor in the museum’s evasion of accountability in the face of the plethora of critique for its range of biased “-isms”. The presentation of the museum as *taking care* of things, therefore, renders care as a dangerous and violent ethos itself as it renders care as a *choice* (Das). Counter to such manic reparative forms of care, Puig’s proposition of ethical obligations of care – which I have considered as a form of non-manic reparation – presents an alternative arrangement that disrupts this question of choice and, rather, insists on reckoning with the inherent embeddedness of care in everyday capacity, in sustaining the possibility of life, as grounding our ontological reality. Matters of care offer a way to reshape our storytelling, providing a way to explore how, as Das notes, care is open for shaping, for facilitating engagement in the work of disrupting oppressive systemic structures like patriarchy, heteronormativity, and whiteness. And, this work, Das notes, demands vulnerability, a concept she explicitly deploys in reference to Brené Brown, another exemplary researcher (and storyteller) that brings psychotherapeutic rhetoric to the mainstream, to engagement in our sociocultural worlds.

As described in my introduction, the posthumanities represent a second generation of the humanities with its additional move to speciesism (Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge*; Ferrando). My psychoanalytic analysis of the posthumanities illustrates the critical value of addressing the presence the human self in the construction of storytelling and the museum as a place that illustrates how this construction matters. As Das’ respondent Marenka Thompson-Odlum articulates, “understanding the self and our positionality is very much needed” as it is a fallacy that museum labels can ever erase the curator’s voice. My analysis throughout this dissertation explores this impact – how the impact of our human lens and human anxiety is all the more present in the Anthropocene, a time characterized by the perception of impending crisis. The American Psychological Association in fact recently acknowledged the new term of “eco-anxiety,” the “chronic fear of environmental doom” (Wray). In response, psychotherapeutic practices are developing “climate-aware therapy,” a form of therapy that is dubbed: “therapy for the end of the world” (Wray). Rather than seeking to be a *lovely* space for preventing or remediating these anxieties, as reflected in museums-on-prescription, what would it mean for the museum to narrate (eco)crisis as a matter of reparative care? When bridged with Janes’ emphasis on museums as an incredible worldwide resource for addressing ecological crisis, this contemporary crisis around taking care offers, instead, an opportunity to rethink the role of

public storytelling and pedagogy, as represented, for instance, by museum practices. Rather than rendering the museum as a tool for health care, as a psychotherapeutic space for, yet again, addressing so-called social ailments, what if museology becomes a space for rethinking the public nature of storytelling wherein the ethical stakes of crisis oblige engagement beyond reaction (or manic reparation) of crisis and, rather, call for relational awareness to reparative matters of care? Specifically, what would it mean to tether stories directly to collective obligation wherein care includes the address of asymmetrical distribution and reciprocity of care, wherein the divisions of intent versus effect are tackled explicitly?

In thinking museum practices as matters of care, the museum enters as challenged by the question of ambivalence, with reconciling with the unknown. In what ways can public pedagogy be reimagined as not about providing answers but rather outlining webs of complexity? As Puig cites from Atkinson-Graham et al. (2015), it is not a question of “how can we care more?” but “to ask what happens to our work when we pay attention to moments where the question of ‘how to care?’ is insistent but not easily answerable” (cited by Puig 7). As a result, “we use care as an analytic or provocation, more than a predetermined set of affective practices” (7; cited by Puig), more than a static set of ethical guidelines. As analyzed in Chapter 2, for instance, the particular nature of manic versus non-manic reparation within critiques of contemporary truth and reconciliation endeavours demand specific analysis of the reckoning with the always ongoing ambivalencies of care in each and every occasion – the tension is critical.

Matters of care in museological storytelling embody Puig’s desire “to restore a gap that keeps knowledge from embracing a fully embodied subjectivity,” a counter to the “risk of romanticizing...*unmediated* objectivity” (98). Both Klein and Puig articulate a study of how “boundaries between self and other are blurred” (Puig 96). The Kleinian subject’s negotiation of internal-external relationality, the *touching* of these realities, resonates with Puig’s articulation of touch – the way “touch’s unique quality of reversibility, that is, the fact of being touched by what we touch, puts the question of reciprocity at the heart of thinking and living with care” (20). And, specifically, “knowledge-as-touch” poses “touch less susceptible to be masked behind a ‘nowhere’” (Puig 97), a nowhere embodied in the abstraction and decentering of the human with OOO’s turn to objecthood, in NM’s turn to Science, in the museum’s obfuscation of the curator’s voice. In other words, this emphasis on the concrete and touchable demands situational specificity and intersectional awareness. The foundational approaches of the posthumanities

attempt to “see without being seen,” despite theorizing from the human (Puig 97). Puig asks: “what kind of touching is produced when we are unaware of the needs and desires of that what/whom we are reaching for” and, therefore, “the way in which touch opens us to hurt, to the (potential) violence of contact” (Puig 99). Like Klein’s conception of relational life, touch is intertwined with both “pain and pleasure” (Puig 107). Such “unavoidable ambivalences of touch” (100) expose that “enhancing material connection does not necessarily mean awareness of embodied affects” (Puig 105) – it is not sufficient to merely connect with our more than human material world because ambivalent reality also demands an attunement to embodied affective life, a characteristic that Klein clearly addresses.

Yet, like reparative tendencies, matters of care is not intended “to purify an ‘other’ vision of touch – the ‘really’ caring one” (Puig 109). Rather, “transforming purported facts and objects into matters of care” involves “thinking with and for neglected labors and marginalized experiences” and, consequently, seeking “to remain in touch with problems erased or silenced by thriving technoscientific mobilizations” (Puig 108), by the contemporary mobilizations that decenter the value of human capacity for the sake of capitalist production and its modality of contemporary living. In this way, matters of care become fundamentally focused on *how* we formulate care around our perception of the matters at hand, not merely an assertion of taking care. In deploying Kleinian reparation – and Kleinian psychoanalysis more broadly – as a matter of care, then, I situate the application of reparative tendencies to the concrete and specific as “a caring politics of speculative thinking” (Puig 110), wherein haptic intimacy enables attunement to the perception and manipulation of objects, a foundational feature of psychoanalytic object relations and a fundamental part of curatorial work. This intimacy disrupts the reliance on intention in museological care-taking. The value of hapticity in Puig’s theorizing maintains value through being “inseparable from the implications of the carer in a doing that affects”, constructing “webs of care through sensorial materiality, as chains of touch that link and remake worlds” (120). That is, the touching in matters of care highlights the “vulnerability in relational ontologies”, the blurring of “boundaries of self and other” and thus the potentialities for “intrusiveness and appropriation” (Puig 119).

Overall, Klein’s concept of reparation and Puig’s articulation of care facilitates a deeper understanding of human engagement in the Anthropocene and how this contributes to different understandings of reality and, consequently, narrations of crisis. Reparation as a matter of care

necessitates a break with manic reparative desires, “a pure longing to an idealized natural human being who would find natural *redemption* through ecological immersion” (Puig 128). Reparative care is more so “a trial-and-error effort of imperfect beings...acknowledging that we are as much earthy creatures as implicated inheritors of the patently poor environmental record of human history” (Puig 128), a history that is embedded in the white supremacy of colonialism, uneven distributions of power and privilege, and histories of so-called care that *is* violent. Just as there is no cure, there is no redemption through reparative care – rather, it is a central component of everyday living and sustenance. The circulation of care “preexists individuals” (156) because it is “always happening in between”; its “affective potency” is embedded in relationality that is “not to be *controlled* by a ‘subject’ or one power source” (Puig 166). That is, matters of reparative care becomes a call “to decenter human ethical subjectivity by not considering humans as masters or even as protectors of but as participants” (129) and by, instead, grounding the ways human psychic life interrupts and affects negotiations of conflict and conviction within more than human realities – how “care webs have no subjective origins and endings to settle in” (Puig 156). The Kleinian subject can be utilized to think about the ways in which the human, while decentered, is still central to, obligated towards, and impacts ethical engagements of care. The Kleinian framework reckons with how “humans exist only in a web of living co-vulnerabilities” (Puig 145). This “immanent, and *ambivalent*, force of care, for the better and the worse” is what renders the so-called locking down of reparative care frameworks “so susceptible to pervasive hegemonic moralities” (Puig 157), as reflected in its manic reparative manifestations and potential perpetuation of colonial relations, illustrated through Eng’s critique in Chapter 2. Rather than “thinking *from* and *for* particular struggles”, matters of care demand reparative endeavours “from *us* to work for change *from where we are*, rather than drawing upon others’ situations for building a theory, and continues our conversations” (Puig 86-87). What really matters, then, is “the *how* we are rather than the intention or disposition to be caring” (Puig 85).

I opened my discussion of museums in my introduction through Cameron’s proposition for posthuman museum practices as a reworking of “the humanisms that hold...objecthood and interpretation in place” (“Posthuman Museum Practices” 350). Cameron’s explication of this concept focuses on a plastic bucket at the Museum Victoria that was partially melted in the Black Saturday bushfires of 2009, “Australia’s worst natural disaster” (“Posthuman Museum Practices”

349). This example serves to highlight “the bundles of material, technical, conceptual, ecological, social, and emotional components” (Cameron, “Posthuman Museum Practices” 351) at play in curatorial work, the use of collection, interpretation, and representation. Cameron describes its capacity to promote “new forms of human civic life and sociality,” towards reckoning with more than human reality, “the potential to promote and enhance respect and ethical concern for diversity” (“Posthuman Museum Practices” 351). Cameron’s particular articulation of posthumanist possibility through museology highlights the consequences of my argument across this dissertation – how “multilateral reciprocities of care,” including the impact of human anxieties, “disrupt our conceptions of the ethical as a moral compound of obligations and responsibilities presiding over the agency of intentional (human) moral subjects” (Puig 121). Museology as a matter of care proffers how to care in a way that breaks with “the modern museum model that is based on hierarchies; nature/culture dualisms; modern precepts of certainty, objectivity, truth, and expertise; linear forms of communication; and the production of social and scientific facts” (Cameron, “The Liquid Museum” 345). By orienting with matters of care, the museum as institution could counter the perpetuation of being “ill equipped philosophically and ontologically to face these challenges” (Cameron, “The Liquid Museum” 345), the challenges of living in the Anthropocene. Care, here, shifts “beyond moral disposition or a well-intentioned attitude” (28) and therefore provides a way to question “human-centered notions of agency” (Puig 122). Museology illustrates a space wherein Puig’s analytical metaphor of touch can “problematize abstractions and disengagements of (epistemological) distances, the bifurcations between subjects and objects, knowledge and the world, affects and facts, politics and science” (Puig 97). As a result, it highlights the potential process of “honing perception to matters of care” (Puig 117).

### *Conclusion*

Through this chapter, I illustrated the ways Kleinian psychoanalysis extends to ethical obligations of care in more than human collectivity. Expanding on my Kleinian reading of the foundational development of the posthumanities across the previous two chapters, the tables are turned in this chapter to consider a Puigian reading of Kleinian reparation – a contemplation of the ways Klein’s developmental framework does not merely assess the anxieties that fuel posthuman theorizing but also how the Kleinian subject can be positioned within the obligations

coexisting in the Anthropocene with more than humans. Puig and Klein, in dialogue, tease out central aspects for contemplating the culture of the Anthropocene and its narration of crisis. In this way, this chapter addresses the ethical potential of Kleinian reparation as a form of care. As I noted earlier, Puig does not engage with psychoanalysis in any capacity, yet her text *Matters of Care* is clearly threaded with terminology and descriptions that resonate explicitly with core aspects of Klein's psychoanalytic framework and especially with the ways in which the Kleinian subject is implicated in more than human relations of care. I utilized museology to highlight the consequences of this analysis for our sociocultural activities and the role of public pedagogy.

Specifically, I argued that Klein's notion of reparative care in the Anthropocene is conducive to Tronto's foundational articulation of "a politics of care [that] engages much more than a moral stance; it involves affective, ethical, and hands-on agencies of practical and material consequence" (Puig 4). I demonstrated the ways in which Klein outlines the internal labour or work of affective relations, which then in turn necessitate ethical and political consideration to gain specific, articulatable meaning in the contemporary moment, in anthropocentric crisis. That is, the Kleinian subject reckons with the "three dimensions of care – labor/work, affective/affectations, ethics/politics" (Puig 5). Like Puig, Klein stays with "the unsolved tensions and relations between these dimensions...to keep close to the ambivalent terrains of care" (5), as opposed to merely focusing on affective maintenance. Reparation is "as well as possible care" in light of its "ongoing process of re-creation", "a speculative opening about what as possible involves" (Puig 6). By bringing the Kleinian subject to the Anthropocene and thus to bear on posthumanist anxieties, I illustrate Klein's relevance to how "care is not only ontologically but politically ambivalent" (Puig 7). Reparation's ambivalent entanglement with both good and bad is the very tension that demands ethical obligations of care towards its specific and concrete nature.

As a result, I illustrated how the Kleinian negotiation of conflict reflects the psychic processing of webs of care, a negotiation of perceived crisis and demand for intervention and, in turn, its intimacy with the desire for a semblance of security. Kleinian psychoanalysis explores the psychic reckoning with and towards matters of care. Klein's concept of reparation, quite simply, reflects what Puig describes as "the ambivalences of conceiving caring knowledge" (Puig 19). In turn, Puig elucidates the complexities of ethical obligations towards reparative care – it demands an attentiveness to the personal-collective, care as a doing, the remediation of

neglect, the re-affecting of care as a situated concern, and recognition of care's lack of innocence (Puig 160-164). Kleinian psychoanalysis both enriches and is enriched by matters of care, because Puig seeks "not to delineate a universally reaching imperative of care that would define human relations with all Earth beings but to specifically learn from these doings of care that include practical, particular, shifting relations where humans are involved with other than humans in ways not reducible to a human-centered-use and are also radically naturecultural" (149). My previous two chapters illustrated how Klein elucidates what is at stake within the posthuman doings of manic reparative care that seeks to erase the human by, in turn, centering a call to consider how human psychic life impacts such potential for interventional reparation. Through Klein, I re-affect the question of reparative care in the Anthropocene, wherein humans are implicated in obligations of care. Puig provides an attentiveness to short-circuiting "the reduction of this ethics to one or the other side of humanist binaries" (149) and psychoanalytic concern is rendered as a route for attuning to the human side, to the anxieties, desires, and fears, that fuel acts of care. In this way, I posit Klein as addressing a critical component of "the interdependence of the 'three ecologies' – of self (body and psyche), the collective, and the earth" (Puig 150).

In juxtaposing two theoretical disciplines, then, the Kleinian subject is "engaged in interdependent more-than-one modes of subjectivity and political consciousness" (Puig 110). Like Puig, my argument seeks an evasion of the bifurcated promise of so-called clear visions and, rather, focuses on ambivalent promises for thinking speculatively (Puig 111). This exploration does not elicit concrete answers or a prescriptive ethics, but rather more abstracted contemplation of the ontological and epistemological entanglements that is "not looking to create a space for care outside present predicaments and hegemonies, but within" (Puig 171). As Puig describes, "life is inevitable mortality, partiality, and vulnerability" (102). These are "the troubles and *conditions* of living" (Puig 102), marking subjective engagement in reparative care as tethered to collectivity, to our attachments and narrations of what has capacity to live and die, what is given consequence, is inconsequential, or persists despite consequences.

## Conclusion

I opened this dissertation with the question: if we accept the Kleinian reading of the subject, what does this mean for the posthumanities? This query instigated a theoretical dialogue between two largely disparate fields of critical theory and analysis – psychoanalysis and the posthumanities, as embodied respectively by Melanie Klein’s theory of object relations and by object-oriented ontology (OOO) and new materialism (NM). The core focus of this investigation was on the ways in which Klein’s psychoanalytic framework resonated within the contemporary sociopolitical moment of the Anthropocene, the current state of crisis as marked by ecological destruction and the potential sixth extinction, wherein humanity is positioned as the driving agent in such devastation and annihilation. In turn, I considered the role of fear (of such destruction, the affiliated guilt and potential insignificance) in constructing limits and rigid attempts for decentering and even obfuscating the human subject within *subjective* theorizing of being *post* human. I contemplated the ways Klein elucidates the psychic life at play in foundational posthumanist desires and, in turn, the ways such alignment enriches the sociopolitical importance and value of Kleinian psychoanalysis for the contemporary present. In light of such resonance, I drew connections between Klein’s theorizing of reparation and Puig’s situating of care within and for our material more than human world. In this way, I enriched the connection between human psychic life and the negotiation of care in light of our collective, more than human entanglement in crisis in the ongoing moment of the Anthropocene and thus render Kleinian reparation as a matter of care, human psychic life as entangled with an ethical obligation to care.

I built my argument initially on two core concepts of Kleinian psychoanalysis – that of the epistemophilic instinct, the driving desire for meaning in the face of internal-external relations, and the death drive, the fear of annihilation – or fear for life – as the primary cause of anxiety. These two foundations of Klein’s framework facilitated my humanizing of the drives and desires of posthumanist theorizing, wherein I positioned the Anthropocene and its threat of crisis as a literalization of the death drive. In turn, Klein’s framework provided a lens for interpreting different modes of responding to crisis, to narrating and demanding modalities for intervention and the possibility of reparative care. The threat of losing the good object, our world, is quite literally indispensable to the preservation of life, exposing the vulnerability of our



dependency, the ontological necessity of human anxieties, desires, and defences influencing our meaning-making and maintenance of everyday living.

More specifically, in Chapter 1, I argued that the implicit subjective disposition produced by the foundational posthumanities is stuck in the Kleinian state of manic reparation, a defence against this literalized fear of annihilation in the Anthropocene. I illustrated this claim by first showing how the foundational desires of early OOO and NM theorizing reflect the same driving desire of the Kleinian subject – the seeking of a sense of security in the face of the threat of disintegration. These foundational approaches mirror the characteristic defences of manic reparation both against the persecutory anxiety of Klein’s paranoid-schizoid position and the guilt and loss of depressive anxiety. These defences include: the construction of a *split* reality that moralizes right and wrong, good and bad; the *denial* of human presence or impact through purportedly neutral abstraction; the *idealization* of a potentially pure and curative *post*-human orientation through either object-hood or scientific fact; and thus a reliance on *omnipotent* control in securing repair and redemption, in preventing failure and ultimately triumphing.

Such manic reparative desires become especially apparent in the intersectional critiques of the rather absolute erasure of the human in initial object-oriented and new materialist theorizing and its reliance, instead, on abstracted universals, such as objects or matter. Such omnipotent denial is shown to reproduce a certain human exceptionalism, that of a white, colonial, and patriarchal Enlightenment subject and its so-called rational neutralization of systemic power structures and biopolitical histories of objectification and exploitation. In turn, I utilized Klein’s framework to elucidate how this purportedly neutral approach works to soothe anxieties over the threat of disintegration, over irreparable loss of the good and loved object – our world or reality as we know it – and thus the vulnerability of dependence on an imperfect reality, a complex world that cannot be encapsulated in a flattened ontology that escapes ethical implications *across* and *with* human entanglement therein. As described by Figlio, this psychic retreat from both paranoid and depressive anxiety constructs a delusional reality that defends against self-examination, against the shared position of humanity, of always being of consequence in contributing to such crisis, of being unable to theorize truly beyond an anthropic lens, and of being potentially inconsequential to the futurity of one’s world. Such a state of confusion without the ameliorating structure or protection of either position not only dissolves the human into the object (or matter), destroys other modalities of an inside (or reality), and

likewise rescinds the human interior (or psychic life). Through this dialogue between Kleinian psychoanalysis and the foundational posthumanities, then, I contribute further insight into how the desires to be posthuman are the product of a specific sociohistorical subject.

I concluded Chapter 1 with a consideration of the Anthropocene as a culture of the death drive wherein I bring Klein's predominant focus on the individual to the level of collective culture. The posthumanities represent one particular response to anthropocentric crisis. Analyses of the Kleinian subject in collectivity consider how a culture forms around the organization of anxiety into collective belief and meaning, creating a world and status quo that consolidates a sociocultural haven for the shared projection of the bad and internalization of the good, a soothing defence against the precarity of group or cultural ideology and thus paranoid and depressive anxiety. In this way, posthumanist desires – the desire to prevent melancholic recognition of one's own human impact, the guilt of not being able to avoid one's own presence, and the potential of not being able to fully repair or secure redemption against the identified anthropocentric crisis – fuel a loss of an individual sense of self, the loss here of the human self within collective investment in *post* human calls for intervention. Through Kleinian psychoanalysis, then, I contribute insight into the contemporary Anthropocene's circulation around a unique moment of anxiety and fear wherein metaphysical assurances are lost – a melancholic constitution of subjectivity and perception that is particular to this sociopolitical moment and produces the propositions of object-orientation and new materialism. As a result, I enhance Zoe Todd's framing of the Anthropocene as a critical narrative tool for particular epistemic structures – the danger for ontological foundations to become just yet another form of colonization – by providing a psychoanalytic reading of the underlying desires and anxieties over anthropocentric crisis, of the ways the Anthropocene triggers ontological fears for life and self-preservation and thus inaugurates the basis for crisis intervention, for intervening in the name of *care*.

In Chapter 2, I explored the fuller pendulum swing of Klein's psychoanalytic framework and what this means for understanding the Kleinian subject in the Anthropocene, for considering the role of human anxiety and desire for reparation in posthumanist theorizing. Through the mourning of guilt and loss in the depressive position, I emphasized two critical components for non-manic reparative possibilities – the reckoning with the entanglement of internal and external reality and, subsequently, the inherent ambivalence of reality. Because Klein conceives of

subjectivity as a pendulum always in movement wherein the positions are never encountered in pure form, Klein's framework allows for human complexity and a dialectic across fragmentation and integration, dispersal and unity. This characteristic of her framework facilitates my positioning of psychic life, its anxieties and phantasies, in posthumanist theorizing. The positions illustrate how our human desires and attachments construct very different conceptions of that reality and the crises at hand. The depressive position marks a mourning of the limits of one's control and capacity, the development of coping with the complexity of dependence, and the impossibility of abandoning the fear of annihilation, the entanglement of life and death. Simply, the movement from paranoid to depressive anxiety is a movement from internal concern – defensive care of or for self – to external concern – care for more than self, for the more than human. In this sense, Kleinian psychoanalysis reframes anthropocentrism wherein the impact of human psychic life is considered but is neither the beginning nor all-encompassing omnipotent force therein.

Subsequently, I considered the ways in which manic and non-manic reparation manifest in analyses of the sociopolitical implications of Klein's framework at the scale of social or cultural practices. I focused in particular on a critical thread around Klein's reference to reparation after colonization as a way to illustrate the critical components of non-manic reparation. Through reference to McIvor's discussion of the growing implementation of truth and reconciliation commissions, for instance, the value of Kleinian reparation for critical theory and its tackling of sociopolitical concerns is explicated as always already precarious and unfinished, as incomplete and compromised, as untethered from consensus or sanitization, and in this way a lens for which to consider the perpetual ethics of relationality and narration. The ambivalent nature of reparation marks it as always desirable and disappointing, as entangled with good and bad, love and hate, repair and destruction, with no final and pure cure. Rather, anxiety – over loss, guilt, fear – is fundamentally part of reparative endeavours. The death drive – our fear for life, fear of annihilation – is politically and ethically constitutive and thus an ontological basis to the human condition that grounds and constructs particular epistemological recognition and narrations of crisis. The inability to eliminate the death drive highlights its pervasive impact on the human condition, on psychic life, in a way that contributes and enriches the theorizing of posthuman desires.

To consider the ambivalence of reparation within the Anthropocene specifically, I turned to psychoanalytic readings of climate change and the negotiation of ecological anxiety, of anxiety over catastrophe. Like the desire to erase the human in the foundational posthumanities, this work illustrates the formation of a culture of uncare, an active uncoupling with care and coupling with disavowal, a collective psychic retreat premised on individual sustenance and salvation, a form of delusional reality or perverse ontology that seeks to systematically evade both paranoid and depressive anxieties. Climate denial emerges as a culture of the death drive through its melancholic defence against the fear of annihilation, a form of radical splitting or manic reparation, marking such ambivalence towards crisis as a denial of reality's ambivalence, an idealization of being able to live in a split reality. Klein contributes uniquely to my analysis of the subject in the Anthropocene because her framework illustrates how it is not the human that is *to be* ambivalent but rather a *grappling with* the ambivalent position given to humanity in a reality that is ambivalent, in benefit, consequence, and disregard. Through psychoanalytic inquiry, such apathy or ambivalence (in disposition) is critiqued as a defence against anxiety, fear, and guilt over being of consequence and inconsequential.

As a result, through Kleinian psychoanalysis, I brought to bear on the posthumanities the necessity of dealing with the psychic and affective dimensions of crisis, what Lertzman describes as “environmental object relations”, an acknowledgement of the human and subjectivity as part of the so-called *natural* material world, a world of objects. In bringing the pendulum swing of Klein's psychoanalytic framework in conversation with the foundational arguments of the posthumanities and concerns over its implications for the human, I elucidated the critical importance for the posthumanities to think about the role of psychic life, the dynamics of intent versus impact, and therefore to consider the ways desires for repair can – *and* cannot – be translated into response and responsibility. Simply, I elucidated the necessary role of psychic life in the posthumanities in part as a response to Kaiser and Thiele's posited question in 2018 of returning the human. Klein's conception of reparative desire clearly grapples with the nature and limits of reality, its messy complexity and the impossibility of cause-and-effect relations around intervention and care. And further, through the lens of psychoanalysis, I emphasized the dialogue of internal reality within posthuman relational theorizing, how internal processes are not necessarily translated externally, how desires are always incomplete. I identified the need to accept the role of psychic life – of fear and anxiety – and the limits of reparative desires in

reaching an ultimate resolution or cure, especially as conceived or engineered in advance. I illustrated the need to grapple with the human-centred notion of reparation that is largely implicit in the posthumanities.

This dialogue across Kleinian psychoanalysis (and object relations) and the foundational posthumanities (and its critiques) sets the stage for Chapter 3, in which I considered how Klein's notion of reparation is a matter of care. Specifically, I turned to Puig's theorizing of care in our more than human world and how it strikingly connects with Klein's framework – how Klein contributes to Puig's articulation of human psychic life and its reckoning with alterbiopolitics, with coming to terms with more than human mattering and human obligations of care, as well as how Puig contributes articulation for Klein's sociopolitical implication in the contemporary context of the Anthropocene, a bringing of Klein to present day issues. Both Puig and Klein grapple with the ambivalencies of care, with the affective ecologies of our human relations to external reality, to beyond ourselves; with the restaging or connecting across the bifurcation of consciousness, across the tendency towards splitting or omnipotence; and with the ontological foundations for our epistemological narration of crisis, of what is felt as threatening annihilation or catastrophe. In this way, I expanded Klein's relevance and applicability to the human in the Anthropocene through these alignments with Puig's theorizing of matters of care, which in turn elucidate how Kleinian psychoanalysis enhances Puig's own emphasis on the role of anxiety and grief within human thinking and living in more than human collectivity, in the world of messy ambivalence that constitutes human engagement in anthropocentric crisis. Through Klein, therefore, I substantiated the ways that attunement to relational awareness, to anxieties, desires, defences, and fear, to the impact of human interpretation and narration, is critical to conceptualizing and approaching engagements in matters of care.

Several key dialectical points emerged. First, a *speculative* ethics marks a break with paranoid-schizoid and thus manic reparative relations – a break with ready-made quick-fixes and rather an acknowledgement of human affective fallibility, the impact of anxiety and defence mechanisms in stories of care and for practices of reparative intervention. Unlike the speculative nature of OOO and its roots in and from speculative realism, reparation as a matter of care is committed to an *embodied* – rather than disembodied – speculative lens. Through an emphasis on the *doing* of care, concern for anthropocentrism in the Anthropocene is connected to the necessary ongoing-ness of creating, holding, sustaining livability, the always ongoing

pervasiveness of care in everyday life, as opposed to the potentiality of concrete and conclusive repair, of achieving utter security through an exacting one-off act. I speculated in this chapter about how non-manic reparation for the Kleinian subject is always already care in and for affective ecologies – how Kleinian reparation embodies collective matters of care in a more than human reality.

Puig and Klein mutually explore and complement each other in assessing how to redeploy the anxiety over self-preservation to the broader world in which humanity is very much intertwined, a displacement of biopolitics to alterbiopolitics. Klein provides a reading of psychic life in and through matters of care, as marked by a collective culture of the Anthropocene, of the threat of annihilation is literalized. And in turn, matters of care articulate initially the ways in which Kleinian reparation manifests in the Anthropocene and thus for alterbiopolitics, for a more than human external reality marked by the threat of impending crisis.

I referenced museology throughout this analysis as an exemplary realm for visualizing the more concrete consequences of my project. I focused on the sociohistorical formation and progression of museology as a theory and practice fueled by human attachments and anxieties. I considered museological work – the practices of collection, interpretation, and curation – as representative of the entanglement between ontological and epistemological realms wherein stories of reality in turn contribute to the (re)production of that reality and its arrangement of relations. As a result, the museum becomes understood as reflecting a darker history of taking care that is contemporarily being inflected into discussions of accountability and activism, especially in the face of ecological crisis and climate change. While I highlighted here the ways in which Kleinian psychoanalysis and the posthumanities are of consequence to propositions for re-envisioning the curative attachments prevalent in museology, future research necessitates the more focused application of my analytical framework here to concrete and specific, present and future, manifestations of public pedagogy and curatorial work. Specifically, I imagine applying this foundational positing of the Kleinian subject in the Anthropocene and my conception of matters of reparative care to emerging exhibitionary practices that seek to explicitly grapple with our more than human world and ethical obligations of care.

My project as a whole contributes to the intersections between psychoanalysis, the environmental humanities, and museum studies. My transdisciplinary dialogue across these fields contributes critical insight into the relational human awareness necessary for moving

*towards* ethical engagement with care in and for crisis, in and for more than human realities. I specifically contribute to the field of psychoanalysis by politicizing Melanie Klein's theory of object relations for the contemporary sociopolitical crisis identified as the Anthropocene and as marked by anthropogenic climate change. I intervene into the field of the posthumanities and environmental humanities by considering the impact of psychic life on their constitution – on the human motivation for repair, the capacity for activist intervention into threats of crisis, and for future demands of transformative justice in more than human reality. And, finally, I demonstrate that museological practice and public pedagogy play a central role in this perception of crisis and subsequent orientations towards curative or reparative intervention, especially in regards to climate change activism and the construction of notions of public care. Over all, I offer a critical lens for speculating on the ethics of public pedagogy in taking care and affiliated engagements in crisis, thinking through the ways in which human anxiety – as defences, desires, and fears – contribute to our very own capacity to face external reality in all its ambivalence in what is contemporarily designated as the Anthropocene.

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