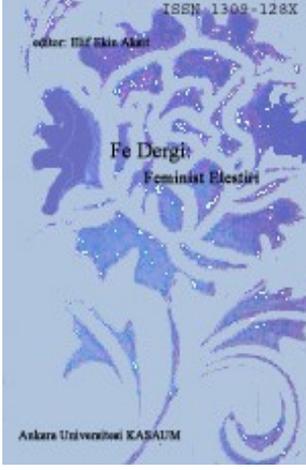


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***Transhumanism, Posthumanism, And The “Cyborg Identity”***

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### **Transhumanism, Posthumanism, And The “Cyborg Identity”**

Cennet Ceren Çavuş\*

*The purpose of this paper is to provide a brief analysis of two confusable philosophical positions, Transhumanism and Posthumanism, and compare their approaches in terms of their social and ecological concerns through an examination of Donna Haraway’s “cyborg identity.” Haraway introduces a ground-breaking approach in A Cyborg Manifesto and her later works, which blurs the formerly defined, distinct categories and identities that underlie the oppression of animals, humans, men, women, machines etc. By using postmodernist deconstruction, she wants to challenge Western dualisms and all kinds of oppression it causes. While Transhumanists, who inherit anthropocentrism from Humanism, support technological advancement to enhance the human condition, Posthumanists draw attention to the harms of the anthropocentric approach in terms of social and ecological justice and offer a more comprehensive and compassionate approach to other species inhabiting the planet. Since both Transhumanists and Posthumanists promote enhancement, Transhumanists need Posthumanist insights to really enhance the human condition concerning her environment.*

*Keywords: Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Ecofeminism, Cyborg, Haraway*

#### **Transhümanizm, Posthümanizm ve “Siborg Kimliği”**

*Bu makalenin amacı, birbirine karıştırılan Transhümanizm ve Posthümanizm akımlarının kısa bir analizini yapmak ve Donna Haraway’in “siborg kimliği” kavramsallaştırması üzerinden söz konusu fikir akımlarının sosyal ve ekolojik meselelere bakışını karşılaştırmaktır. Haraway A Cyborg Manifesto’da ve sonraki eserlerinde, çığır açan bir bakış açısı geliştirmiştir. Bu bakış açısı hayvan, insan, makina, erkek, kadın, vb. tahakküme sebep olan ve önceden belirlenmiş, ayrık kategori ve kimlikleri belirsizleştirerek tahakkümün önüne geçmeye çalışmaktadır. Postmodern bir yapısöküm süreciyle Haraway Batı düalizmine ve onun sebep olduğu tüm hegemonyalara meydan okumaktadır. İnsanmerkezci yaklaşımı Hümanistlerden devralan Transhümanistler insanlık durumunu iyileştirmek için her türlü teknolojik ilerlemeyi desteklerken, Posthümanistler insanmerkezci anlayışın toplumsal ve ekolojik adalete verdiği zararlara dikkat çekerek, gezegende yaşayan diğer türlere karşı daha kapsayıcı ve şefkatli bir yaklaşım sunmaktadırlar. Hem Transhümanistler hem de Posthümanistler iyileştirmeyi desteklemektedir, bununla beraber Transhümanistlerin insanlık durumunu -insanın doğal çevresiyle ilişkisini de gözetererek- gerçekten iyileştirebilmek için Posthümanistlerin içgörülerine ihtiyaçları vardır.*

*Anahtar Kelimeler: Posthümanizm, Transhümanizm, Ekofeminizm, Siborg, Haraway*

#### **Introduction**

As a philosophical movement Transhumanism advocates using technology to enhance the human condition physically and cognitively. Transcending human limitations concerning bodies and minds is the primary goal of Transhumanism (Vita-More 1983) while death, viewed as a human limitation, is seen as an obstacle to be overcome by the use of technology.<sup>1</sup> Transhumanists want to control and even design human evolution (Young 2005; Lee 2010; Vita-More 2011) by using every possible means of technology like genetic engineering,

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information technology, neuroscience, molecular nanotechnology, artificial intelligence, and other future technologies. According to the founding mother of the transhumanist philosophy Natasha Vita-More, who is the author of *The Transhumanist Manifesto* (1983); Transhumanism is for evolutionary transformation, and “the biological human is not the final stage of evolution for the human.” (Vita-More 2011) The next step in human evolution for Transhumanists is the “posthuman.”

“Posthuman” is a term widely used by Transhumanists to indicate the stage after transcending the current human condition. Because of this conceptualization, Transhumanism is usually confused with Posthumanism. While there is no consensus among the scholars about their definitions, the main difference between Transhumanism and Posthumanism is their approach to Humanism.<sup>2</sup> Posthumanism is a postmodern school of thought which strictly criticizes the anthropocentrism of Humanism while Transhumanism declares itself as a philosophical successor of humanistic values. Therefore, Transhumanism is criticized by posthumanist feminist scholars.

Donna Haraway is a postmodernist ecofeminist scholar who inspired posthumanist feminist thought with her ground-breaking work *A Cyborg Manifesto*. Her cyborg imagery, that challenges anthropocentrism of Humanism and Western dualism of any kind, became a popular figure in posthumanist theory for reimagining the human, nonhuman, and humanity (Koistinen and Karkulehto 2018). Haraway declares that her cyborg myth, like the other postmodernist strategies, undermine “the ontology grounding Western epistemology.” (Haraway 1991, 152-3) Haraway’s figurations like the “cyborg”, “companion-species” and “compost” blur categorical dualisms and as they “become with” one another in mutual reciprocity; her approach offers respect for diversity (Braidotti 2017/a, 28). With her work “the collective feminist exit from Anthropos began to gather momentum” (Braidotti 2017/a, 28) and many feminist scholars started to take Posthumanism seriously.<sup>3</sup>

Since both Transhumanism and Posthumanism are new fields of study, there is not enough discussion about their approaches, and this paper attempts to examine them by comparing them with each other and Humanism. The cyborg image of Haraway hasn’t been analyzed in this literature yet, and I aim to open up a new of discussion concerning social and ecological problems by putting “the cyborg identity” on the agenda of both posthumanists and transhumanists. The main argument of this paper is that Transhumanism needs posthumanist feminist philosophy’s insights to enhance the human condition in relation to its ecosystem. In this paper, I will not only critically examine transhumanist philosophy’s concerns about social and ecological justice but also discuss Haraway’s posthumanist feminist approach’s contribution to a better “posthuman future” In the first place, I will examine transhumanist philosophy and some of its criticisms. Secondly, I will mention posthumanist criticisms of Transhumanism and lastly, I will provide a picture of Haraway’s paradigm and discuss how posthumanist feminism might contribute to a better future for humanity.

### The Transhumanist Outlook

Transhumanism has its roots in the work of Julian Huxley (1887-1975), an evolutionary biologist, who suggests to his readers that they “utilize all available knowledge in giving guidance and encouragement to the *continuing adventure of human development*” (Huxley 1992, 287) which is the core belief of the transhumanist program (Tirosh-Samuels 2011, 64). According to him, humanity is at an early stage of evolution and by means of technology, it will evolve to a better state. Transhumanism’s commitment to Humanism is evident in Huxley’s book’s title; *Evolutionary Humanism*.

Transhumanism’s adherence to Humanism can be traced in contemporary transhumanists’ works. Max More, who is a leading transhumanist scholar, indicates that “transhumanists take Humanism further by challenging human limits by means of science and technology combined with critical and creative thinking.” (More 2003) Transhumanism embraces Enlightenment values such as respecting reason and science, commitment to progress, and valuing human. Another pioneering transhumanist Nick Bostrom, who is the Founding Director of the Future of Humanity Institute and a founder of the World Transhumanist Association (WTA), indicates that Transhumanism has its roots in rational Humanism which “emphasizes empirical science and critical reason—rather than revelation and religious authority—as ways of learning about the natural world and our place within it, and of providing grounding for morality.” (Bostrom 2005, 2) As the two contemporary pioneers of Transhumanism declare, transhumanist philosophy is a continuation of Enlightenment values and therefore Humanism.

Even though More and Bostrom agree on the roots and common values of Transhumanism, their approaches to social implications of a possible transhumanist future are quite different. Transhumanist

approaches differ mainly in their political positions. Libertarian transhumanists like More defend free market economy and reject any intervention of governments in the use of technologies for human enhancement. On the other hand, democratic transhumanists like James Hughes, who founded WTA with Bostrom, support equal access to human enhancement technologies to prevent those technologies from widening the gap between the rich and the poor and to promote social equality. Hughes also supports citizenship for non-humans by saying “democracy for persons, not humans.” (Hughes 2004, 79) His approach regards cyborgs as persons and he argues that some cybernetic organisms in the future should have citizenship rights. Since there are socially concerned democratic transhumanists, it would be unfair to label all transhumanists as ultimate technoproggressives who defend technological progress at the cost of aggrieving the majority of the world population.<sup>4</sup>

Transhumanists vary in terms of their projection about humanity’s future too. Some of them are very optimistic about the future of humanity while others are more anxious. Newton Lee, the chairman of the California Transhumanist Party, regards Transhumanism as the next logical step in the evolution of humankind, and as the existential solution to the long-term survival of the human race (Lee 2010, 38). Vita-More argues that nanotechnology will resolve environmental hazards, molecular manufacturing will stop poverty, and genetic engineering will mitigate diseases (Vita-More 2019, 49). However, some transhumanists like Anders Sandberg and Nick Bostrom draw attention to the dangers of technology (Sandberg 2014). According to Bostrom, there are potential “existential risks” that “would either annihilate Earth-originating intelligent life or permanently and drastically curtail its potential”, that technological misuse might lead to (Bostrom 2002). However, these transhumanists refer to technological risks on the human species basis rather than concerning societies or other species.

According to transhumanists, Transhumanism is very humanitarian, pluralistic, and egalitarian in its approach since it “supports infinite diversity in infinite combinations from all ethnicities and races, the religious and the atheists, conservatives, and liberals, the young and the old regardless of socioeconomic status, gender identity, or any other individual qualities.” (Lee 2010, 23) But the problem is that while being humanistic, transhumanists do not seem to be concerned with other earthly creatures. There is an ongoing ecological crisis caused by Humanism’s anthropocentric worldview. As Lee indicates, according to a biomass study, even though humans represent just 0.01% of all living things on the planet, they caused the loss of 83% of all wild mammals and 50% of all plants (Lee 2010, 29). Humanity destroys the ecosystem –and therefore itself- rapidly and this destruction cannot be compensated through technological enhancement.

Transhumanism is criticized for being indifferent not only to ecological justice but also social justice. The foremost opponent of the transhumanist movement Francis Fukuyama, in his article *Transhumanism -the world’s most dangerous idea*, righteously asks “If we start transforming ourselves into something superior, what rights will these enhanced creatures claim, and what rights will they possess when compared to those left behind? If some move ahead, can anyone afford not to follow?” (Fukuyama 2004) Fukuyama’s questions concerning social justice and personal freedom are quite significant in terms of politics and law. Although the Transhumanist Bill of Rights, Version 3.0 declares opposition to discrimination of any kind (Stolyarov 2019, 117), this cannot guarantee social justice in a transhumanist future. As Braden Allenby indicates technological evolution is almost inevitable and “whether and how it can be moderated in the age of global elites becomes an important research question.” (Allenby 2011, 451)

Apparently, some transhumanists take these questions seriously and work on ethical aspects of humanity’s future. The Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies, which was founded in 2004 and has been chaired by the leading democratic transhumanist James Hughes, works on ensuring safety and equal distribution of new technologies. Hughes states that “the technologies won’t make society more equal or tolerant, but we could use technologies to become more equal and tolerant.” (Hughes 2009) Technological enhancements today are not available to the majority of the world’s population and technological developments would deepen the gap between the ruling elite and the rest. Transhumanism supports “infinite diversity in infinite combinations” from all ethnicities, races, and beliefs, regardless of socioeconomic status, gender identity, or any other individual qualities in theory, but how social justice will be maintained in practice remains unclear. What sorts of tangible measures will be developed for preventing the strongest from benefiting from all technological means to “update” themselves to get stronger and from exploiting or enslaving others? There are many questions concerning the practical implications of transhumanism and they should be discussed by various humanities disciplines.

Neglecting humanities by paying attention solely to new technologies is one of the major criticisms directed against transhumanism. The transhumanist philosophy is condemned for being materialistic and reductionist, and therefore failing to understand the complexity of being human (Hoffman 2011, 273). According to Steven Hoffman, transhumanists reduce human mind to neurophysiological (physical and chemical), namely material processes, or, more abstractly, to information-processing systems (2011, 276). He righteously argues that the betterment of humanity cannot be accomplished by the material sciences or technology; we rather need humanities and social sciences to forge a more proper understanding of being human (Hoffman 2011, 294). A similar criticism comes from Hava Tirosh-Samuelsan, who criticizes transhumanists for placing too much faith in technology and not considering all aspects of being human, including values such as empathy, care, compassion, and love (Tirosh-Samuelsan 2011, 79).

Even though Hoffman and Samuelson are right in their concerns about the significance of humanities, they seem to refer to libertarian transhumanists and neglect the presence of humanities scholars in the contemporary transhumanist movement. Among transhumanists, there is a considerable number of philosophers -especially ethicists-, and social scientists from various disciplines. Therefore, transhumanists as a whole cannot be blamed for neglecting humanities in envisaging a transhumanist future for humanity. Everyday social implications of new technologies should be discussed more widely by humanities scholars since –to put it in Hughes’ words- “the technologies won’t make society more equal or tolerant” and, we need to think about how to use technologies to become more equal and just.

Technology<sup>5</sup> will continue to progress and as we witness the emergence of cyborgs like Neil Harbisson and Kevin Warwick, it is likely that more people will be willing to modulate their bodies for treatment or enhancement. Proliferation of such applications will bring countless questions concerning social, political, cultural, ecological, and economic implications of the “posthuman condition” which will engage not only transhumanists but also posthumanists.

### **Posthumanism vs. Transhumanism**

Posthumanism’s philosophical roots go back to critics of Humanism like Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, and Judith Butler. However, as a postmodern school of thought, Posthumanism is rooted in Singer’s, Braidotti’s, and Wolfe’s criticisms of anthropocentrism (Karataş 2019, 68). While the first group of thinkers lived before the emergence of transhumanist thoughts, the second group is against transhumanism. As Francesca Ferrando points out, Transhumanism and Posthumanism have different standpoints and theoretical legacies (Ferrando 2013, 29). First of all, Transhumanism is a successor of Humanism which is a modern philosophy, whereas Posthumanism builds on Postmodernism’s criticisms of anthropocentrism, Eurocentrism, colonialism, racism, and sexism.

Ferrando clarifies Posthumanism’s relation to feminist thought. According to her, feminist literary criticism of the 1990s gave rise to critical Posthumanism, and together with cultural Posthumanism, it constituted philosophical Posthumanism which has “a newly gained awareness of the limits of previous anthropocentric and humanistic assumptions.” (Ferrando 2013, 29) Philosophically, the question of the posthuman was posed by feminist scholars such as N. Katherine Hayles, Donna J. Haraway, and Rosi Braidotti (Åsberg and Radomska 2019). Postmodern feminists are against Humanism since “human” of Humanism is a “white, European, head of a heterosexual family and its children, and able-bodied” male (Braidotti, 2017/a 23). Being against the above-mentioned definition of “human” means being against egocentrism and its various implications such as racism, Eurocentrism, androcentrism, heterosexism and ableism. Socially advantaged people defined the human in accordance with their own characteristics and other categories were considered non-humans or less-humans. To extend Haraway’s expression “Man the taxonomic type has become Man the brand” (Haraway 1997, 74), it might be argued that dominant man with all his characteristics became “the human” of Humanism.

For Transhumanism is in continuity with Humanism, Ferrando, borrows Onishi’s term, “ultra-humanism.” (Ferrando 2013, 26) Since Posthumanism is structured by critics of Humanism, every single criticism directed to Humanism is also directed to Transhumanism. For example, “speciesism” is a common area to all posthumanist criticisms of Humanism, therefore of Transhumanism (Ferrando 2013, 32). As it is evident from the main organization of transhumanist thinkers -Humanity+- transhumanists desire to increase the human capacities and there is no place for “non-humanity” on their agenda. Transhumanism in general is a school of thought which approves human’s domination of other species. It supports saving the lives of humans by using

science and technology at the expense of exploiting the planet and other critters. Posthumanist feminists regard anthropocentrism of humanist philosophy as the cause of current ecological crises in the age of the *Anthropocene*.<sup>6</sup> So long as Transhumanism follows the anthropocentric steps of the humanistic paradigm, it will not solve the current ecological problems. By putting human enhancement as the primary goal, Transhumanism neglects the wellbeing of other species with which we share our habitat. On the other hand, Posthumanism might serve as an efficient means to solve the ecological crisis by its eco-friendly nature. As Wolfe mentions, in opposition to Transhumanism's position, Posthumanism is "an increase in the vigilance, responsibility, and humility that accompany living in a world so newly, and differently, inhabited." (Wolfe 2010, 47) This posthumanist paradigm strengthened by ecofeminist concerns might be a solution to the ecological crisis with its non-egocentric, humble, embracive, and pluralistic approach.

Rosi Braidotti has been making a great effort to formulate posthumanist philosophy. She proposes the critical posthumanist approach as an alternative to Transhumanism's pro-Enlightenment stance. She grounds her approach on the monistic affirmative ethics referring to Spinoza. This monistic emphasis is extremely important to overcome any kind of oppression derived from dualisms. The crucial ethical imperative for her is "to refuse to conceal the power differentials that divide us." (Braidotti 2017/b, 22) She is searching for ways to gather distinctions and unite them up in a common ground. This ground is not human-centered, it instead looks "centerless." As Braidotti puts it "ecosophical species equality" of critical posthumanist ethics enable humans to question the violence and hierarchical thinking that result from human arrogance and the assumption of transcendental human exceptionalism (2017/b, 17). In this posthumanistic paradigm, human species are not exceptional or superior to the other species. Rather they are equal to them, and therefore, they don't have the right to be violent or exploitative. This is the paradigm through which ecological justice could be achieved and maintained.

Another pioneering posthumanist feminist thinker Francesca Ferrando draws attention to the "postcentralizing" aspect of Posthumanism (Ferrando 2012, 16) -which I think can be expressed as "multicentralizing"- meaning to recognize not one but many centers of interest to dismiss the idea of a "centralized center." Since putting one category at the center -as in the cases of anthropocentrism, ethnocentrism, Eurocentrism, and androcentrism- creates a hierarchy and a system of domination, eluding specific centers will be a solution to hierarchy-based exploitation. "Relational" and "multi-layered" thinking of Posthumanism is crucial since it considers various subjectivities rather than "the unitary subject of Humanism" (Braidotti 2016, 26), namely the so-called "human" of Humanism, which is a "centered subject" with many others as "objects."

Posthumanism's emphasis on relationality reflects its postmodernist roots. Considering various subjects as relevant and coequally valuable is a postmodern tendency in opposition to Modernism's unitary approach. The differences between Transhumanism and Posthumanism originate from their modernist and postmodernist backgrounds. This is why Donna Haraway starts by criticizing the foundations of Modernism.

### **Donna Haraway and the "Cyborg Identity"**

Donna Haraway, a leading scholar in contemporary ecofeminism authored *A Cyborg Manifesto* in the 1980s and inspires the posthumanist feminist philosophy with this manifesto, which could be interpreted as a utopia on high-tech culture's challenge to antagonistic dualisms of Western culture.

Cartesian dualism as one of the foundations of modern philosophy, is criticized by postmodernists and Donna Haraway, as a postmodernist philosopher, is against absolutism and universalism of the modernist paradigm. She regards modern dualistic approach as responsible for the domination of the powerful sides in a dual system. Dualisms have been the basis of Western, white, wealthy men's domination of all constituted as "others" like women, people of color, nature, workers, animals etc. The "cyborg" of Haraway is a genderless and raceless mode of being imagined to find a way towards equality by eliminating all sorts of problematic dualisms like that of self/other, culture/nature, male/female, civilized/primitive, right/wrong, truth/illusion, total/partial, God/man (Haraway 1990, 177). She intends to reach the so-called "posthuman state" of human beings, namely "cyborg", for finding a way to overcome various systems of domination.

Since the dualistic paradigm is the reason behind systems of domination, blurring the categorical differences between the elements of dualisms would be the solution to the problem. To elude any means of domination Haraway offers to confuse identities through "breaking boundaries." In this context, she denotes three crucial boundary breakdowns. The first is the boundary between human and animal which has been breached over the last two centuries by biology and evolutionary theory. The second is between animal-human

organism and machine. In the late twentieth century, developments in cybernetics made ambiguous the difference between natural and artificial, mind and body, self-developing and externally designed, and many other distinctions that were applied to organisms and machines (Haraway 1990, 152). The third boundary is between physical and non-physical which is blurred with quantum theory and the indeterminacy principle (Haraway 1990, 153). Thereby the last two centuries saw major changes that blurred the categorical differences.

Among these boundary breakdowns the second one, which confuses the identities of animal-human organism and machine, is the source of Haraway's cyborg imagery. New technological developments in cybernetics blurred the distinction between human and machine so that "there is no fundamental, ontological separation in our formal knowledge of machine and organism, of technical and organic." (Haraway 1990, 178) Here is the exact point in history where cyborg identity appears, namely where the boundary between human and machine is transgressed.

Rather than being afraid of a dystopic future world, Haraway is optimistic about the cybernetic future. She embraces technological developments in the 1980s and saw a possible cyborg world as a chance to overcome Modernism's naturalist, universalist, and totalizing approach to identity. She asserts "a cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints." (Haraway 1990, 154) To put it another way, a cyborg world would be a Postmodern world in peace with different perspectives, in which there is no room for domination depending on identity politics. To achieve this state Haraway supports human's "fusion" with machines because that is how a "cyborg identity" could be constructed.

Since Haraway imagines "a world without gender" (Haraway 1991, 150) she sees cyborgs as a way of making away with the global gender identity. Cyborg gender can take a global vengeance on universalist, naturalist, and totalizing world of dualisms (Haraway 1990, 181). She rejects naturalism that suppose a commonality in being female that naturally binds women (Haraway 1990, 155). Similarly, there is nothing about being human that naturally binds humans, and the cyborg is the image of rejecting the unitary perspective. Haraway declares that she is against any kind of totalizing and unitary tendency for which she criticizes both Marxist and radical feminists (Haraway 1990, 163). According to her, there is not a "unitary self", and identification is something that should be avoided (Haraway 1990, 170).

Identities of gender, race, or class are "forced on us by the terrible historical experience of the contradictory social realities of patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism" (Haraway 1990, 155) and they sustain various dominations. Cyborg bodies are, like our bodies, maps of power and identity. A cyborg body "does not seek unitary identity and so generate antagonistic dualisms without end." The machine is not an "other" to be called *it*; to animate, worship, or dominate. The machine is rather "us", which is our process and an aspect of our embodiment (Haraway 1990, 180). According to Haraway, the cyborg identity which is the result of our fusions with animals and machines is an opportunity for us to learn "how not to be Man, the embodiment of Western logos." (1990, 173) She uses the cyborg imagery to find "a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves." (1990, 181) In the postmodernist context, she refers to deconstruction and reconstruction processes of machines, identities, categories, and relationships. This is a postmodern way of eluding any kind of domination.<sup>7</sup>

To explain the term that she created to denominate her approach, namely cyborg identity, Haraway applies the "women of color" image. She claims that women of color might be understood as a model for cyborg identity because of the fusions of outsider and woman identities (Haraway 1990, 174). While white ethnocentrism of European and Euro-American feminisms has long been criticized by some feminists, Haraway offers the opponents of these ethnocentric and imperializing tendencies' victims, namely women of color, a cyborg identity through which the sense of otherness could be erased. However, both outsider and woman identities are "others" of white and male identities, therefore the otherness becomes doubled in this image. As far as I am concerned, the cyborg identity should be a fusion of dual identities to overcome duality-based identity politics. That is why "women of color" is not a proper image to indicate cyborg identity.

The cyborg imagery of Haraway changes into "compost imagery" in her later works (2016). To stress ecological interdependency, she defines herself as "compostist." She claims "Critters are at stake in each other in every mixing and turning of the terran compost pile. We are compost, not posthuman; we inhabit the humusities, not the humanities<sup>8</sup>. Philosophically and materially, I am a compostist, not a posthumanist." (Haraway 2016, 97) Even though Haraway declares herself not to be a posthumanist, I see no harm in naming her among posthumanist philosophers. So long as the transhumanists call the transhuman state "posthuman", to stress her

opposition to this paradigm Haraway might have declared that she is not a posthumanist. That is why she asserts “We are humus, not Homo, not anthropos; we are compost, not posthuman.” By “humus” she refers to the earthly aspect of human beings and by “compost” she points out the interdependency of earthly species.

Haraway’s emphasis on the interdependency of species is very important in the posthumanist context. In *When Species Meet* (2008) and *Staying with the Trouble Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (2016) she challenges anthropocentrism by stressing human’s relationship with the earth and other critters on it. She emphasizes the interdependency of worldly beings –human and nonhuman- as follows: “Critters—human and not—become-with each other, compose and decompose each other, in every scale and register of time and stuff in sympoietic tangling, ...” (Haraway 2016, 97) She points out “collectively producing” (sympoietic) entanglement between species in an ongoing process of ecological evolution. To stress the importance of “becoming-with” the other species, she created the concept of “Chthulucene” -as an alternative to the well-accepted term Anthropocene- and the motto “Make kin, not babies!” While Anthropocene indicates Earth’s most recent geologic time as being human-influenced, Chthulucene is made up of “ongoing multispecies stories and practices of becoming-with in times that remain at stake, in precarious times, in which the world is not finished and the sky has not fallen—yet.” (Haraway 2016, 55) In her approach, human beings are not the only actors within Chthulucene, all species are in an ongoing process of becoming with one another. This perspective signifies kinship among species which is a kind of ontological and geological bond.

The slogan “Make Kin Not Babies!” is in the first place about realizing the existing kinship among species. By breaking the tie between kin and reproduction, Haraway extends the concept of kinship to, so to speak “existing together in the age of Chthulucene.” This is a very significant approach to attain multispecies ecojustice. Since Haraway calls other species “our parts” (1990, 181) and suggests communicating with them, her approach offers an overarching connection with all that constitutes the “others” of the dualist perspective and to realize the true kinship among all worldly critters. This is the key to solving not only the problems concerning social relations but also the current ecological crisis.

Haraway’s approach offers blurring distinctions that sustain relations of domination both among humans and between humans and other critters. The distinctions such as white-colored, male-female, abled-disabled, human-animal, human-machine, nature-culture, etc. support duality-based hierarchies, systems of domination, and exploitation. To ensure justice in all sorts of relationships, dualistic paradigm and humanistic anthropocentrism of Modernism should be changed with a new posthumanist paradigm.

## Conclusion

It looks like Donna Haraway could foresee a possible future of rapid technological advance already in the 1980s. Rather than resisting the cybernetic future, she has been working to shape it in order to make it a more compassionate, entangled, pluralistic, and comprehensive time for not only humans but also all other species without any discrimination. Haraway’s model whether cyborg, companion species, or compost replaced anthropocentrism with a set of relational links to human and nonhuman others (Braidotti 2017/a, 32). This approach enlarges the scope of the “social” to embrace the wide range of interactions between multiple species. Her worldview presents an extended understanding of social justice in the age of Chthulucene, “when species meet” and “make kin” with each other.

Even though Haraway declares that she is not a posthumanist, she inspired posthumanist feminist philosophy that challenges anthropocentrism for causing systems of domination. Transhumanism is criticized by posthumanist scholars for being an extension of the humanist philosophy. Although both transhumanists and posthumanists embrace technological development and desire enhancement, they differ in their approaches to ecology. Among the main differences between them is that while transhumanists want enhancement of humanity, posthumanists want enhancement of the entire ecosystem with all of its components of which humans are only one among many. The crucial point here is to be aware of the fact that human is entangled with all aspects of her environment and there is no future for humanity without the environment. Thus, for a genuine human enhancement, we should take ecological problems seriously which could only be solved by changing the anthropocentric paradigm.

Some transhumanists are really concerned with social justice, which is worthy of commendation, and it would be beneficial for them to widen their understanding of the “social.” As humans -for being social animals- can’t survive without other humans, they can’t survive without other beings on the planet either. Since we have been exploiting the Earth and making it harder for all species including us to live on, we started to look

for other planets to survive on if the earth becomes uninhabitable. However, finding another ecosystem to survive on a new planet involves the same “existential risk” since the anthropocentric paradigm will likely to bring the same result. Transhumanists who point out the existential risk of extinction for human species should realize that risk is the product of the anthropocentric paradigm. The ecological crisis that threatens not only other critters but also humans necessitates a paradigm shift. The new paradigm could be posthumanist feminism that proposes humans to be more empathetic, compassionate, pluralistic, and just. As a consequence, they could sustain their survival in the long run.



<sup>1</sup>Most of the proponents of this philosophy personally arranged to be cryonically preserved after their death. The leading Transhumanist Max More -Natasha Vita-More's 15 years younger husband- is the CEO of Alcor Life Extension Foundation, which is an American nonprofit organization based in Arizona and advocates researches, and performs cryonics, "freezing of human corpses and brains in liquid nitrogen after legal death, with hopes of resurrecting and restoring them to full health in the event some new technology can be developed in the future" ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alcor\\_Life\\_Extension\\_Foundation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alcor_Life_Extension_Foundation)).

<sup>2</sup>The concepts are still not totally differentiated from each other in the minds of many scholars. For a conceptualization attempt see Nayar 2014, 5-11.

<sup>3</sup>Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 1st ed.; Anne Balsamo, *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996); Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingston, eds., *Posthuman Bodies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) and Cecilia Åsberg and Rosi Braidotti, eds., *A Feminist Companion to the Posthumanities* (Switzerland: Springer, 2018) are among the major works written by feminist scholars. Cecilia Åsberg who is a "more-than-human humanities scholar" founded and directs *The Posthumanities Hub* in Sweden, which is a research platform for postdisciplinary humanities and a center for feminist posthumanist studies.

<sup>4</sup>Together with Libertarian and Democratic Transhumanism, there is another type called "Anarco-Transhumanism." It is important to note that there are various classifications of Transhumanism. For another classification see Sandberg 2014. For different political groups in Transhumanism, see Hughes 2012.

<sup>5</sup>The main problem with technology studies is that there is not a discipline of the technology systems per se. Since technology is not a science and is a tool for many sciences, and an object of inquiry in terms of its consequences there is not an independent field of study for technology itself. Allenby attracts attention to this lack by saying "social institutions are studied by sociologists, economic systems are studied by economists, and political systems are studied by political scientists. Technology systems, however, are not studied by any specific discipline." (2011, 447) This fact creates a vital gap in humanities which to an extent is closed with the philosophy of technology.

<sup>6</sup>The term "Anthropocene" indicates the geological epoch when human activity has a significant impact on the Earth's geology and ecosystems and consequently on the species' collective capacity to survive or not. In this time period, humans are the ultimate actors to determine what would happen to the Earth and the creatures living on it.

<sup>7</sup>For Haraway's contribution to Postmodern philosophy, see Braidotti 2006.

<sup>8</sup>It is important to mention that in the posthumanist context, humanities are considered as an extension of the humanistic paradigm, therefore some posthumanist writers stress the importance of "doing feminist posthumanities" rather than humanities (Åsberg and Braidotti 2018, 8).

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