EDITORIAL

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Within posthumanist thought, the knowing subject disengages itself from the dominant humanist narratives to experiment with new radical forms of subjectivity that interrogate the historical arché of evolution and critically scrutinize the possibilities of future advancement by melding biological organisms with technology. These posthuman 'experiments' in the domain of techno-science, creating human-machine continuum, alter ways of looking at the human subjectivity in the ongoing process of becoming, and culminate in actualizing the displacement of the knowing subject itself as the measure of all things. Such new models of bio-technological embodiment provide dynamic options for a non-unitary transformative subjectivity that is based on the relational ontology of non-human *others*. The displaced subject now attempts to reshape the existing practices of humanism by pitting them against this concept of posthumanism, i.e., its heteronomy and multidimensional relationality. Dynamic notion of an inclusive world with humanistic practices along with posthuman relationlity is the fresh space of possibilities that this knowing subject dares to explore.

The dispositioned subject's attempt to examine new meanings of being human along with an evolving towards an open future marked with contingency and unpredictability involves a transcendence of unitary and autonomous human subjectivity. Challenging all humanist assumptions, this sense of transhumanism, in terms of possibilities of becoming posthuman, attaches itself to the sense of wonder and adventure in seeking acceleration of life through intelligent machines. With this symbiotic relationship between man and machine, innovative technologies are employed to increase human capacity for rising above outmoded forms of thought and existence. These extensions of possibilities within themselves admit a subject who is disengaged from the accustomed notions of living; it engages itself in a posthuman frame of reference which in turn has the potential to become the pretext for the evolution of a shared model of human life with non-human *others* and challenge the assumed superiority of liberal humanists.

This idea of a posthuman universe where technology, in a way, undermines the precedence of humans as the primary agents of action does not sediment itself easily in the common imaginary. The interrogation of the posthuman demands a forgoing of any attachment to common sense in the face of unprecedented changes brought about by

the creation of artificial and virtual life-forms. Cogent objections are raised unveiling the horrors of technology and its far reaching implications on human life; the entry of the posthumanist scope of thought into the mainstream, however, also poses counter-questions about the vulnerability of the posthuman – with its dependence upon the social, emotional, and rational capacity of its human creators. The unprecedented broadening of the frontiers of this debate thus converges at the consideration whether this technologically dependent universe is threatening or liberating.

The interdisciplinary approach to posthumanism evokes conceptual diversity in scholarship. Critical discussions in the papers received in this Issue range from posthumanist subjectivity, prosthetic technology, embodied memory, to bodies in narrativity. In the themed section of the journal, Shalini Harilal's paper relates video game avatars with the idea of *horcruxes* in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series to argue that unattainment of the transhumanist goal of overcoming death on a collective level gives rise to "psychic entropy." To deal with it, video game horcruxing emerges as a subjective coping mechanism and in doing so subverts the official transhuman narrative. Meike Robaard's paper introduces the concept of "cyborg narrativity" in the cinematic texts of David Cronenberg to study the cyborgian condition of contemporary times. Incorporating the aesthetics and mechanics of cyborg, the paper scrutinizes changing physicality through the technologization of the body. In the face of increasingly intimidating technological climate, the third paper in this section by Colleen Johnson brings out the limits of conceptualizing memory as just a disembodied information database. By analysing Uta Briesewitz's episode of *Westworld*, entitled "Kiksuya," and Janelle Monáe's *Dirty Computer*, the paper looks at memory as embodied lived experience, and critiques the possibility of technological intervention in the form of implanted prosthetic memory. All the three papers highlight the possibilities present in posthumanist future, but with a subversive take to critically analyse the fallouts within this prospective reality.

The first paper in the non-themed section by Dylan Emerick-Brown connects Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* and Joyce's *Ulysses* over the discussion of Nepenthe. Disengaging with the traditional association of Nepenthe with Homer, the paper opens new perspectives of love in relation to it which point towards a restorative and regenerative capacity, as developed by Shelley. The second paper by Gergely Vörös uses Foucauldian notions of subjectivity, power, and discursive formations to discuss Percival Everett's novel *Erasure* in the light of how the text challenges normative assumptions about black racial representation and attempts to deracialize the American imaginary.

The process of reading the papers and strategically working on them is always a great learning opportunity, which enriches us with intellectual vitality apparent within the current academic scenario. We publish each Issue with a hope to disseminate valuable scholarly research and, now, as we put this Issue for readers' perusal we hope to be guided by their valuable suggestions, comments, and criticism. As always, we are deeply indebted to all our editorial board members, authors, peer reviewers, and readers for their tireless contributions in helping us publish rigorous research.

A very happy New Year 2020 to all our contributors and readers!