

Recently, humanists have sought to occupy a critical perspective in order to “de-center” the anthropocentric presence of the Subject in its opening to the material universe. This de-centering operation usually involves a negation of the Subject, which often assumes the form of a speculative thesis involving time on an ecological or paleontological scale, as in the case of Quentin Meillassoux’s reflections on the being of the ache-fossil. Thus, absence is no longer determined in relation to “consciousness of,” as in phenomenology, but rather in terms of the “not yet, or the no longer” of the Subject. To offer an alternative version of this perspective, I will return to Lyotard’s reflections on the inhuman from the mid-80’s, where he speculates on the absence that will occur 4.5 billion years in the future – when the sun has exploded and the earth and all of its inhabitants no longer exist—concerning whether the Subject will still survive.