

Christine Daigle and Terrance H. McDonald (eds.), *From Deleuze and Guattari to Posthumanism*

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Christine Daigle & Terrance H. McDonald (eds.) (2022). *From Deleuze and Guattari to Posthumanism: Philosophies of Immanence*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

This volume engages with Deleuze and Guattari's posthumanism as a philosophy that seeks to rethink and unsettle hierarchical dualities historically constructed by modernity, calling for the creation of new concepts that articulate our embodied and affective interconnectedness with the world. As we shall see, the collection is composed of thirteen chapters divided into three parts, in which scholars eloquently rethink the subject and subjectivity.

The first part theoretically rethinks the subject and subjectivity in relation to Deleuze and Guattari's posthumanism. Rosi Braidotti writes that the multiple forms of posthumanism can be perceived as 'navigational tools or *conceptual personae*' (24 – italics in original) that aim to unsettle hierarchical dualities and enact 'conceptual creativity' (29) and imagination informed by its cartographic, embodied, and immanent nature. Braidotti rethinks life 'eco-sophically' (28) as an assemblage that constitutes humans and ecology and can produce 'traversal subjectivities' (27) with political agency. Christine Daigle proposes the concept of *transjectivity* to articulate a way to preserve a 'trace of the self' (41) and a minimal agency through narrative, while affirming interconnectedness and materiality. Daigle appeals to the performative aspect of Ricoeur's theory that relates to the self's embodied ontology and Nietzsche's model of the 'polyp-being' (48-50) to underscore the lived experience, emphasize human-nonhuman interconnectedness, responsiveness, and agency, and affirm our precarious position of vulnerability and materiality. Bruce Baugh argues that joyful affects create vital forces that can 'constitute our being and link us to nature as whole' (79). Drawing on Deleuze's four stages of 'becoming-active' (66), Baugh demonstrates how unintentional desires and affects arising from specific encounters are transformed by the mind and the body into 'adequate ideas' (67) that can equip us with natural mechanisms to cope with loss in a rational way and thus improve our well-being (75). Karen L. F. Houle argues for a 'plant ethics' as an ontological 'morphogenesis' (87) in which the 'human' can constitute difference through 'growth, mutation, deformation, and evolution of thinking' (87). 'Becoming-plant', in Houle's opinion, unlocks a sense of 'vitality, interconnectedness, and resilience' (99) that expands our 'range of action' (100) through exposure and vulnerability. Alain Beaulieu explores the connection between Deleuze & Guattari's posthumanism and Husserl's philosophy at the juncture of cosmology. Within the context of environmental crises like the Anthropocene, Beaulieu points out how their philosophies carry different political implications: whereas Husserl's approach

affirms a form of phenomenological transcendence through which humanity can be culturally saved, Deleuze & Guattari affirm immanence, entertain doubt, urge re-thinking traditional concepts emphasizing their creative potential to produce ‘new people’, ‘new earth’ (118), and a posthuman way of living.

The second part aesthetically rethinks the subject and subjectivity in relation to Deleuze & Guattari’s posthumanism. Terrance H. McDonald perceives posthumanism as a movement of theoretical development or evolution from humanism to posthumanism (130); he argues for a ‘cinema of life’ (130) where subjectivities and identities are constantly re-imagined and emerging anew. McDonald reads Terrence Malick’s, *The Tree of Life*, through the lens of Deleuze’s ‘transcendental empiricism’ (130), demonstrating how the subject is decentered through techniques that focus on experiences like ‘voice-over, point-of-view shot, [and] human images’ (131) amid a multiplicity of other images. Russell J. A. Kilbourn focuses on the relation between ‘close-up as cinematic technique and the face as philosophical concept’ (148), arguing for a ‘radical distinction among the filmic close-up, the photographic still image of a face, and the face itself’ (148). Exploring Nietzsche’s ‘death of God’ (148), Deleuze’s view of God as the ‘absolute other’ (152), and Levinas’ ‘trace of God’ (156), Kilbourn explains how the face in posthumanism invokes faith at an ethical level to re-situate relationality among ‘humans’ instead of involving God. Insisting that ‘we cannot do without some notion of the subject’ (148), Kilbourn argues for a cinematic posthumanism in which humanism is a site of overlapping ominous and promising encounters (161). William Brown argues that some ‘strands of posthumanism … offer a Eurocentric … understanding of posthumanism’ (170) as they ‘conflate the histories of posthumanism and postcolonialism is to deny the lived or embodied history of the postcolonial discourse’ (173). For Brown, Deleuze’s approach to cinema might help us overcome this ‘Eurocentric thought’ to offer more inclusive understanding of posthumanism (171). David H. Fleming builds on Braidotti’s assertion that ‘the stratified sexes necessarily undergo asymmetrical forms of becoming’ (189) to show how Hollywood’s ‘representational narratives … think the post human becomings of woman slightly differently to those of molar man’ (189). Exploring Deleuze & Guattari’s different becomings, namely becoming-woman, becoming-insect, and becoming imperceptible, Fleming demonstrates their ability to ‘break down gender and species binaries’ (190) and explains the absence of a ‘becoming-man’ (203) as reflected in the role of most male protagonists in which they tend to ‘slow down and control our posthuman becomings, or back them up somewhat’ (203). For Fleming, becoming-imperceptible, as a mode made visible through cinematic depictions, could open more future possibilities.

Finally, the third part offers different (bio)political perspectives to rethink the subject and subjectivity in relation to Deleuze & Guattari’s posthumanism. Sherryl Vint considers the ‘biopolitical context that requires us to recognize the constitutive relationship between the ‘making live of valued life’ and the ‘letting die’ of life deemed unproductive to the economic ends of the state’ (212) as key to feminist materialist dimension of the posthuman. Vint draws on Sci-Fi’s ability to estrange what is deemed known and familiar by exploring possibilities that could alert us to exclusions that might escape posthumanism, arguing for a posthumanism that recognizes differences and embraces inclusive ways of being in a world founded upon ‘flow, [and] becomings instead of fixed’ (218) ontology. Martin Boucher discusses disability and how medicine mechanically locates the cause of disability in the body and accordingly approaches it as something to cure and/or prevent, not as a social situation that involves affects and difference. Boucher introduces the term *neo-liberal-able* as the norm for ‘desirable’ (229) subjects to describe the ‘dishumaniz(ation)’ (230) of the disabled subjects and reveal how ableist social and political perspectives are reinforced through technologies developed to ‘repair’ the ‘bad neo-liberal (disabled)’

and transform them to be *neo-liberal-able*. Boucher argues that feminist posthumanism, rooted in immanence and relationality, is useful in addressing these embodied struggles and their political implications. Claire Colebrook argues that Afro-pessimism ‘cannot be aligned easily with posthumanism’ (251) because whereas posthumanism challenges human exceptionalism through the joyful perspective of affirmation, Afro-pessimism insists on ending this world constructed around a humanism that produced anti-Blackness and, in turn, ending this affirmative mode of posthumanism. To be useful, Colebrook contends, Afro-pessimism and Deleuze & Guattari’s philosophy should unite in confronting human exceptionalism as a ‘mode of ... difference’ (252) that grounds itself in ‘nature rather than through an event of deterritorialization’ (252), which transforms humanity into a geological event of forming strata. Finally, Mickey Vallee constructs an assemblage theory of social justice where truth commission represents a transition from a violent past to a better future through an official apology as a form of an acknowledgment of historical trauma from a nation to subjugated social group (268 -271). For Vallee, truth committees are assemblages that capture ‘an emergence, how one state emerges from its past and moves into an unknowable and ultimately discoverable future.’ (269)

The chapters included in this collection confront different aspects of humanism in relation to Deleuze & Guattari’s posthumanism in such a way that they can be put into conversation with one another. The difference between the ‘posts’ in posthumanism and postcolonialism appears to be crucial for understanding the embodied struggles of marginalized, ‘missing’, or ‘subaltern’ people. Whereas Braidotti argues for an embodied ‘traversal subjectivity’ that re-constitutes the marginalized or ‘missing people’ in an ongoing collective process of becoming, Brown underscores the Eurocentrism or ‘neo-colonialism’ embedded in Braidotti’s claim as it does not admit the influence of postcolonial studies especially at the juncture of embodied struggles. Furthermore, the joyful affirmation that constitutes Deleuze & Guattari’s philosophy appears to be problematic. While Baugh affirms the agency of joyful encounters in producing adequate and empowering ideas, Colebrook criticizes this joyful aspect and argues for the values of Frank B. Wilderson’s ‘Afropessimism’ in addressing slavery and anti-Blackness. The possibility of repair and reconciliation are also problematized in comparison to the question of anti-Blackness. The absence of ‘before-and-after vision’ of colonialization for the struggle of the Black subjects, according to Colebrook, explains this mode of pessimism that refuses this constructed ‘world’ and perceives any ‘fellow-feeling’ affect as a form of deceit embedded in the White subject’s understanding of a ‘hopeful’ future. For Vallee, the presence of this ‘before-and-after vision’ explored by truth commissions explains the significance of the colonizer’s official apology and contrition as affects that promise the re-constitution of Indigenous people. Furthermore, the collection emphasizes different embodied struggles and different forms of co-constitution. Concepts proposed and discussed in relation to Deleuze & Guattari’s posthumanism, like *transjectivity*, *neo-liberal-(dis)able*, and *Afropessimism*, succeed in addressing specific boundary (un)making practices to show the contrasting potentials, to intensify and/or dislodge humanism, embedded in these concepts.

However, the section on posthuman aesthetics could benefit from some diversified contributions. Rather than just drawing on contemporary Sci-Fi movies and novels, other aesthetics could be useful to underscore posthuman values. Paintings, for example, could furnish an important medium that demonstrates the artist’s embodied engagement with the work and subject matter through brush strokes, kind of paint and canvas, and their composition among other acting components. Also, engaging with music and literary classics could be important to demonstrate specific space time entanglements emphasized by posthumanism as a philosophy that rethinks and unsettles traditional notions about history as constitutive of linear ontology.

Finally, whereas Deleuze was a philosopher and a theorist, Guattari was a practicing psychoanalyst as well as a political activist campaigning against structures and organized entities. In their introduction to *What is Philosophy?* (1994), Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill explain that 'the interaction with Guattari the non-philosopher brought the philosopher Deleuze to a new stage: from thinking the multiple to doing the multiple' (viii). Posthumanism, thus, is a form of activism that unsettles the boundary between theory and practice. In this light, I believe that this collection is important because it problematizes the 'human' and humanism by reflecting on real marks left on physical bodies of different marginalized others – human and nonhuman; it therefore raises questions about how, in practice, these different modes of co-constitution and becoming may be enacted to review different violent pasts and presents in a way that could enable the emergence of a different decolonized future.

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