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Posthumanist-postsecular intersections and theoretical problems of history

The aim of my presentation is to indicate some common points between issues considered in two contemporary research perspectives, the posthuman turn and the postsecular turn. Both turns tend to expand a notion of agency and make it broader than human only. Their common impulse to introduce such change is in large part ethical and is led by desire to subjectivize and emancipate entities other than human beings.

But there lies some significant difference: while the postsecular turn draws on existing religious/spiritual traditions and ethics which they propose, and these traditions seem to give them some transcendent, sacred or metaphysical legitimization, the posthuman turn misses such resources and its ethics is construed immanently.

In some cultural contexts, demands posited by postsecular perspective (and the particular ethics, which some can go too far and its claims can lead to stir up social-political conflicts; subsequently, development of postsecular perspective sometimes can threaten to support religious fundamentalisms. Such dangers are visible especially within issues of historiography, which always have been manipulated and used for ideological stakes. I will argue that some posthumanist positions can be used to make some postsecular ideological statements milder: ontological reality of non-human actors posited by posthumanities is proved by their “flat,” pragmatic-only agency.

In such context I will refer to Dipesh Chakrabarty's book *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, where the author writes about need to take into account an agency of entities such as gods, demons, ghosts of ancestors etc. as important factors explaining human action in some cultural contexts – contrary to approach posited by Western, secular historiography, which tended to reduce such circumstances to socio-economical factors only. Basing on some examples, I will try to show a compatibility between Chakrabarty's general postulates and Bruno Latour's vision of nonmodern thinking.