

The Vault – Master File (Last update February 2020)

Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006.

Sara Ahmed offers a mode of phenomenology from a queer studies perspective that details how one is allowed unique capacities and destinies through their particular orientations—their subject positions and the associated directions offered by these positions. In some ways similar to Judith Butler's articulation of how the operation of performativity constructs gender identity, Ahmed explores orientation as relates to sexual orientation and "orientalism" to demonstrate how bodies are shaped by their location in space and time. Ahmed argues, "in moving this way, rather than that, and moving in this way again and again, the surfaces of bodies in turn acquire their shape...Bodies are 'directed' and they take the shape of this direction" (16). While there is direct reference to posthumanism, in Ahmed's discussion of a queer phenomenology, connections to the posthuman can be found in how space and time act as interconnected aspects that construct a person and her analysis of how to queer this space and time offers new ways to understand subjectivity in posthuman times.

Keywords:

Phenomenology – subjectivity – subject position – orientations – identity – embodiment

Badmington, Neil. *Alien Chic: Posthumanism and the Other Within*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

This text explores our relationship to posthumanism through our fascination with the 'alien'. A consistent figure in science fiction and conspiracy theory, Badmington seeks to use the alien as a way of examining our posthuman moment. Badmington works through radio and filmic representations of the alien, asking us to critique these narratives and our investment in creating and mediating an Other. Badmington does a thorough examination of the alien, starting with print and radio dramas and proceeds to examine the alien in Cold War cinema. As he reaches our current moment, he turns more fully to posthumanism and how the alien with its technology and our love and fear of the alien expresses larger and deeper anxieties as we move through our posthuman reality.

Keywords:

Alien – film representation - other

Barad, Karen. "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an understanding of how matter comes to matter." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28.3 (2003): 801-831.

In this influential essay, Karen Barad suggests "language has been granted too much power" and moreover, "the only thing that does not seem to matter anymore is matter" (801). Turning from post-structuralism and deconstructionism that has played an important role in shaping posthumanist thought, she suggests an approach she terms as agential realism. She is "proposing a materialist and posthumanist reworking of the notion of performativity" (811) that is not entirely representational or discursive in nature. Barad's contribution to posthumanist thought is grounded in her background in physics and feminist science studies, the latter field pioneered by Donna Haraway's essay "A Manifesto for Cyborgs". Like Haraway, Barad is deeply invested in how we take up the body and challenges us to rethink the role of materiality within feminist and posthumanist discourses.

Keywords: matter – new materialism – agential realism – materiality - body

Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press, 2010.

Bennett makes an important and provocative argument against anthropocentrism, which in her estimation promotes unjust power relations and ecological ruin. Bennett seeks to illuminate a type of "vitality of matter and the lively powers of material formations" (vii). In so doing, Bennett pushes us

towards an understanding of organic and inorganic matter—including humans, nonhuman animals, plants, minerals, human-made objects, etc.—as possessing a type of vitality defined as "the capacity...not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but to act as quasi-agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own" (viii). To do this, Bennett privileges a "distributive agency" of the assemblage over subjectivity of the individual (ix). In de-centering the individual subject in favor of a collective entity, Bennett introduces three alternate configurations, Spinoza's "affective" or "conative" bodies, Deleuze and Guattari's "assemblage" and the Chinese "shi." In all three theories, the "doer" is effaced. Instead, the doer, their subjectivity, and their agency, are dispersed throughout the assemblage. In Bennett's estimation, the idea of an agential confederation of bodies, an assemblage, or shi, de-centers the human as the sole or driving actor and instead horizontalizes power and effect, extending agency and vitality to matter. This, according to Bennett, has the potential to promote richer politics and ecological sensibilities better able to address the Anthropocene.

Keywords:

Anthropocene – matter – vitalism – agency – assemblage

Bogost, Ian. *Alien Phenomenology, or What It's Like to Be a Thing*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012.

This book seeks to go beyond posthumanism because Bogost considers that it continues to consider the human as primary actor. He wants to put things at the center. He is embracing a speculative realist and object-oriented ontology point of view inspired by Graham Harman and Levi Bryant. Contrasting his view to Latour's flat ontology, Bogost proposes a tiny ontology. He questions the use of "object" and instead focuses adopts "thing" or "unit" as divested from the correlate "subject." Ultimately he rejects speculative realism as an attempt to offer a grand theory and posits instead an alien phenomenology that examines how things exist from their point of view—things being always and ever alien to us. The tool to be used is the ontograph, which is an inscriptive strategy that can unearth the relations between things, their interobjectivity. His case study is a series of photographs by artist Stephen Shore which he considers as instances of ontographs that reveal to us how things exist by and for themselves. Contrary to language and words which obscure the richness of units and things, ontographs reveals how they are and what they do. Bogost also examines carpentry as used by Harman and considers it a potent tool to practice alien phenomenology.

Keywords:

OOO – object/subject relation – things – ontography – ontology – interobjectivity

Boulter, Jonathan. *Parables of the Posthuman: Digital Realities, Gaming, and the Player Experience*. Wayne State University Press, 2015.

Boulter's text is an intervention in two fields: critical posthumanism and video game studies. He suggests that video games are a way through which posthuman subjectivity is formed and mediated. He does so by offering an analysis of posthuman characters within video games, such as *Half Life 2* and *BioShock*, to frame his argument. However, Boulter does not simply stop with representations of posthuman bodies but discusses how the function of video games themselves become part of posthuman identity formations. He contends that through playing video games, a person can embody a type of posthuman subjectivity. By bringing video games into the posthumanist conversation, Boulter demonstrates how different modes of technology and embodiment can be experienced.

Keywords:

video game studies – subjectivity – posthuman bodies – identity - embodiment

Bostrom, Nick. "In Defense of Posthuman Dignity." *Bioethics*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2005, pp. 202-214.

In this influential essay, Bostrom advocates for a type of transhumanism which asserts "that human enhancement technologies should be made widely available, that includes should be broad discretion over which of these technologies to apply to themselves, and that parents should normally have the right to choose enhancements for their children-to-be" (202). He does so in response to arguments from transhuman opponents, whom he calls "bio-conservatives," who object to transhumanist beliefs and practices for a myriad of reasons. Chief among them, according to Bostrom, is a liberal humanist, and a times religious, belief in unique qualities of humans that would be endangered or degraded were transhuman technologies and bodily modifications to become acceptable. Bostrom critiques what he considers to be the two cardinal objections of bio-conservatives to transhumanism, the idea that transhuman modifications are both de-humanizing and threaten humans who, for whatever reason, remain unmodified. Bostrom argues for an expanded understanding of human "dignity" that is extended to transhuman bodies and ways of being.

Keywords:

Transhumanism – humanism – science and technology

Braidotti, Rosi et Hlavajova, Maria (eds.). *The Posthuman Glossary*. London: Bloomsbury, 2018.

The *Posthuman Glossary* aims at a compilation of problems tackled by Posthuman theory. The term "problem" invokes the difficulty of defining the "posthuman", which the editors acknowledge in the opening pages, as well as the many propositions that each individual entry intends to make when questioning the status of human agency, subjectivity, and ethics in both academic and non-academic fields. Not only does the glossary serve the traditional encyclopedic purpose of reference work, of a compendium of key terms and concepts in the field, it also challenges the very meaning of reference books or how concepts reach its status as such. As a consequence, the glossary can be a useful reference on the current debates within posthumanism, but also a reminder that concepts are never fully finished or entirely complete, thus problematizing, while informing, the nature of posthuman methodology. Each entry seems aware of its present taking form, constructing, one by one, the "field of enquiry and experimentation that is triggered by the conversations of post-humanism on the one hand and post-anthropocentric on the other" (1). As proposed by the editors in the preface, the collection is a "cartographic account of [the] emerging critical theories" and a reflection on "the vitality and inspirational force of ongoing theoretical debates" (xiii). What differentiates the *Posthuman Glossary* from other typical genealogies or glossaries is its use of a dialogical strategy and its "temporary 'meta-stability', by combining a cartographic approach with a critical response" (5). The *Glossary* combines descriptive entries with cross-references and citations that can be mapped out by the readers through the "see also" section after each entry, thus serving as a formidable go to for inspiration and clarification in any field of posthuman studies.

Keywords:

Genealogy – posthuman methodology – conceptual framework – cartography

Carlson, Marla. *Affect, Animals, and Autists: Feeling Around the Edges of the Human in Performance*. University of Michigan Press, 2018.

In this text, Marla Carlson argues that theatre and performing arts "both reflect and contribute to a redefinition of the category *human*" (1) in ways that question normative hierarchies of human-ness and animal-ness. The animal and the autistic, Carlson argues, are both categories that blur the boundaries of communicative expectation of human qualification, since many animals are perceived to communicate and have interior lives read anthropomorphically as similar to humans', and autists have historically

been harmfully described in animal terms. In the space of performance, the affective ecology of these categories might be read as questioning and illuminating normative expectations and readings of these categories. Together, they perform the operations of the human as a concept that qualifies one for empathy, expression, and even life. Carlson utilizes current affect theory based in Deleuze, as well as disability studies and critical animal studies frameworks for interpreting and critiquing cultural representation. The book is divided into chapters that analyze portrayals of animals and their affect and cognition, as well as those portraying autists. Later chapters concern performances that include real live and dead animals on stage as a form of affective assault prompting moral disgust. Finally, the last chapters concern performances including persons perceived to be autistic that prompt questions of normative expectations of performance, communication and audience identification. Carlson argues that “categories serve hierarchies and thus organize oppression” (1) and thus an attention to those states of being that blur distinctions of categorization are worth critiquing in the “affectsphere” of live performance.

Keywords:

Affect theory – performance – autism – theatre – literary criticism – critical animal studies – disability studies – humanism – posthumanism – Deleuze and Guattari

Chen, Mel Y. *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*. Durham: Duke U P, 2012.

Animacies is a fundamentally interdisciplinary study of the “animacy hierarchies of Western ontology” conveyed through language but which both describe and affect human and non-human bodies. Chen takes a materialist approach insofar as the work considers the materiality of affect, language, and bodily interaction, but considers how these play out in the contested space of language, and how language charges these interactions with political valences. Chen argues that the ways in which objects, humans, non-human animals, words, and phenomena are considered “animated” or not “animated” speaks to a scale of life and death, the implications of which map to all areas of biopolitical life. Further, through discourse analysis and literary study Chen argues that the categories of difference in animacy hierarchies points to areas of “porousness” where language and bodies both are and are not animated. Through analysis on such liminal cases, Chen makes the workings of animacy hierarchies visible as a biopolitical relations. *Animacies* draws upon critical animal studies, new materialisms, discourse analysis, film analysis, environmental activism, queer theory, critical animal studies, disability studies, and posthumanism in this study. Chen describes her far-ranging disciplinary structure and textual archive as constituting a “feral” approach that follows neglected connections while maintaining an awareness of differing historical contexts. The text is divided into three sections: “Language”, “Animals”, and “Metals”. The first discusses the animacy of language and its use to dehumanize; the second discusses borders between the human and animal, as well as the sexual and racialized politics of this border; and the third discusses the geopolitical operations of the discourse of toxins and environmental contamination.

Keywords:

Biopolitics – bodies – Western ontology – human animal relations – queer – affect – film – contamination

Chun, Wendy Hui Kyong. *Updating to Remain the Same: Habitual New Media*. The MIT Press, 2016.

Chun’s work addresses questions involving subjectivity in relation to the new media by means of focusing on real-life experiences of subjects as users. By examining how the concept of networks becomes central to our contemporary understanding of sociality, Chun discusses the operations of

neoliberalism to elude society by means of producing human and nonhuman sovereign subjects. She focuses on two aspects of network sociality: habit and crisis as contemporary temporalities. She claims that subjects as users keep networks functioning by means of the threat of becoming obsolete. Therefore, the formula “habit + crisis = update”, which she explores in part one of the book, explains how “network” becomes a universal concept relying on security and predictability that forms the discourse of neoliberalism. Chun departs from this model by revealing the leakiness and insecurity of this imaginary, claiming that change is inherent to its functioning. Therefore, in part two, she examines real-life online social practices that interrupt the stability of networks, enabling temporary “small s sovereigns” (39) to emerge. Her analysis of network as exceeding the technical into the ideas and discourse is relevant for discussions around agency and subjectivity in the “Big Data” world. It provides an insightful perspective on the links between the new media, transhumanism and critical posthumanism in regards to the debates about individuals, technologies and societies. Also, it is a useful source for those interested in posthuman methodology and representation. Chun’s work play with form by introducing every chapter with a comment in programming language, teasing the reader as to how theory and technical insight can be brought closer together.

Keywords:

New media – ideology – network – public-private – habitual media – subjectivity - individual

Cutts, Steve. *Man*. 2012 (animation, 3 min 36 sec)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfGMYdalCIU&t=2s>

This short animation film illustrates the amount of damage that man (sic) has caused to other species, nature, and the Earth as a whole. The man character is portrayed as walking and dancing forward while killing and destroying everything he encounters to dress and feed himself and for his own entertainment. He dumps nuclear waste and garbage in the sea and empties it of its fishes. Using his magic wand, he transforms trees into reams of paper and makes an urban landscape emerge with its traffic, noise, and industry transforming whole animals into food and experimenting on animals. Having generated more and more waste, he climbs on a huge heap of garbage laughing and celebrates his accomplishments. The whole Earth is transformed into a series of piles of garbage. Man sits on a throne, puts on a crown and lights a cigar, sitting next to a “FKC” bucket of chicken, caged chickens and other animal carcasses. A spaceship arrives and two aliens disembark. Their initial smile morphs into a frown as they notice the state of the Earth. They grab man and squish him into a mat and fly away. The soundtrack of the film is “In the Hall of the Mountain King” by Edvard Grieg.

Keywords:

consumerism – human exceptionalism - human nonhuman animal relations – environmental destruction

Daigle, Christine and Olga Cielemecka. “Posthuman Sustainability: An Anti-anthropocentric Ethos for our Anthropocenic Future.” *Theory, Culture & Society* (forthcoming).

This article argues for the abandonment of a Humanist worldview according to which the human is exceptional and in charge. The concept of sustainability, widespread in environmental discourse and policy, is revisited with a view of questioning the notion of temporality it usually entails and its human-centeredness. The proposal is to resituate the human in its ecosystem and think of sustainability in terms of all living beings and their thriving. The article discusses the Anthropocene and the associated risk of human extinction, in addition to ongoing and accelerating extinction of species. Exploring material feminist positions, the article makes the case for the potential to develop environmental views and policies that will be favorable to the thriving of all living beings if humans embrace themselves anew as entangled beings. The authors take marine polyps as models of

posthuman connectivity and examine forests as complex systems that also teach us about interconnectivity but also variable timescales and their intertwinement.

Keywords:

sustainability – material feminism – posthumanism – environmental ethics – Anthropocene – Extinction

Davis, Lennard. *The End of Normal: Identity in a Biocultural Era*. University of Michigan Press, 2014.

This book presents responses to the critiques of his previous work on disability and normalcy, as well as a series of what he terms “biocultural” interventions into supposedly discipline-specific debates. These responses take the reader through a number of highly debated topics, especially within disability studies (DS) and related disciplines, including the terms of identity politics, non-disabled actors playing disabled characters, genetics and eugenics, the medicalization of affect and the DSM, and physician assisted suicide. Although these topics may appear disparate, he connects them in this volume through what he proposes to call “the biocultural” (vii). Davis defines the biocultural as “the intersection among the cultural, social, political, technological, medical, and biological” (vii). Through this interdisciplinary mode of critique, this collection responds some of the most contentious issues at the intersection of the cultural and the biological. Further, Davis introduces what he calls “dismodern posthumanism,” which he describes as a disability-based twist on posthumanist theory that resists unchecked notions of individualism and independence within scholarship on posthumanism (16).

Keywords:

Disability studies – normalcy – posthumanism – dismodernism – identity – biocultural critique – genetics – medicine – psychology

del Río, Elena. *Deleuze and the Cinemas of Performance: Powers of Affection*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008.

del Río argues that affect is performative. In this text, the affective power of the body is explored and the significance of performance is outlined. del Río contends, “[a]s an event, performance is cut off from any preconceived, anterior scenario or reality. In its fundamental ontological sense, performance gives rise to the real” (4). Thus, del Río is arguing that performances shape life on an ontological level due to their status as events with inherent affective capacity. As such, affect has the capacity to shape one, not only in addition to ideology, but perhaps in ways that are counter to ideology, offering individuals a means by which to form their senses of self beyond the constraints of cultural and societal forces. This can be linked to posthuman ideas that explore how we can evolve out of humanistic constraints. As del Río posits, bodily forces, which she also refers to as affects, “are thoroughly creative and performative in their ceaseless activity of drawing and redrawing connections with each other through a process of self-modification or becoming” (3). Thus, affects are inherently interconnective and act to influence all life in fundamental ways.

Keywords:

Affect theory – event – self – becoming – cinema of performance – embodiment

Dickinson, Adam. 2018. *Anatomic*. Toronto: Coach House Books, 2018.

A book of poetry that derives from the author’s intense self-testing – chemical analyses of blood, urine, feces, and bacterial swabs – *Anatomic* writes a kind of chemical autobiography that no level of thoughtful introspection might discover. Dickinson finds in these tests that his body is thoroughly inhabited by the chemicals of Western industrial life and composed of bacterial cultures adapted to

such environments. This book of poems, novel in its form of consideration of the self, speaks to the posthuman condition of permeability and contamination, as well as the plurality of life that adds up to the lyric speaker's analyzing "I". We find that the self is a "crowd" of hormones (11-13), "wave[s]" of fat distributing hormones (31), and a mixture of biopolitical interference that ties us to our place in time and geography. The book further accounts the author's experience of undergoing the labour of data collection necessary for the writing of the book. These journalistic sections almost solidify the subject as they show the work of poetic and scientific experience as well as the tasks of daily life in a conventional way. We see here the social, thinking human animal we are used to, before being thrust back into a poetics that whips the reader between vastly different scales of bodily engagement. From gut bacteria living a life in both the mother and the speaker, to national politics of planetary environmental contamination, Dickinson writes of a self as but another scale in a vast continuum of interdependent life.

Keywords:

Poetry – poetics – chemistry – biology – self – biopolitics

Dickinson, Adam. *The Polymers*. Toronto: Anansi Press, 2013.

Dickinson's collection of poetry takes the eponymous molecular structures as both a thematic and structural way to think through the relations between the chemical and linguistic components of our everyday lives in a biochemical, infotech, virtual, globalized, and consumerist present. As polymers are composed on repeated smaller units, may be natural or synthetic, and chemically structure our world, they are ripe for Dickinson's poetic exploration. Dickinson specifically focusses on plastics as commodity and contaminant. Of plastic Dickinson writes, it is "an organizing principle (a poetics)" (n.p.). Drawing on traditions of poetic experimentation (a word with an very prominent double meaning in this text), Dickinson blends lyrical poetry utilizing colloquial and scientific language with conceptualist techniques that reconfigure and remix these elements. The poems each correspond to parts of the chemical structure of a given polymer, which forms sections of the book. The intricate and microscopic relations that organize operations become a metaphorical way to think through the relation between the micro and macro scales of industrialized and globalized geopolitical life and its linguistic registers. The book engages with posthuman themes insofar as it takes the microscopic, contaminant, and chemical scales as shared ecologies of postindustrial anthropocene life that exceed the human, but which also organize and affect the human.

Keywords:

Poetry – poetics – conceptual – contamination – biopolitics – plastics – environment – Anthropocene – the body

Ferrando, Francesca. "Is the post-human a post-woman? Cyborgs, robots, artificial intelligence and the futures of gender: a case study." *European Journal of Futures Research* 2.1 (2014): 43.

In this paper, Ferrando utilizes sociological data she gathered in a survey to assess current responses to issues of gender, artificial intelligence, robotics, and posthumanism. Specifically, the article asking how are "epistemological approaches adopted in the fields of Artificial Intelligence, cyborg technologies and robotics, going to impact the futures of gender?" (42). Further, exactly "how and to what extent do gender and the intersectional differences characterizing the human species inform such developments?" (42). These questions are the driving point of the article. A departure from the more philosophical approaches found within the discipline, Ferrando's study is illuminating as it speaks to the variations in public perceptions of posthumanism, robotics, AI, and gender. Although there is a tendency within some posthumanist circles to do away with the focus on technology, Ferrando's assessment shows how important technology is not just to our understanding of the posthuman, but also

of gender.

Keywords: gender issues – artificial intelligence - transhumanism

Frost, Samantha. *Biocultural Creatures. Toward a New Theory of the Human*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2016.

Frost aims to offer a new theory of the human that moves away from a traditional humanist notion of the agent while not entirely doing away with agency. She thinks humans should be put to task as agents, especially in times of ecological crisis such as ours. She adopts the notion of agentic capacity and seeks to establish a minimal agent. Instead of going into the depths of the quantum field she chooses to look into biochemical operations and the atomic relations of energy that ground them, showing that there is a strict mechanics governing energy relations between particles. She examines the atom, molecules, various types of chemical bondings, the operations of permeable membranes, and the role proteins and oxygen play in living organisms. These processes are distributed throughout all matter, including, of course, the matter composing us and they allow for the establishment of some stability thanks to the rules governing biological processes and the intentless direction it generates. Frost's view is not a biological determinism, or überbiological as she refers to it: our corporeal history, our temporal unfolding and the levels of stability within change we may attain, what she calls our "itness," allow us to exercise some intentional direction amidst the intentless direction of our material foundation. This is minimal agency. Key to her propositions is that the organism is permeated by its habitat and relies on the traffic of atoms and cells through its numerous membranes for its persistence, for life to unfold. No traffic through membranes, no life. No intermingling with one's habitat, no life. These processes are material, through and through.

Keywords: material feminism – agentic capacity – biochemical processes – biocultural development

Gale, Ken. *Madness as Methodology: Bringing Concepts to Life in Contemporary Theorising and Inquiry*. Routledge, 2018

This text takes "madness" in the Deulzian sense and utilizes it as a written style that conveys the movements of thought, the repetitions and recombinations of ideas in novel ways, and articulates the moment of reading and writing as a continually changing becoming of language. Gale follows Deleuze and Guattari's idea that "Madness need not be all breakdown. It may also be breakthrough." Gale resists the idea of madness as an individual trait, and rather sees it as a force that works in relation to dominant logics and ontologies. For Gale, this serves as a methodology that connects this with a posthuman ethics that sees beyond the human and the individual, and focuses on assemblages and relational affect. Despite the lauding of the methodology of madness, the technique, in this instance, boils down to a self-reflexive and ironic study of both the subject and the writer writing the subject. Gale draws widely from literature, observations, theory, and personal anecdote to create an assemblage of thinking-through Deleuzian affect theory. Part-autobiography, part theoretical testing, the book prompts the reader to skip and jump through the sections (which the author calls "plateaus") to connect the text with itself and with the "Outside". Gale argues that an attention to the states of becoming that he calls madness offers new ways to think through self and relationality in an embodied and sensory milieu. Gale draws heavily on Deleuze and Guattari, Massumi, Braidotti, Haraway, and many others in a loose assemblage of theoretical conversation to create not a new theory, but a new way of utilizing and living with and through theory.

Keywords:

Deleuze and Guattari – assemblage – posthumanism – affect theory – life writing – madness – methodology

Goodley, Daniel, and Katherine Runswick-Cole. "Becoming dishuman: Thinking about the human through dis/ability." *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 37.1 (2016): 1-15.

In this article, Goodley and Runswick-Cole sketch what they describe as “dis/human studies”, a blending of posthumanism and disability studies that seeks the critique the normative constructions of the human from a perspective informed by disability experience. They argue for a notion of dis/humanism with a split praxis. First, they argue, disability fundamentally requires a critique of the idea of the autonomous and independent human as a model for rights and political consideration. Nevertheless, the lives of those stigmatized as disabled live within this framework of liberal humanist expectation, and thereby we must also push for practical rights within the current model. The constitutive slash of dis/humanism is meant to indicate this twinned ambition of the theoretical project. Goodley and Runswick-Cole’s ambivalence with regard to the human grounds the theoretical posthuman project so as to leverage rights and maintain safety while critiquing ideological groundwork. They base their approach in intellectual disability, and the ways that those so labelled already live in ambivalent relation to normative notions of the human. The goal of this project is to make the theoretical work of posthumanism and disability studies useful and relevant to the lives of disabled people.

Keywords:

Disability studies – dis/humanism – the human – intellectual disability – assemblage – social science – humanism

Goodley, Dan, Rebecca Lawthom, and Katherine Runswick Cole. "Posthuman disability studies." *Subjectivity* 7.4 (2014): 342-361.

In this paper, the authors bring disability studies and Rosi Braidotti’s theorization of “the posthuman” together to think through critiques of humanism based on disability experience. They argue that disability studies and experience already contains the notion of the posthuman, though not named as such, due to disability’s divergence from humanist notions of what constitutes the human and the individual. The first two sections largely establish Braidotti’s theory so the later sections can advocate for disability’s primacy when critiquing the human. They argue this because “disability demands non-normative and anti-establishment ways of living” due to society’s abjection of states and embodiments of disability as non-human. Further, disability highlights the failure of humanism to accommodate the intersubjective and inter-reliant ways of all life, but which are stigmatized in certain cases as disability’s failure to meet the requirements of humanism. Nevertheless, the authors recognize and acknowledge the importance of leveraging rights within the current, humanist framework, such as the protections granted by the *United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. As a political category, a relational ethics, and an experience outside the normative prescriptions of humanism, disability studies, these authors argue, already mesh with posthuman criticism, and indeed may offer much to the latter field. The paper ends with disability perspectives on human enhancement, theorizing the non-human animal, and death, important concepts in Braidotti’s project.

Keywords:

disability studies – Rosi Braidotti – posthumanism – humanism – ethics – non-human animals – death – politics

Grosz, Elizabeth. *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.

Grosz offers an insightful and appealing revision of Charles Darwin's theory through a material feminist lens. The project reflects on the concepts of life, politics and art through the entanglements between humans and nonhumans. As suggested by the title, the expectations at the outset are directed towards political and ontological "reflections" guided by a rethinking of Darwin's theory. Indeed, what the reader encounters in the three parts that structure the book is a in-depth consideration of the main articulations in Darwin's theory that were kept invisible in by the scientific literature, which reduced it to a form of genetic determinism. On the one hand, there is an exploration of the concept of difference, in particular to the difference between nature and culture, nonhuman and human entities that has occupied most of the Western philosophical thinking and whose shared understanding of processes of becoming and unbecoming reveals places of convergence rather than of difference in the dualistic framework. On the other hand, Grosz investigates the process of sexual selection and its relationship with that of natural selection in order to argue how freedom, autonomy and identity, core concepts of feminist theory, could be reinvigorated by the ontological account she is engaging with here. Besides the insightful connections Grosz makes, the book can serve as an introduction to important theoretical frameworks and thinkers that make up the list of "stars" in Posthumanism. With Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze, Luce Irigaray and material feminism, Grosz brings in Darwin's theory as a philosophical perspective towards a more radical, protensive politics of difference.

Keywords:

Natural selection – sexual difference – material feminism – becoming – politics – aesthetics – a life – Deleuze

Grosz, Elizabeth. ---*The Incorporeal: Ontology, Ethics, and the Limits of Materialism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017.

In this book, Grosz offers an "ontoethics" that accounts for the limits of materialism, its "outside", and for what escapes our epistemological knowability. Concerned with relations between humans and the world, both organic and inorganic life, through a careful and detailed analysis of classic philosophy and the body-mind issues derived from this tradition, Grosz investigates the immaterial or incorporeal forces as conditions for the "functioning of matter" (5). As an alternative to the dualism inherent in Western Philosophy, Grosz contends that human consciousness and all theory that accounts for its constitution do not take into account the incorporeal quality of thought, understood as "emergent qualities from some increasing order of the material" (11). In this way, she argues, ideality is inherent in materiality, and materiality carries ideality, always imbued with immaterial forms. Grosz' investigation is located within this inextricable link between the two, and seeks to help us think an ethics that attends to a possible future open to change and able to explain what the world might be rather than what it is. This ontoethical project is inspiring and reclaims the place of materiality in thinking political, social, cultural life. Drawing from Spinoza, Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari, Simondon and Raymond Ruyer, Grosz that the world's material and incorporeal forces enable all forms of life, organic and inorganic alike.

Keywords:

Materiality – ideality – counterphilosophy – a life – immanence – auto-affection – epistemology – onto-ethics

Haraway, Donna J. "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century." *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, edited by Donna J. Haraway, 1991, pp. 149-182.

This is a foundational essay in feminist science studies, and feminist theory more broadly. It has also proved important to posthumanism. The essay is Haraway's articulation of a new type of subjectivity,

the cyborg, which rejects what Haraway perceives as the essentialism of ecofeminism as well as traditional socialist/Marxist, and radical feminism. In *Manifesto*, Haraway rejects identity politics, which she ties to humanism and the false premise of a *sui generis* human, and instead advocates for a politics of "affinity" which understands the human, animal, and machine as interconnected. This interconnection is "non-innocent" and an invention of capitalism and militarism but nevertheless holds the possibilities for new modes of living based on coalition politics. This politics can be brought about through feminist science, feminist science fiction imaginings, and intersectional social movements.

Keywords:

Feminism – science studies – subjectivity

Haraway, Donna J. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press, 2016.

This collection of essays builds on Haraway's previous writings about our fundamental interconnection with others, our "sympoiesis," and what that means for our subjectivity and ethics. All of the essays are, to various extents, written in response to the Anthropocene, or what Haraway calls the "Chthulucene" or "a kind of timeplace for learning to stay with the trouble of living and dying in response-ability on a damaged earth" (2). These essays, on human-nonhuman relations, arts, crafts, and storytelling, like all of Haraway's writings, have fun wordplay that defamiliarize taken for granted ideas and opens possibilities for thinking about humans and nonhumans differently. However, throughout the collection, Haraway repeatedly criticizes both humanism and posthumanism. For Haraway, posthumanism appears as an attempt to extricate oneself from a web of interrelation with others and an abdication of the responsibility to "stay with the trouble."

Keywords:

Animal studies – Anthropocene – feminism – science fiction

Haraway, Donna J. *When Species Meet*. Duke University Press, 2008.

In this text, Haraway attempts to explain a type of relation, that of companion species, as one whereby beings enter into a relation of response and responsibility whereby both become-with one another, become-worldly, and come into being through their relation in ways not possible through the cleaving of identities found in the binary logics of man/animal, nature/culture, etc. An understanding of these relations, the sympoiesis of companion species, of the tying and retying of knots in "the flesh and mortal world-making entanglements of contact zones" (4), necessitate an intra- an interspecies ethics. These ethics, according to Haraway, require response (6), including "curiosity" (7), "respect" (19), and further encounters that continue to co-shape beings in their interrelation. In the text, Haraway again rejects posthumanism as an attempt to escape these fleshy, worldly encounters, but also rejects the human exceptionalism of humanism. She does so even as she refuses to condemn hunting, meat eating, dog breeding, and animal experimentation as she sees such critiques as a simplification of complex systems of co-becoming rather than a rightful critique of relations of Anthropocentric domination. Haraway's arguments unfold over several chapters that discuss dog breeding and cloning, animal experimentation, the sport of dog agility, the "fingery eyes" of the techno-human gaze directed toward nonhumans, and the killing and eating of animals.

Keywords:

Animal studies – dogs – feminism – science studies

Heidegger, Martin. *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Translated by William Lovitt. Haper Perenial Modern Thought, 2013.

Although it cannot be considered a posthuman text *per se*, Martin Heidegger's later work is of essential relevance for both Posthuman thought and methodology. Extending the reflections about *Deisen* developed in *Being and Time* (1956), here Being is looked at in relation to technology. Raising questions around how humans relate to the world, Heidegger explores the instrumental value of technology as both a means towards and end and an end in itself. Through technology the world becomes a "standing reserve" (24) whose exploitation follows some established goal. Having as his starting point Hölderlin's poem and the building of a bridge, Heidegger explores the paradoxical relationship between Being and the world: as apparently harmonious (what man builds is in harmony with nature's givenness), and "dangerous" (Being is 'enframed' and becomes the standing reserve itself). Exploring technology's impossibility of being mastered, Heidegger raises questions concerning technology that are crucial for the development of the posthuman predicament insofar as Being becomes alienated from its essential embeddedness in-the-world (41). In his complicated writing style, Heidegger offers some important tools to think the world, and humans' relationship with it: destining rather than fate, subject as the "thinking-representing being" (151), enframing, reflection, consciousness and freedom. It also helps explain the humanist effort to secure technology's danger against human freedom, while also aiding posthumanist effort to rethink subjectivity, agency and human relationship with the world. His work places the Enlightened man as "no less subject than ... man who grasps himself as a nation, wills himself as a people, fosters himself as a race, and, finally, empowers himself as lord of the earth" (152).

Keywords:

Dasein – technology – enframing – Being – standing-reserve – ontology – power – agency – subjectivity.

King, Malin-Ah and Eva Haywood. "Toxic Sexes: Perverting Pollution and Queering Hormone Disruption." *O-Zone: A Journal of Object Oriented Studies*, vol. 1, 2014, pp. 1-12.

In this essay, King and Haywood propose a "dynamic model of sex" understood as a "dynamic emergence with environment, habitat, and ecosystem" (2). In this way, the authors bracket narratives of socially or biologically determined sex and gender and instead propose a type of becoming inline with posthuman and material feminist thinking. More specifically, the authors analyze becoming sexed and gendered, sometimes once and sometimes multiple times over, through pollution caused endocrine disruption, particularly among some nonhuman animals. Pollution, interacting with bodies and eco-cultures in this way, causes morphological changes in bodies that require response. These changing sexes and genders, often situated in particular natural-cultural contexts, unsettle humanist categories of sex, gender, race, and species in ways that the authors find productive.

Keywords:

Sex and gender – sexuality – human-animal studies – material feminism

Lai, Larissa. *Automaton Biographies*. Arsenal Pulp, 2009.

This book collects fragments of language and pop culture references into a sci-fi-influenced poetry that speaks in the voice of the human and not-quite-human automatons built from this very detritus. The opening poem, titled "Rachel" after the android in *Bladerunner*, presents a lyric monologue of surveillance, violence, and techno-environmental decay that blends into a cyborg meditation of biopolitical life. Lai engages with the ways that race, class, and gender relate to who is and is not allowed to be considered human. Further to the theme of a future-oriented critique of the present, the second poem, "Nascent Fashion", considers the threats of the future, highlighted by sci-fi as well as political and environmental speculation, within the relations of today. Posthuman in its consideration of affiliations between the human and non-human, and the porousness of the border, *Automaton*

Biographies speaks with a cyborg “I” of the assemblages of language and affective relations. Although the poems are often lyric, they also present linguistic and referential blockages and jams that resist a wholistic truth of this state of affairs or the readerly comforts of mastery of language and material.

Keywords:

Poetry – poetics – cyborg – android – science fiction – race – gender – assemblage – environment – technology

Leclerc, Dominique. 2017. *Post Humains*. Pièce présentée au Théâtre Espace Libre, octobre 2017, janvier-février 2018 et en tournée au Québec de février à juin 2019

(<http://posthumains.ca/billetterie-espace-libre/>)

This play explores questions related to transhumanism and cyborgs. The main character, Dominique, who suffers from diabetes is seeking an upgrade to her conventional glucometer. In searching for technologically advanced solutions, she encounters people who embrace the concept of “Humanity+”. These transhumanists and their views open a new world of possibilities for the main character and her partner. They discover the transhumanist pursuit for the biomedically perfected body and for immortality as well as the pursuit to abandon fallible bodies of flesh for silicon based systems in which consciousness could be uploaded. They also toy with the idea of chip implants and each get an implant containing documents about their union. Questions about surveillance and biohacking emerge but numerous issues about identity and whether one is radically changed also come up. Does one improve the self when one improves the body? Are biomedical and biotechnological alterations of human bodies improvements at all? The play combines monologues, documentary video, dialogues, and visual projections to explore these ideas.

Keywords: transhumanism – cyborgs – biotechnologies – biohacking – artificial intelligence – ethics – identity

Le Dévédec, Nicolas. “Unfit for the future? The depoliticization of human perfectibility, from the Enlightenment to transhumanism.” *European Journal of Social Theory*, 21:4 (2018): 488–507.

This article argues that the type of human enhancement sought by the transhumanist movement breaks from the ideals of the Enlightenment. While Enlightenment thinkers offered human perfectibility as a collective goal to be achieved by improving the socio-political, transhumanists are engaged in an individualistic quest that not only disregards the common good but may well go against it. The article examines transhumanism’s use of technology and biomedicine and the reasons that motivate such use. While there are various ideological positions at work, they all ultimately posit that the human has a right to transcend its own natural body and limitations with the use of science and technique. This commonly fuels the charge that transhumanism is a humanism on overdrive. The author claims, however, that while it is a humanism, and not a post-humanism, it is not of the Enlightenment kind. The notion of human perfectibility that transhumanism offers is one that rests upon an anthropology of deficiency according to which the human is inherently lacking. Enlightenment thinkers, on the contrary, believe in the fundamental capacity of the human to perfect itself by changing the socio-economic conditions of life. Transhumanists seek to adapt the human to the future while Enlightenment thinkers seek to transform the future to make it more hospitable for humans. This is how human perfectibility is achieved and not through technoscientific alterations of the human.

Keywords: Enlightenment – perfectibility – human enhancement – transhumanism – socio-political ideals

Luciano, Dana and Mel Y. Chen. “Has the Queer Ever Been Human?” *GLQ*, vol. 21, no. 2-3, 2015, pp. 182-207.

This provocative essay provides a discussion of the “overlap between queer studies and the rising critical interest, across the humanities and social sciences, in human objects” (184) through an analysis of the work of Latinx photographer and artist Laura Aguilar and recent scholarship in the fields of queer theory, affect and feminist theory, material feminism, posthumanism, and animal studies. The authors take as their research question, “has the queer ever been human?” Probing the way queerness unsettles humanist categories of biology, ontology, and spatiotemporality (186), the authors propose an ambivalent relation between queer theory and humanism, recognizing both the prominence human bodies and sexualities have played in queer theory, but also the way queer theory has rejected normative modes of being human and similarly has rejected assimilation into hierarchies of human power. This essay, and the *GLQ* special volume it introduces, is an important queer foray into posthumanism and related studies.

Keywords:

Queer theory – material feminism – humanism – posthumanism – race – gender – sexuality

Massumi, Brian. *Politics of Affect*. Cambridge: Polity, 2015.

This book includes a series of interviews between Brian Massumi and various intellectuals that explore the power of affect in human life through philosophical themes and political concepts. Massumi posits that “affect is a differential attunement between two bodies in a joint activity of becoming” (94-95). So, everyone and everything is interconnected and continuously affect one another in infinitely intricate ways that produce the unique existence of all beings and things. No being or thing can avoid living in this constant state of being in direct contact with the forces of affect as it “is directly relational. It is pure sociality” (205). With this, he states that “[a]ffect is transindividual” (205). This relates to posthuman theories that contend the human being is an assemblage of elements that continuously affect one another in order to construct our individual forms.

Keywords:

Affect theory – becoming – immanent critique – relationality – politics of emergence

McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. 1964. Routledge, 2001.

This book by famed Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan was released in 1964. In it he claims that all media are extensions of human beings (7). The hammer is an extension of the hand, the wheel is an extension of the foot, written word is an extension of the voice. As well, it is in this text that McLuhan’s most famous theory is articulated when he argues, the “medium is the message” (7). This idea has proven to be influential—and controversial—in media studies. What McLuhan means when he says that the medium is the message is that the form of any medium, its design and patterns, have psychological and social effects on those who consume that medium. He states, “the ‘message’ of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs” (8). McLuhan is lauded as having predicted the internet as he suggested in the 1960s that humans were entering the “electronic age;” an age in which technology would become so ubiquitous that it would allow access to information services for all people across the globe creating a “global village.” This work is a predecessor to many theories within the posthumanities related to technological development and integration of machines into humans. The internet can be understood as an extension of human consciousness, and this is an argument that is heavily based on McLuhan’s work in *Understanding Media*.

Keywords:

Media – print culture – global village – human-machine interaction

Moure, Erin. *Pillage Laud*. Moveable Books, 1999.

This book of poetry is written using computer-generated sentences produced by early text generating software. The book takes these pre-created sentences and arranges them to write lesbian erotic verse. This combination of the artificial and the corporeally sexual creates an interplay in the verse as the lyric voices comment on their own genesis: “To form / is the music between your restriction and my industry” (30). The book is structured using numbered “Pillages”, partitioned sections of serial poems that draw upon a vocabulary set. The acts of taking, stealing, and re-appropriating formally structure the book, but also serve as a thematic meditation on the sharing and re-embodiment in acts of love and language. This is poetry that bridges between the conceptual and lyric in an almost cyborganic milieu. As one poem’s speaker says: “To sing is so chaste an invention” (22), and these poems question the segregation of poetry from newly technological experience. Written in 1998, this book is an early example of digitally-composed poetry that blends the human and the computer. An epigraph from Deleuze opens the collection and serves as model for thinking through our newly computerized selves that Moure reflects back to us: “experimentation on ourself, is our only identity, our single chance for all combinations to inhabit us.” The collection queers the computer, computerizes the queer, and thinks of poetry as a repeated experiment in thinking through the self.

Keywords:

lgbtq2 – poetry – poetics – conceptual – computers – cyborg – technology – programming – experimentation

Spinoza, Benedict de. *Ethics*. Translated by Edwin Curley. New York: Penguin, 1996.

This book is an influential philosophical text that unforgettingly critiques the concepts of god, nature, and the human being. Many theories in the posthumanities are deeply influenced by Spinoza’s work, which also is the foundation of affect theory. Spinoza’s defines affect as “affections of the body by which the body’s power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the idea of these affections” (70). The influence of affect that this definition indicates connects to Spinoza’s theory of ‘substance monism,’ which contends that all beings and things are a part of one substance. Spinoza calls this one substance ‘God’ or ‘Nature’ and contends that it is “absolutely infinite” (7). The existence of the one substance is predicated on the continuous relationship of affect that all of its parts have with one another that allow these parts to interact and change in capacity while remaining unified. This relates to the posthuman theory of interconnectivity as well as posthuman arguments against humanistic concepts such as god or the human being.

Keywords:

Affect – monism – interconnectivity – Being – body

Stenner, Chris, Arvid Uibel and Heidi Wittlinger. *Das Rad*. 2001(animation, 8min 27sec)

<https://youtu.be/HOPwXNFU7oU>

This animated short illustrates the differences in timescales for humans, bugs, trees, rocks, and the Earth system. The film humorously explores those different timescales, focusing on the experience of two rock characters and their interaction with human civilization via the invention of the wheel. The human characters encounter the rocks as immobile and lifeless in the human world while in the rock characters’ world human action unfolds at lightning speed. The rock characters witness the rise and fall of human civilization within 5 minutes and 50 seconds of their existence. As buildings and highways spring up in an acceleration of growth, they near the two rock characters. Everything comes to a halt and suddenly collapses. A roadside ad sign claiming “Built to last” also falls and rots in seconds. The rock characters express their relief and their environment quickly regrows and takes over again. Temporalities intersect in this short film and the world is experienced differently accordingly.

Keywords: temporality – rise and fall of human civilization – rocks – nature after humans

Stewart, Kathleen. *Ordinary Affects*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

Stewart's poetic and evocative work vividly and viscerally illustrates the affective potency of the ordinary through a series of short vignettes that range from seemingly mundane occurrences to philosophical ponderings of everyday life. Stewart offers a simplified definition of affects, which she states are "the varied, surging capacities to affect and to be affected that give everyday life the quality of a continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies, and emergences. They're things that happen" (1-2). This description, while seemingly general in nature, attests to the ubiquitous power of affect. As Stewart notes, "[r]ogue intensities roam the streets of the ordinary" (44). These intensities can affect someone in indeterminable ways that may be banal or violent. Stewart's work, while not explicitly influenced by posthumanism, through its exploration of the continual affective dimension of everyday life connects to the integral aspect of posthuman theory that is interconnectivity. Most of the passages in the text are short instances recollected from Stewart's life; however, they are written from a third person perspective to reflect how the power of affect in ordinary day to day life interconnects all beings and things. Indeed, each day is full of continuous affects that shape us in ways that are unpredictable and allow us to persist in our existence.

Keywords:

Affect – relationality – emergent – interconnectivity

Taylor, Sunaura. *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation*. New York: The New Press, 2017.

Sunaura Taylor confronts the overlapping oppressions and comparisons made between people deemed to be disabled and animals in order to argue for a co-informing critique with the purpose of both disability and animal liberation. As disability rights have often been placed at odds with animal rights through Peter Singer's leveraging of animal rights at the cost of valuing disability experience, as well as the frequent ableist comparisons between disabled bodyminds and animals. Similarly, Taylor points to the ways in which factory farmed animals experience profound bodily damage, disruption, and, indeed disability, through their dangerous environment. Environments of capitalism that affect bodies that are then deemed to be disabled, Taylor writes, affect human and non-human animals in similar ways. Through her personal experience of disability and animal activism, Taylor argues that "we must begin to examining the systems that degrade and devalue both animal and disabled people – systems which are built upon, among other things, ableist paradigms of language and cognitive capacity" (53). Taylor argues that the broad ideologies that oppress both non-human animals and humans with disabilities point function to make this critique necessary, rather than any inherent similarity in the intrinsic experience between them. Liberation, Taylor argues, requires valuing of otherness and breaking down liberal humanist ideologies of independence and autonomy as a requirement for consideration and rights.

Keywords:

Critical animal studies – disability studies – environment – emancipatory politics