

National Taiwan University
Graduate Institute of Foreign Languages and Literatures
2022 PhD Program Admissions Examination
Subject: Literary Theory and Criticism

1. Why is the Anthropocene sometimes also called the Capitalocene? And how does this alternate nomenclature reveal about the workings of modernity? In other words, why have the humans occupied the center-stage of this new geological period? How do you see the outbreak of the Covid-19 as one of the major indices of the Anthropocene? (Please make no reference to conspiracy theories.)
2. Present a contemporary theory that understands the “subject” as exteriorly constructed or mediated. And explain whether or not in this theory there might still be insinuations of some kind of “leftover self” that cannot be completely accounted for by referring to the outside. Elaborate then on how this understanding of the subject can or cannot put up effective resistance toward colonial or neocolonial domination? If your answer is negative, how do you ameliorate this theory? (You can enlist other theories if you want.)
3. Posthumanism is presumably underlain by its attempt to treat all things, human or nonhuman, as equal by dethroning anthropocentrism. But can posthumanism radically flatten the hierarchy, once called the “great chain of being”, where humans preside over other things? Animal studies, some argue, might serve as an example of how some form of posthumanism still unwittingly holds onto anthropocentrism. Do you agree? Please elaborate.