



The Posthuman

By Rosi Braidotti

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The Posthuman offers both an introduction and major contribution to contemporary debates on the posthuman. Digital 'second life', genetically modified food, advanced prosthetics, robotics and reproductive technologies are familiar facets of our globally linked and technologically mediated societies. This has blurred the traditional distinction between the human and its others, exposing the non-naturalistic structure of the human. *The Posthuman* starts by exploring the extent to which a post-humanist move displaces the traditional humanistic unity of the subject. Rather than perceiving this situation as a loss of cognitive and moral self-mastery, Braidotti argues that the posthuman helps us make sense of our flexible and multiple identities.

Braidotti then analyzes the escalating effects of post-anthropocentric thought, which encompass not only other species, but also the sustainability of our planet as a whole. Because contemporary market economies profit from the control and commodification of all that lives, they result in hybridization, erasing categorical distinctions between the human and other species, seeds, plants, animals and bacteria. These dislocations induced by globalized cultures and economies enable a critique of anthropocentrism, but how reliable are they as indicators of a sustainable future?

The Posthuman concludes by considering the implications of these shifts for the institutional practice of the humanities. Braidotti outlines new forms of cosmopolitan neo-humanism that emerge from the spectrum of post-colonial and race studies, as well as gender analysis and environmentalism. The challenge of the posthuman condition consists in seizing the opportunities for new social bonding and community building, while pursuing sustainability and empowerment.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The *Posthuman* makes a vital contribution to feminist scholarship across disciplines... Braidotti's reading of contemporary issues is out of the box: challenging, encouraging and inspiring."

Feminist Review

"An important and generative step toward new theories and scholarship and a welcome addition to Braidotti's already formidable canon."

H+ Magazine

"Shows remarkable clarity and concision even as it lays out highly technical, complexly theoretical, and deeply interdisciplinary concepts."

Choice

"This is a rather startling work that requires heavy concentration on the part of the reader to follow the brilliant thinking of the author. Rosi Braidotti, a contemporary philosopher and feminist theoretician, 'makes a case for an alternative view on subjectivity, ethics and emancipation and pitches diversity against the postmodernist risk of cultural relativism, while also standing against the tenets of liberal individualism.' Throughout her work, Braidotti asserts and demonstrates the importance of combining theoretical concerns with a serious commitment to producing socially and politically relevant scholarship that contributes to making a difference in the world."

Grady Harp, Literary Aficionado

"This is an exciting and important text, full of intellectual brilliance and insight. It will make a major mark."

Henrietta L. Moore, University of Cambridge

"Braidotti's exhilarating survey of the constellation of posthumanity is lucid, learned and provocative. It will be an essential point of reference in future debates about the central philosophical problem of our age."

Paul Gilroy, King's College London

"Debates over humanism and post-humanism have been fought over from feminist philosophy to literary theory and post-colonial studies. This latest work by Rosi Braidotti presents us with a clear-headed glimpse of some of the hard choices we have before us. Braidotti knows the philosophy, cares about the politics, and empathizes with those who have been shoved aside in these brutal last hundred years. She shows us how feminism, technoscientific infrastructure and political strands cross, sometimes with sparks."

Peter Galison, Harvard University

From the Back Cover

This book offers an original and accessible introduction to the contemporary debates on the notion of the posthuman. It develops two lines of argument. First, contemporary market economies profit from the control and commodification of all forms of life. 'Second Life', genetically modified food, advanced prosthetics, robotics and reproductive technologies are familiar facets of our globally linked and technologically mediated societies. This high degree of bio-technological development results in hybridization, erasing categorical distinctions between the human and other species, seeds, plants, animals and machines. The

dislocations produced by posthuman cultures therefore make possible a critique of anthropocentrism. Post-anthropocentric politics, as exemplified by environmentalism, encompass not only other species but also the sustainability of our planet as a whole.

The second line of argument is concerned with the shape of contemporary philosophical debates about the human. Braidotti explores the extent to which a post-humanist perspective displaces the traditional unity and universality of the subject. Rather than perceiving this as a loss of cognitive self-mastery and ethical decency, she argues that the posthuman condition helps us make sense of, and find a new moral compass within, our globalised culture. The book concludes by providing some intellectual and ethical guidelines for the new and alternative modes of non-anthropocentric thinking that are emerging today. The challenge of the posthuman condition is to seize the opportunities for creating new forms of social bonding and community building, while pursuing economic sustainability, empowerment and social justice.

About the Author

Rosi Braidotti is a distinguished university professor at Utrecht University and founding director of the Centre for the Humanities.

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