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Towards a semiotization of radical alterity:  
The endeavor of transhumanism in becoming posthumanist  
Master Thesis

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Tartu  
2013

I hereby declare that I have written this Master Thesis myself, independently. All of the other authors' texts, main viewpoints and all data from other resources have been referenced.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	7
1. 1. Transhumanism.....	7
1. 2. Otherness.....	9
1. 3. A brief terminological clarification .....	11
1. 4. Problem overview .....	12
1. 5. Transhumanism in contemporary culture: a manufacture of consent.....	13
1. 5. 1. Äkta Människor .....	13
1. 6. Methodology.....	15
2. Problem overview .....	17
2. 1. Humanism.....	18
2. 1. 1. Descartes' humanism: I think, therefore I am .....	19
2. 1. 2. Post-structuralist criticism .....	21
2. 1. 3. Humanism and identity: the need for expansion of the concept of alterity .....	22
2. 2. Posthumanism.....	23
2. 3. Terminological confusion .....	26
2. 3. 1. Transhuman.....	27
2. 3. 2. Posthuman.....	27
2. 3. 3. Cultural and philosophical posthumanism.....	28
2. 3. 4. Philosophy of technology .....	31
2. 4. Transhumanism.....	32
2. 4. 1. Transhumanism and the problem of otherness .....	34
2. 4. 2. An example of a template reused by transhumanism: animal studies .....	37
3. Otherness.....	45
3. 1. À-venir .....	47

3. 2. Hospitality.....	50
3. 3. I think, therefore I think the Other .....	52
3. 4. Being-with.....	54
3. 4. 1. Community .....	54
3. 4. 2. Being singular plural.....	57
3. 4. 3. Being singular plural as a political Being .....	58
3. 4. 4. The being-with of being.....	59
3. 4. 5. Being singular plural: an ongoing process.....	61
3. 4. 6. Transhumanist mêlée: a rhizome .....	64
4. Semiotizing otherness .....	67
4. 1. Semiosphere(s) of the self and the other.....	67
4. 1. 1. Translation .....	71
4. 1. 2. Derridian haunting multi-fold aporia(s).....	72
4. 1. 3. Untranslatability as a condition for cyborg politics.....	75
5. Transhumanism and otherness in television series „Äkta Människor” .....	81
6. Conclusion .....	85
References.....	88

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1. 1. Transhumanism

The discipline of transhumanism is becoming increasingly popular within academic circles. Scholars from various disciplines within the humanities are showing keen interest in disciplines such as biotechnology, nanotechnology, molecular electronics, computation, robotics, cognitive and neuroscience and other similar areas<sup>1</sup>. Their objectives as well as approaches are very different, but most of them merge in their attempt to anticipate certain consequences of emerging technologies and their influence on human lives. The number of campaigns, workshops and conferences that are related to the topic of transhumanism is increasing each year worldwide, and so is the endeavor to introduce the issue to national parliaments. Members and associates of organizations such as “Humanity+”<sup>2</sup>, “Kurzweil Accelerating Intelligence”<sup>3</sup>, and “The Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies”<sup>4</sup> have been actively promoting and advocating for the ethical use of emerging technologies for purposes of improving human capacities and lives in general. Longevity Parties are being established continually around the world (currently the most active are in The United States and Russia), as is the case with International Longevity Alliances and similar organizations, whose membership is increasingly growing. Singularity University<sup>5</sup> is

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1 The reverse is also true – scientists are engaging in, for example, public debates on ethics and new found interest in the search for meaning (of coexistence with anticipated artificial intelligence, even the meaning of life, and similar investigations) has emerged.

2 The organization was initially established as the “World Transhumanist Association” in 1998, and has since then organized numerous conferences entitled “TransVision” in The United States and Europe. “H+” magazine has also been published quarterly since 2008.

3 Kurzweil Accelerating Intelligence (KurzweilAI) is an on-line journal which further investigates the concepts about which Ray Kurzweil has written in his books “The Age of Spiritual Machines” (Kurzweil, 1999) and “The Singularity is Near” (Kurzweil, 2006). The core concept of Kurzweil’s books is related to an exponential development of information-based technologies and the effect they have on lives and the world. For further information, please see <http://kurzweilai.net>.

4 Members of the Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies (IEET) are devoted to questioning the ethical issues raised by the increased usage of new technologies, as well as to anticipating the impact of emerging technologies on human beings. The members advocate for ethical approaches to technologies and insist that the orientation of the institute be technoprogressive (which is an opposed (biopolitical) point of view to bioconservative). For further information, visit <http://ieet.org>

<sup>5</sup> Established by Ray Kurzweil, Peter Diamandis, Robert D. Richards, among others, Singularity University is a private educational institution located in northern California, US.

another important landmark for scholars devoted to the investigation of the influence that new and emerging technologies have on lives, with tens of dozens of conferences organized each year around the world. The funding and sponsorship these organizations receive on an annual basis is immense, which testifies to the interest that international corporations have in this issue. Transhumanists are also active in processes of law formation and have influenced numerous legislative acts.<sup>6</sup> Transhumanism relies to great extent also on both biopolitics and necropolitics<sup>7</sup>, and the influence of these lines of theoretical thought is of great importance.

As a relatively new but nevertheless increasingly popular (also) academic discipline, transhumanism therefore necessarily needs an attentive critical analysis of its certain aspects. As an academic discipline that is concerned with the improvement of human lives by relying on achievements in biotechnology, nanotechnology, cognitive and neuroscience, it secures human (or rather, already transhuman) supremacy over other forms of life<sup>8</sup>. On the other hand, transhumanism is imbued with a kind of anxiety, or even existential fear of the posthuman subjectivity that may emerge during the process of development of these technologies. This fear is caused by the potential threat of causing a “technocalypse”, which is immanent in the posthuman subjectivity. This fear is also related to the loss of dominance and supremacy, which would in this case belong to this new form of intelligent life. Paradoxically, the fearful event of

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6 Probably the most famous figure is Francis Fukuyama, who was a member of the US President’s Council on Bioethics in 2003 together with Greg Stock, and has influenced law formation through lectures and debates about the consequences of developing human enhancements and posthuman projections. During these debates, Fukuyama has taken a bioconservative perspective, while Stock's arguments had a technoprogressive orientation.

7 South African theoretician Achille Mbembe and Slovenian artist and writer Marina Gržinić together with some other scholars write about the impossibility of theoretizing biopolitics after the attacks of September 11th, 2001, and about the need of developing further the concept of necropolitics and necropower, which are both described through attentive reading of Foucault's formulation of the concepts of biopolitics and biopower. Gržinić has described necropolitics as the perspective that “regulates life through the perspective of death, transforming life into a mere existence, below every life minimum”; and necropower as “a sovereign power that is set up for maximum destruction of persons and the creation of deathscapes that are unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead” (Marina Gržinić , lecture “Knowledge Smuggling!, Belgrade, 12/09/2009).

8 And forms of non-life as well – but this now has to be read in a new light: animate versus inanimate in the context of new and emerging technologies would be a whole another topic and a thesis in itself, and thus thorough analysis will not be devoted to the topic here. Nevertheless, among authors who have written about such topics are professor Willard McCarty, Bill Joy, etc. The supremacy of the transhuman is extended over the supremacy that humans have had over non-human animals and repressed and subordinate (cultural) categories of humans. Thus, these categories are even more radically excluded from what is now perceived as acceptable, decent, desirable (members of a society).

the arrival of posthuman subjectivity, a technocalypse, is simultaneously celebrated by members of the other stream of transhumanism – by technophiles, for whom the arrival almost implies a tone of messianicity. Majority of transhumanist debates are related to the question of whether or not cognitive and moral enhancements limit freedom, as well as to the fact that scientific and technological progress are regulated by the laws of the market economy. Finally, each transhumanism-related discussion is necessarily related to bioethics and neuroethics.

## **1. 2. Otherness**

At the heart of each bioethical or neuroethical discussion is the question that concerns the encounter with otherness. To act ethically means to act responsibly towards the other being, no matter how different it is. Exactly this aspect of transhumanism is the one to which attentive analysis will be devoted in this thesis, since it is among core problems of transhumanism – the problem of otherness.

The problem of otherness has been present throughout almost the whole history of (theoretical) thought. The most well known modern (re)thinking of the issue began after 1950, with Emmanuel Levinas' writings on the ethic of the Other, developed in his work "Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority"(1969). Levinas' ethical standpoint implies the need for a responsible approach to the other – which is always a radically different, incomprehensible other person – thus, the other human being. The ultimate, radical other, whose chronotopes cannot be comprehended nor his or her thoughts ever properly and correctly translated and understood, can be any other human being. Nevertheless, throughout the history, numerous examples of the othering of not just any other subject, but those belonging to particular cultural categories, have emerged. Members of races that are not Caucasian have been subordinate and seen as radically different and therefore simply of less value for centuries. The othering of non-white persons has been a foundation for the enslavement and elimination of innumerable people worldwide. After the formation of nation-states, members of other nationalities have been seen as ultimate others, as threats (even to the purity of one nation). Two World Wars with innumerable conflicts on nearly every continent have taken millions of lives, and the dread that is the legacy of ethnic cleansing and genocide has left its mark on the lives of those who survive. Class based othering

has produced immense gaps between peoples' quality of life, and so has gender and age based othering.

Discourses on otherness have become increasingly popular in the second half of the twentieth century, after the turbulent period of World Wars, the Cold War, decolonialization, and after the intensive fight of women for their rights and for full inclusion in society, after the rethinking of the stratification of society into classes, of the separation of the world after WWII into eastern and western blocs, and after the 1960s produced a "rich, developed North" and a "poor, underdeveloped South".

The second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century is marked by a subtle turn in the understanding of radical alterity. Jacques Derrida has written about the non-human animal as the ultimate other, whose aspirations, needs and chronotopes can never be perceived or understood. Together with "the animal", the figure of the monster has been constructed and theoretized as even more radically different to the human than even the animal. Finally, transhumanist theoretization of the arrival of the posthuman may be seen as the latest permutation in the understanding of the notion of radical alterity. The posthuman other is seen as that which is both threatening and whose arrival can bring liberation and improve the conditions of life. But the transhuman self has another other that precedes it – the human – over whom it has claimed supremacy. The problematic aspect of the relationship between human and transhuman is related to the issue of boundaries, and the important question is as follows: how many cognitive or body prostheses does it take for a human to be considered a transhuman? Does nine still retain a person's humanity, but ten already constitute a transhuman? Such questions have been the topic of lively debates for the previous three or four decades, and it seems no answer can be wrong. One stream of theoreticians claims that wearing contact lenses for the improvement of vision and usage of the internet makes transhumans (or even cyborgs), while theoreticians of the other stream are prone only to accept more complicated prostheses as a measurement of *transhumanness*.

Finally, theoreticians devoted to posthumanism, the discipline that is devoted to a critical rethinking of humanism, invite the expansion of the concepts of otherness and alterity (Marchesini 2010: 91). Marchesini claims that notions of otherness and alterity are also too narrow and calls for the replacement of the divergence-expulsion model of identity which correlates to humanistic paradigm by a dialectical-integrative model, which would fit with

posthumanist endeavors to include other forms of life than the human into the scope of its theory (Marchesini 2010: 92).

### **1. 3. A brief terminological clarification**

As both transhumanism and posthumanities (and posthumanism) are relatively new fields, and their properly standardized terminology or methodologies do not really exist as of yet, a brief terminological explanation is needed, in order for any sort of confusion to be avoided.

To begin with, it is necessary to delimit the fields of studies, systems of beliefs and philosophies from the objects of studies and the consequences or activities of studies. The first among them, and also the most problematic one is humanism – that centuries old perspective, or rather field, which as its main focus has human beings, their exceptionality and superiority over other forms of life. Humanism has had its several revivals, but for the purposes of this analysis the most important is that which is related to the Age of Reason, the Enlightenment and Descartes' philosophy. The scope of the humanities encompasses academic disciplines that primarily study human culture. Unlike the empirical approach of the majority of the natural sciences, approaches characteristic of the humanities are analytical and critical. Among the humanities are disciplines such as history, anthropology, languages and linguistics, literature, philosophy, cultural studies, arts, law, economics as well as a several other disciplines.

Anti-humanism is considered to encompass a set of beliefs and practices which critically examine humanism. More than a simple critical reading, anti-humanism is represented by a rejection of the core concepts of humanism, such as “Man”, “human nature” and the like.

Transhumanism is a movement that as its main objective has the improvement of the quality of human life through the enhancement of physical and cognitive capabilities. It is often seen as both an ideology and a transitional period between the human and the posthuman. Through a wide variety of social, medical and technological practices the objectives of transhumanism are achieved.

The prefix “post-” in posthumanism does not indicate a historical period, nor a rupture or a final break with humanism, nor the absence of humanity, but simply rewriting and re-reading of humanism. It is a critical practice *within* humanism, with its main focus on a discourse of human

supremacy.

Finally, the difference between the objects of these studies must be described. A transhuman entity is in a certain sense an improved version of the human, a being whose physical and cognitive capabilities are enhanced through the usage of new technologies. Cybernetic organisms (cyborgs) that have been created from human beings are often seen as a kind of transhuman, but also are war veterans, humans with heart bypasses or any other sort of physical or cognitive prostheses. Unlike transhumans, posthumans can never emerge from humans. Posthuman entities are those that are yet to come, whose arrival may bring the apocalypse: immortal subjects. Posthuman subjectivity is often understood simply as an artificial intelligence, self-programming, self-repairing and self-reproducing entities.

#### **1. 4. Problem overview**

As a discipline that is focused on the improvement of human lives, on a better version of the human, transhumanism is not just repeating, but securing the foundation for problematic humanist values. The main problem with transhumanism is that it is too humanist, especially in the manner in which it deals (or does not deal) with the issue of alterity. Transhuman identity is exclusive in relation to other modalities of being, and as such unprepared for the arrival of its radical other – of the posthuman. In order for the transhuman to survive the arrival of the posthuman, which is simultaneously feared and praised, the transhuman self must be constantly engaged in a process of readjusting to this coexistence. The boundaries of the self have to be redrawn and the core of the self has to be remodeled. Being must become *being-with*, and notions of community, hospitality and boundary have to be rethought, re-read, rewritten all together. Transhumanism must make a devoted endeavor in order to become posthumanist – to shrug off the burden of humanism. Transhumanism must attentively reflect on the manner in which other disciplines that lean toward posthumanism (animal studies, some approaches to gender – Donna Haraway's, for example – and post-colonial studies) have been dealing with such issues – first in order not to repeat mistakes that have been made, but also to move beyond (for example) three waves (and counting) of re-reading and correcting itself, as is the case with gender studies.

The core of the problem of otherness – subjectivity – has to be formulated differently in theory and constituted differently in practice.

### **1. 5. Transhumanism in contemporary culture: a manufacture of consent**

A whole range of concepts and relations today resists being thought outside of those constructs that contemporary culture has offered to its audience for decades. Besides the function of an artistic expression, literature and cinema have functioned since their inception as tools for the manufacture of consent<sup>9</sup>. Careful reading and analysis of media texts implies research into the means in which narration, images, montage and symbolic forms function in the construction of ideological representations of cultural categories such as gender, race, religion, etc. Ideological layers are inscribed in the literature and cinematographic achievements of a wide variety of genres, and they therefore represent an inexhaustible resource for the analysis of ideological trends and categories. Unlike literature, cinema and television production use audiovisual sources in often unexpected manners in order to seduce audiences and lead them to more than mere consent: media texts are reservoirs of positions for identification and manipulate audiences' emotions.

Science fiction, cyberpunk and recently post-cyberpunk are genres devoted to (among other things) the representation of both transhuman and posthuman subjectivity, and their relation to humans. For example, movies such as *Gattaca* (Andrew Niccol, 1997) and adaptations of books written by Philip K. Dick<sup>10</sup> are among the texts that are the most often analysed examples that focus on different aspects of the transhuman, but the scope of analysed media texts that are stressing this subject is increasingly growing.

#### ***1. 5. 1. Äkta Människor***

Among recent examples is the science fiction and drama television series “*Äkta Människor*”

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9 “Manufacture of consent” is a phrase coined by Walter Lippmann at the beginning of the 20th century.

10 Ridley Scott's “*Blade Runner*” (1982) is based on the novel “*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*” (1968), and “*Total Recall*” (Paul Verhoeven 1990) on Dick's short story “*We Can Remember It for You Wholesale*” (1966)

(Real Humans), produced by Swedish national television SVT. The series, written by Lars Lundstrom and directed by Harald Hamrell and Levan Akin, had its initial broadcast on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012. During the following year, the series was distributed in more than fifty countries and has gained a huge audience. This series is a proper example of how the manufacture of consent to the (potential) inclusion of non-human otherness (both transhuman and posthuman) into a society is gradually created. What distinguishes this series from the other similar media products is a manner in which the question of otherness is treated, as designated with a huge seal of political correctness, characteristic of Swedish media.

The narrative takes place in a near future, if not a parallel present, in Sweden. Everyday life is unimaginable without the use of consumer-level android robots – *hubots* – which are available on the market in the form of domestic help – servants and workers – but also as companions. Early advocates in Swedish society have eagerly welcomed hubots, while members of the organization “Real Humans” fight for the prohibition of the usage of hubots, since they are seen as a threat in the sense that they may replace humans as workers, friends, parents and similar roles; “Real Humans” puts great effort into the endeavor of preserving human purity. The problem emerges when a group of several “liberated” hubots organizes a fight for freedom, a revolution that includes the liberation of other hubots. Leo (Andreas Wilson) is the first transhuman and son of the creator of hubots, who has been brought back to life after an accident with the help of technology. His fellow revolutionary hubots have never been humans, but are capable of feeling emotions and pain (which has throughout the history of science fiction often been the “reliable sign” of humanness), of having independent thoughts and of living without a human *owner*. The first season of the series ends with a cliffhanger, at the peak of the hubot revolution. The second season is not expected to be broadcast until the autumn of 2013, but nevertheless this incomplete narrative offers numerous scenes and dialogues that can be seen as a tool for the manufacture of consent.

Of particular interest is a dialogue that Inger (Pia Halvorsen), the mother of a family that owns hubot Mimi (Lisette Pagler) (who has lost her memory of being liberated before she has been reprogrammed), and who was initially against the very existence of hubots, has with her husband Hans (Johan Paulsen), who wants their family to get rid of their hubot. Inger wants to help to Mimi to hide from the members of the “Real Humans” organization, who are now trying

to destroy hubots. Inger insists on Mimi staying with them until the danger is over, and advocates for the rights of this now already posthuman subject, claiming that society is treating hubots in the same manner it once treated slaves, women, animals and even children and foreigners: as their subordinates and “help”.

Ingrid's argument offers a parallel with the way radical otherness has been perceived throughout the history of thought, and thus makes this series worthy example of how this issue is relevant for and represented in contemporary culture, as well as proper material to support the objectives of the current analysis. Inger calls for the inclusion of liberated hubots (posthumans) in families and in human society, for unconditional hospitality and the reinvention of a community of humans and non-humans. This is what makes this dialogue a proper background for the current analysis – thus further methodology can be described.

## **1. 6. Methodology**

In order to analyse and understand better the radically different other of the transhuman self, Derrida's theoretization of the impossibility of knowing, comprehending and predicting the future, as well as his description of the instance that is yet-to-come proves most suitable. His notion of *à-venir* (that which is yet to come) supports an understanding of how the impossibility of anticipating the future is the necessary condition of the possibility of the future. Understanding of the concept of *à-venir* helps to clarify another of Derrida's notions relevant for purposes of current analysis - that of *l'arrivant* – of the radically different other that is in a constant process of emergence, possibly without ever realizing itself. Both *à-venir* and *l'arrivant* belong to Derrida's seminal works, seen as pillars of deconstruction, which implies a *peeling* of the layers of meaning – which is a semiotic endeavor par excellence.

Further, a rethinking of the notion of community between the transhuman and its otherness and of the act of hospitality (offered by the transhuman to the posthuman) is necessary. Jean-Luc Nancy's effort to transform existence into a coexistence and being into being-with are seen as that which logically follows Derridian thought on *l'arrivant* and hospitality, and for numerous other reasons as well this is useful for the purposes of this analysis. A different reading

of community implies ultimate hospitality for the ultimate other, and coexistence as the only possible manner of being-with-the-other.

Finally, this brings us to the need for the redrawing of the boundaries of the self, which implies the need for translation of content from one side to the other. Yet another deconstruction (of the notion of boundaries) seems to be fertile approach, and Derrida's rethinking of *aporia(s)* offers insights into how boundaries can (or should) now be read. Redrawing the boundaries of the self also implies the remodeling of the core of the self, and compatible with Derrida's deconstruction for these purposes is Juri Lotman's model of semiosphere, as well as his notion of (un)translatability. Semiotization of both the transhuman self and posthuman other offers new insights and possibilities for an anticipated community of future radical alterities.

## 2. PROBLEM OVERVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the problem under consideration by emphasizing problematic aspects of humanism that are also present in transhumanism, as well as the need for firmer methodological grounds for transhumanism. The delimitation of fields of studies from systems of beliefs offered in this chapter, as well as more detailed description of the objects of studies of those disciplines, contributes to the overall content by making the further analysis more comprehensible. This chapter focuses on Cartesian humanism and its critique, as well as on rethinking the notion of identity in the light of an expanded concept of alterity. Finally, certain aspects of animal studies (which belong to the scope of posthumanities) that are repeated by transhumanism are emphasized, in order to describe how the same matrices have been reused by various disciplines.

Exponential speeds of the development of technology as well as manners in which we relate to them and implications they have on a society require attentive inquiry. Increasingly popular transhumanism, a movement, a system of beliefs and field of study within humanities, appears as one of problematic approaches. With its focus on the enhancement of human life and on its values, it appears to be too humanist, and thus very problematic<sup>11</sup>. A fear (immanent in writing and speeches of those transhumanists who hold on blindly to the humanist legacy) of the posthuman future may be reduced to an old philosophical problem of radical alterity, since it is related to a fear of the posthuman other that may compromise human supremacy and thus bring apocalypse. The problem of alterity or otherness is necessarily related to problem of subjectivity. In order to coexist with the posthuman other, both transhuman and human subjectivity have to be less humanist, less essentialist: they have to become posthumanist.

A wide variety of fields within humanities have approached this issue from different angles. Many of the fields that have tackled the influence of emerging technologies on contemporary society as well as the emergence of the posthuman other and coexistence with it, are relatively new. A lot of confusion is arising from the absence of firm methodological

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11 Though humanism is often thought of as a politically indispensable foundation of egalitarian movements, it has come to appear problematic due to its anthropocentrism and unethical treatment of the non-human other.

foundations and clear delimitation of objects of studies. Lack of properly standardized terminology is another significant issue and a cause of numerous contradictory usages. A proper critique of these aspects of transhumanism requires reflection on the background field, humanism, with the focus on particular instances relevant for such critique. It also requires a delimitation of fields of study from systems of beliefs and philosophies; as well as a clear distinction between objects, consequences and activities of studies. In order to argue why transhumanism is considered to be *too humanist* and why this is so problematic, terminological confusion has to be clarified. To begin with, it is necessary to distinguish the transhuman from the posthuman, humanism from transhumanism and posthumanism, as well as delineate various approaches to the issue.

## **2. 1. Humanism**

Humanist ideas have their origins in ancient Greek and Roman philosophy. They have been revived in different periods from the Renaissance to 18<sup>th</sup> century Neo-Classicism and the Enlightenment and Industrial ages. Each of the revival periods of humanism was designated as its peak and relied on similar foundations. Within academic discourse, the *humanities* encompass (human) achievements within the fields of science, philosophy, art and language. The humanities contribute to the wider discourse of humanism.

Humanism emphasizes the value of human beings, rationalism and especially empiricism. Man is at the center of things and is essentially ontologically distinct from and superior to the non-human. Humanism is a philosophy or a system of beliefs that relies on Protagoras' maxim "Man is the measure of all things". For Romans, term *humanitas* was used to distinguish those activities proper only to men from those also proper to animals. The maxim was very influential during the Renaissance, since it implied diminishing the role of God. Moreover, the role of God has been in a sense replaced by a new godlike figure: universal Mankind.

Eclectic reinterpretations of classical philosophy together with the emphasis on the value of human beings has bred the humanist ideal: the man, independent and free-spirited, who

develops his<sup>12</sup> mental abilities through questioning conventional beliefs as well as through gaining new knowledge, both scientific and artistic. Humanists stood out as a separate social layer consisting of aristocrats, scientists, rulers and artists – an elite. Humanism during the Early modern period meant a rebirth of both the sciences and arts in Europe.

During 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, Europe and the rest of the (civilized) world entered a period described as the “Age of Reason”. In addition to the original humanist empiricism and rationalism, intellectuals of this cultural movement insisted on skepticism and the scrutiny of dominant ideas, especially religious ones. They fought against ignorance. Paradoxically, the emancipation of the human mind, together with the progressive development of society, has laid the foundation for numerous repressive social *norms*.

### ***2. 1. 1. Descartes' humanism: I think, therefore I am***

Humanism is a centuries-old concept developed by numerous thinkers throughout history. For the purposes of this work, not all approaches are equally relevant. Cartesian thought must be looked at more attentively, since it offers an excellent starting point for the analysis of non-human alterity.

The publication of René Descartes' “A Discourse on the Method” in 1637 was of crucial importance for the Age of Reason. In this work, Descartes writes about what it means to be human. As a key feature of humanness, that which separates Man from beast, he mentions reason. The Cartesian version of humanism has been highly influential throughout the history of thought, and it is essential for understanding the chasm that has been constructed between the human and the non-human. Descartes writes: “I think, therefore I am”, and thus endows Man with the ability to distinguish truth from falsehood<sup>13</sup>. It should be noted that Descartes was searching for things about which he could be absolutely certain, due to his motivation by the principle of universal doubt.

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12 Even though I consider the issue of usage of gender sensitive linguistic forms of great importance, I have decided to use word “his” at this place. Humanism derives its ideas from ancient Greece and until recently humanism generally excluded everything falling outside the categories of white, western men.

13 Truth and falsehood are, generally, rather associated with the truth value of propositions, not with metaphysical certitude for Descartes.

He also engages in an exhaustive work establishing the basis of existing binary oppositions; not just those between truth and falsehood, but especially the opposition between the rational mind (or soul) and the body:

[...] I could not for all that pretend that I did not exist; and that on the contrary, simply because I was thinking about doubting the truth of other things, it followed quite evidently and certainly that I existed; whereas, if I had merely ceased thinking, even if everything else I had imagined had been true, I should have had no reason to believe that I existed; I knew from there that I was a substance whose whole essence or nature is solely to think, and who, in order to exist, does not require any place, or depend on any material thing. (Descartes 2006: 29).

Descartes insists on humans being single and complete entities that stand in opposition to the non-human, which is, unlike the human, incapable of either understanding itself or of having rational thoughts. Moreover, humans are capable of distinguishing themselves from the non-human. This problematic description of non-human (mostly cognitive) capabilities, or rather, incapacibilities, includes the usage of signs and language, conveying thoughts and some other related (in)capabilities. Descartes underlines intellectual superiority of humans:

[...] For it is very remarkable fact that there are no men so dull-witted and stupid, not even madmen, that they are incapable of stringing together different words, and composing them into utterance through which they let their thoughts be known; and, conversely, there is no other animal, no matter how perfect and well endowed by birth it may be, that can do anything similar. Nor does this arise from lack of organs, for we can see that magpies and parrots can utter words as we do, and yet cannot speak like us, that is, by showing that they are thinking what they are saying; whereas men born deaf and dumb, who are deprived as much as, or more than, animals of the organs which in others serve for speech, usually invent certain signs to make themselves understood by those who are their habitual companions and have the time to learn their language. (Descartes 2006: 47)

Descartes, thus, lays firm foundations for a formation of human “us” that is opposed to the non-human “them”. This is an intentionally plural inclusion and exclusion<sup>14</sup>, since human beings are brought together by the common essence that they share. The human and the non-human stand as different, discontinuous, pure.

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14 The plural division between “us” and “them” here is more suitable than singular one between “I” and “you”, since it refers to a community of humans which share a common essence (humanness), as opposed to the community of non-humans.

From the Industrial age on, the glorification of human values and progress continued to increase. The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was distinguished by achievements in physics and chemistry, Schoenberg's atonality and modernism in art. Faith in humanity had its peak, but was soon challenged by disasters brought by the two World Wars. Achievements in nuclear physics, biology and chemistry also resulted in nuclear, biological and chemical weapon of mass destruction. Half a century later, weapons of mass destruction have been replaced by a certain kind of *knowledge of mass destruction*, encouraged by achievements within the fields of robotics, genetics and nanotechnology. Both weapons and knowledge of mass destruction were of crucial importance for the peak of the aforementioned process of othering between “us” and “them”. Not only was the non-human considered a threat, but all other sorts of differences among human beings were also not acceptable.

### ***2. 1. 2. Post-structuralist criticism***

Just as humanism encompasses endless numbers of pages written about the widest varieties of related issues throughout its history, its critique is equally exhaustive. Aspects of French post-structuralist theory are very closely related to posthumanism, and thus are of great importance for this work. When it comes to a critique of humanism, approaches are divided: one strain has offered a critique with an apocalyptic tone and an attempt at an absolute break with humanism; the other, represented in Derrida's work, calls for a new writing of humanism and also implies a rethinking of the first strain of critique.

The starting point for the critique of French post-structuralist theoreticians of the first strain is the notion that humanism can neither think difference nor can think differently, that it is unable to imagine the Other that is opposed to the rational human mind. After the death of God, it was necessary for Man to die as well. Anthropocentrism was threatened by the disappearance of Man. This is a position that Lévi-Strauss takes when he states in “The Savage Mind” that “(.) the ultimate goal of the human sciences is not to constitute, but to dissolve Man” (Lévi-Strauss 1972: 245).

His position is very close to that of Roland Barthes, for whom humanism at its core hinders difference, knowledge and change. For him, there are certain similarities between humanism and

myths, since both rest upon a pre-established order of things and practices that endow them with inevitability. Thus, not only the non-human but different sorts of otherness are considered to be unnatural and unthinkable. In Barthes' opinion, humanism has to be demythologized: “ () there is nothing “obvious” about the human as such, instead there is only a “discourse” - humanism – that is trying, through the construction of “myths,” or through “mystification/mythification,” to legitimate a hierarchical system in which the human manages to retain its absolute supremacy by expelling differences outside its “own” category and projecting them onto constructed “others,” i.e., non-humans” (Herbrechter, Callus 2008: 100).

On the other hand, Derrida was reluctant to accept this absolute break with tradition and the disappearance of Man, considering it to be a kind of *false exit* from humanism. His critique is directed towards the fact that this absolute break with humanism continues to carry its inside, the rupture only means reaffirmation of humanism. Still, he is of an opinion that humanism bears necessity of its own critique. Derrida's critique is not only directed towards Barthes' and Lévi-Strauss, but also towards Foucault's anti-humanism, implicit in “The Order of Things”, claiming that the thought always bear certain traces of humanist tradition regardless of it being on a different side of the established order of things (Derrida 1978: 31). Put simply, Derrida suggests that a concept such as the disappearance (or the end) of Man bears traces of the humanist tradition since it is only possible and meaningful due to that tradition. Thus, the end of Man is always-already designated by the language of Man. It is important to notice that, in this sense, humanism cannot be overcome by celebrating the non-human, because in this case the human will continue to haunt. It is exactly this dialectic between haunting and examination that maintains the humanist hegemony.

Derrida by no means advocates for the necessity of a reappearance of humanism. Nevertheless, he does attempt to explain that a unique solution for challenging anthropocentrism does not exist, and calls for engagement in a new writing of humanism.

### ***2. 1. 3. Humanism and identity: the need for expansion of the concept of alterity***

This is where the humanist approach to the issue of identity appears as one of the most problematic aspects of humanism. The endeavor to incorporate the non-human into the

dimension of the human calls for a necessary focus on the dialectic of alterity and identity within the human being itself. For centuries, a person's identity was considered to be a pure, isolated and unique entity. Roberto Marchesini refers to this humanist model as the *divergence-expulsion model* (Marchesini 2010: 92) of identity. He believes that this model results in a weakening of identity, which is deprived of contributions from the interchange with alterity. The divergence-expulsion model implies identities that are clearly delimited, stable, and fixed, and where the process of identification is a process of purification and separation. Once again, the most problematic presumption of humanism appears – that of absolute human autonomy. This autonomy is achieved through “(.) compressing a plurality of alterities into a single, universal idea of alterity” (Marchesini, 2010: 93).

Thus Marchesini calls for the expansion of the concept of alterity or otherness, in a sense that the humanist construction of the non-human should no longer be characterized by universality, since such universality can be “neither a multiplicity nor a bearer of individual characteristics, as opposed to the category of humanity which is intrinsically pluralistic” (Marchesini 2010: 93). He suggests that after the 1970s, a dramatic shift in understanding the conception of identity occurred. The *dialectical-integrative* model has replaced the old divergence-expulsion model. The new model integrates other entities and qualities. Alterity is “no longer a contaminant to be purged” (Marchesini 2010: 91) but a desired quality. This model is exactly the instance that has opened the way to identities that are hospitable, i.e., to ontological pluralism. In the new kind of identity external references are integrated, which is its main strength. There are no more prototypes more relevant or significant than others, and diversity is considered valuable for its ability to create various alternatives. The identity that diverges from the prototype is no longer subjected to marginalization through being deviant and inferior.

## 2. 2. Posthumanism

Roberto Marchesini considers “*alterità non humane*<sup>15</sup>” to be the crucial issue for posthumanism (Marchesini 2010: 91). By broadening the concept of otherness and discrediting the humanist

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15 Non-human otherness

divergence-expulsion model of identity, Marchesini in a sense responds to Derrida's call for a “new writing” of humanism. He writes about a crisis of humanism and refers to posthumanist discussions. Those universalist, essentialist and moral values of the Western ideology that have been more or less dominant for five centuries have indeed entered into crisis.

Another type of new writing of humanism has been offered by Neil Badmington, who suggests that humanism unwittingly becomes the other to itself, posthumanism. He proposes a posthumanism that will not be “afraid to tackle the traces of humanism that haunt contemporary western culture” (Badmington 2004: 144). The main task of posthumanism should therefore be the reconsideration of the end of Man: challenging humanism, that hegemonic system of beliefs, and its philosophical and theoretical underpinnings, such as essentialism, universalism, anthropocentrism and speciesism.

Posthumanism should by no means be seen as a historical period. The prefix “post-” thus does not designate a break with humanism, nor an end, a rupture, or a novelty. The “post-” in posthumanism also does not imply the absence of humanity, especially not one that would be the result of a certain movement “beyond”, in either a biological or evolutionary sense. It designates *working-through*. Posthumanism does therefore not come *after* humanism, but inhabits it.

Posthumanism implies a rewriting of humanism, which is “constitutionally and ceaselessly pregnant” (Badmington 2004: 120) with posthumanism, as Badmington compares it to a relation between modernism and postmodernism. Just like that of postmodernism, the history of posthumanism does not have a precisely located beginning or end within the history of philosophical thought. Neither can it be considered anti-humanist, since anti-humanism is also too humanist.

Posthumanism is (or rather, should be) a critical practice within humanism, a practice whose main focus is anthropocentric discourse. Put simply, it is an investigation of what has been omitted from anthropocentric discourses. Posthumanism, thus, should be a study of the collapse of ontological boundaries. Posthumanism does not imply the end of Man, but rather the end of the (hu)man centered world-view. It implies a critique of the arrogant belief in human uniqueness and superiority.

The state of being human has been considered anything but natural – for to stay human, we have to engage our minds in culture. Culture is, paradoxically, that which guarantees human

*nature*. It follows that it should rather be spoken of as the state of *becoming human*. Following this line of thought, Badmington suggests that posthumanism is also always becoming, and not something stable, present or instantly graspable (Badmington 2004: 145). Herbrechter and Callus even rephrase Latour, claiming that “we have never been human” (Herbrechter, Callus 2008: 104).

One of the tasks of posthumanism should be to rethink Cartesian dualisms – between human and non-human as much as between mind and body, which reemerges as a very problematic one as well.

The first problem that appears within posthumanist criticism is of course related to the position of one who criticizes humanism: what kind of analytical detachment in relation to humanity is necessary in order for the critique of humanist values not to be determined by this position? Herbrechter and Callus suggest that “(t)o read in a posthuman way is to read against (...) one's own deep-seated self-understanding as a member or even representative of a certain “species” (Herbrechter, Callus 2008:95). This would mean that criticism requires a position that would at the same time be one of identity and of otherness. In a sense, posthumanist investigations of humanist assumptions can easily fall into the traps of tautology and redundancy, since the detachment from the investigator's position (that of human) is hardly possible. Posthumanist criticism implies indicating the implicit humanism of texts written under the pretense of being its critique, of exactly those texts that investigate what has been omitted by humanism. Posthumanism, therefore, should not aspire to redefine what it means to be human, nor to be *dehumanizing*. The discipline should, on the other hand, be able to identify the opposition between human and non-human in texts as well as in various practices, thus preventing the essentialist determination between the two categories from appearing and being maintained. Posthumanist readings should aim “to show that another and less defensive way of thinking about the human in its posthuman forms and disguises, and in its implications within the posthumanising process, may be not only possible but pre-inscribed within texts” (Herbrechter, Callus 2008: 97).

### **2. 3. Terminological confusion**

After outlining humanist premises that have limited the field in question to a narrow anthropocentrism and essentialism, posthumanism appears as one of its possible criticisms or even alternatives, and certainly is not considered to be a novelty. Nevertheless, due to the fact that the non-human encompasses not only animals, but also those entities that have emerged only recently as a product of the development of technology, terminological confusion within the field was inevitable. Not only is it important to distinguish posthumanism from anti-humanism as is done above, but also from other related fields of study, philosophies and systems of beliefs have to be described. Clear definitions do not exist as of yet. Various authors tend to use the same concepts in order to describe conflicting standpoints. It is impossible to rely on or to refer with certainty to any of authors, since many have ignored the issue of setting disciplinary boundaries and scope. On the other hand, numerous authors have recently tended to imprudently mis-categorize works written by other relevant authors.

Terminological confusion is to be expected not only due to the fact that these disciplines are relatively new, but because this newness implies a lack of methodology or of characteristic sets of premises that are needed to delimit a field or to recognize particular issues or approaches as belonging to one field or another. The problem for posthumanities is not just delimiting methodologies – it is also about how to delimit and describe objects of study, and the activities or consequences of such studies. It can be said that *the lowest common denominator* of different approaches to posthumanities, and of those disciplines that operate under the pretense of being posthumanities, are concepts such are alterity, becoming, transgression of boundaries and, of course, the position of both humanism and humanity with regard to these issues. After describing posthumanism as a critical reading of humanism and anti-humanism, it is necessary to also describe cultural posthumanism, philosophical posthumanism, philosophy of technology, and, finally, transhumanism. Through the process of description of these fields, the objects of study that are commonly mistaken and that should be described will appear – notions such as transhuman and posthuman. Clarification of the issues that particular fields are concerned with will enable a narrowing down of the context that must be described as necessary for the purposes of this research. In order for fields to be more easily described, some of their objects of study should first be explained.

### **2. 3. 1. Transhuman**

The term “transhuman” was first used by French scientist and philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, in his book “The Future of Mankind”. In his book written in 1949, the author deals with issues such as democracy, globalization, extraterrestrial life and scientific possibilities of peace on Earth. He considers liberty to be an opportunity that each man should have in order to develop his personal potential to the fullest – the opportunity to *trans-humanize* himself (de Chardin 1949: 238). Other contemporary theoreticians identify ourselves as transhumans, in the sense that we are attempting to become posthuman in order to embrace our posthuman future. This *state* involves learning about and using new and emerging technologies in order to expend our intellectual capacities as well as to increase life expectancy. In short: to prepare for the future through transcendence of obsolete human beliefs and behaviors (Pepperell 2005: 171).

Authors vary, from those who consider the habits of using eye glasses in order to improve vision or the use of computers as an extension of mind as making us transhuman, to those that would rather also include more drastic transgressions of biology by the use of technologies. Peter Sloterdijk in his “Critique of Cynical Reason” writes about war veterans as transhumans, whose usage of prosthesis was the first step towards *disembodied streams of electrons*, which he calls posthumans (Sloterdijk 1988).

The aforementioned television series “Äkta människor” incorporates both transhuman and posthuman subjects. One of the main characters, Leo (Andreas Wilson), initially *only a human*, is “repaired” by his father after an accident and has integrated into his body technological devices to keep him alive, thus making him a transhuman. Leo is the only transhuman in the series, and one of his main purposes is the liberation of other (posthuman) hubots, also made by his father.

### **2. 3. 2. Posthuman**

Theorization of the posthuman is the anticipation of entities that are yet to come. Posthuman subjects are bound to be of radically greater physical and intellectual abilities than both humans and transhumans. The posthuman bears the echo of immortality: they will be self-programming

and self-repairing, unlimited subjects who have overcome the biological and neurological constraints that existed for humans. Pepperell anticipates that posthumans will be “partly or mostly biological in form, but will likely be partly or wholly postbiological — our personalities having been transferred “into” more durable, modifiable, faster, and more powerful bodies and thinking hardware. Some of the technologies that we currently expect to play a role in allowing us to become posthuman include genetic engineering, neural-computer integration, molecular nanotechnology, and cognitive science” (Pepperell, 2005:171). Artificial intelligence is often the first entity to be associated to the posthuman. Because of the possibility of the posthuman to be disembodied, many theoreticians have problematized its relation to the Cartesian dualism between mind and body. The most well-known are the critiques of Hans Moravec's idea of uploading consciousness into a computer or to the internet. This would imply reinforcement of the binarity between mind and body, which had to be transcendent due to a popular argument that mind emerged from matter.

### ***2. 3. 3. Cultural and philosophical posthumanism***

The fields of cultural and philosophical posthumanism<sup>16</sup> overlap in several instances, and thus should be comparatively described.

The initial writings of the field that could be designated as cultural posthumanism started to appear around the middle of the last decade of the previous century. This field is characterized by its implementation of different approaches to and discourses of cultural studies within posthumanism. The focal point is the analysis of changes that adaptation to current technological and scientific achievements bring to subjectivity and (dis)embodiment. The cultural approach to posthumanism tends to criticize humanism, expanding and rethinking the concept by weakening ontological boundaries between human and non-human. Cultural studies in general have emerged in a sense as a response to dissatisfaction with the humanities (Badmington 2006, 260) – a shift was needed in order to be able to draw attention to forms and manners of life that had been excluded from the scope of interests of universities. The critique is directed towards the

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<sup>16</sup> Posthumanism refers to various academic disciplines, and thus it is important to note that various posthumanist approaches take into an account different ultimate others, not only technological.

tendency of the humanities to narrow down culture to *human culture* – to that which is produced, reproduced and challenged by Man. The anthropological use of term “culture” affirms the superior position of human over non-human, since webs of significance are created and interpreted by man in search of meaning, which would in this case be a uniquely human characteristic. Badmington suggests that cultural posthumanities would have to extend these webs of significance “across the traditional ontological abyss between the human and its others” (Badmington 2006, 266).

The repression of the question of nonhuman subjectivity is a crucial problem, since disciplines within the field of humanities have tended to take for granted the subject as *always-already* human, and this is where the field of cultural posthumanism overlaps with the field of philosophical posthumanism.

Philosophical posthumanism has as its focus the issue of the transgression of ontological boundaries. Unlike cultural posthumanism, this field thoroughly stresses the implications of what it does (not) mean to be human. Philosophical posthumanism has as its starting point a rethinking of the consequences of technological advancement, which is implicit in post-Enlightenment skepticism toward the idea that technological advancement is equivalent to progress. Philosophical posthumanism criticizes the transhumanist fear of the posthuman, which could be a threat to humanity. Within this field, ethical concerns are extended not only to non-human animals, but also to automata, embracing them not as separate, threatening species, but as the other whose arrival is welcome. Philosophical posthumanism is therefore not just about the future, but also about the present.

The aforementioned Derridian critique of anti-humanism may be considered to fall within the field of cultural posthumanities, but also in that of philosophical posthumanism. Badmington writes that what is of crucial importance for both philosophical and cultural posthumanism is the shift that was brought about by Haraway in her “Cyborg Manifesto” (Haraway 1991) - in which the monadic subject of humanism has been replaced by a nomadic confusion of the organic and the inorganic, the natural and cultural (Badmington 2006, 263). Technology can no longer be separated from everyday life, thus its influence on culture is incommensurate. Cultural posthumanism comes closest to philosophical posthumanism in its critique of the essentialism and specieism that permeate humanism. Badmington insists that this new kind of reading would

not imply “burning books or bridges” (Badmington 2006, 269), but attentive academic work on the expansion of various conceptions beyond them being uniquely and exclusively human.

Cultural posthumanism also encompasses the discourses on and the representations of the posthuman at work. Besides Neil Badmington's various analysis of the discourses on and the representations of the posthuman, several other authors are crucial for both fields in question.

Donna Haraway's aforementioned work could be designated (also) as cultural posthumanism, since her work contributes to a great extent to the weakening of ontological boundaries. She analyses how companion species and cyborg ontology are crucial for the abandonment of anthropocentric positions. Cyborg ontology is a concept that Haraway develops in her “Cyborg Manifesto”, a chapter in a book written for different purposes than those of interest here – that is, for the purpose of describing a state of socialist feminism. The author describes the metaphor of cyborg both as the gatekeeper of a boundary and the transgressor of boundaries, as a promise of subvention of organic wholes and illegitimate fusions. Her critique of socialist feminism is founded on a statement that the movement represents yet another tearing down in search for new matrices for essentialist identities, and she thus calls for cyborg politics (Haraway 1991) – a force that can generate new languages and subvert structures that reproduce the dominant categories of identities, as well as transcend binary oppositions.

Another important author whose work can be categorized both within the field of cultural posthumanism and philosophical posthumanism is N. Katherine Hayles. Hayles' work is focused on how the problem of (dis)embodiment is related to crisis of humanism. She analyses relations between pleasure, reality and virtuality, as well as relations of power, which she considers to be of crucial importance for the construction of transhuman and emerging posthuman bodies (Hayles, 1999), and thus this part of her workload can be categorized within the field of cultural posthumanism. The author attentively discusses the question of boundaries of bodies, as well as the implications of the translation of embodiment into information, and her work is famous for the strong critique of disembodied minds, uploaded consciousness and similar conceptions. She refers to Moravec's upload of consciousness and thus comes close to problematizing the Cartesian duality between body and soul. Therefore, with the critique of humanism as a guiding framework, Hayles contributes to the workload written within the field of philosophical posthumanism.

Finally, Cary Wolfe's work within the fields of animal studies and posthumanities, which is derived from Derrida and Luhmann, can also fit into both varieties of posthumanism, since it echoes the transgression of ontological boundaries and the critique of humanist values. Through criticism of the work of philosopher of mind Daniel Dennett, Wolfe describes how self-awareness, boredom, altruism, tool-making and tool-using, friendship and non-verbal language can be attributed to non-human animals, not just humans (Wolfe 2010). The position that Wolfe takes in his work “Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourses of Species, and Posthumanist Theory” is very close to that of other cultural posthumanists, and in a sense he paraphrases Peter Singer:

[...] as long as this humanist and speciesist *structure* of subjectivization remains intact, and as long as it is institutionally taken for granted that it is all right to systematically exploit and kill non-human animals simply because of their species, then the humanist discourse of species will always be available for use by some humans against other humans as well. (Wolfe 2003: 7-8)

For both cultural and philosophical posthumanism, the question of otherness is of crucial importance. For this question to be properly problematized, first the fields of philosophy of technology and transhumanism have to be described.

### **2. 3. 4. *Philosophy of technology***

Even though the field of philosophy of technology is not directly related to the objectives of posthumanities, it is necessary to briefly delimit the field and its focus, since some of the issues that have been stressed are very important for further inquiries in the field of posthumanism. Etymologically, the word 'technology' derives from Greek words *techne*, skill, art or craft, and *logos*, which in this context relates to study or science. Initially, the word was used to refer to the transformation or control of the surrounding natural world. This essentially anthropocentric view suggest that man became a *noble savage* when he started to control and adapt natural resources to his own needs. The roots of the inquiry into technology can be found in Plato's “Republic”, where the author describes *techne* as the proper philosophical rule of polis, as well as in Aristotle's “Nicomachean Ethics”, where the same term is one of the four manners through which humans can perceive the world. Finally, the key work on this topic, “The Question

Concerning Technology”, was written in 1945 by Martin Heidegger. The author discusses the notion of technology as well as how it influences humanity and the manner in which it helps man to reveal the world. Heidegger writes about the transformational effect that technology has on human perception, culture, politics, and society in general. His standpoint suggests that technology has a strong influence on subjectivity, even though it was long considered only an addition and/or adaptation to nature. Heidegger also writes about the concept of enframing, which treats technology as a process rather than an artifact (Heidegger 1977: 13). Technology is thus considered as a process of revealing specific modes of being. Among other notable authors working within the field of philosophy of technology is Jacques Ellul, who wrote about its various aspects in his book “A Technological Society”, published in 1964 in France. Neither Ellul nor Heidegger ever used term *posthumanism*. Nevertheless, their ideas are significant for various aspects of contemporary posthumanities.

#### **2. 4. Transhumanism**

Pepperell describes transhumanism as a philosophy of life that “seek(s) the continuation and acceleration of the evolution of intelligent life beyond its currently human form and limits by means of science and technology, guided by life-promoting principles and values, while avoiding religion and dogma.” (Pepperell, 2005:171)

Transhumanism is a movement that aims at enhancement of the quality of human life through augmentation of physical and intellectual capabilities, as well as at the extension of its duration. It is also often considered to be an ideology, as well as a transitional period between the human and posthuman. Wide-ranging social, technological and medical practices related to human embodiment are increasingly developing, due to various new resources that are available in order to pursue realization of embodiment as an individual project. Among those practices are genetic engineering, plastic surgery, hormonal and pharmacological treatments, nanotechnology, prosthetics, sport and similar practices. The human body is therefore directly participating in the field of the political, and is considered to be a product of the power relations invested in it, those same power relations that designate it, involve it in rituals, or, to put it simply: discipline it (Foucault 1995).

Numerous transhumanist thinkers have engaged in analysing the challenges and advantages of emerging technologies in order to understand how they can be useful for the enhancement of human life. What is threatening about emerging technologies are potential scenarios of posthuman life taking over the world and bringing both human and transhuman life into danger. This approach displays an underlying humanism at its best: it invites the defence of humanist values for the sake of maintaining human superiority and uniqueness.

Among the supporters of transhumanist movements are numerous public figures from around the world, including politicians, scientists, thinkers, pharmacologists and medical doctors. Most transhumanists are aware of also contributing to the process of redefining what it means to be human. Transhumanism aims at preparing humans for their potential posthuman future, for coexistence with posthuman beings, whether they are artificial intelligences or something that we cannot yet anticipate. What is interesting about the anticipation of something is the fact that it suggests more about the moment in which it is anticipated, than about what is expected. While Peter Sloterdijk writes about *homo prostheticus*, he reminds readers that the human body has for some time now functioned as a prosthesis in a society (of work and struggle) (Sloterdijk 1992: 432). The author writes about war veterans as the first modern transhumans, and emphasizes, in a very humanist tone, that technology is there for men and not the other way around. Among further transhumanist developments is professor Kevin Warwick's project Cyborg 1.0, in which the professor has achieved success in his use of a chip embedded in his body to manipulate other electronic devices in his surroundings. Other transhumanist projects are related to work on the achievement of that old dream of robotics: the achievement of immortality thorough gradual replacement of body parts with prostheses and robotic technologies and, finally, through uploading consciousness.

Some transhumanist debates belong to the fields of bioethics and neuroethics, and are related to cognitive, body, mood and - the most problematic – moral enhancements. Australian theoretician Julian Savulescu defends the thesis that moral enhancements (among which he considers Oxytocin and Serotonin injections and the like) do not pose a threat to (trans)human freedom by narrowing it down, while the other stream of theoreticians, among whom Peter Singer and John Harris are probably the most well known, are of the opposite opinion. Other debates are related to issues such as the relation between enhancements and autarchy, procreative

altruism, egalitarianism and moral enhancements, and the like. Besides the aforementioned, among the professors who are most often consulted or invited to give speeches are Professors James Hughes of Trinity College, Ingmar Persson and Bennett Foddy of Oxford University, Stefan Sorgner of the University of Erfurt, and Robert Sparrow of Monash University. It is significant that a majority of transhumanist conferences and symposia are sponsored by pharmacological corporations and stem cell banks, and this fact often sets the tone of the conference and in a certain sense disables the possibility of really radical critical contributions.

The movement has been negatively criticized by numerous theoreticians, among whom Francis Fukuyama's critique is the most famous and most problematic. Fukuyama's approach to transhumanism brings to the surface those problematic humanist values, due to the fear of a potential threat, immanent in the emergence of the posthuman. The most problematic concept that he offers is probably Factor X, which implies a human "essence" which is threatened by the emergence of enhancements. His approach is from the perspective of political science rather than moral philosophy, as Fukuyama has been a member of the United States President's Council on Bioethics, and his position has been described as bioconservative. Fukuyama's inquiries within philosophy have been instrumentalized for the purposes of policy making (Miah 2007: 4), making his theoretical work of great importance. He is concerned with the moral force of human rights being threatened by the emergence of transgenic species and thus calls for the reestablishment of fundamental humanist values.

#### ***2. 4. 1. Transhumanism and the problem of otherness***

The problematic relationship between the human and non-human has already been addressed by suggesting the introduction of a dialectical-integrative model of identity. The transhumanist endeavor is to improve the human in order to be better prepared for the emergence of and coexistence with the posthuman other. This threatening other can thus be designated as an ultimate other – that which brings about apocalypse (or rather, technocalypse), which does not feel or remember the Biblical Fall, nor hopes to return to Eden. Ultimate alterity arises together with Gray Goo – a scenario according to which learning computers could rapidly become super intelligent and catalyse a technological singularity. Gray Goo involves molecular

nanotechnologies, i.e. self-replicating robots getting out of human control and consuming all matter on Earth, including both humans and their environment, in order to provide more resources for themselves. Thus the singular other is foreign, unpredictable and out of the control of the Man who enabled its emergence.

Throughout the history of philosophy, thousands of pages have been written on the problem of the constitution of subjectivity and its necessary relation to the Other. Numerous works have been written on the idea that the Other (person), in relation to whom one constructs the Self, can never be fully understood, fully perceived, and cognized, and that the chasm between two selves can never be bridged. By designating the Other, the boundaries of Self are established, and therefore the constitution of a modern subject is always done in relation with the Other. The Other is always radically different and every attempt at the construction of one's own subjectivity or identity in relation to the Other turns out to be not only threatening but also violent, since it has been chosen among many other Others. Every attempt at establishing a relationship with the Other means an opening of one's own boundaries, making them permeable and even erasable, and therefore leaving the core unprotected and fragile. The (always radically different) Other then threatens to undermine the very essence of the self. Since the chronotopes and experiences of the Other can never be comprehended, it remains the Other, the difference.

The threat of the posthuman other and the potential collapse of ontological boundaries have raised numerous debates within circles of humanist academics. Attempts to determine the human essence have been related to notions such as dignity, rights and also personhood and subjectivity. Participants in these debates often refer to Montaigne and Descartes in order to support their humanist standpoints. The problem of otherness appears most frequently both within humanist and posthumanist discussions and is related to the question of ontological, moral, political and finally cultural boundaries. Posthumanism is open toward any sort of transgression of boundaries and the entities that are gatekeepers of those boundaries. The posthumanism approach thus encompasses various inquiries into entities located on the other side of the boundary that separates humans from the non-human. Animal studies, as well as studies about monstrosities and extraterrestrial life, have tackled topics that also appear on pages written about the transhumanist relation to radical alterity. Disciplines that deal with the non-human are not the only ones tackling the problem of otherness. For example, gender and

postcolonial studies offer exhaustive analyses of how different forms of identity and human subjectivity are subordinated and marginalized through social rituals and practices. One particularly valuable reflection on this issue has been written by Cary Wolfe, who writes about the place of animal studies within the field of cultural studies. His work is of great importance for the purposes of the current analysis, since he also describes how animal studies have used the templates of other disciplines from the field of cultural studies. Thus, a parallel can be also drawn between other non-human entities besides animals, i.e. with both transhumans and posthumans. A more attentive analysis of the problem of how another posthumanist discipline – animal studies – has gone through the process of inclusion of certain entities has to be undertaken.

Wolfe explains the fact that non-human animals within humanities have only been designated as “a theme, trope, metaphor, analogy, representation, or sociological datum” (Wolfe 2009: 567) and describes that the animal has been repressed and brought together with other forms of discourses and identities that are located at the other side of the boundary. While writing about the other identities, he refers to racial, gender, class and sexual identities and for purposes of domination. Wolfe describes animal studies as

the latest permutation of a socially and ethically responsive cultural studies working to stay abreast of new social movement (...) which is itself an academic expression of a larger democratic impulse toward greater inclusiveness of every gender, or race, or sexual orientation, or – now – species. (Wolfe 2009: 568)

The author thus refers to “the cultural studies template” that has been reused for purposes of animal studies and which might be also reused for purposes of transhumanism, due to the fact that both disciplines fundamentally challenge the structure of anthropocentric underpinnings of cultural studies. Wolfe describes animal studies as “the latest flavor of the month” (Wolfe 2009: 569) within the scope of various academic disciplines and practices, many of which are designated as *studies*. The same goes for different aspects of transhumanism – as many of them are simply repeating different templates of previously popular disciplines. An effort is thus required in order to prevent transhumanism from being repetitive and redundant. This means that certain limitations of the current state of affairs in this academic field have to be emphasized. That is not to argue that posthuman studies should not rely on studies done within other fields, but to insist that it makes little sense to repeat them. Finally, in order to clarify this more

thoroughly, description of how this process of the othering of non-human animals has taken place and comparison with the process of othering the posthuman has to be undertaken.

#### ***2. 4. 2. An example of a template reused by transhumanism: animal studies***

For a long time in the history of the problem of otherness, the radical Other was always thought of and written about as of a human being. At some point, it seemed that for centuries philosophers have been blind to a whole world of more radically different entities that were present all along. And finally, when non-human animals were seen as even more different and non-comprehensible than humans, they were treated even more violently. This violence reinforced the boundaries between humans and the unitary, singular entity of animals, as opposed to the whole universe of potential boundaries that could have been drawn within the animal kingdom. This division also points out that by labeling the huge number of living beings under a single name, or rather a concept, “animals”, and also speaking of them in the general singular, human superiority over the other has been established. Not only were animals subjected through the process of naming, but the boundary was finally firmly drawn.

The (moralizing) subjection of the other has opened a way to taming, domestication, training, discipline and finally, anthropomorphization. The case is also similar to that of posthuman visions: in order for the human and the transhuman to survive, the other has to be domesticated, tamed, disciplined and (at least) imagined in a familiar shape.

The notion of radical alterity as a subordinate entity was the dominant standpoint until the moment when Jacques Derrida became ashamed of his nudity under the gaze of his cat. Derrida was at that point well aware how misidentifying and possibly misleading a word “animal” is, and how this subjection has justified and given to humans authority and power to be violent to animals. After describing how this violence has been done through industrial farming and biological experimentation and manipulation, all for the sake of the well-being of humans, Derrida has introduced expression *ecce animot* (Derrida 2008), which unlike name the animal that delineates the final ethical difference from humans, designates neither a specie nor a gender, but is an individual living multiplicity of mortals and a sort of monstrous hybrid, just like the chimera that is made of multiplicity of animals. *Ecce animot*, therefore, is an entity whose

identity can only be maintained by a word. The expression he introduced also calls for pluralization and for attention to the numerous differences that may distinguish species and their sexes – just like aforementioned Haraway's cyborg ontology (Haraway 1991).

But then again, if philosophers from Descartes to Lacan have been denying animal the power to respond—to pretend, to lie, to cover their own traces (Wolfe 2010), in what way should the difference or a gap between humans and non-human animals be constructed now? Even more importantly, for what purposes are these differences being constructed? Of course, before thinking about the essence of the non-human self, the essence of humanity had to be thought in order to be able to once more draw the line that differentiates the two. The human has long ago been described as a rational animal<sup>17</sup> and a promising animal (Nietzsche), and what puts him alone behind the boundary now has to be rethought. Any kind of property that may be attributed to a non-human animal now would be another attempt in anthropomorphization. Derrida argues that properties attributed to animals such as muteness, powerlessness and mourning have once again placed humans in a superior position. But after the question “Can it speak?” the one that logically followed was “Can it respond, reason or think?”, and the shift that followed was related to the fact that these questions determine so many others that actually concern power or capability – the questions of being able, having power to do something, and so on (Wolfe 2010). Derrida reminds readers of Bentham’s questions of sufferance, of passion, of non-ability – can they not-be-able? - by reinterpreting them, and explains this non-ability not as a power, but as impossibility, which is the only possibility, the possibility of a non-power (Derrida 2008). When it comes to posthuman entities, transhumanist questions about them are always necessarily related to their capabilities. And this is the source of (trans)humanist fear of the posthuman Other – that the gap between their superior capabilities and those of (trans)human will be so unbridgeable that humanity will lose its supremacy. The loss of human supremacy would, obviously, imply apocalypse.

The point about human/non-human capabilities is actually of great importance for animal studies since it reduces the tension made between the approaches of psychoanalysis and

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17 It is uncertain from whom the expression originates, but Aristotle, Husserl, Kant, Hegel are among notable philosophers who have used it.

cognitive science to the question of animal's cognitive abilities. By claiming that a lack of language may be seen as a phenomenological impossibility of speaking of a phenomenon and of distinguishing signifying from signifying of signifying, Derrida finally moves away from the mechanistic approaches to cognition and behavior of animals (Derrida 2008).

These instances of signifying and of language are indisputably related to the problems of both ontology and epistemology. In an attempt at comparison between these two approaches Cary Wolfe has tried to give answers to questions of what knowledge actually is, how it is related to abstract categories such as subjectivity and consciousness, but also what knowledge is and what kinds of knowledge can be obtained, both by humans and by non-human animals. Wolfe has searched for the answers in Derrida's works, but also in the works of Daniel Dennett, a philosopher of mind (Wolfe 2010). Wolfe has presented Dennett's approach (which he finds significant, but also problematic) which suggests that mental processes are like computation in simple computers, where the mind is the software and neural circuits the hardware of the brain. Dennett insisted on the usage of mechanistic terminology that would explain chemical electrical signaling of the brain instead of using mentalistic terms, since those notions should be used for more complex processes in brain that are not understood yet. Finally, his approach can be described as mechanistic and materialistic, since his concern is rather about the functional question, what the mind can do, instead of what it is made of or what its other material qualities are. Following this line of thought, Dennett insists that it would help solve some other issues related to mind-havers (Wolfe 2010). Nevertheless, this approach brings him close to the philosophical ideas that he is trying to dissociate himself from. Namely, it brings him close to Descartes' idea of central agency, or a puppeteer that processes information that has been produced by neural networks and "steers the ship of subjectivity" (Wolfe 2010: 34). He does so (among other things) by trying to debunk the myth of double transduction, which implies the processes of transduction of input from the environment into neural signals and of transduction of those impulses into the other medium of consciousness. The main problem with Dennett's approach is related to this: although he claims that his approach is that of embodied materialist functionalism and uses representational concepts of language, he reestablishes the disembodied Cartesian subject, and Wolfe argues that representationalism is precisely the thing that introduces dualism (Wolfe 2010). Therefore, by giving a different status to humans, which has numerous

ethical consequences, he also separates humans from other non-human animals by introducing, in Wolfe's terms, the instance of "explosive language" (Wolfe 2010).

On the other hand, Wolfe introduces an argument by Maturana and Varela (but does not necessarily agree with them), who claim that non-human animals are also capable of rich and complex linguistic planes, but that it is exactly in human language where phenomena such as awareness, mind and self-consciousness take place. Dennett goes further to claim that the fact that animals do not have representational knowledge does not mean that they are not capable of know-how. He states that non-human animals are indeed intelligent, but unthinking, and that they do think, just being unaware of it. In his view, animals also may not be capable of off-loading problems and making and using representations. Dennett finally claims (and multiply problematically) that animals are not only not reflective but are not reflectable upon. This is exactly where Wolfe introduces Derrida again to argue for the idea of steps in becoming a person (Wolfe 2010: 39). First of all, he explains that there are three orders of intentional systems: having beliefs and desires, having beliefs and desires about beliefs and desires, and finally, wanting the other to believe that it has beliefs and desires. Here Wolfe refers to Derrida's example of a Jewish story in order to point out that animals could not be capable of the pretense of the second order (of having beliefs of having beliefs, which is exactly immanent in Cartesian materialism which Wolfe criticizes). Finally, Wolfe goes back to cite "The Animal Therefore I Am" and concludes that the question of animals (more precisely, animals' capacities) is rather one that concerns (cap)ability and power, and the one that is again determined by passivity and non-ability:

less a matter of asking whether one has the right to refuse the animal such and such a power. than of asking whether what calls itself human has the right to rigorously attribute to man what he refuses the animal, and whether he can ever possess the pure, rigorous, indivisible concept, as such, of that attribution. Thus, were we even to suppose—something I am not ready to concede—that the "animal" were incapable of covering its tracks, by what right could one concede that power to the human, to the "subject of the signifier?" (Derrida 2008: 138)

This construction of the animal as alien and incomprehensible, century-long, culturally deep and constantly reified by science, at some point turned out to be insufficient to stand in place of a figure of radical alterity. The animal was almost not flesh and blood enough, not overwhelming

enough to take the place of the ultimate Other. The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of favorable conditions of the construction of the new Other, the Other to the Other. Experimental embryology and teratogenesis were in bloom. Darwin's "Origin of Species" was published, offering repressive arguments, related to the understanding of which products of the mechanism that produces endless diversity should be considered as normal. The Victorian era has made the figure of the Other into a spectacle of the monster, constructing a whole discourse around it. The monster had to be constituted in speech rather than in the order of things. In order to describe how the new figure of the ultimate Other was constructed, how it was inseparably related to animals and what its attributes were, Darwin's "Origin of Species" has to be re-read. In the second chapter of the book, titled "Variations Under Nature", Darwin discusses variations and individual differences among species and varieties. He also explains the difference between the terms specie and variety, as well as monstrosity, which designates certain drastic deviations of (physiological) structure (Darwin 2009, 56). The language he uses reflects to a great extent how the whole era in which he was living and writing has constructed everything that was an aberration from the rule as the Other. Darwin describes monstrosity as malformation, as something that is alike to the normal structure of other animals, and uses an example of a pig with an elephant's trunk. Further on he also explains lesser varieties and individual differences, which are distinguished from monstrosities, since they are possible among the members of a specie that live in the same delimited place. These differences and varieties are often inherited and accumulated. Darwin also warns readers that the discovery of a variety is not a pleasant moment for those who systematize, and that also not many are willing to explore inner organs (Darwin 2009: 57). This brings him to the description of the most complicated individual differences, of polymorphic genus. Darwin states that some of these variations are neither adverse nor useful for a specie, but rather problematic for scientists in terms of qualification. He emphasizes the importance of doubtful forms (Darwin 2009: 60) that are gradually connected with other species and more common in nature than it could be expected. The whole discussion peaks with the conclusion that varieties and exceptions to rules in the living world create many problems when determining whether they are species or varieties. He also addresses the problem of the existence of transitional forms that raise doubt about the boundaries of species. Finally, he concludes by expressing his own opinion and suggesting that both differences and varieties are

of high importance since they represent “the first step, that of such slight varieties as are barely thought worth recording in works on natural history” (Darwin 2009: 68), gradually towards a greater and greater differences, and finally, to a whole new species. Even though Darwin is not really interested in radically different entities, the monstrous also serves as a proof of the instability of boundaries.

Finally, an attempt at re-reading Darwin and Derrida through each other offers many interesting insights for the analysis of ultimate Otherness. For both of them, the monster is indisputably the gatekeeper of a borderland, of boundary itself. Even in his writings that are not directly related to the question of either animals or alterity, Derrida writes of monsters as of figures that embody (thinking) other(wise). For him, the monster is “the species of non-species, formless, mute, infant and terrifying form of monstrosity” (Derrida 1978: 280), a specie that is still about-to-become, and whose aberration is yet to be classified. The metaphor of monster that Derrida uses certainly comes from Darwin’s discourse. Both of them see the monster as an entity that breaks down totalitarian constructions of nature and taxonomic logic by questioning boundaries. Derridian monstrous entities, whether the text or the unnamable other, are heralds of a rupture, of a desperately needed transformation of world(s). Derrida would go even further to claim that in a way the future itself is a dangerous monster, a mutation that should challenge hegemony, so there is no doubt anymore that the figure of the monster may serve as a very icon of deconstruction, both material and semiotic, both flesh and writing. And this is exactly where the template used by animal, gender and even postcolonial studies is most obvious. It is also the direction into which many transhumanist theoreticians have set off, neglecting hundreds of pages already written and falling into traps already discarded by those who have already been there.

Following Derrida’s line of thought, a figure of the Other would always be related to the Garden of Eden, in a way that the Other would always be on the other, negative side of binary opposition, on the side that repeats the Biblical Fall. In that case, the Garden would always be the very heart of (phal)logocentrism. Colin Milburn belongs to a tradition of those who went further to claim that both for Darwin and Derrida the origin can always only be a trace, graduation, event, but not an origin (Milburn 2003: 611). And as an entity that repeats fall, the posthuman will always be the one that brings the apocalypse in the eyes of narrow, too humanist transhumanism.

The question of the monster (and in this case, posthuman other is also necessarily monstrous) as the figure of the other is, once again, inseparable from an instance of boundaries. Nevertheless, in the tradition that assumes the human to have clearly demarcated boundaries, in the tradition in which man is at the core of things, the monstrous other is displaced. It is without a structure and at the same time both within and outside the Nature. It is a dangerous supplement to nature and has an immense number of (rhizomatic) connections. It is infinitely dependent on the existence of its own other. This instance of a dangerous supplement also indicates that monsters are always necessarily violent, even as a metaphor. Monsters are threatening to violate the order of things and the very core of humanism. As Milburn suggests, they also have a terrible life of their own.

Therefore, it is no wonder that the figure of the ultimate other is always turned into a spectacle. Besides being the other of nature, both monsters and posthumans, located at the breaking points of the culturally imaginable, are also the other of culture. The heritage of the religious rhetoric of the Fall and sin has helped in the construction of radical alterity, or (again) the other to the other as a spectacle, especially during the Victorian era. The monster's non-speaking and general muteness are perceived not as non-language, but rather as a question, a doubt, an invitation. The Victorian era was in a way a fertile ground for this construction of bizarre otherness, and, what is more, it confirmed the idea of Sartre, who wrote that Europeans could become human only by creating slaves (and monsters) (Sartre 1961). Both the natural sciences (first of all, medicine) and humanities lacked a consistent definition of the concept of a monster at that time. This fact was reflected in social consciousness and literary representations of the century, and a new discourse of monstrosity was soon created. There are numerous examples of which that of Joseph Merrick, the Elephant Man, is probably most famous. This example also reflects the inconsistency of the definition and the methodology within the field of teratology. Medical workers at that time were not able to offer any clear diagnoses or treatments to Merrick and to many other "monsters" of that time. So this case, like many others, was more a matter of medical, philosophical and anthropological debates of that time, and in this way was gradually turned into a spectacle. Merrick could not possibly be admitted to a public hospital due to his incurable and, more than that, non-classifiable condition. At the same time circuses and "freak-shows" became increasingly popular all across the Europe, and especially in United

Kingdom. They were held in the Egyptian Hall, and the isolation of monsters between these shows has kept them rare, exotic and worth paying to see. The same goes for any possible step toward achievement of the posthuman – numerous conferences, symposia and fairs are held around the world each year, and the only way to describe fascination by technological improvements is spectacular.

In the case of Victorian freak shows, many medical doctors were present, not for the sake of examination or science, but rather pure entertainment. All this resulted in (most often human) beings with certain deformities being bottled, cataloged, roughly described by using conflicting vocabulary of diagnosis, and finally, created as a spectacle. There are numerous examples of the figure of the monster in the literature and popular culture of that time, and the audience received what it wanted most: flesh and blood, a spectacle, the difference according to which it could confirm its own normality.

Numerous other parallels are present besides the similarity in a manner in which animal and monster have been gradually distinguished as a radical alterity to those of anticipation of the posthuman. Haraway's cyborg as an entity of post-gender world (gender studies), Spivak's subaltern (post-colonial studies), queer studies' rethinking of marginal identities all have very similar, if not the same underlying matrices. In order to prevent transhumanism from being not just too humanist, but also repetitive and redundant, it is necessary to reflect on how they have related to the problem in question, that of otherness.

### 3. OTHERNESS

The emergence of posthuman subjectivity has been present in numerous cultural texts throughout a long period of time. Such texts have become increasingly popular during the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the role of technology in everyday life became undeniably important. Starting with Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1832), Fritz Lang's "Metropolis" (1927), science fiction and finally cyberpunk of the '80s and '90s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well as emerging post-cyberpunk, futuristic scenarios were everything but optimistic. "High tech, low life", a sentence that is used to describe cyberpunk, bears a worrisome tone. And this worry has an implicit humanism par excellence – fear for human survival, integrity, and above all human supremacy and exceptionalism. Transhumanists such as Ray Kurzweil and Hans Moravec both excitedly predict a coming singularity, the uploading of human consciousness and disembodiment, and are putting a huge effort into a personal preparation for the posthuman future. Still, academic texts and debates on transhumanism do not really indicate any movement from humanism toward something that would be overcoming of its problematic aspects. Humanism resurfaces in transhumanism even more, in a form of an obsessive worry and fear for human well-being and integrity. Unfortunately, this means that transhumanism is, just like Cartesian humanism, incapable of contemplating differences and of thinking differently. It is thus unable to think otherness, the posthuman subjectivity for whose arrival it has been preparing for so long. Even the cases of inclusion of otherness within transhumanist ideas by positive valuation or adoration present in technotopias are not a transcendence of humanist limitations and binarities, but only a repetition of them. Thus, a certain effort is needed for transhumanism to cast off the burden of humanism and its limitations, in order to be better prepared for the future. For transhumanism is still too humanist for what its main tasks are – welcoming and coexisting with its posthuman other. It has to embrace the liberal humanities' <sup>18</sup> efforts and movement toward posthumanism. The discipline has to carefully re-read the narratives of human

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18 Even though Wolfe considers that many disciplines among the liberal humanities have failed in accepting otherness, the effort is still present in a sense that each discipline had its own re-reading that was considered as leaning towards posthumanities. Among these examples is Donna Haraway's contribution to feminism. On the other hand, the disciplines are failing in the sense that instead of accepting otherness, it is being tamed. The liberal humanities accept otherness as long as they can write and talk about the other, while still remaining ignorant towards what otherness has to say about them.

exceptionalism and to become posthumanist – in a sense not only to repeat templates that other posthumanist disciplines have established and reused, but to be aware of mistakes that have been made. It has to reflect on, for example, gender studies, the discipline that probably has the greatest number of pages written about otherness, and to skip three waves of revisions, as well as to reflect on similar disciplines that have as its focus the problem of reading the other as a threat, and that have been reestablishing its methodologies and postulates until the present day.

Transhumanism has to avoid fixed categories, to remain a subversive and constant deconstruction. As an expression of deconstructive practices, it has to constantly keep moving away from the center, to keep becoming dislocated, to avoid normativity. Transhumanism has to become a discipline that refuses to be disciplined, whose foundations elude that which could make it fixed and stable. In a sense, transhumanism also has to reflect on Judith Butler's argument for Teresa de Lauretis<sup>19</sup> in their debate about queer studies: both queer studies and transhumanism have to avoid the damnation of being institutionalized and introduced into the academic discourse of humanities, since that would make them stable and obedient; both have to maintain the main object of their studies, identity, subversive, without structure, open.

Academic texts that aspire to emphasize potential pitfalls and mistakes that certain (future oriented) disciplines can make, also have to avoid offering answers, remedies, for in order to be able to think (about) the future, the discipline has to avoid the anticipation of its outputs. The future has to stay unknown, the other. The exposure to what is about to come requires both the entity and the discipline to give up on certainty and predictions of how to embrace the unknown.

As for the object of studies, apart of becoming, in a sense, a superhuman by embracing cognitive and physical enhancements, in order to survive the arrival and coexistence with posthuman other, transhuman subjectivity has to become less humanist. This calls for yet another focusing on the problem of otherness, in this case – on the ultimate other of the transhuman self. What is different about this radical alterity is that it has been thought of and imagined as the monstrous other since the very beginning. In the cases of gender, post-colonial, studies about nationalism and similar fields, monstrosity was usually only a figure of speech, a metaphor used

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19 The ongoing academic debate between Judith Butler and Teresa de Lauretis is related to the questions such as whether queer identity exists, if its existence contradicts the deconstructive (in a sense de-centering) logics of the discipline, as well as whether institutionalization of the academic discipline has made it less activist.

in order to describe the strange and bizarrely incomprehensible other human being; while posthuman otherness is considered to be the first form of radical alterity that threatens by possibly being superior. This is, put simply, exactly why the future posthuman other is important for liberal humanities, which can accept the other others as long as they are inferior and unthreatening. The potentially superior future posthuman other is seen as a rupture, since unlike various other cultural categories of otherness (women, racial and ethnic minorities, animals), the posthuman other is ignorant of whether the liberal humanities can or cannot extend their normalization and taming (hidden under an euphemism of egalitarianism) to its existence.

Thus, further analysis must avoid offering unambiguous answers, fixed categorizations and stable models. Derridian thought on the future, otherness, hospitality and boundaries together with Jean-Luc Nancy's rethinking of the notions of community seem the most appropriate tools for such analysis. Not only are these notions suitable for the purposes of the present analysis, but the theory behind them seems to do less harm to transhumanism than any other, in terms of avoiding normativity and regimentation.

### **3. 1. À-venir**

The posthuman other belongs to the posthuman future – about which we do not have any knowledge, any experience, about which we cannot make any certain predictions. In order to better understand how the future community of human and the non-human will be, what the thinking will be, the reflection upon Derrida's concept of *à venir* has to be made.

As the French language has two different expressions for the future, *le futur* and *l'avenir*, and as they are used to refer to different instances, it is necessary to first delimit them, so the latter can be understood more precisely. The first expression, *le futur*, is used in sentences to designate a possibility, a prediction, something that belongs to a distant future. It refers to hypothetical situations, desires and prophecies. On the other hand, *l'avenir* is used to describe events of the future that are not as remote. *L'avenir* refers to that which is *yet-to-come*, and Derrida thus uses the expression as a condition of "(...) all promises or of all hope, of all awaiting, of all performativity, of all opening towards the future" (Derrida 1996: 68). Belonging to a post-structuralist tradition of theoreticians that consider the future to always consist of the

unexpected, Derrida uses the notion of *à-venir* in order to describe that which is yet to come as something that provokes understanding, that initiates a change in direction, unexpected junctures and growth, a disjointedness. If read through a Derridian lens, the posthuman entity that is yet to come is certainly expected to be that which provokes thoughts and whose emergence necessarily implies a change in focus and ruptures. It is that which requires the rethinking of every order and of finitude, that which denies the possibility of being measured and durable. Derrida inscribes in a sense a certain new meaning in the notion of *à-venir*. He reads it as that which unhinges and disjoins an event and by doing so disturbs the possibility of that very event. Even though he writes about the impossibility of the *à-venir* to be pinned down as a metaphysical entity, the author anyway considers it to be that which allows thinking of what is beyond the closure of metaphysics (Derrida 1996: 72). In this sense, *à-venir* echoes the entities and events that are arriving, that are afoot, unknown and unthinkable by the present. As a rupture that indicates movement in an unexpected direction, *à-venir* is a trace<sup>20</sup> of an erasure of traces, and as such it indicates not the future, but a direction of other *texts* (Derrida 1996: 91). The disjointed, ruptured, structureless posthuman other that is yet to come thus escapes mastery and determinable ground. And it not only escapes mastery, but the possibility of being thought at all by the mind of the transhuman. As a radically different entity that is yet to come, the posthuman other interrupts the present, identity, any kind of structure, breaks all of the rules, being reached within categories of space and time, as well as every attempt at purification. It belongs to the future, although it does not originate from it just as it does not originate from the past, but rather originates from itself. In the same manner, it is unable to constitute itself within the identifiable present. That which is yet to come is always necessarily radically different other, since it is that which dislocates existing binary oppositions<sup>21</sup>. Derrida writes that what is to come (the ultimate other that is to come) always bears a heritage and a possibility of repetition (Derrida 2002: 83). This repetition implies the possibility of multiplication, and what is to come is always plural and

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20 The concept of trace is of great importance for Derrida's work. Although Derrida denies the possibility of defining the notion, it generally refers to a minimal repeatability in every experience. The author establishes the notion in his books "Of Grammatology" (1967) and "Writing and Difference" (1967).

21 For Derrida, most important binarities that are being dislocated by that which is to come are those between self and the other, presence and absence and of course, past and future.

irreducible to quantification – it is impossible to reduce it to a single, distinguishable entity with clearly demarcated boundaries, a figure, not even to one of the figures otherwise used by Derrida for a description of gatekeepers – a specter, a ghost, a demon.

Our potential posthuman future, thus, is a future of a multitude of possibilities, of a multiplicity of scenarios with an irreducible plurality of radical other(s). It is not a linear future, but one that unfolds in an infinite number of directions.

The unknown, multiple other that is yet to come is due to these characteristics read as a threat by transhumanists. Derrida, on the other hand, suggests a messianic reading of this coming alterity, since messianicity implies a certain kind of undecidability – between whether it is coming or not; and also between whether it (in this case the transhuman) is prepared for the encounter with something so foreign, so unexpected. Messianicity in this case is messianicity without religion, and it also implies the possibility of the coming that comes without the arrival and being present, a kind of arrival for which Derrida suggests to empty all meaning (Derrida 1994: 96). As such, the arrival implies emergence from a radical impossibility, for *à-venir* remains (trapped) in a state of emergence.

But it is also another kind of impossibility, one that would follow Derrida's logic of the relation between the possible and the impossible, which permeates many of his writings: the impossibility that is actually the only possibility, the only certainty, since unlike the possible (which may or may not happen) it will finally be actualized as an impossibility. Impossibility also refers to the acquisition of knowledge of what is to come, and Derrida suggests that *à-venir* goes beyond knowledge, since it has nothing to do with both knowing and ignorance (Derrida 1989: 30). It is also an impossibility of identity, of coherence and of closure.

Sticking to humanist postulates in a situation of the arrival of the ultimate other, the one that breaks every relation with order, would be fatal for transhuman subjectivity. The apocalyptic tone of transhumanist theoreticians who write about the encounter with the posthuman only makes sense when that which is yet to come is perceived as challenging the other, since the old categories and modes of encountering the other would not make any sense in this situation. The problematic humanist values implicate in transhumanism would keep transhumanism exclusionary and purifying, and the identity of the other would remain that which is seen as a contaminant that has to be purged, not a quality to be absorbed – and would thus fit into the

aforementioned Marchesini's obsolete divergence-expulsion model of identities (Marchesini 2010: 92).

### 3. 2. Hospitality

The emergence of *l'arrivant*, in this case the posthuman other, demands radical reconstruction of the manner in which the encounter with it is thought. *L'arrivant* may arrive even if it is not expected, when it is least expected, without an invitation. The question of arrivant is necessarily related to that to which it approaches - the threshold, the border, the boundary, limit. The arrival to the threshold requires unconditional acceptance, a coexistence that would transcend hierarchy. The one who arrives has no name nor identity yet, and is therefore thought of in terms of absolute otherness. Derrida describes the arrivant as a monstrosity:

[t]he future is necessarily monstrous: the figure of the future, that is, that which can only be surprising, that for which we are not prepared, is heralded by species of monsters. A future that would not be monstrous would not be a future; it would already be a predictable, calculable, and programmable tomorrow. All experience open to the future is prepared or prepares itself to welcome the monstrous arrivant. (Weber, Derrida, 1995: 386-387)

And this is exactly where transhumanist readings should be careful: *l'arrivant* is not a person, a subject, nor a living thing, nor it is "an intruder, an invader, or a colonizer" (Derrida 1996: 34), but rather a "hospitality itself" (Derrida 1996: 33).

In order to argue his thesis about the necessity of the unconditional hospitality of radical alterity, Derrida re-reads Kant's famous "Perpetual Peace". Kant describes hospitality as a right rather than an act of philanthropy and has an anthropological dimension in mind. Hospitality is for Kant the right of a stranger not to be treated with hostility but as a member of the household. Derrida goes further to expand the question to whether one owes hospitality toward the non-human other, whether it be an animal, vegetable or divine; not only to a stranger (Derrida 2000: 4). The author describes a welcomed guest as a stranger that is commonly treated as a friend<sup>22</sup>.

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22 Derrida uses notion of friend in a same sense as Carl Schmitt did. Schmitt's opposition between friend and enemy is of crucial importance for political philosophy, and Derrida initially uses this concept in his texts about democracy. In Derrida's writings, the opposition between friend and enemy is narrowly related to the one between

On the other hand, the one who welcomes is seen as master or patron of a topos (household, state, nation, subjectivity) where one is welcomed to. As such, one who offers hospitality defines the conditions of hospitality. Derrida thus suggests the concept of hospitality to imply a violent contradiction – as long as there is an obligation, a necessity, a duty; as long as there is an authority of the master of the household who sets rules, unconditional hospitality is impossible (Derrida 2000: 4). The law of hospitality turns out to be the laws of the household, of *oikos* – of the economy of giving and receiving, of reciprocity, of boundaries that should not be crossed. This kind of hospitality would imply maintenance of humanist views on this problem. For example, if the problem of identity is in question, sticking to the position of the master, setting thresholds and boundaries, counting on reciprocity, would only make sense in a case of traditional, rigid, stable identities. In order to be able to accept the radical other that is arriving (and it must be accepted), one must unconditionally open boundaries of their own identity, prepare to give everything and possibly receive nothing in return. Nevertheless, the author writes that the threshold is always present, and where the threshold is; there is no hospitality, but “the difference and the gap between the hospitality of invitation and the hospitality of visitation” (Derrida 2000: 14).

Derrida writes that hospitality thus turns out to be a self-contradictory concept, in the sense that it implies a possibility of producing itself as self-destructive, as impossible, that it “can only be possible on a condition of its impossibility” (Derrida 2000: 5). Hospitality offered to the ultimate other has to refrain from “reaffirming: this is mine, I am at home, you are welcome in my home” (Derrida 2000: 14).

Yet another paradox related to hospitality derives from Derrida's statement that it is exactly the absolute other, the arrivant, that makes all forms of belonging (including the humanity itself) possible (Derrida 1996: 35). Among the forms of belonging the author mentions cultural, social, sexual, national, but also concepts such as ego, personhood, subjectivity and consciousness (Derrida 1996: 35). The one who offers hospitality waits for *l'arrivant* without knowing whom (s)he awaits, without knowing whether it is a Messiah or a monster or anyone else who may come. Thus, hospitality can only happen beyond the possibility of hospitality, by

“overcoming the hospitality that paralyzes itself on the threshold which it is” (Derrida 2000 14).

Hospitality is therefore, just like the arrivant, always in the process of the emergence, always *à-venir*. Transhumanist anticipation of its radical other needs to be thought within different categories than those of friendship and hostility. Unlike other liberal humanities (as Wolfe refers to several disciplines), for transhumanism the figure of radical alterity is still not present, it still has no shape, name or identity. Thus for the first time it is possible to think its arrival anew and to prepare manners for relating to it.

### **3. 3. I think, therefore I think the Other**

Derrida's call for thinking in paradoxes, for simultaneous thinking of contradictory claims, or put simply – his challenge to the commonsensical rational thought which is logical, totalitarian, exclusive – opens the way for the thinking of the absolute other which is so foreign and even impossible to the process of thinking. Thinking of an entity that does not fall under any of the common categories of belonging (as are aforementioned), of something which may never fully emerge; simply – thinking of the unthinkable – creates possibilities for the impossible, for uncertainty, indecisiveness, instability – for some kind of *non-knowledge*. And the presence of the other is necessarily uncertain and unstable, since it implies the risk of destroying the core of the “I”, of the instance that comprehends the law of thinking. This kind of approach to the problem of being with the other, of a paradoxical relation that implies both transcendence and belonging and distance and intimacy (Blagojević 2007: 40), goes well in line with other examples of Derrida's non-canonical understanding of politics and the political. Not only that the author re-reads Schmitt's opposition between friend and enemy in his “Politics of Friendship” (Derrida 2001), but also his understanding of hospitality for the impossible, in a sense opens the possibility for a different understanding of politics and the political, which is crucial for understanding the notion of otherness. His understanding is different in as much that he assumes a hospitality of the stranger who makes possible the question of the political: “The question with which the foreigner will address them, to open this great debate, which will also be a great fight, is nothing less than that of the political, of man as a political being. The question of the political is given there as being the question that comes to us from the other, the foreigner” (Derrida 2000:

66). Derrida goes further to claim that the foreigner, the absolute other that breaks every relation with law and duty and requires absolute hospitality, has “no shape. No sex No name. It is neither a man nor a woman. It is not selfhood, not “I”, not a subject, nor a particular person. It is another *Dasein*<sup>23</sup> that every *Dasein* has, through the voice, a voice it hears, of itself, not within itself, in the ear, in the “inner ear”, within a certain subjective interior, not from a distance and away from the ear (since it cannot be heard from far in a specific external space, i.e. in a certain transcendence) but in one's own environment, at a distance which is neither absolute – absolutely infinite – nor worthless in the absolute closeness of one's ownership, therefore impossible of being determined according to particular units of measurement in the world. This range of voice to-be-in-the-range-of-voice. makes the other someone of a different kind” (Derrida 2001: 465).

Finally, Derrida questions the meaning of Descartes' *cogito* for the modern subjectivity, which is crucial for further understanding of why and how transhuman subjectivity has to *be-with* instead of simply *be*. If the Cartesian maxim “I think, therefore I am”, which is at the core of modern thought, is altered in order to fit to the new conception of subjectivity, it would have to take the instance of otherness into an account. As such, Derrida suggests that the maxim should rather be: “I think, therefore I think the other: I need the other in order to think” (Derrida 2001: 340). This necessity of the inclusion of otherness into the process of thinking makes the very process unimaginable without this instance. Not only that for subjectivity thinking demands the other, but the notion of otherness is placed at the very core of the process of thinking itself. The modified maxim suggests the ontological, the ethical and the economic<sup>24</sup> dislocation as it demands absolute hospitality and the unconditional opening of all boundaries and offering the core of the self to intrusions.

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23 Even though Heideggerian understanding of *Dasein* and *Mitsein* is of crucial importance for both Derrida's and Nancy's writing (and especially their understanding of a community), for purposes of this thesis it is not necessary to exhaustively reflect on his theory.

24 Economic as that which has to do with *oikos*, the household, in this context: the economy of giving and receiving.

### 3. 4. Being-with

#### 3. 4. 1. Community

If Derrida's alteration, "I think, therefore I think the other" is re-read through Jean-Luc Nancy's writings, it would indicate that no entity (or rather: no singularity) exists without being plural. This plurality implies coexistence with the other, a community of a different kind than those of the past. As Nancy carefully reads Derrida, it could be said that his understanding of a community both embraces the radical otherness and implies absolute hospitality.

The author challenges traditional understandings of the notion of community as a totality in which all voices and expressions are like-minded, a community that rests on exclusiveness and is self-enclosed (Nancy: 1991). Traditional understanding of community also implies a collectivity that provides continuity and rests upon an exclusionary myth of a sense of unity of a certain kind. Although a critique of the traditional conception of community is also present in works by other authors<sup>25</sup>, Nancy's reading of the notion is especially important for the purposes of the current analysis since he calls for the incorporation of more inclusive and flexible modalities of *being-in-common* (Nancy 1991: 60). A community is now understood as a cultural, political and socio-historical construct that has to be replaced with new forms of *belongings*, since the context in which they are emerging is radically changed.

It is also necessary to point out Nancy's and Derrida's different approaches to the new conception of a community, since the two conceptions are in a dialogue. Derrida establishes his conception in his "Politics of Friendship" (written in 1994), where he writes about fraternity not only as a sort of primary community, but more than that, as of the instance that determines what is included into and excluded from the community. Derrida calls for a friendship that is as close as a fraternity, and goes further to equate the process of fraternisation to the process of identification (Derrida 2001: 108). The equation follows the identification of a brother (or further on, a friend) with the self. This sort of community excludes those entities that cannot be

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25 The opus of a critique of traditional understanding of a community includes works by Giorgio Agamben ("The Coming Community", 1993), Maurice Blanchot ("The Unavowable Community", 1983), Jacques Derrida ("Politics of Friendship", 1994, but also numerous smaller works), Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri ("Empire", 2000, "Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire", 2004), Roberto Esposito ("Communitas: the Origin and Destiny of Community", 2004).

identified with the self, those different, foreign and uncommon entities. Since this kind of conception is exclusionary, it is also necessarily violent, but nevertheless, as still being also an inclusive conception, implies a community that can be described as *being-with* (Nancy 2000: 38). Nancy's approach, on the other hand, is based on the interruption of a myth (Lacoue-Labarthe, Nancy: 1991) – on an inability to describe a common origin – the inability to recognize the other as a brother. Morin explains the interruption as that which does not initiate the disappearance of myths, but “they (myths) no longer function as the ground of communal belonging: it becomes impossible for us to gather around the narration of our common origin. The interruption does not build a community, it un-works it, that is, it lets a space open in the identification of the community with itself. This un-working is the active incompleteness of community: it prevents the community from effecting itself as work” (Morin 2004).

Nancy's conception of community does not imply any sort of common substance or value, and that is what makes it a desirable model of a community of the transhuman and posthuman. The author goes further to claim that community, being in common, *being-with* is a model that replaces *being*; that identity always necessarily includes otherness – that *being singular plural* is the sense of (necessarily co) existence. For Nancy, *being* as *being-with* has to imply all those threats that *l'arrivant* may bring – of which, for the author, most important aspects of being are being exposed, being abandoned and being interrupted (Nancy 2000: 51). This is where a notion of sense appears to be of great importance, since for Nancy being in common is a sense, not vice versa (sense is not common to being). It means that this sense should not be considered as a pre-existing common substance of our existence; sense appears in a community in which it is shared as a “multiplicity of singular expressions” (Nancy 2000: 64).

Community has nothing to do with owning a common substance; now interruptions, noise, misunderstandings and differences are desirable as constituents of a community, in order for it not to be exclusionary and thus violent. Nancy goes further to finally claim that also a complete coexistence, complete being-together (and thus also absolute hospitality) is nothing more than a “suicidal endpoint of an immanent search for an original community” (Nancy 2000: 70).

One of the crucial aspects of a community is the experience of being exposed. Being exposed to each other by referring to another, by believing (and the instance of belief is of

inevitable importance for both Nancy and Derrida) that the other will receive what is communicated. And only in communication meaning arises; exposure is thus necessary for the meaning to exist.

For Nancy, being exposed is even an equivalent for the existence itself, since it is “beginning from its simple identity in itself and from its pure position, exposed in appearing, in creation, and, as such, exposed to the outside, exteriority, multiplicity, alterity, and change” (Nancy 2000: 187). Nancy writes that neither the least signification nor the most elaborate concepts have immanent meaning, unless they are communicated within a community or within oneself (Nancy 2000: 2). Meaning is therefore only *meaning(ful)* if it is shared, and the author goes even further to claim that meaning is the sharing of Being – whereas being does not have a meaning, but “is meaning that is, in turn, its own circulation – and we are the circulation” (Nancy 2000: 2). And this is the exact place from which Nancy derives his notion of *being-with*, since being itself can only be a kind of circulation, and therefore being-with-another. The only meaning for the author is thus the meaning of circulation within the community, and it is important to note that this circulation is not necessarily linear – but implies plurality (or rather multitude) of directions. This circulation is also always between that who is exposed and that who is communicating, always between places, moments and “without any progression or linear path” (Nancy 2000: 4). Nancy finds this interval, distance, “betweenness” that does not even lead from one to the other (but is still in a relation with both) of great importance, and claims it is rather contiguity than continuity: “There is proximity, but only to the extent that extreme closeness emphasizes the distancing it opens up” (Nancy 2000: 5).

Hospitality (also that hospitality to a community) offered by the transhuman self to the posthuman arrivant would indeed imply not only this kind proximity that would fit to “the law of touching that is separation” (Nancy 2000: 5), but a general and quintessential opening of boundaries; a contact that is beyond connection and disconnection, a contact in which all of transhuman being is in touch with all of posthuman being. Nancy writes that in case of this, touching, or rather, coming into contact, implies making sense (of one another): “then this coming penetrates nothing; there is no intermediate or mediating milieu” (Nancy 2000: 5).

### 3. 4. 2. *Being singular plural*

The singular is a plural. It also undoubtedly offers the property of indivisibility, but it is not indivisible the way substance is indivisible. It is, instead, indivisible in each instant (*au coup par coup*), within the event of its singularization. It is indivisible like any instant is indivisible, or *punctually* indivisible. (Nancy 2000: 32)

The desirable mode of being described by Nancy – being-with – is the mode that is inevitable for future communities. Transhuman and posthuman selves cannot exist in isolation in as much as mutual exclusion or ignorance would harm the existence of both. The self necessarily has to open its boundaries and become a multitude. Nancy suggests that being has to become singularly plural (or plurally singular), since the self exists only through coexistence, through sharing of the world (Nancy 2000: 29). “Being” of “being singular plural” is supposed to be read both as a verb and a noun, and its essence singular plural. It means that any sort of self-enclosed, substantial essence of being is unacceptable in emerging communities. Essence is thus, Nancy suggests, *coessence* that cannot be reduced to a multiplicity of essences, but “signifies the essential sharing of essentiality, sharing in the guise of assembling” (Nancy 2000: 30). The coessentiality is that which is at the very heart of being-with, where *with* is that instance that constitutes being itself. The singularity can not be dissociated from the plurality, since singularity of each instance is necessarily bound to the other, is being-with-many.

An even bigger risk than that which is immanent in the arrival of the posthuman other is the one that is implied in the understanding of being as being-with. Being-with leaves the self broken, interrupted, open and thus uncertain, indecisive and unstable – Nancy alters (now dysfunctional) *ego sum* into simple *ego cum* (Nancy 2000: 31).

Being-with is an indisputably political notion par excellence, driven by antagonisms and at the core of every political question. Nancy follows the Derridian tradition of political philosophy and thinks of the notion of community in these terms, and claims that the whole history of philosophy is in a sense “the thinking of being-with, and because of this, it is also thinking with as such” (Nancy 2000: 31).

### **3. 4. 3. *Being singular plural as a political Being***

Issues related to the notion of otherness that are relevant to Nancy's writing, such as exposure, community, fraternity, friendship, love – any sort of giving and receiving – turn out to be political notions par excellence. Thinking of the political, as well as political thinking, requires further understanding of why the notion of singular being, of identity that is self-identical, has to be necessarily thought of in relation to the other. Traditional understandings of subjectivity as singular and self-identical are thus opposed to the understanding of subjectivity as being-with, and paradoxical formulations of traditional self-identical subjectivity has to be described.

Subjectivity thought as self-identical, as identity, owns or possesses itself (as its own property). Self-identity, understood as a consequence of a strategy of ownership, is structured as a process of appropriation (Blagojević 2007: 19) which indisputably requires the other. The other is not perceived in its otherness and difference, but as the other that has been acknowledged, cognized and translated into language (of the self, to its own language), whose self has been reduced to the known and familiar. However, the other can neither be translated nor owned, it remains incomprehensible and therefore even identity cannot be identical to itself nor can it possess itself. This would imply that modern subjectivity thought of as identity is always already in danger since it always escapes itself and is incapable of possessing and encompassing itself. Unlike traditional totalizing and absolute understandings of subjectivity that deny otherness as an integral part of the self and overcome differences in a process of subjectivization, singular plural subjectivity implies the possibility of a *survival* in differences, of the existence of the other in its otherness. This otherness is thus constitutive for the process of thinking itself, since thinking demands otherness. Finally, thinking implies a possibility to think the political, to the thinking of the other and the other thinking.

And this is of crucial importance for understanding of the coexistence of transhuman and posthuman selves: before thinking of the political in the context of the coexistence of the two, before thinking of the constitution of a community between the two, it has to be emphasized that communication indisputably happens with the otherness of the other; since the other only exists in its otherness. This also refers to a call that Inger makes in “Äkta människor”: to accept and embrace the other that is threatening to take over (until recently) characteristically human roles: works, membership in communities of various kinds, and many other roles.

### 3. 4. 4. *The being-with of being*

Nancy suggests the need for the radical emphasizing of the “with” as a crucial aspect of Being and as “its proper plural singular coessence” (Nancy 2000: 34). This need is a consequence of a shift in thinking that starts from the one or the other, as well as that thinking that begins from the togetherness of the two, to a thinking that is rather “thinking, absolutely and without reserve, beginning from the “with”, as the proper essence of one whose Being is nothing other than with-one-another (*l'un-avec-l'autre*)” (Nancy 2000: 34).

“With” is the essential feature of Being that indicates sharing of spatio-temporal continuity and makes Being singular plural a necessity<sup>26</sup> – the meaning of Being understood as being-with excludes the possibility of essentialist core, of self-sufficiency and self-enclosed entities.

The author describes “with” as that which “neither goes from the same to the other, nor from the other to the other. In a certain sense, the “with” does not “go” anywhere; it does not constitute a process. But it is the closeness, the brushing up against or coming across, the almost-there (*l'à-peu-près*) or distanced proximity” (Nancy 2000: 98). Being-with is an imperative, just as a community is:

[...] the concept of community appears to have its own prefix as its only content: the *cum*, the *with* deprived of substance and connection, stripped of inferiority, subjectivity, and personality. Either way, sovereignty is nothing. Sovereignty is nothing but the *com-*; as such, it is always and indefinitely “to be completed”, as in com-munism or com-passion. (Nancy 2000: 36)

The coming into being of being-with Nancy designates as coappearance – a sort of (co)existence or appearance that cannot be detached from *cum* which is its fundamental ontological structure (Nancy 2000: 61).

The being of the transhuman self has to be being-with all the other selves, whether human, posthuman or non-human. It has to “*give itself occurs, dis-poses itself* (made event, history and world) as its own singular plural *with*” (Nancy 2000: 38) – put simply, it has to be

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26 Being-with thus has to imply presence-with – it has to imply being-present as well as the present of Being. Nancy suggests that the two should not coincide in or with itself (Nancy 2000: 41).

exposed. The being-with of the transhuman self has to become simultaneous with itself and with others, its being has to be an initial plural unity, an indivisible multitude; it has to be-many.

Nancy writes that both communism and socialism have been expected as revolutionary arrivals that will bring rupture, innovation and a fundamental reconstruction of the world (Nancy 2000: 41). Transhumanists to the same degree expect the arrival of the posthuman other to bring a new world and in a sense, a condition for all three is simply coexistence. Coexistence implies various modalities of being, starting with being-with, being-in-common, being-with-one-another and has “weak and unpleasant connotations” (Nancy 2000: 43) but is still the only possible manner of existence, even though the figure and identification of each of them is difficult to imagine (Nancy 2000: 47). Probably the closest figuration would be Derridian monster or a specter – and both (or all) of these possible figurations appear as spectacular for the contemporary theory (and culture). Being-together can thus also be read as being-together-at-the-spectacle, since “being-together understands itself as an inversion of the representation of itself, which it believes to be capable of giving itself as originary (and lost): the Greek city assembled in community at the theater of its own myths” (Nancy 2000: 51). The conception of being-together as being-together-at-the-spectacle is in a dialogue with a common conception of a spectacle, since it implies reading of a spectacle as a method of othering, where the subject gazes from a distance, and the object(s) are seen as exotic and external, thus not part of self. Coexistence, according to Nancy, implies such practices as are encounters, porousness, osmosis, rubbing up against, as well as attraction and repulsion (Nancy 2000: 186). As such, coexistence is existence itself, since it is not just that which happens to the existence, nor is it simply its addition.

The author suggests the conditions of the critique of the singular plurality of Being by claiming that it (a critique) has to be founded on other principles than those of the ontology of sameness and otherness<sup>27</sup>; it has to be based on a sort of *coontology* and “to support both “human” and the “non-human”; it must be an ontology for the world, for everyone” (Nancy 2000: 53).

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<sup>27</sup> Since, as Foucault suggested in “The Order of Things”, modern episteme is exactly based on the interplay between identity and difference.

### 3. 4. 5. *Being singular plural: an ongoing process*

There is a certain necessity, even urgency, in Nancy's writing, for being singular plural to be read as an entity that is ongoing, unfinished: *mêlée*. The processuality does echo a certain association to a post-structuralist opposition of the process to a structure, and it is of great importance to reflect upon this binarity in the context of the proposed mode of being (-with).

Singular plural being has to be read as a process, rather than a structure, for a structure would imply it to be a complete, stable entity. In the case of a structure, the plurality would have to become a fixed web of relations, identity. As such, Being would struggle to remain being-with, and would rather be a rigid, closed entity. Thus, if rigid and self-enclosed, transhuman subjectivity would be unable to break free from the humanist burden – from own supremacy and exceptionalism in relation to other forms of life.

This urge for approaching to an entity as to a process, action, something unfinished, incomplete and unstable, has its concretization in a chapter “Eulogy for the *Mêlée*” of Nancy's book “Being Singular Plural” (Nancy 2000: 145). Even though the author writes about a place, Sarajevo<sup>28</sup>, that has become an expression of a system for the reduction to identity, the chapter may be read as if it was about an entity other than topos – it may be read as an eulogy<sup>29</sup> for the *mêlée* of subjectivity, of selves. Re-reading of the chapter from Nancy's book may turn out to be in many ways beneficial for the endeavor of transhumanism to become posthumanist. Not only that the discussion about the community that has gone through ethnic cleansing may offer insights into (an improper) coexistence with the other, but can also emphasize various threats of

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28 Nancy initially published his book “Being Singular Plural” in 1996, less than a year after the war in Bosnia ended. Before the war, Sarajevo was a town famous for its religious, national and cultural fusions. Exactly these formerly celebrated categories were among causes for a four years long ongoing dread, ethnic cleansing and genocide. In a chapter titled “Eulogy for the *mêlée*” Nancy uses Sarajevo as a metaphor for an inoperative community and a system for the reduction to identity. Sarajevo (that of the 1996) is an example of the negation of any sort of being-with, of differences and of hospitality.

29 The author finds an act of writing a eulogy paradoxical, since a proper eulogy for the *mêlée* would be the one that wouldn't have to be given, due to the inability of identification or discerning (Nancy 2000: 147). He thus promises to give a eulogy that is itself a mixture, *mélange* – a eulogy with a reserve, the one unable to identify its object too precisely and in that manner to betray it. Nancy writes: “I am embarrassed by the idea of a “eulogy for the *mélange*” as if the *mélange* would have to be some sort of value or authenticity to be uncovered, even though it is only a piece of evidence, or, if one looks at it more closely, even though it does not exist if there is never anything “pure” that can be and must be “mixed” together (*mélanger*) with some other “purity”” (Nancy 2000: 149).

a simple opposite of negation of differences – it can indicate how a celebration of differences can also turn out to be nothing but a surface of the previous, and thus still an act of negation of being-with.

Understanding the difference between French expressions *mêlée* and *mélange* is of crucial importance for further discussion. *Mélange* could be translated as a heterogeneous mixture, that which has gone through the process of mixing. The most suitable translation of *mêlée* in this context would be to mix, mixing, stirring of heterogeneous elements – an action, rather than a substance or a finished process. The two expressions are of crucial importance for understanding of a(n inoperative) community as well as of a community of a new kind.

For Nancy, Sarajevo, and for the purposes of this analysis, *being-with*, should be a place (an entity) of *mêlée*, “a knot and an exchange, a disjunction, a circulation, a radiating (*un étoilement*)” (Nancy 2000: 145). A community does not require identification – of itself and of its members. The identification of the mixture's elements would confirm the heterogeneity and would contribute to an isolation (“of pure substances” (Nancy 2000: 147)). The process of identification is necessarily related to the confirmation of the sameness and exclusion of differences and of otherness, and is therefore in a sense contradictory to the singular plurality of being. Nancy gives a nice example of a painting that “never has anything to do with the spectrum of colors; it only has to do with the infinity mixed in with and derived from their nuances” (Nancy 2000: 147), and thus suggests movement towards *mêlée*, since giving too much identity to the *mélange* should be avoided. The author calls for a refusal of belief in such simplistic and homogeneous identities as Bosnian, Muslim, woman (or posthuman) would be. This call implies a description of webs, heterogeneous trajectories, assemblages, even a remaking of culture anew. Movement from a *mélange* towards *mêlée* has to be made, since the former is a simple (politically correct) celebration of multiculturalism and hybridization<sup>30</sup>, “a fragile thing, both subtle and volatile (...) and obscure these days” (Nancy 2000: 148).

*Mélange* is a mixture, a structure, a finished process to which a nature can be attributed – a structure that is identifiable. *Mélange* implies a risk of being essentialist, as its ingredients may

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30 Both of which still consist of pure identities, and are thus insufficient just existing “as they are” (Nancy 2000: 148).

become stable enough to make a *mélange* heterogeneous. *Mélange* has always-already taken place and Nancy suggests that it can be a mixture of two kinds, of two different identities:

that of a fusion or a thoroughgoing osmosis, or that of an accomplished state of disorder (*mise en désordre achevée*). These two fantastical extremities are alchemy and entropy, extremities that, in the end, come together and identify with one another in an apocalypse or a black hole. (Nancy 2000: 150)

The movement from *mélange* towards *mêlée* would thus be a movement from alchemy and entropy towards *mêlée* of fight and *mêlée* of love (Nancy 2000: 150). *Mélange* that is moving towards *mêlée* is that which happens rather than that which *is*. *Mélange* implies the finished process of an extraction of pure substances and of their amalgamation, whereas *mêlée* would imply the creation of an infinite spectrum of shades and nuances. The task is to accept identities as such – processes and constant ongoing identification – rather than closed structures. The discourse of simplification of the other raises the value of identity and its purity and is simultaneous with the discourse about the complementarity of moderate differences, that exact discourse designated with a certain kind of an intention, a discourse which is welcomed in moral and political urgency. Nevertheless, an identity can never be absolutely distinctive, and just as with the difference, it can never be fixed or pinned down. Thus the process, *mêlée*, has precedence over *mélange*, the substance. *Mêlée* implies weaving, crossings, exchanges, divisions; never one and the same thing. Freezing a frame in order to identify it attentively would mean a loss of the insight into a process, a whole; moments of the process to come would remain eternally lost.

Nancy writes that the first culture that consisted of different races and species, of *homo erectus*, *homo faber* and *homo sapiens* was a *mêlée* itself (Nancy 2000: 151). Cultures are *mêlée* since it cannot really be said that a certain culture is a mixture. Of course, cultures do encounter, modify and reconfigure each other, as the author suggests, even cultivate and drain each other (Nancy 2000: 151), since the movements and developments of culture are the movement and development of *mêlée*. *Mêlée* can also be described as that instance which determines various characteristics of every culture. It is originary and necessary rather than accidental and contingent (Nancy 2000: 156). *Mêlée* is that which makes being singular plural a process, since it keeps constantly occurring and happening. Just as every culture is always-already multicultural, so is the every community always-already a multitude.

A eulogy for the *mêlée* is a critique of pure identities. Pure, complete, self-sufficient identities are among the greatest threats for any sort of community<sup>31</sup>, especially those of coexistence of radical alterities. Nancy goes further to claim that pure identity is not only dangerous, inert and empty, but also absurd, that which cancels itself by not being able to identify itself (Nancy 2000: 153). By being identical only to itself, by only mixing with itself, by identity performs autism, even auto-eroticism, remains trapped in loops and therefore fails to exist and remains utterly deprived of relations. Nancy poetically writes that “(p)urity is a crystalline chasm where the identical, the proper, the authentic is engulfed by itself; it is nothing at all, and it drags the other along in order to carry it into the abyss” (Nancy 2000: 154). An intact and pure identity is an empty place, an absence, since nothing is capable of existing pure, isolated and beyond any kind of boundaries with something else. The very existence of boundaries between the supposedly pure entity and the other implies a contact and therefore the inability of being intact.

*Mêlée* is that which insists on identities and communities to be plural and shared, since one of its modalities is that which Nancy describes as *mêlée* of Hermes: “a *mêlée* of messages and paths, bifurcations, substitutions, concurrences of codes, configurations of space, frontiers made to be passed through, so that there can be passages, but ones that are shared – because there is never any identity that is not shared: that is, divided, mixed up, distinguished, entrenched, common, substitutable, insubstitutable, withdrawn, exposed” (Nancy 2000: 157). The other, just as cities, is also a *mêlée* for itself – it has millions of citizens, incomprehensible chronotopes, numerous histories, secret passages as well as ancient cities ruined and hidden under the surface.

### **3. 4. 6. Transhumanist *mêlée*: a rhizome**

The being-with of transhuman subjectivity would have to be a *mêlée*, that which keeps happening. It would have to be a creation of an infinite spectrum of shades and nuances and coexistence that is also a *mêlée* with all sorts of non-human subjectivity. The transhuman self would have to embrace its “illegitimate offspring” (Haraway 1991: 43) with both human and

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31 Nancy writes: “With all due rigor, who was ever pure enough to be an Aryan worthy of the name?” (Nancy 2000: 154), and thus reminds us of numerous dreadful examples of insisting on pure identities throughout history.

posthuman subjectivity, and to confirm itself as such, for a pure transhumanist identity (the one that is not *mêlée*) would remain an absurdity. As that which has gained supremacy over both human and non-human animals and over all sorts of marginalized human cultural identities, a pure transhumanist entity tends to be a possible answer to Nancy's question related to a subjectivity that would be “an Aryan worthy of the name” (Nancy 2000: 154).

Transhumanist *mêlée* has to be a rhizomatic<sup>32</sup> identity: it has to have a great number of forms and to be consistent of likes, not points. Rhizomatic transhumanist identity cannot have a beginning nor an end, but has to merge in the middle. It should be a part of a complex environment and constantly open and susceptible to changes. Rhizomes are part of the multitude and are a multitude in themselves – never one, finished, but always (*n-1*) (Deleuze, Guattari 1987: 6-7). The transhumanist *mêlée* should lean toward alliances and heterogeneous connections as well as to replace the exclusionary *or* with an affirmative *and*. Transhumanist subjectivity that coexists in a community with various forms of human and non-human subjectivity has to simultaneously think contradictory concepts and to be open to communities based on affinity, rather than on identity (Haraway 1991: 43). Rhizomatic subjectivity never exists alone and in isolation, but are constantly being deterritorialized and reterritorialized – they are part of chaosmosis (Guattari 2005: 32), of chaotic osmosis of variable connections, never of a strictly ordered cosmos. A strictly ordered cosmos would imply rigidity and in the best case an attempt at a *mélange* (that of pure identities). Transhuman subjectivity, as well as a community of transhuman and non-transhuman subjectivity, should not possibly be reducible to *one*, nor to a multitude: just as rhizomes are, it is made of dimensions and directions, not of units ((Deleuze, Guattari 1987: 14). Even the relation with the posthuman self should not be understood as a threat, since rhizomatic transhumanist subjectivity would have to function based on variations and expansion and not on a reproduction based on conquering (Deleuze, Guattari 1987: 18). A transhuman identity that is a *mêlée* should be a self that is made of an infinite number of partial identities, that identity which simultaneously thinks oppositional perspectives and pushes and blurs all possible boundaries. Finally, it should be capable of disabling a possibility of existence

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32 Rhizome is a philosophical concept developed by Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze in the first volume “Anti-Oedipus” of their work “Capitalism and Schizophrenia” (1972). In the second volume, titled “A Thousand Plateaus” written in 1980, the authors developed principles of the rhizome.

of any sort of matrices that could serve the purpose of constituting essentialist identities.

## **4. SEMIOTICIZING OTHERNESS**

The notion of the rewriting of boundaries has been touched upon several times now, and this issue may be considered as a semiotic issue par excellence. The importance of more attentive thinking of the notion of boundaries is invaluable for any sort of further inquiry into the weaknesses, opportunities or threats to transhuman subjectivity; thus it should be analyzed more thoroughly. The call made for being to be understood as being-with, for identities to be rhizomatic and dialectical-integrative, is a call for the (semiotic) remodeling of subjectivity. One of the most important features of Juri Lotman's model of semiosphere (Lotman 2005) is precisely the notion of boundary, and thus (and also for other reasons, which will be stated in pages to come) this model appears as the most suitable for this purpose. Not only is this model helpful for rethinking the boundaries of transhuman subjectivity, but Lotman's description of the mechanisms of translation, of dialogue between center and periphery, as well as isomorphism between part and a whole also offer precious insights. Further on, although he belongs to a tradition that is similar but in many aspects very far from Lotman's, relating Derrida's analysis of aporia(s) to Lotman's problematization of intersemiotic translation (or rather, untranslatability) seems fruitful and may offer insights of great importance for remodeling subjectivity. The problem of untranslatability appears as the instance that may enrich the being-with of the transhuman and its otherness – the other transhuman subjects, the foreign, still incomprehensible posthuman other, as well as those types of non-transhuman otherness that precede it – human and non-human animals. Untranslatability is also the instance that may contribute to an endeavor or a fight against perfectly coded language, as proposed by Donna Haraway. Finally, as Lotman suggests, untranslatability produces explosions and new meaning, and this issue has to be necessarily emphasized in order for the transhuman subjectivity to be understood as that which can truly overcome the limitations and burden created by humanism (especially that of the Age of Reason).

### **4. 1. Semiosphere(s) of the self and the other**

If hospitality has to do with doorsteps and thresholds, community with acceptance and

exclusions, identity with limits and openness, then the question of boundaries – a genuinely semiotic one – is at the core of understanding the coexistence of the transhuman with the non-transhuman. Semiotization of both the self and the other has to start with a questioning of their boundaries. In order to suggest the semiotic model of subjectivity or identity that can contribute to the coexistence of the transhuman self with its other, first it has to be noted that the proceeding analysis will be a simultaneous modeling of the isomorphic semiospheres of the transhuman self, the semiospheres of transhuman *selves*, as well as the semiospheres of its Other – posthuman, human and non-human animals.

Lotman writes that meaning is not possible without sharing and communication, as well as that dialogue that necessarily comes before language and even makes it possible (Lotman 2005: 218). His model of the semiosphere is a confirmation of Nancy's premise that being-with always comes before being, since Lotman, while describing his model, states that

the ensemble of semiotic formations precedes (not heuristically but functionally) the singular isolated language and becomes a condition for the existence of the latter. Semiosphere itself consist semiotics monads, languages and other meaningful units. Minimal meaning-generating mechanism needs at least two coding system through which it gives meaning to non-semiotic reality. Thus, without the semiosphere, language is not possible. The different substructures of the semiosphere are linked in their interaction and cannot function without the support of each other. (Lotman 2005: 218-219)

Lotman's concept of the semiosphere is in a sense a response to the limitations of two famous lines of understanding of the basic semiotic concepts: Peirce-Morris' line emphasizes the sign as the most important element of a sign system (which is necessarily the succession of a sign), as well as Saussure's double formulation of the sign and opposition between language and text (Lotman 2005: 205 – 206). As an analogy to Vernadsky's concept of the biosphere, Lotman suggests a semiotic continuum in which mono-semantic systems<sup>33</sup> are immersed and “which is filled with multi-variant semiotic models situated at a range of hierarchical levels” (Lotman 2005: 206). The semiosphere is thus a multitude of individual isolated entities (due to his tradition, Lotman refers to texts and languages) that are in a certain manner related. Lotman uses organicistic metaphors in order to describe the model more accurately. What makes the

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33 Lotman claims that mono-semantic never exist in isolation (Lotman 2005: 206), and could be thus designated as being-with.

semiosphere more suitable for modeling the self and the other for the current purposes is the fact that primacy is not given to signs, but to a “greater system”, a semiotic continuum outside of which semiosis cannot happen (Lotman 2005: 206).

Previously understood as impermeable, boundaries of the self in the context of semiosphere are rather seen as “bilingual translatable ‘filters’, passing through which the text is translated into another language (or languages) situated outside the given semiosphere” (Lotman 2005: 209). As such, the boundaries of the self are rather a sum of points than a clearly drawn line. As a filtering mechanism that translates incomprehensible foreign content into the known and familiar, the main function of the boundary is not only to protect, defend and to limit penetration, but to semiotize content. It serves the purpose of translation of external communication into something internal and comprehensive, as well as the other way around. The boundary of the semiosphere of the self thus cannot be simply understood as a limit, a dead end, a thick border – but rather as a frontier and a threshold; as that instance which enables any sort of communication with external, non-semiotic space. External and non-semiotic spaces are often designated as chaotic, although they only appear as a different kind of order or organization.

Lotman writes that “a person who [...] belongs to two worlds, operates as a kind of interpreter, settling in the territorial periphery, on the boundary of cultural and mythological space, whilst the sanctuary of ‘culture’ confines itself to the deified world situated at the center” (Lotman 2005: 211), and in a certain sense this person, this interpreter, may be compared to Derrida's monstrous gatekeeper. Its nature is bilingual, or even multilingual, and as that which ensures semiotic contact between two universes it is prone to the aforementioned illegitimate fusions and resists any sort of essentialist categorization. In a sense, it is desirable for transhuman subjectivity to always remain at the core of the boundary, as gatekeeper, that which will remain rebellious towards the humanist burden of supremacy and exceptionalism. Even more so, it is desirable for transhuman subjectivity to be that which unites and divides two spheres of semiosis that are otherness to it as well as to each other: human and non-human (and by necessarily including non-human animals and posthuman subjectivity, this would make the transhuman the entity that unites much more than two other semiospheres). As a gatekeeper, transhuman subjectivity would also serve another function and would have other features of this semiotic boundary – it would represent the area of “accelerated semiotic processes, which always

flow more actively on the periphery of cultural environments, seeking to affix them to the core structures, with a view to displacing them” (Lotman 2005: 212). A kind of subjectivity that tends towards the periphery is therefore constantly enriched, and ultimate hospitality thus necessarily means further development and flourishing. External structures are often encompassed and turned into another periphery, and in turn (due to both semiotic and economic growth), the former center is challenged and conquered (Lotman 2005: 212). The dynamics between the center and the periphery continue and the dialogue between the two is preserved. Nevertheless, this indicates another rule of organization of a semiosphere – that of internal irregularity. Lotman explains how core or nuclear structures may rise to a state of self-description and become rigid, and thus unable to adjust to the very moment: “If one of these nuclear structures not only holds a dominant position, but also rises to a state of self-description, thereby separating itself from the system of meta-languages, with the help of which it describes not only itself but also the peripheral space of a given semiosphere, then the level of its ideal unity creates a superstructure which itself is above the irregularity of a real semiotic map” (Lotman 2005: 213). This is exactly what happens when, in a semiosphere of *white male professional European humans*, having risen to a state of self-description, the rigidity (of strict boundaries of what a desirable “human” can (not) be) has been increased to such great extent that its development has been slowed down<sup>34</sup>. While the development of the center is slowed, the peripheral areas continue to burgeon. Internal irregularity thus indicates the displacement of the core to the periphery (of the previous stage), so that the former periphery becomes a center of a semiotic system.

Thus, this is another feature that gives to a semiosphere prevalence over other semiotic formations for this current purpose, since it enables the aforementioned possibility of simultaneous modeling of isomorphic semiospheres of the transhuman self, semiospheres of transhuman *selves*, as well as semiospheres of its Other – posthuman, human and non-human animals. The dialogue between the center and the periphery, as an internal diversity of the semiosphere, necessarily also indicates the integrity of the system. Lotman writes that parts and

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34 Obviously, such generalizations have been present even in periods that are not designated as peaks of humanism. Examples of achievements of racial, gender and national otherness that have risen from the periphery to become a center are numerous throughout history. This generalization, however, is very problematic, but is nevertheless suitable for these purposes.

wholes of semiospheres are related to each other as parts and wholes of an organism, making “the essential feature of the structural formation of the core mechanism of the semiosphere the fact that each of its parts creates its own whole, isolated in its structural independence” (Lotman 2005: 215), and thus revealing an isomorphic quality – elements of any semiosphere are simultaneously a whole and its likeness (Lotman 2005: 215). Vertical isomorphism between the semiospheres of, for example, transhuman and posthuman selves, thus creates the quantitative increase in their communication.

#### ***4. 1. 1. Translation***

Finally, the structural heterogeneity of semiospheres in Lotman's opinion implies reserves of dynamic processes and is a mechanism for the creation of new information. Boundaries and peripheries as areas of increased dynamic processes and semiotic exchanges consist of fragments of structures, and their position enables frequent contact with the other. Thus, in these areas meaning generation appears to be enhanced. The author suggests that “the eternal flow in culture of specific reserves of text with lost codes leads to the process of creation of new codes” (Lotman 2005: 215), new languages, and thus once again confirms the necessity of boundaries to be seen as permeable filters, rather than limitations.

Any sort of communication between two or more different entities, then, implies facing a multitude of boundaries, and therefore a certain kind of impossibility. The existence of boundaries in this process suggests that their crossing, their translation, is desirable, even though the content on both sides is so different that the two realities cannot be fully equated. According to Lotman and Uspenski, for culture in general there also exist types of culture that move towards closeness, types of anti-culture. The crossing of so-called filtering membranes is also a search for a common language between realities – one that could semiotize the external into the internal and translate meaning as accurately as possible. The existence of at least two different languages – or rather sign systems – is necessary, since one is not enough to enable adequate reflection of the overall reality. Multitudes of different sign systems give rise to different tensions which, as Lotman suggests, initiate explosions – which are desirable, for they in turn give rise to new meanings and the generation of new information. Explosions of this kind are

often unpredictable future events, but it should be noted that they are also very different than the Derridian understanding of the unpredictable *à venir*. After the initial tension and explosion comes the period of making sense of the event of explosion, of fixing it within structures (of memory and the like). Unlike explosions, *à venir* never actualizes, the arrivant always remains in the process of coming or emerging and the tension never ends.

Nevertheless, translation between various sign systems (initial untranslatability) implies description and development and therefore also enrichment of – on a greater scale – culture in general. Both interlingual and intersemiotic translations are inexhaustible sources of autocommunication of culture. Lotman’s writing on boundaries and (un)translatability is not only relevant for the description of cultural phenomena, but as another argument for post-structuralist treatments of power relations, with a focus on the problems of otherness. The problem(s) of otherness are related to the constitution of subjectivity and identity and can be expanded to a culture in general. The impossibility of translation and constant efforts to make it possible necessarily create new meanings, since a multitude of different sign systems is used in order to more accurately transfer meaning.

Translation between radically different semiospheres is therefore in a certain sense based on the condition of its untranslatability. As such, boundaries of semiospheres, as entities that have an impossibility as a condition of their possibility, are similar to the Derridian understanding of *aporia*. For the purpose of further analysis, this coincidence has to be analyzed more thoroughly, and the semiotic approach to translation has to be juxtaposed to the philosophical.

#### ***4. 1. 2. Derridian haunting multi-fold aporia(s)***

The philosophical concept of translation is, just as the semiotic, wider than the linguistic one. It refers to any sort of interpretation or decoding of the foreign into the familiar. The very fact that something implies interpretation of the foreign into the familiar indicates a relation to the issue of otherness. Derrida writes about the relation of the aforementioned *à venir* and translation, or rather, of the impossibility of translation, in his book “*Aporias: Dying – Awaiting (One Another At) the “Limits of Truth”*” (2003). An understanding of the Derridian usage of the notion of

aporias<sup>35</sup> opens a space for understanding the final *à venir* in a situation where translation is no longer possible. Such is the situation of the encounter of the transhuman self with its radical alterity, the posthuman. The author describes *aporia* as

the difficult or the impracticable, here the impossible passage, the refused, denied, or prohibited passage, indeed the non passage, which can in fact be something else, the event of a coming, or of a future advent (*événement de venue ou d'avenir*), which no longer has the form of the movement that consists in passing, traversing, or transiting. It would be “coming to pas” of an event that would no longer have the form or the appearance of a pas: in sum, a coming without *pas*. (Derrida 1996: 8).

As the author writes in this book about mourning and dying (as a limiting concept that cannot be experienced by the one who is dying), the question implied in the above quotation is the one related to what it means to trespass the border, a boundary that separates two worlds – that of living and that of death – and it is certainly a question, not a confirmation of the existence of boundaries, in this case impermeable *aporias*.

The notion of *aporia* is common for issues that permeate many of Derrida's works – for hospitality, mourning, forgiveness and (gift) giving. *Aporia* is exactly that instance that renders a thought about these concepts paradoxical, since for the author *aporia* is that which constitutes both the condition of possibility and that of impossibility for all four instances. The resolution of this paradox is not achievable by taking into an account the opposite of *aporia* - *poros* and *diaporein*, which have been seen as a possible route out of the initial difficulty (of *aporia*)<sup>36</sup> for a long time. The existence of *aporias* implies the situation of a transition from “a familiar space to one that is not familiar: it is a passage from one stage to another and vice versa, from light to obscurity or the other way around” (Kofman 1983: 45).

The resolving of an *aporia* has been problematic for the entire history of thought about this notion, and Derrida finally calls for *a new type of aporia* (rather than a new understanding of the old concept) that would imply the arrival of the expected future advent of the event to be

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35 Derrida calls for (or rather insists on) a usage of the plural form of the word *aporia*, since it disables the possibility of creation of “an institution of indivisible lines” (Derrida 1996: 11) and since boundaries are always multi-sided.

36 Aristotle has carefully investigated notions of *poros*, *diaporein* and *aporia* in his “*Metaphysics*” and thus has set foundations for their further understanding. There is no need to describe his understanding more thoroughly for the purposes of this analysis, since Derridian understanding is sufficient for further investigation into the issue of translation.

unrelated to

the passage of what happens or comes to pass. In this case, there would be an *aporia* because there is not even any space for an *aporia* determined as experience of the step or of the edge, crossing or not of some line, relation to some spatial figure of the limit. (Derrida 1996: 21)

Put simply, it would be an *aporia* that refuses the possibility of the *aporia* and of the trespassing of boundaries in general. The author suggests that resolving *aporias* by following pre-determined courses is not a possibility, in addition to all *aporias* being temporary (Derrida 1996: 23). Even though *aporias* have always been associated with the unbridgeable, infinite voids, abysses, as foreign and as hostile worlds, Derrida writes that all aporetic problems in discourse can be solved and paths can be made, regardless of the language. Imagining the figuration of a new type of *aporia* is impossible, since it encompasses all the other existing types of *aporias* – it is a plurality of intermingling *aporias* that haunt each other infinitely.

Derridian scholar Jean Paul Martinon describes the first type of which the new type of *aporia* is consistent as that which is in a sense an impermeability or an uncrossable border, whereas the second type is its opposite and originates from the impossibility of the existence of limitations, from the lack of opposition between two sides (Martinon 2007: 119). The third, new type of *aporia* that Derrida calls for is thus an impossibility, negation of the passage,

an impasse itself that would be impossible; the coming or the new future advent of the event would have no relation to the passage of what happens or comes to pass (...) There would not even be any space for the *aporia* because of a lack of topographical conditions, or, more radically, because of a lack of the topological condition itself. (Derrida 1996: 20)

Three types of *aporias* are now understood as intermingled, many-fold, and haunting each other – an impassable dead end; untranslatability. Derrida even denies the very possibility of identifying the moment of encounter with the *aporia*, but he mentions elsewhere that a new type of *aporia* is simultaneously concerned with ontology and with thought and language. As an essential part of both language and ontological fields, *aporias* are the instances that are always present in lives (just as much as in death, about which Derrida writes in his book on *aporias*), without its necessary acknowledgement, “it follows us like our very own shadow and yet it never belongs to us properly” (Derrida 1996: 12).

Derrida calls for the creation of a braid of three different *aporias*, which should not be

considered as an object or a structure, but rather as an infinite weaving and unweaving of itself; that which is eternally haunted by what escapes it. The infinite weaving of non-paths – the impossibility – is once again that instance which renders these boundaries, borders, thresholds and limits necessary.

#### ***4. 1. 3. Untranslatability as a condition for cyborg politics***

For various disciplines among the so-called liberal humanities as well as posthumanities, otherness derives its essence from Derrida's notion of *différance*. Otherness is always in a sense related to the untranslatability and (a crossing of) boundaries. Donna Haraway has, for example, tried to explain how both *différance* and untranslatability may be key weapons in resistance against oppression, in this case against the totalitarian power of white heterosexual male Christian professional Western domination (Haraway 1991: 20). Resistance is directed towards translation of the world into a problem of perfectly exact coding and situations in which signifiers signify clearly defined, unambiguous, stable signifieds. This sub-chapter is an analysis of how and why Lotman's concepts of boundaries and translation (or rather, untranslatability), as well as Derridian difference are relevant for the further remodeling of transhuman subjectivity and its coexistence with not just posthuman subjectivities, but non-transhuman subjectivities in general.

For this purpose, Donna Haraway's conception of cyborg politics<sup>37</sup> (Haraway 1991: 32) as (among other things) a critique of totalitarian language turns out as an instance that may contribute to the analysis of untranslatability to a great extent. Haraway suggests that noise in communication and untranslatability may be elements of crucial importance in the fight against oppression.

As mentioned, boundaries should be understood as sums of points and bilingual translatable filters, rather than fixed impermeable structures. These slippery, permeable margins are then a key notion for understanding Haraway's concept of cyborg politics. It is also the

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37 Haraway's notion of cyborg politics is, put simply, a politics of (already described) cyborg ontology. Cyborg politics implies a call for a constant reading of webs of power relations, for communities based on affinity rather than on identity and for a fight against a perfect code (Haraway 1991: 39).

foundation of a cyborg, whose identity would be richer due to (mis)communication at this fluid, hottest spot of the semiosphere.

Problems arise with regard to translating content into a reality that lays on the other side of these permeable filters. Translation presumes the existence of two or more different sign systems, which together would reflect reality with some accuracy. A bilingual or multilingual structure is a minimal functional structure, since a single language or point of view gives rise to “worse illusions than double vision or many-headed monsters” (Haraway 1991: 44). The necessity of the existence of aggregates of independent and different languages represents an opposition to the centuries old ideal of a single ideal language which would be sufficient for the expression of reality. The tower of Babel had to collapse, since what its top would have reached are exactly the illusions and monsters that Haraway warns about – burdens of the Enlightenment embodied in God, Truth, the One, the Absolute and the Final (Haraway 1991: 35). The need for a multitude of languages is not a deficit, but a simple precondition. It is not just a requirement for other languages, but for other entities in general: for other subjectivities and other cultures. But the other has its own structures that can never be translated and understood, its own chronotopes that can never be fully perceived. Even when relationships of adequacy are established between two entities, untranslatability and/or limited translatability arise. Both represent a sort of adjustment of extra-systemic objects to their reflection within the system. Situations in which partial adequacy between systems is established often result in imprecise, approximate equivalences which “provoke new semantic connections and give rise to texts that are in principle new ones” (Lotman 1990: 37). Untranslatability is a condition for meaning generation in the sense that complex relationships between translatable and untranslatable elements of incommensurable systems generate the conditions for meaning generation. Large degrees of untranslatability also imply a great potential for the creation of new meanings, according to Lotman. Incommensurability, as the impossibility of adequately representing one element within another system, arises especially in the case of translation between discreet and non-discrete texts. Mutually equivalent relationships are rarely established between the units of two systems, and such attempts at translations of the untranslatable are both most valuable and most tempting and constitute “one of the most important features of creative thinking” (Lotman 1990: 37). Creative resistance is part of Haraway’s cyborg politics. It is a call for expressions that are

composed of contradictory, untranslatable entities that would serve as an act against suppression. Communication is more valuable and informative in the case of difficult and inadequate translations between non-intersecting spheres, and translation of the untranslatable is thus a carrier of information of the highest value (Lotman 1990).

In order to describe how untranslatability may be useful for the coexistence of transhuman and non-transhuman subjectivities, Derrida's notion of *différance* (Derrida 1998: 14) also has to be described, for it is essential for further inquiry. In his book "Of Grammatology" written in 1967, Derrida has stated that truth and knowledge are only existent on the level of the signifier, ie. that truth is a matter of what one can say or write and is being done by relaying on the Other (Derrida 1998: 43), and this is where he seriously questioned the whole Western tradition of thought. An important part of this book is his re-reading (or rather, deconstruction, instead of a critique) of Saussure's ideas, among which is the relation between speech and writing<sup>38</sup>. The author also questions the implications of what remains in Saussure's works if logocentrism (which is a consequence of phonocentrism) is removed from it, which brings him closer to the description of his notion of *différance*. Derrida explains that meaning is not situated in the signifier, but exists in a relation of signs, in a network (Derrida 1998: 73). Thus he radically questions the idea of one final, ultimate meaning, and also the existence of Truth. *Différance* comes before being and is placed in the very core of existence, instead of essence. Nothing can be outside of Saussure's system of differences and therefore absolute identities are not possible. Derrida explains that the description of one entity is always based on exclusion. He uses the example of nature and culture, and how nature is always explained as the absence of

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38 Derrida states that Saussure was prone to phonocentrism, and that linguistics itself gives precedence to speech over writing. Writing is considered to be secondary and nothing more than the transcription of speech. Saussure, according to Derrida, accused writing of being, in many ways, monstrous, sinful, perverted and tyrannical (Derrida 1998: 32). On the other hand, he claims that writing keeps signifying even in the author's absence, even though readers may not have any access to the author's intended meaning (Derrida 1998: 57). Meaning is therefore something that is perpetually being produced as opposed to one finished, immanent structure. Writing endangers the Western logocentric tradition in which ideas - which come first - are actualized in speech, and then transcribed in writing. At very core of logocentrism is meaning, and the signified is existent firstly in the sphere of pure consciousness and is then actualized in its external form in language. Derrida also claims that pure and free-standing signified entities (or ideas) are not existent, and considers the search for the transcendental signified (the only meaning which determines all other meanings - one, ultimate Truth) to be absurd (Derrida 1998: 60). Also, if meaning is considered to be an effect of language, and not its cause, these notions lose their transcendental status (Derrida 1998: 61).

culture. One term cannot be excluded from the meaning of the other, and therefore meaning depends on differences. It also implies postponing (defer-ing)<sup>39</sup>, especially if one signifier differs from the other and therefore defers meanings which it produces (Derrida 1998: 78). Logocentrism implies the existence of pure meaning and final truths, but in both speech and writing only the signifier is present, and the presence of meaning as a pure idea is postponed (deferred), suppressed, and suspended by the signifier.

This insight into Derridian deconstruction once again brings us close to his notion of the metaphysics of presence and the paradox of possibility. Following his line of thought, one could say that the impossible is the only possibility, since what is possible is both possible and impossible to happen. The impossible, on the other hand, is definitely impossible to happen, and is therefore the only possible option. Différance is thus neither active nor passive; it is a process. It is the only source of meaning and has no content. Derrida makes this notion even more complicated and states how it is neither present nor transcendent; that it is not even a notion nor a word. Finally, Derrida writes about the impossibility of mentioning any notion in speech and not recalling its transcription, so writing therefore always penetrates speech (Derrida 1998: 82). Saussure's double articulation of signs, the closed and finished circle, may indicate that every signifier carries its own one and only meaning. But deconstruction, with its suggestion that neither signifier nor signified, but différance is the only source of meaning, moves meaning towards undecidability and through this process democratizes language and helps overcome highly hierarchical binary oppositions. Finally, Derrida opens up a new space for interpretations and analysis and suggests that meanings are not given nor guaranteed but lived, and therefore prone to questioning and mutations.

The central dogma of phallogocentrism, one code that translates all meaning perfectly, is at the heart of the resistance against perfect communication. It is precisely this which Donna Haraway calls cyborg politics – the struggle for language(s) filled with noise, pollution and illegitimate fusions. She writes in a context that is designated within the tradition of progress, racism, white male domination, capitalism and the constitution and reproduction of subjectivity

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39 In French language word *différer* means both to differentiate and to defer or postpone.

in relation to the other. Haraway founds her critique of socialist-feminism on a statement that, just as in other forms of feminism, is another tearing down in the search for new matrices for essential identities, and thus wrong (Haraway 1991: 52). Finally, she describes cyborg politics as a force that can generate language and gender and thus subvert structures of the reproduction of dominant categories of identities as well as problematic binary oppositions:

With no available original dream of a common language or original symbiosis promising protection from hostile “masculine” separation, but written into the play of a text that has no finally privileged reading or salvation history, to recognize “oneself” as fully implicated in the world, frees us of the need to root politics in identification, vanguard parties, purity, and mothering. Stripped of identity, the bastard race teaches about the power of the margins. (Haraway 1991: 54)

Haraway thus calls for humor and seriousness, and for simultaneous acknowledgment and usage of contradictory and incompatible entities since both/all of them are necessary and correct (Haraway 1991: 48). She calls for responsibility in the construction of the boundaries of various semiospheres, being aware of their importance and understanding their function in a way very close to Lotman. But she also calls for deriving pleasure from the confusion of boundaries – blasphemy in the construction of identity. She uses the metaphor of the cyborg in order to describe a new kind of subjectivity that would be a desirable entity in a post-gender world:

it has no truck with bisexuality, pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labour, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity. The cyborg is resolutely committed to partiality, irony, intimacy, and perversity. It is oppositional, utopian, and completely without innocence. No longer structured by the polarity of public and private, the cyborg defines a technological polls based partly on a revolution of social relations in the oikos, the household. Nature and culture are reworked; the one can no longer be the resource for appropriation or incorporation by the other. (Haraway 1991: 59)

The cyborg is the gatekeeper of a boundary and at the same time it represents the transgression of a boundary. Haraway reminds readers that the consequences for feminism of overall textualization in post-structuralist theory are reflected in the neglect of relations of domination that are based in a playful arbitrary reading (Haraway 1991: 52). The myth of the cyborg promises to subvert organic wholes such as literary forms (she gives the example of poetry), primitive cultures, and similar constructs (Haraway 1991: 65). Indisputably, political struggle against perfect codes offers coalitions based on affinity, rather than identity, as well as a model

of oppositional consciousness, political identity that entails skills for reading and understanding webs of power relations. Webs of power relations have to be deconstructed by those who bear negative identities, or are exempted from stable categories of race, class and gender – but also species.

Finally, Haraway explains more thoroughly why noise and untranslatability are necessary for this new kind of politics. She gives the example of communication sciences, where the translation of the world as a problem of coding is characterized by cybernetic systems theory, feedback loops, command and control communication (Haraway 1991: 74). These are systems where each signifier has to have one clearly definable, unambiguous signified. The metaphor is extended to social reality, where each social practice or social role has to function according to the same mechanism. And this is what Haraway criticizes – gender identity cannot be based on exclusive or fixed categories. It should be an affirmative rather than negative identity, simultaneously male and female (transhuman as well as the non-transhuman), thus going beyond these categories and making them irrelevant. If it were put in Lotman's dictionary and modeled as a semiosphere, cyborg identity would be multilingual gatekeeper, always placed in the center of a margin. Just like Derridian *différance*, cyborg subjectivity is not a complete entity but a process; absence rather than presence. It is always immersed in a network from which it derives meaning.

## 5. TRANSHUMANISM AND OTHERNESS IN TELEVISION SERIES „ÄKTA MÄNNISKOR”

The theoretical framework provided above enriches certain aspects of transhumanism with an alternative approach to the problem of being-with the radically different other. As for the chosen transhuman self the figure of ultimate otherness (the posthuman other) is that which has not emerged yet, giving unambiguous, rigid answers and setting clear, certain hypothesis has to be avoided. In a sense, the posthuman self is that entity that suits the Derridian description of *l'arrivant*, as it may remain in a constant process of emergence and may not ever realize itself fully. *L'arrivant* should not be understood as a person nor as a subject, as with the posthuman self. For lack of a better figure to which the theoretical framework can be applied, a fictional representation must be chosen. Scientific assumptions of what posthuman otherness might be like are represented in a vast scope of literary and cinematographic achievements. Many of them are incredibly interesting, but among them the Swedish television series „Äkta Människor” has been chosen for its recent popularity and due to its carefully constructed relations between human, transhuman and posthuman selves.

The plot of the series has members of the fictional organization “Real Humans” fight for the extinction of hubots from society, since they are perceived as a threat to the quality of human lives. Though the organization is named “Real Humans”, many of its members can be designated as transhumans, due to their usage of either cognitive, mood or physical enhancements. This is interesting as it brings back one of the oldest questions in transhumanist debates – how many implants or enhancements does it take before a person stops being human, and becomes transhuman?

As hubots in the series have been created wholly anew, without ever being humans, they may be considered as posthuman entities. The only unquestionable transhuman in the series, as is aforementioned, is Leo, whose father saved his life after an accident in his childhood by using both nano- and biotechnology. By asserting the humanist values of exceptionalism and supremacy, members of the organization “Real Humans” are unable to think the Other, and are incapable of contemplating differences, as well as of thinking, differently. Through numerous public campaigns during the first season of the series, they attempt to reach out to the wider public and gain support. But in a community consisting of other humans, there are also those

who are celebrating and praising their hubots. This kind of adoration cannot be seen as a transcendence of humanist limitations, but only as its repetition and further confirmation.

The notion of *l'arrivant* that is afoot, unknown and unthinkable by the present, the one that breaks all of the rules, does not completely fit the figure of liberated hubots presented in the series. Nevertheless, as the Derridian metaphor has been overused by now, it might be slightly adjusted for the current purposes, as it is the most suitable, regardless the differences. The arrival of liberated hubots predicted in the end of the first season of the series, just as Derridian *à-venir*, has undoubtedly initiated a change in the direction in which society as a whole has been headed. Morals, laws and rules have been interrupted and finitude was rethought. What is still yet to come<sup>40</sup> is provoking unexpected junctures and disjointedness. The few glimpses that the audience has into the being and activities of liberated hubots witnesses a ruptured, disobedient posthuman otherness that escapes mastery and determinable grounds; entities that break all of the rules and resist every attempt of *normalization* and purification. Arriving otherness indeed does bear the possibility of repetition, as Derrida suggests (Derrida 2002:83), by the further liberation of other hubots, the creation of new and repair of old, neglected ones. A tone of messianicity is present in the arrival of this radical alterity; messianicity without religion in this case. Messianicity is present also in the other sense that has also been described by Derrida – that of remaining (trapped) in the state of the emergence.

Liberated hubots, just as *l'arrivant* does, arrive when they are least expected, where they are least expected. They approach the thresholds of households without invitation, and require unconditional hospitality and acceptance. Leo and Mimi, two main characters, together with several other hubots, require coexistence that transcends hierarchy. The family in which Mimi lived and worked before the liberation did offer her unconditional hospitality, even when the integrity of the family was threatened. As the ones who have offered help, members of the family have waited for other liberated hubots, without knowing for whom they have been waiting, nor whether their guests will be Messiahs or monsters.

When in one of the episodes of “Äkta människor” Inger makes her argument about how hubots should be included as equal members of a society, she speaks exactly about hospitality.

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40 The second season of the series is in the process of post-production during the writing of this thesis.

She mentions historical examples of how Western society has not allowed various forms of cultural otherness to pass its threshold, leaving them on margins: women, slaves, foreigners. Not offering a free pass over the threshold, *hospitality into a home*, resulted in leaving the other not only physically, but also morally, legally and culturally secluded. Inger warns about repeating the age-old mistake of not offering unconditional participation into society, whose consequences are evident in various dreads and terrors throughout history.

The new reading of the notion of community implies an embrace of radical otherness as well as an offering of absolute hospitality. Nancy's challenge to the traditional understanding of a community is a challenge to supporters of the movement "Real Humans" – to a community that rests on exclusiveness and is self-enclosed (Nancy: 1991), to a community which rests upon an exclusionary myth of a sense of unity among humans. The desirable kind of community, on the other hand, is the one where being is understood as *being-with* hubots, where identity always necessarily includes otherness. The new modality, being-with, implies all the threats suggested by Nancy's reading of Derrida's theoretization of hospitality – threats of being exposed or being abandoned by hubots used as help and company. Being exposed to hubots by referring to them, trusting them and by believing in them. Humans and hubots cannot exist in isolation in as much as mutual exclusion or ignorance would harm the existence of both. The human self necessarily had to open its boundaries and become a multitude, to become singular plural with its ultimate other, since, as Nancy suggests, the self only exists through sharing of the world (Nancy 2000: 29). And this sharing of the world, but also communication between human owners and hubots, happens with the otherness of the other; since the other only exists in its otherness. Thus the being of the transhuman self has to be being-with all the other selves, whether human, posthuman or the non-human. Being-with posthuman selves has to imply weaving, crossings, exchange; it has to be a process, it has to be *mêlée*; and that is exactly what liberated hubots are demanding. The emphasis on a rebellious life that liberated hubots are living, designated as "amoral" by the society of transhumans and humans, in a sense functions as a confirmation of the need for the impurity of posthuman identities, for incompleteness as opposed to complete and self-sufficient identities, which are seen as some of the greatest threats for this alternative reading of the notion of community – for coexistence with the radical other. The pure identities of members of the "Real Humans" organization are not only dangerous and inert, according to

Nancy, but even absurd (Nancy 2000: 153). An example of a community that would be closest to the one suggested by Nancy is the community between Leo, the transhuman, and other liberated (posthuman) hubots. It is a kind of alliance constituted and based on affinity, rather than on identity. Swedish society as depicted in the series would have to embrace its “illegitimate offspring”, as Haraway refers to it (Haraway 1991: 43), with both transhuman and the posthuman selves.

Where the author of the series failed to break free from the humanist burden is in the process of constructing the identities of hubots – they are still too simple, too human, instead of being infinite numbers of partial identities, multitudes, those identities that push and blur all possible boundaries.

The boundaries of the semiospheres of posthuman selves cannot be understood as impermeable, thick borders that separate what is inside from the outside, and the boundaries of transhuman selves should not be conceived as such either. Leo is in a sense a person that indeed does belong to two worlds and operates as an interpreter, just as Lotman wrote about the gatekeepers, beings of the boundaries (Lotman 2005: 211). Leo ensures semiotic contact between the two opposed universes. Leo and Inger, the two persons that mediate in conflicts, are initially set on the periphery of society, but as their nature is, in Lotman’s words, multilingual, their roles quickly get displaced to the core of the events.

Finally, Inger’s call for the inclusion of otherness in society is that which provokes new semantic connections, gives rise to new texts and enriches society overall; it is that which invites the audience to wait patiently until the premier of the second season. The incomprehensibility of hubots by humans and transhumans, the struggle of hubots against the perfect codes that would perfectly translate all meaning, as well as the dialogue between centre and periphery, is what leaves this media text open for interpretation.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This is how it should be done: lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*”, 2004: 161)

Anticipation of the issue that is yet-to-come and that has to do with that which is still unthinkable and impossible to grasp is an ungrateful task to be undertaken. Nevertheless, a reflection upon how the issue in question, namely the relation of the self to its ultimate other, has been thought and dealt (or not) throughout the history, may offer certain useful insights. Contemporary culture is a necessary background that has a very important role. In that sense, “Äkta människor” is a constitutive part of manufacture of consent to a potential posthuman future. It is also an evident about the moment in which the future is thought. However, unambiguous and straightforward solutions to issues that arise with anticipation have to be avoided since they may as well appear as double edge swords in a sense that they could be seen as several steps back rather than advancement.

Nevertheless, semiotization and deconstruction seem to offer suitable tools for redrawing of the boundaries and for remodeling of the core of the self – the two necessary processes for the coexistence with the new ultimate other to be possible. A reflection on how other disciplines from the scope of cultural studies (gender, animal, queer studies, conception of subaltern and similar) have dealt an issue together with semiotization and deconstruction of notions such as community, hospitality, being(-with), can spare time and efforts by pointing to the common mistakes and wrong paths that could be taken, and especially can save from all the suffering the previous others have gone through.

Deleuze’s and Guattari’s quote above suggests for subjectivity to become nomadic, to be that which is all about leaving and letting (go): leaving places, (stable) identities, strict and rigid categories and modes of being, letting the other remain the other in a sense that its strangeness will rather be embraced than reshaped into that which fits to the self; letting the other remain multiplicity, and embracing a community (or relation) with the other as being conditioned by the impossibility of its realization. Being that is being-with (the other) is nothing but leaving and

letting go, sometimes only to return after passing the full circle or after getting lost in labyrinths. Being-with is nothing but being inextricably intertwined, nothing but irreducible plurality, it only implies a self that is always necessary constituted as broken. It is nothing but offering the core of the self to the other and to the world, nothing but being exposed, vulnerable, unprotected. Offering unconditional hospitality to the radically different other is nothing but offering to unconditionally embrace it, to give everything and not to expect anything in return.

Being-with the other is nothing but crossing of boundaries and limitations, trespassing to foreign and even forbidden territories. And when it comes to the self and the other – transhuman and posthuman, and all different (unthinkable) sorts of otherness – the purpose of boundaries, limits and walls is not to protect nor to save, since there is nothing from which self should be protected or preserved. The purpose of boundaries and walls is to mure and to *wall up*, they exist for those who are not mured or walled up to hit the wall and to strike limitations. When boundaries and limitations are present in an initial event of the encounter with the other, the very event may be seen as a limitation itself. And an event that has begun with a limitation continues to develop in a limited way; the limitation disables any further events and everything happens in accordance with the initial limitation – nothing really happens, being-with is deprived of events. Being(-with) is in this case composed of impossibilities, obstacles and discouragements, weaved of the innumerable multiplicity of limits. Both “I” and the other are then boundaries, all identities and every territory then become boundaries and unbridgeable gaps. Limitations and boundaries thus mediate and interfere, and relations between the self and the other are then always such – interfered with, mediated, limited, distanced; deterritorialization and following of lines of flight is almost impossible in such a relation. *Mêlée* and penetrations are impossible in a situation that begins as limited and in which the Other is approached as radically different, foreign and separate. The relation between the self and the other thus remains separate, opposite, solitary, intangible.

Being-with a radically different entity and offering unconditional hospitality to the posthuman *arrivant* that has no shape, no form, whose essence is not graspable and whose chronotopes are incomprehensible, implies events that are rather seen as ruptures, explosions, ends of worlds. And everything necessarily gets released at the end of the world, in an apocalypse of all limits and the catastrophe of every identity. The cataclysm of the coded,

territorialized, mured world opens up new unstable, unsteady worlds of intensive and nomadic merging(s). That is the only kind of world in which being-with is possible: worlds through which one flies like a Deleuzian line of flight, but also not necessarily worlds of pure pleasure. Being-with and unconditional hospitality to the ultimate other only happen in worlds full of horrors, abysses and falls; in the same worlds that are made of pure emotions, worlds where the exploded self has transformed into “a flock of desires, a pile of emotions, screams and breaths” (Arsić, Bajić 1995: 162).

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## Summary in Estonian

### Radikaalse erinevuse semiotisatsiooni poole: transhumanismi püüdlus muutuda posthumanismiks

Erinevate distsipliinide jaoks, mis tekkisid humanitaarteaduste vallas XX sajandi vältel, on teistsuguse (võõrasuse) kontsept üheks uurimise põhifookuseks. Üks kasvavalt populaarsemaid nende seast on transhumanism, mille põhifookuseks on inimkeha ja inimese kognitiivsete võimete prandamine uute ja arenevate tehnoloogiate abil. Transhumanistlikud püüdlused inimese arendada on saanud teemaks bioeetilistes ja neuroeetilistes aruteludes. Nii nagu mitmed teisedki valdkonnad, tegeleb transhumanism radikaalse erinevuse küsimusega.

Ehkki transhumanismi on distsipliinina aina populaarsem, puudub sellel siiani korralikult välja arendatud ja standardiseeritud terminoloogia ja metodoloogia, mistõttu on käesoleva töö üheks fookuseks sellesuunaline kriitiline analüüs. Selle distsipliiniga, mis on huvitatud inimese arendamisest biotehnoloogia, nanotehnoloogia, kognitiiv- ja neuroteaduste saavutuste abil, käib humanismiga sarnaselt (mõistega *transhuman*) kaasas üleolek elu muude vormide suhtes. Transhumanism lähtub paljuski humanistlikest, universaalsele kehtivusele pretendeerivatest väärtustest nagu instrumentaalne ja valgustatud mõistus, mis aga on üha enam kriitika alla sattunud ja millega käib kaasas hirm (radikaalse) teisele kohtumise ees. Nii mõnedki teoreetikud kordavad olemasolevaid mõttemustreid, mis on postuleeritud mõningate varasemate koolkondade ja distsipliinide poolt, rõhutades eriti teistsuguse pühitsemise vajadust, mis osutub aga samuti problemaatiliseks nagu tema eituski.

Keskendudes konkreetsele dialoogile Rootsi ulme/draamaseriaalis „Äkta Människor”, mis aastate 2012 ja 2013 jooksul on saavutatud suurt populaarsust kogu maailmas, püüab käesolev magistr töö kaardistada transhumanismi probleeme kaasaja kultuuri kontekstis.

Käesolev töö kutsub üles radikaalse teistsuguse semiotisatsioonile, piirde ja mina tuuma avamisele, eesmärgiga pakkuda tingimusteta külalislahkust radikaalse teisele, *transhuman* ise – *posthuman* teisele. Ta on ülekutse mõista kogukonda teistmoodi, nii et see sisaldaks radikaalselt erinevat teist, mis ise on aga pidevas tekkimisprotsessis; ülekutse mõista Olemist kui koos-

Olemist ja elamist kui kaasa-elamist. Ta on väljakutse antropotsentrismi vastu ja katse vabaneda mitmete valgustusajast pärit väärtuste kütkeist, üleskutse transhumanismi muutumiseks posthumanismiks.

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