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Author: Agata Nipitella

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Italy is “the nest of posthumanist culture” (p. 14). This is the powerful argument made by Enrica Maria Ferrara as editor of *Posthumanism in Italian Literature and Film: Boundaries and Identity*, in which she investigates Italian literature from a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective. The volume aims to demonstrate the presence of early Italian contributions to a theory of the posthuman subject and how Italian contemporary fiction and films have embraced the posthuman perspective. The book is divided into three main sections, comprising a total of twelve essays and a brilliant introduction by the editor who guides the reader through posthumanist concerns, their origins, and the ongoing debate around them. This volume has the merit of demonstrating how important it is to look at literature and films from new epistemological standpoints: together the chapters draw theoretical inspiration from new materialism, ecocriticism, and much more, successfully conveying the attempt by Italian writers to disclose the new “posthuman human.”

The first section, entitled *Becoming Posthuman*, includes four contributions: the first two essays persuasively demonstrate how nineteenth- and early twentieth-century authors such as Leopardi and Pirandello revealed posthumanist reflections, while the other two focus on how contemporary writers, such as Laura Pugno and Elena Ferrante, deliberately elucidate the process through which humanity has become posthuman. More specifically, the first chapter by Gianna Conrad presents a close reading of several passages from Leopardi’s *Zibaldone*. Compellingly, Conrad proves how Leopardi already possessed a posthumanist sensibility that anticipated the philosophical theories later developed by such major thinkers of the post-humanist turn as Marchesini, Haraway, and Braidotti. According to Conrad, the poet considered humanity as part of an ontological continuum with all living matter, promoting an egalitarianism of all species based on their equal vulnerability and excluding the idea of human supremacy. Moreover, Leopardi reflected upon the relational essence of human subjectivity, which he considered to be in close rapport with other human and nonhuman beings, viewed as active embodied subjects like humans. This non-anthropocentric perspective is also present in Pirandello’s fiction, as stated in the second chapter co-authored by Alberto Godioli, Monica Jansen, and Carmen Van den Bergh. Here, the presence of the tortoise and its animal gaze foreshadows the concept of “becoming-animal” later developed by Deleuze and Guattari. Moving to 21st-century’s fiction, in chapter three, Marco Amici shows the presence of anthropocentric and post-anthropocentric elements in *Sirene/Mermaids*, *La ragazza selvaggia/The Wild Girl*, and *La caccia/The Hunt* by Laura Pugno, whose intention, according to Amici, is not to provide a definition of posthumanism, but to represent it as a complex and unsolvable process. In the fourth chapter, about Ferrante’s *L’amica geniale/My Brilliant Friend* (The Neapolitan Novels), Enrica Maria Ferrara employs Barad’s concept of intra-agency acting to analyze the construction of the protagonists’ identities. She posits that Elena and Lila can assume their posthuman identities through language, enabling them to control the fear of a “vortex-like fracturing of material living and dead” (p. 98). In sum, while Leopardi and Pirandello communicate an early posthumanist perceptiveness arisen during the modernist and post-modernist eras, Pugno and Ferrante exhibit two different contemporary elaborations on how to become posthuman.

In the second section, “Technology and Identity,” the four contributions are dedicated to the troubling consequences on human identity of man’s interactions with digital technology. The first chapter (Chapter 6), by Giancarlo Alfano, considers Italian contemporary poetry and offers an interesting reflection on how the Web 2.0 has affected the concepts of canon and originality. In addition, Alfano addresses how the Web 2.0 has influenced perceptions of authorial identity, engaging

the reader with interesting research questions about, among other things, the effects of the web on the idea of poetry and the role of the book. In Chapter 7, Kristina Varade examines the pervasive presence of technology in daily life in contemporary works of fiction such as *Vibravoll*, *Pura Vita/Pure Life*, and *Brucia la città/The City is Burning* by Aldo Nove, Andrea De Carlo, and Stefano Culicchia, respectively. Varade draws attention to the crisis of the communication between humans continuously interrupted and mediated by technological devices and to the false sense of emancipation the cellphone provides. Daily interactions with technology are also the focus of Chapter 8, in which Eleonora Lima investigates how the concept of female body is elaborated in reference to technology in Luciano Bianciardi's *La vita agra/It's a Hard Life* and Tiziano Scarpa's *Madrigale/Madrigal*. While Bianciardi negatively considers technology as a reifying danger, Scarpa does not identify any significant threat in it. Lima emphasizes how these posthuman correlations are *de facto* shaped by the writers instead of being pre-existent and simply reflected in their writing, thus awarding literature an active role in attributing positive or negative socio-cultural functions to technology. Finally, in their reading of the novel *Bambini di ferro/The Iron Kids* by Viola Di Grado (Chapter 9), Anna Lisa Somma and Serena Todesco draw upon the concept of the abject elaborated by Julia Kristeva as well as the theories about maternity, monstrosity, and machines formulated by Rosi Braidotti in order to examine the depiction of a cyborg motherhood capable of displacing biological motherhood. Somma and Todesco show how Di Grado's work raises innumerable ethical issues by offering a thought-provoking vision of the entanglement between maternity-related and posthuman concerns. From the chapters in this section, it is clear that Italian contemporary literature is making important contributions to the definition of the relationship between humans and technology, moving from critical interpretations to positive assessments.

The third and last section of this volume, "Boundaries of the Human," delves into the idea of a re-determination of human boundaries in relation to all the active entities inhabiting posthuman reality, namely animals, inorganic presences, and technological devices. In the first chapter (Chapter 10), Eugenio Bolongaro argues that Aldo Nove's novel, *La vita oscena/The Obscene Life*, presents a narrative barrier corresponding to the barrier of the posthuman. Through an intriguing and persuasive interpretation of the text, the author describes the complex process through which the narrator confronts himself with nonhuman beings in a continuous movement of engagement and disengagement. According to Bolongaro, the narrator repeatedly approaches the threshold between human and posthuman, but in the end encounters an ethical defeat: he is not capable of establishing a contact with the alterities nor thus of becoming truly posthuman. As a result, he urges the other presences to become human instead, thus falling back into a kind of anthropocentrism. On the contrary, in Chapter 11, through a close reading of "Finzioni a cui credere" ("Fictions to Believe in"), *Narratori delle pianure/Voices from the Plains* and *Quattro novelle sulle apparenze/Appearances*, Enrico Vettore demonstrates that Gianni Celati's mid-1980s fiction accomplishes the transition to a posthuman condition via Zen and ecopsychological ideas. Celati's characters are able to reach oneness with the surrounding world and overcome the separation between subject and object. Next, in Chapter 12, Fabio Camilletti analyzes the image of the zombie in songs, movies, and novels by Gianfranco Manfredi, Pupi Avati, and Tiziano Sclavi. In Camilletti's opinion, the living dead is "the posthuman icon of contemporary alienation," able to reflect the concerns of the post-1968 period characterized by a declining political *impegno* (p. 265). Finally, Antonioni's trilogy *L'avventura/The Adventure* (1960), *La notte/The Night* (1961), and *L'eclisse/The Eclipse* (1962) is the focus of Chapter thirteen. Here, Paolo Saporito scrutinizes the relationship between the female character and the environment through the lens of Karen Barad's theory of agential realism, challenging previous scholarly work about the same

topic. Saporito stresses the posthuman entanglement between women and their surroundings, which leads to the formation of a new ethical perspective that distances them from the suffocating bourgeois milieu in which they live. Moreover, Saporito convincingly demonstrates how the camera itself can be considered an agential entity that, together with the female body and the environment with its objects, produces the enmeshments under analysis. In this last section, it is apparent how the “boundaries of the human” are by now blurred and intertwined with the boundaries of what Cartesian thought categorizes as “the other” (animals, non-living matter) and how technology is contributing to a deeper erosion of these already fine lines between subject and object. Together, the texts in this last segment effectively offer an occasion to observe how Italian contemporary literature and films are re-elaborating the connections between humans and a variety of other agential bodies surrounding them, thereby demonstrating the uniqueness of Italian contributions to contemporary debates on the posthuman.

The goals set in the introduction by the editor Enrica Maria Ferrara are successfully achieved, as the reader is, in the end, persuaded that Italian culture anticipated posthumanist concerns, and that Italian writers are now both acting in response to and articulating the challenges of our contemporary posthuman reality. Perhaps the selection could have dedicated more space to film narratives, treated only in the last two chapters, but not enough to express the complexity of posthumanist analyses in this visual art. Finally, the comparative angle does not extend beyond European borders: it would be interesting to consolidate the volume’s argument assuming a broader comparative perspective. However, overall, this work comes as a welcome contribution, not only because it fills a gap in the study of Italian modernism from a posthumanist perspective, but also because it consistently looks at the relevance of posthuman fiction in contemporary Italy through a variety of theoretical frameworks. In her editorial role, Ferrara produced a clear and coherent structure: the text moves progressively from the dawn of posthumanism in modern and post-modern Italian literature to the repercussions of the pervasive presence of technology on human identity, and, finally, to the re-definition of human boundaries in relation to otherness in contemporary Italian literature and films.

Comprehensively, *Posthumanism in Italian Literature and Film* offers new perspectives and raises new research questions about the nature of the mutually exclusive relationship between posthumanism and literature, the role of human language for the expression of human identity, the role of Italian horror films in the re-definition of the human, and much more. Another strength of this collection is its presentation of different, and sometimes opposite, results in the elaboration of posthumanist reality in Italian fiction, thus showing and confirming the complexity of the subject. Hence, the volume is especially useful for scholars who are interested in gaining an initial understanding of what posthumanism is, but also for those who wish to dialogue with the latest directions that this mode of thought, as regards Italian fiction, has been taking.

AGATA NIPITELLA
Brown University