

Posthumanisms beyond Disciplines

Sümeyra Buran¹, Çağdaş Dedeoğlu², Pelin Kümbet³, and Yunus Tuncel⁴

Posthumanism and its core ideas have been spreading in different parts of the world and in various areas of human interest as a response to the multi-faceted problems human and more-than-human worlds are facing. While scholars such as Stacy Alaimo, Karen Barad, Rosi Bradoitti, Donna Haraway, Katherine Hayles, and Cary Wolfe led Posthumanism as a distinct literary and philosophical movement in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, it is rooted in postmodern thinking and its criticism of modernity and humanism, as seen in Ihab Hassan's work. The human-centric subjectivity of modernity and its logocentricity found its climax in the Enlightenment, which paved the way for the Industrial Revolution in the following century. Through colonialism, modernity and its ideals have become global phenomena, as indigenous cultures have been subsumed under modernity's principles, and some have gradually disappeared as a consequence. Those who have survived became exotic objects for the modern gaze.

While the earliest and strongest voices of the critique of modernity were Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud, many thinkers since these critics or the “masters of suspicion” as Foucault (1990 [1964]) called them, and informed by their ideas, have expressed their critical position and addressed different problems from different angles. Artists, writers, scholars, researchers, and activists have approached these problems in their own fields and media. The ecological crisis⁵ in the age of the Anthropocene remains to be prevalent, simply because if we do not have a planet to inhabit, it will be the end of the human species and therewith all of its problems, and there is a plethora of environmental issues from pollution, destruction of forests, animals and natural habitats to water shortage. There also are other questions that need urgent attention: logocentricity and mind/body dualism; subjectivity, anthropocentrism, speciesism, and our relationship to other beings that co-habit our planet such as animals and plants; representation in arts and the underestimation of arts and artistic creativity; the place of the body in human life and the denial of authentic bodily needs and their expression; matter/spirit dichotomy; immortality and after-life; alienation in production and exchange and disparity in distribution of income and wealth and hence chronic poverty in many parts of the world; conscious/unconscious relationship of psychic life and repression; the constitution of family and family life and the structural problems of monogamy; gender

¹ Sümeyra Buran, University of California Riverside, United States. E-mail: sburanut@ucr.edu.

² Çağdaş Dedeoğlu, Yorkville University, Canada. E-mail: cdedeoglu@yorkvilleu.ca.

³ Pelin Kümbet, Kocaeli University, Turkey. E-mail: pelin.kumbet@kocaeli.edu.tr; pelin.pelinkumbet@gmail.com.

⁴ Yunus Tuncel, New York University, United States. E-mail: yunus@sprintmail.com.

⁵ A significant book by Graham Parkes recently came out, *How to Think about the Climate Crisis*, which brings many issues and discussions together from scientists and philosophers, as it highlights the urgency of the problems humans must confront.



roles and relations, as well as the subjugation of women under patriarchal regimes; organized religions and their modern manifestations, as well as various forms of extremism and fundamentalism; nation-states, nationalist ideologies, racism, and immigration; and, last but not least, the problem of technology.

Since we live in a technological age, that is to say, technology is not just a tool or a set of tools and not just a know-what and know-how, but also our way and being in the world (after Heidegger's reflections on the subject), technology has been a recurring theme in many debates on Posthumanism. Posthumanism and Transhumanism are both concerned about this theme. While it is best to keep in mind that there are several branches of Posthumanism and Transhumanism,⁶ it must be noted that, in their general orientations, their approaches are radically different. While Transhumanism, rooted in the ideals of the Enlightenment and scientific rationality, embraces technology almost *in toto* without questioning its overall and short and long-term impact, Posthumanism challenges the essence of technology without demonizing it and calls for re-examining our relationship to technology and a new ethos for all technology-related issues from enhancement and stem cell research to robotics and artificial intelligence. Moreover, while questioning the matter/spirit dichotomy, posthumanism takes a critical stance on the human/machine dichotomy and opens up new questions regarding intelligence and intelligent life. In short, Posthumanism invites us to seek out an alternative—fair, inclusive, and safe—ways of staying with the trouble of living and dying (Haraway, 2016) in the posthuman condition (Braidotti, 2018), which has shown itself in the amalgamation of physical, biological, and digital environments.

In the spirit of addressing the burning questions of our times from diverse global and multidisciplinary perspectives within the context of Posthumanism, we came together to start a new journal: *Journal of Posthumanism (JoPH)*. As the field's first multidisciplinary and multilingual journal, the *JoPH*, aims to bring together conversations that go beyond Anglo-American academia, including marginalized ontologies, epistemologies, methodologies, and axiologies, as well as underrepresented disciplines, experiences, views, cultures, and histories. By marking global multiple chapters and discussions in the area, the *JoPH* promises to expand fresh and diverse understandings of posthumanisms.⁷

Thus, during these challenging times, we are so proud to see that our inaugural issue has been published. This issue is composed of five articles, three commentaries, one interview, two book reviews, and one artistic work—all of them are addressing emerging issues of our posthuman condition and showing directions for future praxis.

The first article, "Posthuman Archaeologies, Archaeological Posthumanisms" by Craig N. Cipolla, Rachel J. Crellin, and Oliver J. T. Harris, argues for critical and meaningful interactions between posthumanism and archaeology by illustrating connections between the two. They argue that archaeology and posthumanism can and should coexist. Based on the scripts from three vignettes, the authors point out the opportunities provided by posthuman archaeologies and archaeological posthumanisms.

In "Cyborg or Goddess? Religion and Posthumanism from Secular to Postsecular", Elaine Graham asks whether posthuman perceptions would have a religious aspect. Departing from

⁶ For an overview of all of these schools of Posthumanism and Transhumanism, our readers can consult with Francesca Ferrando's recent book *Philosophical Posthumanism* (2019) and Stefan Lorenz Sorgner's *On Transhumanism* (2020).

⁷ We are excited to announce that, based on this vision, we will be launching our website, <https://posthumanisms.org/>.



Haraway's famous claim that she would "rather be a cyborg than a goddess" (1991), Graham paves the way between "secular" human to "postsecular" posthuman. This also allows a closed examination of the distinctions between "nature, humanity, and technology", and between "sacred and secular, belief and non-belief".

Carol A. Taylor's article "The Vital Life of Kitchens in Higher Education Institutional Workspaces" investigates the workspace kitchen as a valuable but underestimated place for the implementation of a variety of material, affective, and micro-political institutional activities. The article shows how crucial kitchens are for institutionalization in higher education from a post-disciplinary theoretical position and relying methodologically on a post-qualitative bricolage approach.

With its approach to the body from a performative, metahumanist approach, Jaime del Val's article, "The Body is Infinite / Body Intelligence", questions transhumanist colonialism and depicts the contours of metahumanism as an alternate to critical posthumanism in addressing the algorithmic challenges today. Unpacking the concepts such as proprioception, ontohacking, and metaformative, the article provides us with an onto-epistemology to understand the algorithmic and the viral metabodies of the pandemic(s) in the Algoricene.

In "Chinese Kung-fu Films and the Posthuman Daoism", Wong Kin Yuen reconsiders kung-fu movies, seeing them as natural cyborg intersectionality, a human-technicality fusion. Building upon their previous work on 'Posthuman Daoism', Wong presents a unique blend of philosophical concepts from Zhuanzi and Deleuze. The author thus discusses how cinema imagines body-movement aesthetics inside and beyond humanism.

In this inaugural issue, we also include three commentaries, each of which highlights a different aspect of the posthuman condition. Kevin LaGrandeur asks: "Are We Ready of Direct Brain Links to Machines and Each Other?" The author discusses bioethical issues surrounding the Brain-Computer Interface (BCI) and argues for the need for international regulations. In "From the Ashes", Matt McDonald sees the Australian bushfires as yet another result of anthropogenic ecosystem interventions, and he connects the question of ecological ethics to the post-anthropocentrism debate. Pramod K. Nayar's "To the Posthuman Born(e)" engages with the concepts of post-natural and posthuman subjectivity through Jeff VanderMeer's novel, *Borne*.

Moreover, Asijit Datta's interview with Francesca Ferrando, "Dialogue on Posthuman Life, Death and COVID-19", addresses the most urgent and philosophical questions, including but not limited to the pandemic, Anthropocene, the relation between humans and more-than-humans, animal rights, spirituality, technology, Transhumanism, and needless to say, Posthumanism. Reading between the lines of the interview, Ferrando also provides practical suggestions for a better future/present.

Furthermore, we have two book reviews in this issue: Karen E. Barr's investigation of *Posthumanism and Higher Education* by C. A. Carol and A. Bayles (eds.), and Aleksandar Talovic's examination of *On Transhumanism* by S. L. Sorgner.

Last but not least, we include the Nonhuman Nonsense's note about their experimental art project "Pink Chicken", which perfectly fits with our mission of offering new ways of knowing and understanding.

To achieve the *JoPH*'s goals, our publisher, Transnational Press of London, and its executive director, Dr. Ibrahim Sirkeci, accepted all the ideas we proposed and helped us in all matters of electronic publication. We would like to thank him and his team for all their support and for hosting our journal. In a short time, we built an international team of editors. A special “thank you” note goes to them, as well as to our reviewers and to those who who contributed to the journal with their outstanding works.

With the hope of continuing the dialogue on a global forum in solidarity with other journals, we invite all researchers, writers, artists, activists, and scholars from different disciplines to share their work with us. Why are the questions raised in the different branches of Posthumanism, important for you? In what ways does your work, whether in theory or practice, in fiction or non-fiction, contribute to the on-going debate and shed light on these questions? How do we work together to advance the conversation? We look forward to hearing from you and receiving your submissions to the *Journal of Posthumanism*.

References

- Braidotti, R. (2018). A theoretical framework for the critical posthumanities. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 36(6), 31-61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276418771486>
- Haraway, D. J. (1991). A cyborg manifesto: Science, technology, and socialist-feminism in the late twentieth century. In D. J. Haraway (Ed.), *Simians, cyborgs and women: The reinvention of nature* (pp. 149-182). Free Association Books.
- Ferrando, F. (2019). *Philosophical posthumanism*. Bloomsbury.
- Foucault, M. (1990 [1964]). Nietzsche, Freud, Marx. In G. L. Ormiston & A. D. Schrift (Eds.), *Transforming the hermeneutic context: From Nietzsche to Nancy* (pp. 59-68). SUNY Press.
- Haraway, D. (2016). *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press.
- Parkes, G. (2020). *How to think about the climate crisis: A philosophical guide to saner ways of living*. Bloomsbury.
- Sorgner, S. L. (2020). *On Transhumanism: The most dangerous idea in the world?!* (H. Hawkins, Trans.). Penn State University Press.

