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**LEONARDO ABSTRACT SERVICES (LABS) 2010-2011  
A PRACTICE-INFORMED CRITIQUE OF TECHNOLOGICAL  
POSTHUMANISM AND ITS IDEOLOGIES**

**By David Cecchetto**

With the recent emergence of copious scholarship that considers the discursive life of the term “human,” posthumanism has become a timely interdisciplinary discourse. This study is a critical analysis of three strains of this discourse’s technologically oriented segment: “scientific” (Dawkins/Dyens), “humanist” (Hayles), and “organismic” (Hansen) posthumanisms. Throughout, these analyses are presented in an effort to appreciate the insights available from these three perspectives, and to contextualize them in the larger conversations of technology and culture. Ultimately, though, the analyses also unpack how each perspective continues to hold onto certain elements of the humanist tradition that it is mobilized against; in each case, the study desublimates the presumption that underwrites a given perspective. To materially ground the problematic of posthumanism in its full complexity, this dissertation interleaves these theoretical chapters with three others on artworks. Each of the latter draws out the problems discussed in the immediately preceding chapter, demonstrating the material impact of each perspective’s biases. Moreover, these chapters focus on the topos of sound, demonstrating how aurality might offer new insights to an area that has been dominated by visual theorization. The last of these chapters is a discussion of the author’s own collaborative artistic practice that elucidates the variegated causal chains that comprise human-technological coupling, unpacking the ramifications of how we narrate this problematic.

In short, this study offers at least four contributions to the existing literature on posthumanism. Firstly, it nominates the term “technological posthumanism” as a means of focusing specifically on the discourse as it relates to technology without neglecting its other disciplinary histories. Secondly, it suggests that deconstruction remains relevant to this discourse, specifically with respect to the performative dimension of language. Thirdly, it offers analyses of artworks that have not heretofore been considered in the light of posthumanism, specifically emphasizing the role of aurality. Finally, the text’s innovative form introduces a reflexive component that exemplifies how the discourse of posthumanism might progress without resort to the types of unilateral narratives that the dissertation critiques. Collectively, this study offers new purchase on the question of humanity’s relation to technology, a question that is of unprecedented relevance today.

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