Abstract

Sharing the same dialectical logic with part of Anti-humanism theories, humanism has been thoroughly deconstructed by Derrida’s structuralism. But lacks the alternatives. Besides, in the discussion of post-human issues, humanism is easily brought back into the paradigm of confusion due to the anthropomorphism rooted in dialectics. This essay attempts to differentiate the “Posthuman” in a narrow sense from anti-humanism in a broad spectrum. Such posthuman detours the consciousness of subjectivity in its exteriority, opposes against fundamentalism, and deconstructs all kinds of opposite monism as well as its empirical embodiment.

Keywords

Posthuman Humanism Anti-humanism Deconstructionism Dialectics

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Since the middle of the last century, western intelligences of all fields have been brought together for the deconstruction of humanism established ever since the 18th century, thus entering a phase marked by the “post-”ism paradigm. Posthumanism is exactly one of its representatives. As a sort of circumstance that has occurred and idea being generated, a swarm of discourses “posterior” to humanism began to flourish. This essay attempts to clarify a narrower

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“Posthuman” in contrast with humanism, thereby distinguishing it from ideas virtually on “Postmodernity”, “Deconstruction” or “Antihumanism”. The reason is that, other than worn-out dialectical criticism and vestiges of thinking inertia in anthropocentrism, a more accurately positioned posthuman idea that insists on externalism, monism and empirical embodiment can better respond to the matter of bioengineering and artificial intelligence in the current era, which is also considered a promising direction by the author.

1. Understanding and Classification of “Posthuman”

The term “post-human” proves to be firstly coined by Blavatsky in The Secret Doctrine published in 1988. However, opinions vary today in terms of this much-discussed academic concept: Some suppose it can be traced back to the late 1980s[2]; some argue that it harkens back to the 1960s post-structuralism and various antihumanistic “post-”isms (especially Foucault), holding that there were posthuman sprouts in early puberty, which turned into a specific domain in the mid-1990s.[3] Contrary to its opponent, humanism with profound consensus, posthuman are so far still a ground brimming with different voices. It can often be seen that some scholars looked upon their Posthumanism as preferable to the others, while some so-called scholars of Posthumanism built up their fame by criticizing it, and even tended to isolate themselves from this camp.

In her 1999’s How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics, Katherine Hayles suggests that Cybernetics[4] that emerged in the 1940s has rocked the conventional humanistic understanding of “human”, and turns out to be the initial posthuman idea with a clear-cut proposition and impact:

First, the posthuman view privileges informational pattern over material instantiation ...; Second, the posthuman view considers consciousness ...as an epiphenomenon ...; Third, the posthuman view thinks of the body as the original prosthesis we all learn to manipulate. Therefore, extending or replacing the body with other prostheses becomes a continuation of a process that began before we were born. Fourth, by these and other means, the posthuman view configures human being so that it can be seamlessly articulated with intelligent machines.[5]
This is a process in which information is gradually materialized and even essentialized, while consciousness is disembodied, distracted (viz. disembodiment) and then translated into a more abstract and universal coding, so it can flow beyond material media, and manipulate all kinds of prostheses including but not limited to the physical body. Evidently, Hayles reveals that this is nothing more than an upgraded subjective consciousness philosophy wrapped in modern scientific terms, so she made herself a vocal opponent of “Posthumanism”, advocating re-drawing the concept of human and the matter of binary back to an account of embodiment—elements like the human body, the material reality, and the environment. In fact, without criticism by those humanist scholars, a second wave of Cybernetics in the 1960s has already launched self-criticism, indicating that the objectivity of Level -1 control system must be illustrated on the basis of the Level-2 control system. Issues like rules established by the system, sporadic variations, and the observer’s subjective initiative are all assigned to the theme of “reflexivity”, which was eventually developed by Luhmann, the sociologist into a whole set of philosophical discourse as akin to Foucault, Neo-pragmatism and Deconstructionism. No matter what kind of posthumanism Hayles favors or disfavors, a shareable broadest theme might as well be sook out: against the backdrop of the mix of human and intelligent machines, the originally well-defined, solid subjective boundary becomes something up for grabs.

If Hayles is all to do with information and machines, Cary Wolfe’s What is Posthumanism? is embracing the deconstruction of philosophy and animals. He opposes the illusion of autonomous subject and disembodiment as Hayles does, but also criticizes Hayles’ pointless defiance against “Posthumanism” with disembodiment solely. To distinguish his aspect from various other “-isms”, Wolfe refers to it as “posthumanist”, a trail of thought instead of a doctrine. He stressed that “posthumanist” is not just a matter of body and machine, of biotech or else, but encompasses a new way of thinking and even academic paradigm:

To return, then, to the question of posthumanism, the perspective I attempt to formulate here—far from surpassing or rejecting the human—actually enables us to describe the human and its characteristic modes of communication, interaction, meaning, social significations, and affective investments with greater specificity once we have removed meaning from the ontologically closed domain of consciousness, reason, reflection, and so on. It forces us to rethink our
taken-for-granted modes of human experience, including the normal perceptual modes and affective states of *Homo sapiens* itself, by recontextualizing them in terms of the entire sensorium of other living beings and their own autopoietic ways of “bringing forth a world” … But it also insists that we attend to the specificity of the human—its ways of being in the world, its ways of knowing, observing, and describing—by (paradoxically, for humanism) acknowledging that it is fundamentally a prosthetic creature that has soevolved with various forms of technicity and materiality, forms that are radically “not-human” and yet have nevertheless made the human what it is.\(^6\)

Derrida’s Deconstruction “breaks” out of the conventions of humanistic philosophy, denoting that the non-present, non-conscious, non-identity, or simply, non-human factors (such as machines, animals, environment, signs) in its core instead non-originally take priority over human ones.\(^7\) Despite a deficiency of positive theses, Deconstruction has uncovered the necessity of constantly reflecting on existing boundaries and raising alternative representations. Luhmann, however, “erected” a system that neither lapses into any fundamentalism and philosophy of “ego cogito” (I think) nor descends to infinite regress and relativism. Such a system self-referential on multiple dimensions takes on a sort of openness from closure, making it possible its self-repair and self-proliferation in the interactions with environmental complexity.\(^8\) Wolfe challenged traditional understanding of consciousness, mind and body through the priority and exteriority of language and information coding, and kept deconstructing the concept of human with instances such as machines, animals, and the disabled.

Recent scholars can better sort out posthuman schools in hindsight. Ferrando differentiates between Transhumanism, Antihumanism and Posthumanism. “Posthumanism” that Hayles argues against, with its name changed, is more accessible today—transhuman expects to upgrade the physical and mental abilities of human, which may result in “cyborg” (translated as “transman” and “the transitional” in China)\(^9\) . Rooted in the Enlightenment ideas, it is the reinforcement of all-round concrete capabilities in view of the concept of human subjectivity. Posthumanism is neither hostile nor agreeable to technology, but merely takes it as one of the routes to human deconstruction (criticism of Speciesism is another route). It inherits the deconstruction thoughts in race and gender theories, heading toward breaking down all centrism, borderism and dualism—so the author believes that Derrida is posthumanist whereas Foucault antihumanist. The reason
is that there has always been a binary of “life and death” beneath “death of human”, while the naming and binary of “life and death” are inactive in Posthumanism.\textsuperscript{[10]} Miah distinguishes between Posthumanism of “cultural studies and philosophy”: the former is represented by Haraway and Hayles, and what they share is the challenge to the consistency and perfection of human body; the latter camp involves scholars such as Rorty, Heidegger, Levinas, Deleuze and Guattari, who tend to topple the central position of human in domains like philosophy of mind, animal ethics, and technical apparatus, and to deliberate the significance of the other.\textsuperscript{[11]}

The Italian Rosi Braidotti draws a clear-cut distinction between Antihuman and Posthuman: “Antihumanism is a position fraught with such contradictions that the more one tries to overcome them, the more slippery it gets. Not only do anti-humanists often end up espousing humanist ideals – freedom being my favourite one …The best example of the intrinsic contradictions generated by the anti-humanist stance is emancipation and progressive politics in general, which I consider one of the most valuable aspects of the humanistic tradition and its most enduring legacy”.\textsuperscript{[12]} It seems “anti-” in Antihumanism can hardly break away from its suspicious synthesis with Humanism, so Posthuman is bound to become another option. The author draws on Spinoza’s monism and Deleuze’s theories on life and machine, expecting to propound a “philosophy of subjectivity” that reframes the concept of subject and hereby makes it her own critical Posthumanism. Such Posthuman does not work on negating dialectically, for its concept of subject is built upon the universal monistic self-organizing (or auto-poietic) force of living matter, which displaces the boundary while locating itself outside the dialectical scheme. Not only does human become the fragmented “subject” to endure the non-human subject, but the Humanities may also lose its consistently favored object— “human”.\textsuperscript{[13]}

At this point, it is apparently necessary to make a distinction in this essay. On the one hand, two tendencies are identified in Posthuman theories: one emphasizes empiricism, and focuses more on the latest cross-disciplinary scientific and technological achievements, regarding artificial intelligence, biotechnology, animals, environmental protection, and the disabled as challenges to be overcome; the other is more related to safe, conservative disciplines, and relies heavily on classical, abstract philosophical resources. On the other hand, Posthuman is intimately associated with Posthumanism. Some attach importance to its con-
tinuity, while some underline its deceptive aspect and the necessity of fragmentation. The present study deems that there has been sufficient research yet on all the broadly-defined thoughts challenging liberal humanism, like existentialism, phenomenology, structural linguistics, Marxism, deconstructionism, feminism, postcolonialism, and Lacanian psychoanalysis. Accordingly, to discuss the issue more accurately and effectively, it is essential to define narrowly—or whatever the definition is, be it “-ism” or “-ist”, it could be briefly called “Posthuman”. Antihumanism is the dialectical negation of the Centered “Human” by the marginalized others, and this dialectical logic is ultimately pushed to the limits by the deconstructionist topology; the narrow Posthuman is special for the fact it discerns and then detours this logic instead of continuing to negate and extend it dialectically from the interior of “Human”.

2. Humanism-Anti-humanism Anthropomorphical Dialectics

In the humanist list of various essential attributes of “Human”, rationality is undoubtedly the most ancient and important one. Aristotle once said, “Man is a rational animal”. However, as a key prescriptive quality of human, rationality was identified as the cornerstone of liberal humanism by Descartes in the Age of the Enlightenment. “Ego cogito” implies that rationality embraces not only the observation, calculation, and speculation on the dimension of Level-1 system, but also is recognized by Level-2 system—which seems to be a self-evident but inane trick of consciousness, or a logical identifier with an additional layer of reflection without any concrete empirical content. However, that’s the key that differentiates human rationality from animal sentience, because the capability of reflection is the very basis and essence of “ergo sum (therefore I am)”. “Ego cogito” also draws Hegel’s “Self-consciousness, finds its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness”, and heralds a spectacle of all-encompassing dialectics. Hegel’s modified interpretation of “ergo sum” is intended to evade the bad infinity of infinite regress while maintaining its momentum of self-negation, self-contradiction, fragmentation and identity. It is not an error incompatible with the rationality of formal logic, but an authentic mystery that enables rationality to proliferate, and even transcend the subjective consciousness and become the spiritual journey of totality, namely dialectical logic. The growth and self-actual-
ization of man, the historical and cultural development of the entire human race, as well as the replacements of knowledge (particularly philosophical knowledge) are uniformly described as a story of “alienation-revert”. Although this tremendous totality philosophy is not limited to human-consciousness-subjectivity, the historical red line of absolute idealism, or the dialectic with universal explanatory power, it still shares the same structure as the original simplest consciousness trick. Therefore, dialectics is always anthropomorphism.

The process of deploying individual capabilities and the development history of civilizations written by human race are a dialectical process during which the consciousness, the will, and the power are constantly devoted to objects other than “I” while the core ego strength is re-identified and enriched from the alienation. “Subject-human” remains the core, the top end, the starting point, and the purpose. Apart from the environment and animals, objects of difference in the external world also include differences in hierarchy within mankind, and binary oppositions between race and culture. In turn, “humanism historically developed into a civilizational model, which shaped a certain idea of Europe as coinciding with the universalizing powers of self-reflexive reason … This Eurocentric paradigm implies the dialectics of self and other, and the binary logic of identity and otherness as respectively the motor for and the cultural logic of universal Humanism. Central to this universalistic posture and its binary logic is the notion of ‘difference’ as pejoration.”[14]

Nevertheless, the reflexive edge of dialectics will eventually direct at human subjectivity and that somewhat obscure universal nature. Heidegger replaced the subjective human separating from the creation with “Dasein” (being there), and connected it to the unsubstantialized matrix of “being itself”. Structural linguistics points out: “Language speaks man”. In other words, language largely shapes humans’ presumptuously prior rational thinking and connotation activities, out of which develops Lacan’s “The unconscious is structured like a language”. Marx peremptorily considers academic, artistic, and institutional practices like humanism as non-value-neutral ideologies that ultimately rest on economic basis. Foucault unfolds a non-human, anonymous and ubiquitous concept of “power”, which runs through all kinds of discourse practices and shapes the human subjectivity. The common ground shared by the theories above is that they all have dialectically reversed human’s central and prior position, and rooted it in a non-human, more fundamental “Big Other”, implying that human is something shaped
by it, but in turn mistakenly conceits itself as prior. On the other hand, “little others” marked as human with universal ideal—females, blacks, orientals, homosexuals, etc.—have affected this ideal: they are assigned to the lower layer of hierarchical order, still heading toward the highest standard but are always screened off by it (Homi K. Bhabha: almost but not enough). However, they are dealing with each other in the same coin, boldly challenging, expanding, and enriching the ideal with its difference while unraveling it: both the transcendental human subjectivity and the established hierarchical order of difference prove to be a kind of discourse construction.

Anti-humanism does not mean giving up the care for human, but implies a sort of rather dialectically upgraded care. The philosophically ethereal, unsubstantialized “being” may be turned into culture-nationality-country in reality, while the abstract of an individual is taken back to the soil of community till the emergence of catastrophic fascism. Marxists, postcolonialists, and feminists approach liberal humanism with critical eyes, for this ideology can hardly enable everyone to embrace those fine words as it claims. Instead, it just veils and naturalizes the injustices and iniquities in the earthly world. Insisting on the concept of *a priori*, abstract, liberal and rational individual fails to interpret and change anything; quite the contrary, he can be truly liberated and benefited only when such ideal social political soil is discerned. The leftists keep hammering on the restrictions of economy, culture and power on human, which seem to obliterate liberty with some kind of determinism; but the truth is that the leftists, who would never readily believe in any congenitally pre-specified essential “liberty”, tend to look on with cold indifference on what kind of initiative can be left by human, and how humans pursue their happiness after being restricted on various dimensions. Why are the leftists keen on constructivism and even determinism? As they love human[’s liberty] so fondly—it follows that there is always a dialectical connection between antihumanism and humanism, which can seemingly attain a more in-depth synthesis of humanism and antihumanism, just like this development spectrum: “The romantic and positivistic Humanisms through which the European bourgeoisies established their hegemonies over (modernity), the revolutionary Humanism that shook the world and the liberal Humanism that sought to tame it, the Humanism of the Nazis and the Humanisms of their victims and opponents, the antihumanist Humanism of Heidegger and the humanist Antihumanism of Foucault and Althusser, the secularist Humanism of Huxley and Dawkins or the

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It is necessary to single out Derrida’s deconstruction philosophy here. This topological model turns out to be not only the most thorough clarification of dialectics but also the exhaustion of negative force.

The author’s doctoral dissertation *The Binary of Post-colonialism: Reflection on the Methodology of Criticism* offers a conservative account of Derrida: deconstruction does not equal to a simple reversal or negative erasure of two terms in any binary, but is more of a clarification of dialectical structure that wouldn’t necessarily determine ultimate value judgments and reversals. The weak latter in binary is not “simply overriding the former, because cancellation of the former and the latter goes hand in hand. The latter is not primary and cannot contribute to the former. On the contrary, the prescriptivity of its being entirely relies on that vulnerable former. The meaning of its being is not with itself but points to the former; the former, despite a lost presence, keeps guiding and prescribing being of the latter, and plays an irrevocably important role”. Clarification merely allows us to notice that this binary pair, which “only exists in accordance of this hierarchy”, can define each other, and thus enlighten us to explore the constructed history, extend the contacts, rethink the real-life experience, and seek alternative discourse beyond these meaning boundaries and relations. The deconstructed binary terms would not continue the dialectical synthesis, and “différance” would not become a new ontological concept like Heidegger’s “Being”, because in binary structure, when you declare a “différance” as ontology, it implicitly refers to another larger “identity”, and indicates that the relationship between the binary terms intrinsically features the “différance”. That’s just like the “topological structure” adopted frequently by Lacan-Zizek, namely the configuration of Mobius Strip or Klein Bottle. It is neither planar relativism nor a dialectical spiral with starting points and regression, but something that is actually well-organized both internally and externally. However, the external may suddenly turn into the internal, and thus another reversal recurs—when you intend to ontologize any “tentative” terms, you will get lost over and over again in the eternal “tentative” différance, where there is no origin, no presence, and no identity as well.

Clarification is not to overthrow the relations between the binary terms and the operation of dialectics, but to note that they do not exist as they claim to. Likewise, Derrida’s Deconstruction has employed the keen words of negative dialectics without prompting any synthesis and identity, instead, it can be as “effable
or ineffable” as such today by banishing itself to infinite, different openness—under the current use of our thinking and language mode. Though most aggressive and thorough, Derrida’s Deconstruction may be useless. Since it has just established a strategy of deconstruction and critical principles that are not attached to any binary opposition (or temporary at best), or simply, a kind of “negative liberty” that is great enough but does not provide any positive criteria for judgment. In *What Is Posthumanism?*, Wolfe blended Derrida’s inclination toward criticism of utilitarianism and the philosophy of consciousness in bioethics, only to admit that deconstruction can only remind us of placing our ethical concern onto animals beyond the boundary. As to what it is, we can simply apply phrases like “keep open”, “reach back”, “constantly changing”, and similar words such as “future”, “advent” and “infinity” are also favored by many French philosophers.

The exhaustion of dialectics’ negation power, as claimed in this essay, does not mean that it is wrong, inactive or should be abandoned, but that scholars baptized by a swarm of post-schools are so proficient in dialectics—which is also a pitfall—that dialectical negation is often reduced to some no-good acuteness such as discussing the two-sided cycles between “criticizing the hegemonic Center through the different other” and “criticizing the tendency of essentializing the other”. Critics can directly attack the loopholes in their opponents’ epistemology without introducing any historical empirical materials. Nevertheless, such seemingly profound debate makes no contribution to both innovating theories and understanding reality, as if dialectics were an idling machine.

Of course, Derrida is not the only great philosopher of the time: “It is as if, after the great explosion of theoretical creativity of the 1970s and 1980s, we had entered a zombified landscape of repetition without difference and lingering melancholia.” Cyberneticians including Wiener, Mathurana, and Luhmann, German and French thinkers such as Habermas, Levinas, Lacan and Foucault, as well as neo-pragmatists across the ocean like Putnam and Rorty differ from one another in the field of study, terminology, theoretical bases and value standpoint, but all of them are inseparable from the dialectical relations between the subject and the other, and between the discourse and the world after the linguistic turn. If discourse is always essentially metaphorical, discourse in different disciplines is nothing more than indirect referents to certain inaccessible “truths” and theories in the 20th century have indeed taken on an analogical logic. Their controversy and difference are only a patchwork of this paradigm. The true alternative
experience and discourse are needed to go beyond dialectics.

3. Two Major Problems of Anthropomorphical Dialectics

There is no need repeating in detail the drawbacks of humanism and the necessity of opposing them. What this essay intends to stress is that the differences between Anti-humanism and Posthuman are worth acknowledging. This is not because it rarely entails technology in contents, but because quite a few anti-humanists (such as the list made by Braidotti) have secretly inherited the uniform anthropomorphical dialectics of humanism. This approach fails to directly and effectively respond to challenges posed by modern technological advancements, and there is still a risk of humanism resurgence in discussions on Posthuman. We must be wary of these two major problems—

First, the “dialectical” aspect of anthropomorphical dialectics provides human nature with an ideally self-attesting ontology refrained from the attack of any modern scientific discourse.

The information scientist Moravec once imagined that human memory could be completely extracted, uploaded to the computer and downloaded to other human bodies, so that they would become an immortal, body-free being. Such supreme praise of humanism, however, has caused a panic and protest in the humanities (including Humanism and Anti-humanism). As modern science gains ground, spirit, consciousness, liberty, and intelligence appear to be themes that humanities should be concerned about. In fact, in addition to bustle in sci-fi and popular science camps, this war has never ever taken place in specialized fields. Scientists and philosophers express their opinions in their respective safer field, supposing their automatic walkover and that this issue does not warrant in-depth exploration. On concepts above, controversies within the humanities—such as analytic philosophy, linguistics, deconstruction, and psychoanalysis—have spelled troubles far more fatal than science. Scientific facts have never virtually overwhelmed them, for operations of dialectical logic and formal logic have already built up a perfect defense.

For example, human have consciousness—self-consciousness. That’s a fact that everyone can understand as one reflects, but such absolutely subjective and internal but universally self-evident simple experience is fraught with difficul-
ties in being “translated” into other material media or language through science. I can “see” an ice cream, and have the “desire” to eat it, but will fall into the “emotion” of frustration because I can’t eat it. Science has little to do with that, and can barely explain it as the flow of electrons released by a few billions of neurons, without defining where the electrons come from, or why it happens to evoke the consciousness of ice cream—there is an argument better understood as a tautological explanation rather than reason: When I see an ice cream, active currents are generated in an area of the brain, and this neural activity still cannot be completely extracted and “reproduced” for the present, let alone a complex emotion of depression from “failing to eat it”. As long as we stick to the concept of “consciousness”, it would never be incorporated into science, but it may easily be rocked by philosophy. It suffices to ask: How on earth will you feel when you generate the “consciousness of ice cream”? Image? Taste? Emotions? What are they? After all, I have nothing to say without using “consciousness”-related discourse, not to mention passing it to others with telepathy. For all the contents of consciousness like ice cream and pain, are they belong to not my experience or yours? It’s unknown. From the perspective of late externalist view featuring Wittgenstein’s “language meaning as use”, “consciousness” is not the referent of a capability or content, but on the contrary, it proves to be a tautological, or even more precedent rule, while the so-called self-evidence actually skips over the difficult problem of “other minds” and forces “consciousness” to be its basis. We are unsure of anything about real inner experience; but so long as “ego cogito” is employed, I am so sure of my consciousness, and affirm everyone is sure—even though it does not enter his consciousness. Human consciousness characterized by the “ego cogito” structure is self-argumentative, and cannot be reduced to empirical science. Against the advancements of science and ethics, consciousness may extend to some animals, but still it has nothing to do with flowers or stones. Machines can process sounds or images, speak and compute, move and work, but there is one thing that will never happen —machines can be conscious of its consciousness and announce it to human beings.

Another key concept is “freedom of will”. People are always reluctant to hear that they are being determined, which is the paradox: If you clearly recognize you are being determined, how could you be radically determined? Kant defined the most negative form of freedom as “the ability to initiate a series”, or simply speaking: Human has a faculty of beginning an idea spontaneously,
putting it into practice, and causing a series of consequences in the phenomenal world. These visible empirical consequences cannot be described solely by scientific causal chains in the world, and its “reason” (another intellectual category from human reflection) is bound to go back to a nonintuitive, nonprescriptive thing-in-itself, namely the will. Will certainly refers to pure reason and experience, but fundamentally speaking, it determines everything by itself groundlessly (for example, I know that cheating is not right and dangerous, but I still decide to cheat). It is a hollow starting point that traces back to a man’s inner explanation for an idea or practical action. So brainwaves are also tautologies rather than a precedent reason resulting in a decision. The most unfavorable test for free will is: the testee holds the switch on both hands, and presses one of them randomly. The brain scanner shows that the neural activity that causes this action is a few hundred milliseconds or seconds earlier than human’s (self-conscious) concrete action. However, how to explain this experiment? Is the prior signal indeed a superior commander of the will? If so, we can continue to ask: What is the “basis” of such signaling? Is it random? Or is the entire process from signaling to acting a synonymous description of free will? Or probably it has a bearing on the unconscious mind? The answers remain unknown. As a matter of fact, the free will signifies a continued inquiry into the very bottom of human till it reaches an inquiry-free vacant domain. This may sound like a sophistry, but its definition per se is an ontological argument immune to the determination of any other discourses.

The concept of wisdom or intelligence is more complicated, for it covers a series of sessions synthesizing cognition, calculation, and judgment. The well-known Turing Test reasons that if a computer is so humanoid in conversing with human that the interlocutor can hardly discern, the machine then hits the spot of “intelligence”. This is the first time that the scientific community has attempted to define machine-intelligence explicitly, but the Turing Test can be interpreted in so many ways that may direct to different arguments. As we will see later, perhaps it is not how intelligent the machine is but whether human intelligence can be reinterpreted in accordance with the way the machine works that counts. In brief, these Humanism-grounded concepts break even with their opponents in collision with the circumstances and problems of Posthuman, and merely talk to themselves and reiterate that they are right time and again. There is nothing wrong or right of such controversies. Instead, they are of no avail.
Second, the “anthropomorphism” facet of anthropomorphical dialectics interfuses Posthuman issues with the conceptual presuppositions of Humanism, and messes things up. Even Antihumanism can hardly avoid this deficiency.

When some anti-humanists criticize “human” in liberal humanism (the most typical case is the cultural studies’ criticism against “bourgeois- Western white-heterosexual man”), a common strategy is to take advantage of the marginalized others like women, blacks, proletariat, the Third World, queer, animals, ecological environment, and machines… The reason is that dualism is always connected to conceptual “human” at the other end, meanwhile, dialectics is isomorphic to consciousness. Therefore, even though such criticism stretches to animals and machines, it still follows the thinking inertia of anthropomorphism, and raises questions like “Will we lose ‘humanity’?” and “Would machines control/enslave/replace humans?”.

How terrible is this way of questioning? Frankenstein, known as the earliest science fiction, opens the first fresh rift on the natural, ideal body of humans. Machines with partial humanity—it is thus quite easy for us to imagine a “cyborg”—which has impacted our boundary consciousness. However, such concern is finally established on anthropomorphical imagination of machines, and has no effect on “human”. Moravec, albeit delighted with the prospect of “machines’ replacement of brains”, was not an adherent of ‘machines overwhelm humans’, instead, he tried hard to consolidate the concept of “humanities as the substance, machines for practical use”. The man-machine war in The Matrix is not a confrontation of physical forces, but mainly occurs in the virtual computer codes. Smith, virtually an anti-virus program, has to show up as a somber-suited FBI agent. The most glaring bug must be the animation prequel: As all the labor is done by robots in the future, hundreds of thousands of humanoid robots can be seen to drag heavy huge stones on the construction site like the slaves of Pharaoh or the barge haulers on the Volga River; and then these robots generate ideas and emotions, revolt and enslave humans—Wait, isn’t that undue anthropomorphical imagination? We don’t have to wait for the future, as building materials are transported through the cranes today. In the film, you will feel the horror of being dominated by innumerable robots, but in reality, you would not have the fear of being dominated by a crane. That’s the point precisely.

How can machines enslave humans? It will happen when you have long viewed machines as humans. What is slavery? A man (or an animal, a monster)
imposes his will, emotions, and desires on the others. Scores of people, including some sci-fi fans, believe that the acme of artificial intelligence is to create an existence that possesses human-like subjective experience and can act like humans. However, that’s not the choice of scientists and engineers, and artificial intelligence’s work should not be ascribed to inner experience. It is impossible and unnecessary for machines to develop “inner dramas” like will, emotions and desires, let alone to impose those on human beings. Machines’ human slavery is nothing more than an illusion of anthropomorphical thinking, as well as a pseudo-problem provoked by confusion of the two paradigms. As Hayles remarked, “What is lethal is not the posthuman as such but the grafting of the posthuman onto a liberal humanist view of the self.”[22] Bounded by anthropomorphical thinking, even anti-humanism barely has the courage to open up the boundary of humans while confronting machines the others; we comes to the threshold of Posthuman as we span beyond the anthropomorphical dialectics.

4. The Detouring Posthuman

Posthuman is different from but also relevant to antihumanism. The difference is that the narrowly-defined posthuman must make a clean break with Antihumanism that attaches itself to anthropomorphical dialectics. The relevance, for example, can be referred to as “anti-humanism” in light of Derrida’s Deconstruction, or as “Posthuman” in terms of analogies to cybernetics. He, together with plentiful other thinkers, has sufficiently disclosed the [im] possibility of subjective philosophy, and made room for alternative discourse. It follows that “anti-humanism is ultimately an important resource of the view of the posthuman.” However, Deconstruction has always played a constructive rather than destructive part, whereas some other anti-humanist ideas (Posthuman in fact) do not pay much attention to interdisciplinary new issues. Therefore, the anti-humanist resources are “not unique at all, the relations between anti-humanism and posthuman are logically unnecessary, and not always historically inevitable.”

The narrow posthuman claims advocated in this essay are as follows: First of all, posthuman is standing together with ideas of deconstruction and language philosophy at the end of the clarified dualism. The so-called “beyond” anthropomorphical dialectics is not to demolish its argument (the negative will be dialec-
tically absorbed), but to detour it as far as possible and make it neutralized. Sec-
ond, as a result, posthuman must respond to and affirm the reality somehow after
the “clarification” and “detour”. In synergy with the development of scientific
discourses such as cybernetics, artificial intelligence, and zoology, it assimilates
resources from the anti-mental-images externalism in metaphysical monism, em-
piricism, phenomenology and the philosophy of language as well as the embod-
iment of cultural studies. It also connects human to various nonhuman others in
a temporary, analogical sense, eradicates and rewrites—rather than dialectically
negates internally—the concept of human (including the essential attributes) with
inhuman experience. This essay roughly outlines several characteristics of this
specific posthuman view as follows—

1. Exteriority

    Being in the camp of subjectivity philosophy, Husserl detached the intentional ob-
ject (Noema) from mental images, and reversed the subjective-objective epistemolog-
ical stereotype of “how consciousness accesses the object”; likewise, philosophers of
language argue against mental images and a priori ideas; for all post-isms, any “foun-
dationalism” that embraces inner experience, external reality, and abstractions must be
resolutely rejected. This is not dialectical self-negation of the philosophy of conscious-
ness, but a process in which the innate foundation of individuals are gradually trans-
ferred with observable, material, social practical discourses. However, Husserl still re-
spects the abstract, universal concept of idealism, but later, those exterior to individual
mind become the distinct structuralism-like or self-referential discourse of pragmatism,
the Level-2 system of cyberneticians, the interaction rules discussed by sociologists,
and so on. The exteriority of posthuman is more about machines and animals. There
seems to be groundless to be more radical, making the words and phrases on subjective
human experience something self-evident, correct but useless.

    Let’s continue the topic of “intelligence” above. Searle, American philosopher,
refitted the Turning machine as the “Chinese Room”: although the translations you
put in and take out are correct, you would never know what is working inside, a pro-
fessional translator or some other rules? This experiment does not necessarily support
or refute Turing, but rather refines the concept of “intelligence” that Turing did not
elaborate: If intelligence enables machines to reproduce a set of perceptual thinking
and decision-making processes in human brain, then Turing is wrong— the fact that
machine can deceive human would not justify that its “brain” does “understand” the
language; as long as we broaden our understanding of “intelligence” with correct in-
put and output, whether the operation in the “black box” is the same as that in human
brain doesn’t matter at all. The artificial intelligence, as is often mentioned, technically
includes artificial intelligence and artificial life, among which the research ideas of the latter are apparently more dominant. Artificial intelligence in early days was based on consciousness, viewing cognition as the supreme commander of actions independent of emotions while immersing itself in the anthropomorphical fantasy of simulating brains with machines. Yet, Rodney Brooks took an alternative path in the 1980s. Drawing on the neural structure of insects, he successfully made the machines interact with the environment through a synergy of various classification systems, instead of differentiating emotion, cognition from action—the result of which suggests that his approach is pretty intelligent, but has nothing to do with “consciousness”.

The difference between Deep Blue and Alpha Go is typical. Deep Blue adopted the simple, crude method of exhaustion to calculate enough possibilities within the tolerable bounds of the hardware, which appears similar to human understanding of board games; in spite of that, Deep Blue at the time failed to exhaust all the variations in chess, but was optimized in terms of their opponents’ playing style, so people tended to believe that computers could not tackle the more complicated Game of Go in the short run. Unexpectedly, Alpha Go detoured and designed two “neural networks”; the “Decision Network” is responsible for calculating the next move, while the “Value Network” can predict the winner after each move is done. Thirty million moves by human chess players were input to train this set of networks, which finally completed myriad games with itself. A complex chess game has no model answer beneath the numerous choices, and its optimal solution is constantly changing during the gaming. Based on massive actual gaming experience, Alpha Go not only exhausts with the Decision Network, but also allows the Value Network to figure out which moves are more likely to win, thereby determining a more accurate and effective scope of calculation. The two networks complement each other, and made the machine invincible. Here are quite a few anthropomorphical terms—Deep Blue and Alpha Go share “calculation” and “choice”, but they have nothing to do with the process of choice making in human mind; “nerve” is also just in an analogical sense, because the current of human neurons is completely irrelevant to the algorithms and data of computers; the “Value Network” filters, optimizes and calculates the results based on empirical probability rather than “value judgements” of human.

“Science fiction films often assume that computers must develop consciousness if it tends to catch up with or even surpass human intelligence. However, another idea emerges in the true science There are many ways to achieve super-intelligence, but not each of them has to be based on consciousness. The exteriority revealed by anti-humanism is somewhat a consciousness-related intersubjective (also “exterior”) relationship. Posthuman, however, takes a more nonhuman way, making consciousness a “redundant accompaniment” as indicated by Brooks. This is not to allow the nonhuman to be integrated, expanded or partially rewrite the implications of human, but to reframe human things in accordance with a nonhuman model—at the risk of conceptual failure,
fragmentation and reorganization.

2. Monism

The Exteriority of Posthuman is essentially Interiority suggested by Deleuze, while Deleuze’s Monism equates the radical Pluralism, which refers to the arbitrary and temporary analogical connection deconstructing all kinds of binary oppositions advocated by the Posthuman theories.

The exteriority of Deconstruction, linguistics and system theory underlines and invalidates the self-evident inner experience exterior to consciousness and will, while self-reference ensures that “exteriority” does not amount to objectivity that rests on the external world. For Deleuze, “exteriority” deconstructs objectivism and fundamentalism as the “plane of immanence”, the “preset site in which interiority (mind or subject) and exteriority (world or certainty) can be distinguished” as the “radical exteriority”.[27] The combined “interiority-exteriority” is exactly Deleuze’s monism based on Spinoza’s monistic worldview, which contains nothing but “unity”—immanence, empiricism as well as life. Without the slightest sense of mysticism, ontology or mental experience, they are actually edging closer to Derrida’s proposition “there is no outside-text”: all kinds of binary oppositions are born together in the moment of distinction, and prior to that, there was not a single criterion for the distinction. However, Deleuze referred to immanence as a “site” for interiority-exteriority distinction, and didn’t intend to ontologize it. The emphasis is a little different: Derrida guarantees the incisiveness of Deconstruction with infinite difference, whereas Deleuze’s opposition to foundationalist monism and a priori empiricism suggests that any binary distinction and relationship on interiority/exteriority and subject/object should always be arbitrary and temporary.

If we reorient our thinking, we will find that valuable ways of distinction-connection are not confined to the scope of subject-object, mind-world. When connected with light, human eyes can see, films can image, and plants can grow. Deleuze believes that life is a machine without enclosed identity and an ultimate purpose, but only its specific part is connecting, generating, and taking effect in a specific way—monism in principle is the pluralism in concrete practice. Like the example of The Matrix listed above, the reason why robots can frighten people while cranes can not is that we always think about machines in the mode of “man-the other” or “man-tool” connection. If we no longer stick to the priority of human, house building is a connection between machines and bricks; likewise, typing is a connection between hands and keyboard, not to mention the connection between input method and the cloud big data that is much ‘smarter’ than humans. Beyond all doubt, it has been an integral part of our thinking and language—but we have never had to “anthropomorphically” worry about being kidnapped by data in a computer. Connections have broken down all the established oppositions and boundaries, as what Haraway calls ‘cyborg’: “A cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fic-
tion”, while “human beings, like any other component or subsystem, must be localized in a system architecture whose basic modes of operation are probabilistic, statistical. No objects, spaces, or bodies are sacred in themselves; any component can be interfaced with any other if the proper standard and code, can be constructed for processing signals in a common language”. [28]

3. Embodiment

Haraway’s words seem to be a manifesto of transhumanism, but what she emphasizes is limited within the importance of breaking down the existing boundaries and imagining new modes of connection by citing the latest technologies then. The sci-tech ideas and achievements today prove to be greater than cybernetics, and men have neither “dismembered” themselves into almighty masters of information, nor have they become slaves of smarter, greater machines. Human beings are just connected with nonhuman factors like machines, environment, and animals, and posthuman must be framed by embodiment.

Embodiment, above all, implies that human traits proclaimed by the long-standing humanism will not be eliminated. We will never lose the self-evident cognition, desire, emotion and freedom, which, as a human inner experience and empirical commonsense, are of considerable importance in certain domains (like aesthetics, politics and ethics). As Hayles remarks, it should not be grafted onto posthumanism. In posthuman thought, these conceptual humanistic implications will become useless or start afresh. Inner experience is a black box of humans, just like the Turning machine and Searle’s “Chinese Room”. Posthumanism will not replace interiority with other codings. Instead, it stands up for the incommensurability of interiorities, and draws analogies from the perspective of exteriority. Accordingly, mind, body, culture and daily life of humans remain the indispensable soil of our thinking on posthuman.

Furthermore, embodiment implies that the nonhuman can be regarded as a fellow creature that differs from the subject or other dialectics. For example, Alpha Go, through intensive training, has sought its own style, as well as the optimal solution that professional chess players had never ever noticed. This is the result of computation proliferation by the two levels of self-referential system (“self-learning” and “creation” have induced a humanistic panic), which can hardly be explained adequately by engineers of neural network design. Chess players, in turn, should learn from the computer: it appears that the supposedly poor san-san joseki still has the potential of being further explored. Such learning is naturally not to switch on the respective black box of man and “Go”, but to help chess players reconvert the computational results into their inward understanding. The players’ consciousness is still self-evident, and throughout the whole story from a posthuman angle, human wisdom has been split, scattered, and then connected to machines already. Hayles’ interpretation of Searle’s “Chinese Room” is: whether people inside the room are ones who can understand the foreign language or who check the rulebook. It should be admitted that it is the entire room that knows Chi-
nese, or, it even knows more Chinese than any of its components (brain, the rulebook, and people who check the rulebook). The situation of modern humans is akin to that of Searle in the Chinese room, for every day we participate in systems whose total cognitive capacity exceeds our individual knowledge. Rather, the distributed cognition of human correlates with the distributed cognitive system as a whole, in which thinking is done by both human and nonhuman actors. When the human is seen as part of a distributed system, the full expression of human capability can be seen precisely to depend on the splice rather than being imperiled. — This is indeed a self-interpretation more modest and peaceful than any version of intersubjectivity.

“The crisis of Humanism means that the structural others of the modern humanistic subject re-emerge with a vengeance in postmodernity.” What kind of others? Dialectics determines the fact that every negation and update of Humanism-Antihumanism rests on the others. The others introduced previously are either humanoid others inferior to Men of Ideas, so they can always be absorbed; or the Others that precede human and nonhuman and shape human, such as language, unconsciousness, and power, but the criticism and understanding of human would halt at the dead end here. So nowadays, how should we deal with the new others like computers, clones, and big data? If we still start from consciousness and analogically promote the consciousness structure to the others, no matter how the others are introduced to oppose the Anthropocentrism, we may at most stop at the nonintegrated binary of “human versus machines, animals and the environment…” Nevertheless, these others should not get bogged down into the stereotype of dialectics. Instead, they will inspire us to imagine the self in an entirely nonhuman way. In this imagination, being of the world is no longer a lopsided binary pattern like the “self/other” binary in Humanism or the “nonhuman Other/human subject” binary in Antihumanism, but merely a monistic world of chaos independent of any hegemonic discourse, where there is only rambling connection and generation, as well as temporary definition, distinction and analogy. Beyond the anthropomorphical dialectics, we will detour part of the pitfalls of Posthumanism and the limits marked by some other theories, and usher in an upcoming Posthuman future that is even already here.

Notes

1 There is an argument that it stems from the 1988’s Post-Human Manifesto by Steve Nichols. Quoted from Zhi Yunbo: Posthuman-Biopolitical Interpretation of Nineteen Eighty-Four, Journal of Ocean University of China (Social Sciences Edition), 2017 (2).

2 See Cary Wolfe, What is Posthumanism? (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press,
From Anti-humanism to A Narrower Posthuman, Beyond Anthropomorphical Dialectics


3 The Chinese term “控制论” corresponds to “Cybernetics” in the original text, also the abbreviation of “cybernetic organism”, which is referred to as “Cyber” or “Cyborg” discussed by Haraway later in this essay. It can be paraphrased as “bionic man”. The object of Cybernetics is mainly a set of coding “systems”, in which the flowing content is “information”, so the SCI Theories, namely the System Theory, the Control Theory, and the Information Theory, are actually the same thing, and the different titles only indicate their different highlights. In Cary Wolfe’s What is Posthumanism?, he touches on the Macy Conferences, Wiener, Moravek, Maturana and so on, which are also mentioned by Hayles, and adopts the unified concept “System Theory”.

4 Katherine Hayles, How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics (Liu Yuqing Trans), Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999, pp. 2-3


6 “In fact, descriptions like ‘origin’, ‘priority’ and ‘fundierend’ are susceptible to pitches that Derrida opposes. They can only be awkward expressions of language adopted for the moment. Derrida has always emphasized that differance, archi-ecriture, trace and supplement are not only something that makes presence and identity possible, but also something that cannot be ontologized and regarded as the superior origin … People refers to such an anteriorly present structure as an “otherness” or “alterity” … a strength that is other than the subject, but is built into the subject or between the subjects, and dominates the subject or intersubjective associations.” (Wu Qiong: Jacques Lacan: Read Your Symptom, Beijing: China Renmin University Press, 2011 edition, p.301.) Different scholars hold different concerns and positioning for different others (such as the other, language, economy, power, etc.), but it is beyond doubt that Derrida turns out to be one of the most aggressive and thorough, who would never ontologize the difference and identify names for it.


8 See Qiu Renzong, Li Nian: Are Transhumans, Posthumans Rich Forms of Humanism?: An Interview With Qiu Renzong, Philosophical Analysis, April 2016.


11 Ibid. p. 86 & p. 250.
This does not, by simple inversion, mean that the signifier is fundamental or primary. The “primacy” or “priority” of the signifier would be an expression untenable and absurd to formulate illogically within the very logic that it would legitimately destroy. The signifier will never by rights precede the signified, in which case it would no longer be a signifier and the “signifyin”g signifier would no longer have a possible signified. The thought that is announced in this impossible formula without being successfully contained therein should therefore be stated in another way; it will clearly be impossible to do so without putting the very idea of the sign into suspicion, the “sign-of” which will always remain attached to what is here put in question. At the limit therefore, that thought would destroy the entire conceptuality organized around the concept of the sign (signifier and signified, expression and content, and so on).” Jacques Derrida, translated by G. C. Spivak, *Of Grammatology*, Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1976, p. 19.

Note 9.


17 Wiener the cybernetician puts forward in his paper manuscript The Nature of Analogy that the information theory is an analogy: “language is always analogical”, which fits with the various theories after the linguistic turz The cybernetician Wiener proposed in his paper manuscript “The Nature of Analogy” that information theory is an analogy, “language is always analogous”, which is consistent with many theories after the linguistic turn. See Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999, pp. 97-98. And Cary Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), p. 8.


21 Ibid. p.35-36.

23 See CCID: From Deep Blue to Alpha Go, How is Man vs Machine Going over the 20 Years?


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CCID: *From Deep Blue to Alpha Go, How is Man vs Machine Going over the 20 Years?*

