Debashish Banerji
Makarand R. Paranjape   *Editors*

Critical Posthumanism and Planetary Futures

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Richard J. Carlson is an independent scholar, with eclectic interests ranging from technology and culture, climate change and jazz. He is the founder and chief operating officer of Pacific Weather Inc., a meteorological service provider to the national aerospace system in the USA. His music project entitled 'Blues Spake Zarathustra' lends a blues treatment to philosophical themes conjured by Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault and others. His meditation on post-Katrina New Orleans appears in critical digital studies (University of Toronto). He lives in Port Angeles, Washington.

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Marilouise Kroker is senior research scholar at the Pacific Center for Technology and Culture, University of Victoria. She is the author, with Arthur Kroker, of *Hacking the Future* (1996). She has co-edited and introduced numerous anthologies including *Digital Delirium*(1997), *Body Invaders* (1987) and *Last Sex* (1993)—all published by St Martin's Press, as well as *Critical Digital Studies: A Reader* co-edited with Arthur Kroker (University of Toronto, 2008). She is the co-editor of the Digital Futures book series for the University of Toronto Press, as well as the peer-reviewed, electronic journal *CTheory*.

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Amrita Pande, Ph.D., is a professor of sociology at the University of Cape Town. Her research primarily focuses on globalization, gendered bodies and gendered work spaces, new reproductive technologies and new forms of social movements. She is currently writing a monograph titled, *Caution! Brown Wombs at Work: Transnational Commercial Surrogacy in India*. Her other ongoing projects include research and advocacy work on the sponsorship (*kafala*) system of migration and its effects on the lived experiences of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon. She is also involved as a performer and educator in a theatre production, 'Made in India', based on her research work on commercial surrogacy in India (produced and directed by Global Stories Production, Denmark).

Jose Ramos works at the interface of applied foresight, alternative globalization pathways, community and urban resilience. He is a social change researcher, trans-disciplinary collaborator and advocate for commons-oriented social alternatives, focusing on foresight-informed breakthrough design and social innovation. He holds a doctorate from Queensland University of Technology in Global Studies and Strategic Foresight. He has taught and lectured on future research, policy and social enterprise creation at the National University of Singapore, Swinburne University of Technology, the University of the Sunshine Coast and Victoria University, Melbourne. He is the founder of consulting group Action Foresight,

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Prayag Ray is a postgraduate research scholar at the School of English, Queen's University Belfast (QUB). His current research re-evaluates British and Irish conceptions of Hinduism in the eighteenth century. His M.Phil. was completed at Jawaharlal Nehru University and involved a study of postcolonial science fiction and fantasy, with a focus on author Samit Basu. His B.A. and M.A. were completed at Jadavpur University. He has presented research papers in conferences on areas such as postcolonial studies, the Enlightenment, science fiction and fantasy, and posthumanism. He has worked as an editor and is currently a university tutor at QUB.

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Chapter 1
The Critical Turn in Posthumanism and Postcolonial Interventions

Debashish Banerji and Makarand R. Paranjape

While the urge to transcend the self has periodically been affirmed in various cultures and philosophies as characteristic to the ontology of the human, it is only in recent times, as we enter the twenty-first century that we have been faced with a species-wise blurring of the human boundaries. This has occurred largely due to our global engagement with advanced technology, which has on the one hand pushed us into an information age in which objective and subjective definitions and descriptions of the human have been codified to a degree enabling modification and hybrid transformations; and on the other, quasi-human functional substitutes and surrogates of machinic, bionic and biogenic kinds have appeared on the horizon, leading to a spectrum of alternative humanoids with fuzzy borders. One may observe a contemporary unevenness in the immediacy of concern regarding such possibilities, more imminent and real to hyper-technological 'developed' societies; more remote and seemingly irrelevant to 'developing' and 'underdeveloped' ones. But given the ubiquity and pervasion of global capital combined with the tight integration of tele-technological and mnemo-technological instrumentation, to think of any region or society of the world as exempt from these possibilities is only a blissful ignorance. Rather, more prescient and true is to set our sights on a global spectrum of power relations between a variety of quasi-humans amounting to a contest for the superhuman dominance of the earth. It is in this sense that the postcolonial and subaltern condition becomes assimilated into a posthumanism with or without consent, just as the postmodern needs to contend with the ethics of a radical anthropological alterity surpassing historical difference.

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What kinds of futures await postmodern and postcolonial humans in this age of the limit condition of the human? This volume explores a variety of responses moving through topographical overviews, enabling potentia, critical utopianisms, subjugational violences, ethical imperatives, existential ontologies and subjective transformations. The techno-positivism of post-Enlightenment modernity has found articulation in a variety of optimistic futures tied to neoliberalism, the most popular perhaps being the narrative of transhumanism or extropianism, the assimilation or supersession of the human in the suprahuman machine. Posthumanism takes a critical view of this scenario, interrogating it for its triumphalist rupture from the animal, its complicity with the class politics of big capital and its fantasmatic investment in patriarchy. Such a critical posthumanism characterizes all the essays in this volume, though this does not thereby make them all pessimistic or technophobic. The existential co-constitution of the human with the technical on the one hand and with the vital and the spiritual on the other is a consideration that pervades most of the essays, which nevertheless accept the contemporary historicity of the emergence into practical, social and political consciousness of this condition. What does this imply theoretically in terms of ethical, economic and subjective practices or what are the global utopias and dystopias that form its peripheries? These questions, in their various inflections, burden a number of essays in this volume and constitute the postmodern territory of posthumanism. Several other essays engage the question of postcoloniality, subalternity and feminism vis-à-vis posthumanism and deal with issues of subjugation, monsterization and dispensable elimination and surrogacy, as well as the possibilities of resistance, ethical politics or subjective transformation based on archives of indigenous practice. Yet others attempt to provide answers founded on existential or institutional practices.

Based on these emphases, we have divided the essays in this volume into three parts: 'Critical Theory: The Posthuman Turn', 'Subalternity and Posthumanism' and 'Reconstructions'. Critical theory could be said to have its roots in Kant and can be seen as his contribution to the European Enlightenment. In more recent times, as a post-Marxian intellectual movement founded by the Frankfurt School, it sought to undercut ideology but kept its investment in Enlightenment humanism. Poststructuralism went one step further in questioning the assumption of the Eurocentric rational male as the normative subject of humanism and developed instead an anti-foundationalist and anti-humanist critique which relativized all identity constructs as operations of power complicit with knowledge. In our Critical Theory section, the opening chapter by Rosi Braidotti (Chap. 2) rehearses these positions and describes our contemporary situation in terms of a posthumanist critical cartography. If postmodernism or poststructuralism used critique as a solvent that left theory without an ontological centre, critical posthumanism, in Braidotti's view, seeks nomadic transversal alliances to reconstruct a neofoundationalist ecology of belonging rooted in the non-anthropocentric radical immanence of a materialist vitalism. Prior to elucidating this constructive ontology, Braidotti spells out the mistaken pathways that go by the name of transhumanism and/or posthumanism but only exacerbate a technological humanist horizon—these include triumphalist technological enhancements, extropianisms, anxiety-driven

cosmopolitan solidarities against machine intelligences and life forms, post-gender sexualities. The critique of these phenomena is as much a part of critical posthumanism as the seeking for vitalist mediation across species boundaries or between the human and the technical. Nor should it be ever overlooked that any such mediation or affiliation must be undertaken against the grain of capital-driven control societies and a necro-political governmentality (Mbembe 2003: 11–40) and war machine (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 420). The universal disposability of life forms (including humans) in a regime of comparative commodification and segregationist profiling enforced by robot armies faces us as a global 'anthrobscene' (Parikka 2014) condition to which the biopolitics of 'bare life' terrorism is not the adequate answer, but rather the discovery of new posthuman relational subjectivities based on the immanence of the creative life-force, *zoe*.

Braidotti's opening cartography lays the ground for much of what follows in this section and the rest of the book. The next chapter by Nandita Biswas Mellamphy (Chap. 3) uncovers the ontological critique inaugurated by Heidegger as the anti-metaphysical foundation of his anti-humanism (Heidegger 1998). For this, she traces Heidegger back to Nietzsche's seminal text on the transitional status of the human (Nietzsche 1961/1969). Heidegger, who interpreted this initially as a privileging of becoming over being, later revised his thought to make Nietzsche into the last metaphysical thinker, inscribing becoming with the type of the overman, the limit condition of the will to power seen as the will to technology. Mellamphy instead reads a different sense to overhuman typology in Nietzsche, a creative and future-ward reading in which the passage to the overhuman becomes a choreographic dramatization of the self-overcoming of the human, typology as a science of method, making the human into the collaborative and creative inscription surface for the transductive technology of the overhuman. Mellamphy moves on from this critique and reinterpretation of posthuman ontology to posit an alternative writing practice, a glyphic 'type-writing' that represents the posthuman as just such a non-foreclosed becoming of the overhuman. Mellamphy argues that pharaonic thought represented by hieroglyphic inscription transcends denotation and operates in the pre-modern meditative key of nature's language of correspondences that mediates heterogeneity and enables transduction across different series' of becoming.

Already from these first two chapters, the constellated ideas and lineages of critical posthumanism begin to emerge—Spinoza, Nietzsche, Bergson, Heidegger, Foucault, Deleuze, anti-humanism, anti-metaphysics, control societies, nomadic subjects, vitalism, immanence, collaborative emergence, transduction. These thinkers and ideas reappear throughout the volume receiving different emphases and relations. For example, the chapter by Richard Carlson (Chap. 4) re-engages with Nietzsche's passage pertaining to the transition from human to overhuman (Ibid.) in the context of contemporary technological ubiquity in the matter of surveillance, the collapse of the division between public and private spheres, and the fragmentation and ordering of individual subjectivity (dividuation) (Deleuze 1992) for the purposes of capital commodification and thanato-political governmentality. The contemporary enmeshment of the machine in the human and the nonhuman; and the global networks of this wireless reductive system of information transfers and flows

controlled by capital-driven corporate and state politics are spelled out by Carlson as the backdrop for sporadic acts of whistle-blowing and truth-telling (parrhesia) (Foucault 2001) such as Edward Snowden's NSA revelations. Carlson uses this instance as a point of departure for his meditation on the context of Nietzsche's statement about the status of the human as a transitional becoming between the animal and the overhuman—the preparations and actions of the prophet Zarathustra and of the tragic rope-walker who responds to his call (Nietzsche 1961/1969). To the roster of thinkers we have already encountered, Carlson adds a name not made explicit before but present just below the surface—Gilbert Simondon, philosopher of technicity and a post-anthropocentric individuation. The idea of transduction across heterogeneous interfaces invoked by Mellamphy and Carlson comes from Simondon and becomes a key term in a creative posthuman subjectivity.

Carlson's essay is followed by Arthur and Marilouise Krokers' poetic-philosophic meditations on drone warfare. The Krokers' powerful pieces excavate the imbrication of technology, mythology, psychology and religion in our posthuman futures. Are drones merely unmanned surveillance tools at the bidding of righteous and protective nation-states, or are they an integral aspect of human ideology, mythology and religion, operating as omnipotent amulets and curses in a global psychosphere? What kind of wider subjectivities are immanent in such devices and what are the consequences of such subjectivities? The Krokers' dystopic poetics are meant to awake us to our subliminal lives and our collective responsibilities vis-à-vis the subjective matrix of technical objects. Our composition from the Krokers includes two parts—the first one, an essay by Arthur Kroker titled 'After the Drones', is being republished from his book *Exits to the Posthuman Future* (2014) and is being reproduced for its relevance to our volume. The second part 'Art as a Counter-Gradient to Drone Warfare' by Arthur and Marilouise Kroker is an excerpt from Chapter 2, 'Dreaming with Drones' of the text 'Surveillance Never Sleeps' from the peer-reviewed electronic journal *CTheory*,[1] republished here with the authors' kind permission. Here, the value of art in awaking a critical awareness and affective conscience to counter unthinking subjection to omni-technologies of surveillance and warfare such as drones is highlighted through a discussion of significant examples.

Part I ends with a consideration germane to posthuman sexualities, the phenomenon of sex dolls, as discussed by Prayag Ray (Chap. 6). A peculiarly contemporary phenomenon that has arisen within an advanced technological environment marked by progress and sophistication of prosthetics, evacuation and phobia of human affective intimacy, cyborg-mediated fuzziness of human boundaries, commodity fetishism braided with a fantasmatic will to power, hyper-enhanced and universalized technologies of persuasion and near-instantaneous virtual-material translations, sex dolls operate at the borders of a humanist dystopia and a transhumanist future. Ray explores the social and cultural psychology of this mode of liminal eros.

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[1]http://ctheory.net/ctheory_wp/surveillance-never-sleeps-3-surveillance-never-sleeps/ (last accessed 6/24/2016).

Part II deals with postcolonial concerns vis-à-vis posthumanism. The opening essay here is Monirul Islam's cartography of this terrain (Chap. 7). If transhumanism and posthumanism have an uneasy relationship, postcolonialism, though closer to posthumanism, has its difficulties with both discourses. The problematic nature of these relations arises from the loci of the human and the technological in all three. Whereas both transhumanism and posthumanism are premised on our cognitive and volitional response to the blurred status of a post-Enlightenment definition of the human in an age of advanced technology, postcolonial cultures were normatively defined as being in need of humanizing ('the white man's burden'), yet never capable of being fully human ('not quite/not white' in Homi Bhabha's celebrated phrase (1994: 85–92)). Moreover, as 'developing' and 'underdeveloped' modern and contemporary nations, they have been kept economically and culturally distanced from the agency of the will to technology, instrumentalized as 'serfs' and 'tools' (cyber-coolies) of the developed world when obedient, or disposed in the image of the animal or monster when disobedient. Thus, though a critical posthumanism could be seen as liberating to postcolonialism from the viewpoint of its critique of universalist, post-Enlightenment humanism and the triumphalist myth of technological progress and colonial subjugation, it fails to account for subalternity within the discourse of its nonhuman others. Must the subaltern be accepted as 'human' within a global anthropocene ecology before he or she can become posthuman? This is the logical assumption, yet the decolonized subaltern may choose a self-identification which rejects the universal Eurocentric definition of the human. What would this imply for posthumanism? Such questions become part of the critical cartography of a subaltern posthumanism, as raised by Islam and several of the others in this section. Braidotti's nomadic, transversal and relational posthumanism seeking a decentred subjectivity, which cuts against the grain of power hierarchies, provides a possible model for addressing these questions.

Islam's essay is followed by Pal Ahuwalia's (Chap. 8) consideration of posthumanism vis-à-vis pan-humanism with respect to the classificatory power hierarchies of a post-Enlightenment humanism. Like Islam, Ahluwalia draws attention to the implication of rupture in the idea of posthumanism and indicates how such a rupture is premised in a classificatory system based on a normative humanism. A posthumanism of this kind, in its emergence, also extends its inverse double, the nonhuman monster, grafted onto the subaltern. As of our time, this periphery is represented most aptly by the Islamic terrorist. In place of this problematic rupturous 'post-,' Ahluwalia invokes Paul Gilroy's idea of pan-humanism (1995) , which revises post-Enlightenment humanism through multicultural engagement with its alternatives, a cultural micropolitics which consciously enlarges and extends individual and collective subjectivity. Such pan-humanism can be thought of as a posthumanism, not a post- which exceeds humanism but includes and surpasses it.

The next essay in this section is Samrat Sengupta's (Chap. 9) profound meditation on the technological paradigm of our times in its world transformative effects. In this, though he does not specifically mention either the posthuman or the subaltern, it is clear that human subjectivity is passing through a ubiquitous modality shift that represents a different state of being determined by a world-spanning

technological network powered by global capital using an imperial political machinery which is all-inclusive and has no outside left to challenge it. The technical media that has made this possible is the advent of teletechnology. Sengupta invokes Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler in thinking about the ubiquitous spectrality and virtuality/reality of contemporary telematics. This paradigm shift of the human can only be called posthuman. Yet such a posthumanity in the making is a reduction of human bodies (bios) and life (*zoe*) to information, along with nonhuman life forms and non-living objects. The subaltern peripheries which were grafted in an earlier disciplinary and biopolitical regime on to the animal and the monster are now, conterminous with all humanity under the regime of a thanatopolitics which renders them all equally exploitable and equally disposable. Sengupta gives this new paradigm and political modality the name information-politics. It is in this sense that Sengupta's posthumanity, subject to global information-politics, can be thought of as a universal displacement of the subaltern. Against this totalistic (fore)closure, Sengupta proposes subjective praxis such as a refusal to representation and acts of imagination that can grasp the flattening of difference in the necropolitical order, the levelled anonymity of death; or of the 'other' of this order, its collapse in total apocalypse.

The final two essays in this part deal with feminist subalternity. Sucharita Sarkar's (Chap. 10) consideration of the deep ambiguity of forms of posthuman/transhuman motherhood, in elite, bourgeois and subaltern cultures in India maps the terrain of surrogacy, mommy makeovers (yummy mummies), supermoms and mombloggers. Principal emblem of the persuasion industries, the sexualized female body, in a period of real-time global circulation and distribution of images of consumption, exerts a greater normative pressure than ever on women to conform to types of desirable commodification. This universal force, combined with enhanced technologies/technologies of enhancement, has led to a proliferation of female self-making in the key of male desire. Sarkar's cartography restricts itself to a section of this domain—technologically mediated motherhood in India. At the subaltern level, the most obvious example of this kind of posthuman practice is surrogacy. India, given its large population of impoverished women, is increasingly becoming a world destination for surrogate motherhood. Sarkar explores the ambiguities on both sides of this phenomenon, the rich who choose to avoid the discomfort and loss of shape and capital productivity by buying surrogacy services; and the underprivileged, for whom it is an employment opportunity. Sarkar next considers other forms of technologically enhanced motherhood, such as regimes to obviate the sexual unattractiveness of the pregnant or postnatal body (the yummy mummy), or to multitask between the demands of being mother, lover and white-collar worker (supermom). It is particularly in this last instance that she demonstrates the imbrication of cultural mythologies in patriarchal social norms that are rooted in regional lifeworlds. These subjection pressures coexist with liberatory discourses, such as that of Donna Haraway's cyber-feminism (1991). Sarkar ends her essay with a consideration of the cyber-subjectivity of the momblogger, where new transversal solidarities may be built, but which are also dependent on elite access to technology, forms of agency denied to the subaltern. In the final

essay in this part, Amrita Pande (Chap. 11) expands on the problematics of surrogacy in India—its economic, ethical, emotional, medical, hygienic and cultural constitution. Having researched this growing phenomenon extensively, particularly in its Indian manifestation, Pande provides situated case studies and ends by considering the possible futures of surrogacy.

We have titled the third and final part of this volume 'Reconstructions'. This refers to the need, highlighted by Braidotti in her essay in this volume, to look for ongoing process-based alliances following the deconstructive relativism of poststructuralism. What are some of these reconstructive possibilities for planetary futures? Indeed, many of the essays in the first two sections have already made an approach towards this, in particular the ideas presented by Braidotti, Carlson, Mellamphy and Ahluwalia. In Part III, the first essay by Jose Ramos, Michel Bauwens and Vasilis Kostakis (Chap. 12) opens a structural alternative to the neoliberal capital inundation of global information or control societies. This is the enablement of peer-to-peer (P2P) epistemologies, economies and cultures. Ramos, Bauwens and Kostakis analyse nine perspectives on planetary change—reform liberalism, post-development, relocalization, cosmopolitanism, neo-Marxism, engaged ecumenism, meta-industrial, autonomism/horizontalism and co-evolutionary perspectives—comparing them to peer-to-peer theory and demonstrating the latter's suitability to the formation of a decentred networked posthuman subjectivity. The authors are involved in the implementation of such a state-sponsored network, FLOK (Free Libre Open Knowledge) in Ecuador, a discussion of which they conclude with.

The rest of the essays in this part are more phenomenological and psychological in nature. Modernity represents a self-conscious break from the past, a rational exorcism of all ghosts through an exclusive trust in the material constitution of the world. This displacement of human faith has brought us to a technological cusp where one may think of a triumphalist material supersession of the human. But we have had ample scope to ponder the problematic status of such a transhumanism. In critiquing its excess, posthumanism can question the relativity and exoticism of a rational materialism and reopen the doors of suppressed ontologies. It is in this vein that Michel Foucault foretold "insurrections of subjugated knowledges" (1980: 258) and Deleuze and Guattari invoked a return to the vitalism of Henri Bergson (Deleuze and Guattari 1996). Federico Luisetti (Chap. 13) argues for a political animism along these lines, drawing on a number of thinkers such as Deleuze and Guattari, Bruno Latour, Gilbert Simondon and Ashis Nandy. Just as the material world inhabits our dreams, our dreams inhabit our material world and we walk through a terrain as much subjective as objective. Recognition of a world in which the who and the what are not put against each other but face each other as subject-objects, or as Latour puts it, where 'objects' are in experience, quasi-agents (Latour 1993), initiates a neoshamanic micropolitics of animism that unleashes the locked creativity of life within the ideological strictures of materialist technoscience. Yet this shamanism is not invested in the division of the natural and the technological; with Gilbert Simondon (2016), it engages a phenomenology of technical objects at the service of a naturalization of the (post)human.

While critical posthumanism has mostly drawn on continental sources of philosophy, Ananta Giri (Chap. 14) opens an American lineage for its furtherance in

the pragmatic philosophy of C.S. Pierce, John Dewey and William James. Giri probes the spiritual dimension of American pragmatism, demonstrating its kinship with continental thought in the work of Karl Otto-Apel and Jurgen Habermas and calling for a convergent dialogue with Indian spiritual thinkers such as Sri Aurobindo, Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Indeed, Vivekananda is known to have had dialogic interactions with William James, and Giri points to the appreciative appraisal of James by Sri Aurobindo. Indian yoga, as a life practice leading to transcendence, may be thought of in terms of individual spiritual pragmatism; Giri pushes this in the collective direction in seeing its border-crossing with American pragmatism. He also invokes Luce Irigaray in this regard in positing an erotic of shared embodiment, leading towards lived cultural communities of liberation and transcendence. Such shared and progressive subjectivities of spiritual pragmatism are seen by Giri as providing pathways of transformation for the posthuman by sidestepping technocapitalist overdetermination and putting technology to collectively determined situated uses conducive to fraternal universalization and intersubjective transcendence.

Giri's essay is followed by Ferrando's (Chap. 15) more systematic consideration of a spiritual genealogy of posthumanism. If the posthuman condition is one exacerbated by capital-driven global technology, which splinters the subject (dividual) (Deleuze 1992) and reduces heterogeneity to information at the service of a global desiring machine, critical posthumanism, of the kind proposed by Braidotti (1994), seeks a decentred subjectivity of transverse filiations which privileges pluralism but views a vitalistic monism (*zoe*) (2013) at its basis. In this, we see that technical technologies need to be countered and supplemented by technologies of existence. Ferrando claims that such a reconstructive strategy may be presaged in world spiritual traditions, which have ancient beginnings, but which have not been brought into conversation with posthumanism. It is in this sense that Ferrando claims that "we have always been posthuman." Ferrando examines a number of spiritual traditions, several of them from India, such as Advaita Vedanta, Tantra, Mahayana Buddhism, Jainism and Christian mysticism. Often based in unexamined social biases of the past, many of these traditions are rooted in dualities and/or are androcentric, anthropocentric, hierarchical, cultic or privilege monism over pluralism. Ferrando recommends a separation of religion from spiritual practice and a critical assimilation of such practices without traditional closure into the objectives of posthumanism.

Extending the consideration of Ferrando by bringing the spiritual philosophy and practice of a modern Indian spiritual teacher, Sri Aurobindo, into conversation with ideas related to posthumanism, Banerji's essay (Chap. 16) is the last in this part and this volume. For this consideration, Banerji engages with two generations of modern philosophers of conscious evolution, arguing for the centrality of global technologies in their ideational genesis. Outlining the similarities that tie the thinkers of each of these generations, his essay hones in on Sri Aurobindo from the earlier set and Gilbert Simondon from the later, to compare their ideas of cosmogenesis and individuation, in terms of contemporary posthuman praxis/yoga. Simondon's individuation as a form of cosmogenesis operates across all registers of

existence: non-living, living nonhuman, human and technological. At the human level, individuation extends itself into transindividuation, an ontogenetic expansion across human and nonhuman (natural) heterogeneous lineages through the mediation of culture and technology. As a seminal influence of Gilles Deleuze, Simondon's ideas map closely to the nomadic posthumanism of Braidotti and Ferrando. Banerji aligns the cosmogenetic processes of individuation and transindividuation in Simondon with the metaphysics and yoga praxis of Sri Aurobindo and his spiritual collaborator, Mirra Alfassa, who Aurobindo designated The Mother at his spiritual ashram in Pondicherry, India. Simondon, as a philosopher of individuation, included technology in his processual thought and Banerji draws out the history of the modern philosophy of technology leading to Simondon. He concludes by attempting to integrate the praxis of these two great thinkers in addressing the question of posthumanism for our times.

Earlier versions of the essays by Rosi Braidotti, Prayag Rai, Monirul Islam, Pal Ahluwalia, Sucharita Sarkar, Amrita Pande, Ramos, Bauwens and Kostakis, Luisetti and Giri in this volume were presented at a conference on posthumanism: 'Beyond the Human: Monsters, Mutants and Lonely Machines (or What?)', organized by Makarand Paranjape, Debashish Banerji and Richard Carlson, and held at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, 20–22 February 2014. An earlier version of Banerji's essay "Individuation, Cosmogenesis and Technology: Sri Aurobindo and Gilbert Simondon" appeared in Integral Review, Volume 11, No. 1 (February 2015). Arthur Kroker's 'After the Drones' has been republished from his book *Exits to the Posthuman Future* by the kind permission of Polity Books. 'Art as a Counter-Gradient to Drone Warfare' by Arthur and Marilouise Kroker, excerpted from the e-text 'Surveillance Never Sleeps' carried in the peer-reviewed electronic journal CTheory is republished with the authors' kind permission. Critical Posthumanism has received increasing attention in recent times; but this volume opens a new chapter in posthumanism studies by bringing South Asian postcolonial considerations into these studies, particularly with regard to their archives of positive engagement and transformation.

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Part I
Critical Theory: The Posthuman Turn

Chapter 2
Posthuman Critical Theory

Rosi Braidotti

Introduction

The idea of the posthuman enjoys widespread currency in the era also known as the 'anthropocene',[1] where human activities are having world-changing effects on the earth's ecosystem. The turn to the posthuman is a response to growing public awareness of fast-moving technological advances and also of contemporary political developments linked to the limitations of economic globalization, the risks associated with the 'war on terror' and global security issues. We are experiencing at present an explosion of scholarship on nonhuman, inhuman and posthuman issues, which elicit elation in equal measure to anxiety and stimulate controversial public debates and cultural representations. More importantly, for the purposes of this essay, the posthuman predicament enforces the necessity to think again and to think harder about the status of human subjectivity and the ethical relations, norms and values that may be worthy of the complexity of our times. Such issues also impact on the aims and structures of critical thought and ultimately come to bear on the institutional status of the academic field of the humanities in the contemporary neoliberal university (Collini 2012; Braidotti 2013).

In philosophy, the 'posthuman turn' is triggered by the convergence of anti-humanism on the one hand and anti-anthropocentrism on the other, which may overlap, but refer to different genealogies and traditions. Anti-humanism focusses on the critique of the humanist ideal of 'Man' as the universal representative of the human, while anti-anthropocentrism criticizes species hierarchy and advances

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[1]Nobel Prize winning chemist, Paul Crutzen, in 2002 coined the term 'anthropocene' to describe our current geological era. This term stresses both the technologically mediated power acquired by our species and its potentially lethal consequences for everyone else.

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ecological justice. The posthuman expresses a critical consensus that is reached about the seemingly simple notions that there is no 'originary humanicity' (Kirby 2011: 233), only 'originary technicity' (MacKenzie 2002). In other words, the term 'posthuman critical theory' marks the emergence of a new type of discourse that is not merely a culmination of the two main strands of thought—posthumanism and post-anthropocentrism—but rather a qualitative leap in a new and more complex direction (Wolfe 2010). This shift of perspective also moves the critical debates away from the explicit anti-humanism supported by post-structuralist philosophy since the 1980s and inaugurates an array of different posthumanist perspectives circulating widely today.

Although the postmodernist philosophical debate casts a long shadow over the posthuman, these two movements of thought differ considerably. Whereas post-modernist deconstructions led to moral and cognitive relativism, posthuman research is neo-foundationalist and aims at re-grounding concepts and practices of subjectivity in a world fraught with contradictory socio-economic developments and major internal fractures. It is significant to note, however, that posthuman writings tend to evoke the same knee-jerk reaction among their detractors today, as earlier postmodernist texts did to their humanist critics.[2]

The 'death of Man', announced by Foucault (1970) formalized an epistemological and moral crisis that resulted in insubordination from received humanist ideals. What was called into question was the humanistic arrogance of continuing to place Man at the centre of world history, and more specifically, the implicit assumption that the distinctively human prerogative is 'reason'. Connected to a sovereign and rationalist ideal, this 'reason' is conceived as the motor of science-driven world-historical progress. The poststructuralist rejection of Enlightenment-based ideals of the human, however, did not stop at the humanist image of 'Man'. It also involved the acknowledgement that it is impossible to speak in one unified voice about any category, be it women, LBGTs, indigenous people and other marginal subjects (Johnson 1998). New emphasis needs to be placed instead on issues of diversity and differences among all categories and on the internal fractures within each category. According to Foucault, even Marxism, under the cover of a master theory of historical materialism, continued to define the subject of European thought as unitary and hegemonic and to assign *him* (the gender is no coincidence) a royal place as the motor of human history.

This line of criticism gathered momentum since the 1970s. In an immanent critique of humanism, post-colonial and race theorists re-grounded the lofty claims of European Humanism in the history of colonialism and racist violence. They held Europeans accountable for the uses and abuses of this ideal by looking at colonial history and the violent domination of other cultures, but did not fully reject its basic humanist premises. The 'bellicose dismissiveness' of other cultures and

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[2]See for instance, *The New Scientist* review of my book on the posthuman: 'What's death to do with it?', by Cohen (2013), which argues that the posthuman is too important to be left only to academics or rather 'social science cognoscenti'.

civilizations was exposed by Edward Said, as "self-puffery, not humanism and certainly not enlightened criticism" (2004: 27). Many non-Western models of neo-humanism are at work in the world today. Significant examples are Brah's (1996) diasporic ethics, which echoes Shiva's (1997) anti-global neo-humanism. African humanism or Ubuntu is receiving more attention, from Collins (1991) to Drucilla Cornell (2002). Gilroy's (2000) planetary cosmopolitanism also proposes a productive form of contemporary critical posthumanism. Ecofeminists stress the link between the Western humanistic emphasis on 'Man' as the self-appointed measure of all things and the domination and exploitation of nature. They condemn the abuses of science and technology, arguing for a more harmonious approach that militates for respect for the diversity of living matters and of human cultures (Mies and Shiva 1993).

Contemporary posthuman critical thought builds on these premises but according to a different architecture. Ever mindful of the fact that, the 'human' is not a neutral term but rather a hierarchical one that indexes access to privileges and entitlements, linked to both the humanist tradition and anthropocentric 'exceptionalism', critical posthumanists, post-colonial and feminist theorists have made a strong intervention in this debate. The standard which was posited in the universal mode of 'Man' has been criticized (Lloyd 1984) precisely because of its partiality. The allegedly universal 'Man', in fact, is masculine, white, urbanized, speaking a standard language, heterosexually inscribed in a reproductive unit and a full citizen of a recognized polity (Irigaray 1985; Deleuze and Guattari 1987). As if this line of criticism were not enough, this 'Man' is now also called to task and brought back to its species specificity as *anthropos* (Rabinow 2003; Esposito 2008), that is to say as the representative of a hierarchical, hegemonic and generally violent species whose uniqueness is now challenged by a combination of scientific advances and global economic concerns.

The posthuman cannot be said to be a new universal, not only because universalism has lost a great deal of it appeal as a result of the fundamental critiques made by postcolonial, feminist and poststructuralist theories, but also because we are not 'human' in the same way or to the same extent to begin with. Both methodologically and politically, a posthuman approach requires therefore careful cartographies of the different degrees and the extent to which any one of us can be said to be 'human'. My approach combines Foucauldian genealogies with feminist politics of location to provide embodied and embedded accounts of the multilayered and complex relations of power that structure our 'being human'. The aim of a cartographic method is to provide a politically grounded and theoretically infused account of the webs of power relations we are all entangled in (Braidotti 1994, 2011a, b).

The real methodological difficulty in releasing our bond to *anthropos* and developing critical post-anthropocentric forms of thought, however, is affective. Disloyalty to our species is no easy matter, because different ecologies of belonging are at stake in the movement towards a critical posthuman position. How one reacts to taking distance from our species depends to a large extent on the terms of one's engagement with it. Some of us feel quite attached to the 'human', that creature

familiar from time immemorial who, as a species, a planetary presence and a stratified cultural formation, spells out very specific modes of belonging. Moreover, the distance one is likely to take from anthropocentrism depends also on one's assessment of and relationship to contemporary technological developments. In my work, I have always stressed the technophilic dimension (Braidotti 2002) and the liberating and even transgressive potential of these technologies, in contrast to those who attempt to index them to conservative aims, transhumanist dreams of fast lane evolution or to banal profit-oriented systems. But loyalty to one's species has some deeper and more complex affective roots that cannot be shaken off at will. Disidentification at this level involves the pain of disengagement from *anthropos*. But it is well worth the effort: taking critical distance from familiar habits of thought cannot be dissociated from the kind of consciousness-raising that sustains critical thinking. Disidentification from established patterns of thought is crucial for an ethics and politics of inquiry that demands respect for the complexities of the real-life world we are living in. Posthuman thought is a branch of complexity theory.

Only the shallow optimism of advanced capitalism can market as unproblematic the current post-anthropocentric turn and the renewed interest in human–nonhuman interaction. Such futuristic scenarios tend to obliterate the differences that matter, notably the perpetuation of structural discriminations and injustices postulated on those allegedly antiquated variables: class, gender and sexuality, age, ethnicity, race and able-bodiedness. My argument is that we need to introduce more grounded and complex cartographies of the posthuman condition so as to strike a balance between facile euphoria and techno-pessimism about the future of a category that, out of habit, we still call the 'human'. Let me develop this aspect in the following section.

Critical Genealogies of the Posthuman

Critical cartographies are needed to explain, with some degree of accuracy, by which historical contingency, intellectual vicissitudes or twists of fate, 'we' have entered the posthuman universe.

The 'we' in action here is not a unitary—let alone universal—entity but rather a nomadic assemblage: relational, transversal and affirmative (Braidotti 1994, 2006, 2011a).

The term 'posthuman' covers at present a vast array of diverse positions and different institutional processes, which often defend diametrically opposed political agendas. To give just one example of the diversity of positions, consider the creation of two new major research institutes: on the one hand, the Oxford transhumanists gathered round the 'Future of Humanity Institute', and on the other, the Cambridge Centre for the Study of Global Risk. In a project significantly called 'super intelligence', the former argues for a carefully monitored form of human enhancement via brain–computer network interfaces as the next necessary evolutionary step for humanity. Optimistic about the opportunities for computational

growth offered by neoliberal capitalism, these initiatives combine a reductive vision of the subject based on brain–network interface—with unlimited faith in the self-correcting powers of scientific rationality. The Oxford Institute for the Future of Humanity rejects the term 'posthuman' as a logical impossibility for our species, considering the insufficient level of computational power we dispose of at present (Bostrom 2003).

The Cambridge Centre for the Study of Global Risk takes the lead in assessing the significant risks involved in too hasty an endorsement of human–technology interfaces. They also defend a more grounded perspective that locates technology in the real world and evaluates its long-term social and environmental impact in a balanced manner. These two complementary projects set the tone for the debate in relation to the posthuman turn. They combine radical expectations of transhumanist enhancement, with a firm reiteration of enlightenment-based values such as rationality and liberal individualism. Apparently nonplussed by the internal contradiction of combining radical change with the perpetuation of tradition, they reject the critical edge of posthuman theory, appease venture capitalist interventions in fundamental research and strike a politically conservative note.

The current scholarship in the field is fortunately more experimental because it takes the challenge of enhancement seriously, while remaining suspicious of the profit motive of the current market economy, driven by 'cognitive capitalism' (Moulier-Boutang 2012). Research on the posthuman covers a wide range of positions and just about every imaginable variation, including doomsday scenarios. The variety of views, which I cannot summarize here, makes it imperative to set some normative framework for my critical posthuman stance.

The first critical parameter of my cartography is the rejection of 'closed' systems of thought, which already pre-empt the conclusion of what a transition to a posthuman world may look like. I do not think we are justified in taking the posthuman as an intrinsically liberatory or progressive category, nor can we embrace the equation between the 'posthuman' and post-power/gender/race/class positions, without taking into account enduring power differentials (Braidotti 2002, 2013; Livingston and Puar 2011). Nor can we restrict the discussion of the posthuman to identity-bound issues of self-formation. What is needed instead is careful negotiation in order to constitute new assemblages or transversal alliances between human and nonhuman agents, while accounting for the ubiquity of technological mediation. My argument is that we need to take the challenge of transformation right into the fundamental structures of subjectivity: the posthuman turn is not to be taken for granted.

A second critical concern I have in relation to the exuberant production of ideas round the posthuman is the tendency to posit 'humanity' as a unitary category and as an object of intense debate, just as it emerges as a threatened or endangered category (Chakrabarty 2009). This results in what I have defined as a reactive re-composition of Humanity, which expresses intense anxiety about the future of our species (Braidotti 2013). A negative sort of cosmopolitan interconnection is established through a panhuman bond of vulnerability, which cannot fail to affect social theory scholarship (Beck and Sznaider 2006). The literature on shared

anxiety about the future of both our species and of our humanist legacy is by now an established genre, as shown by the statements of significant political and social thinkers such as Habermas (2003), Fukuyama (2002), Sloterdijk (2009) and Borradori (2003). In different ways, they seem struck by moral and cognitive panic at the prospect of the posthuman turn, blaming our advanced technologies for the situation. The size of recent scholarship on the environmental crisis and the climate change also testifies to this state of emergency and to the emergence of the earth in the anthropocene as a political agent. Both United Nations humanitarianism and corporate posthumanism assuage this anxiety by proposing a hasty reformulation of a panhuman 'we', who is supposed to be in *this* together. I will return to *this* point in the next sections.

Post-anthropocentrism is especially thriving in popular culture and has been criticized (Smelik and Lykke 2008), as a negative way of representing the changing relations between humans and technological *apparatus* or machines in the mode of neo-gothic horror. I have labelled it as a 'techno-teratological' social imaginary (Braidotti 2002) that posits technology as the object of both admiration and aberration. The literature and cinema of extinction of our and other species, including disaster movies, is a popular genre offering dystopian reflections of the bio-genetic structure of contemporary capitalism. A creative alliance between feminist theorists and the science fiction horror genre (Barr 1987, 1993; Creed 1993) constitutes a fast-growing posthuman strand, proposing relational bonds between different species and across different classes of living entities (Hayward 2008, 2011; Alaimo 2010). Queer theorists have equated the posthuman with post-gender and proposed an alliance between extraterrestrial aliens and social aliens (Halberstam and Livingston 1995; Halberstam 2012; Ferrando 2013). Queering the nonhuman is now in full swing, in a series of variations that include re-thinking sexual diversity based on animal and other organic systems (Giffney and Hird 2008). Emphasis is placed on high degrees of sexual indeterminacy or indifferentiation, modelled on the morphology and sexual systems of nonhuman species, including insects (Braidotti 1994, 2002; Grosz 1995) and bacteria (Parisi 2004). Post-gender sexualities have also been postulated as post-anthropocentric modes of reflection on the extinction of the current form of human embodiment (Colebrook 2014), thus putting the nails in the coffin of the humanist subject: 'we' are indeed in *this* involution together.

The '*this*' in question highlights our historical condition, that is to say the excitement as well as the horrors of our times. The high degrees of technological mediation and the undoing of the nature–culture divide create a series of paradoxes, such as an electronically linked pan-humanity which is split by convulsive internal fractures: forced proximity can breed intolerance and even xenophobic violence. And the contradictions multiply: genetically recombined plants, animals and vegetables proliferate alongside computer and other viruses, while unmanned flying and ground armed vehicles confront us with new ways of killing and dying. Humanity is re-created as a negative category, held together by shared vulnerability and the spectre of extinction, but also struck down by environmental devastation, by new and old epidemics, in endless 'new' wars, in the proliferation of migrations