

editorial  
editorial

entrevista  
interview

ágora  
agora

tapete  
carpet

artigo nomads  
nomads paper

projeto  
project

expediente  
credits

próxima v!rus  
next v!rus

**V!21**

REVISTA V!RUS  
V!RUS JOURNAL

issn 2175-974x

dezembro . december 2020

ÁGORA  
AGORA

UM DIÁLOGO PÓS-HUMANO ENTRE MICHEL FOUCAULT E BRUNO LATOUR  
A POSTHUMAN DIALOGUE BETWEEN MICHEL FOUCAULT AND BRUNO LATOUR  
PAULO KAWANISHI

PT | EN



**Paulo Noboru de Paula Kawanishi** has a degree in Literature, a specialization in Psychoanalysis and a master's degree in Applied Linguistics. He is a Doctor candidate on Applied Linguistics at the Campinas State University (UNICAMP), Brazil. His topics of interest are language, post-human, subjectivity, and technology. [pkawanishi@hotmail.com.br](mailto:pkawanishi@hotmail.com.br)  
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/3432207930132740>

How to quote this text: Kawanishi, P. N. P., 2020. A posthuman dialogue between Michel Foucault and Bruno Latour. *VIRUS*, 21, December. [online] Available at: <[http://www.nomads.usp.br/virus/\\_virus21/?sec=4&item=3&lang=en](http://www.nomads.usp.br/virus/_virus21/?sec=4&item=3&lang=en)>. [Accessed: dd Month yyyy]. 2020].

ARTICLE SUBMITTED ON AUGUST 23, 2020

### Abstract

Considering the transformations caused by the coronavirus pandemic, and the way the risk of Covid-19 showed the non-human agency about human life, the theme “We have never been so digital”, which is the basis for this issue of the *VIRUS* journal, provides us with a space to present this article. The text proposes an approximation between concepts by Michel Foucault and Bruno Latour, as a means of forming a theoretical contribution capable of addressing post-human subjectivities, namely the cyborg. Mechanisms for understanding the post-human are crucial to reflect on the relationship between humans and non-humans amid the pandemic. In addition to briefly discussing the mutually complementary concepts of both authors, exploratory analysis is presented to exemplify the richness of the dialogue between the two philosophers, aiming to address the role of non-humans in the constitution of a post-human subject.

**Keywords:** Posthuman subjectivity, Dispositive, Actor-network

## 1 Introduction

The consequences of the new coronavirus pandemic have spread through multiple social spheres. The disease's proliferation has implications on social relations, which leads to “new mechanisms of power”, as pointed out by Foucault (2007a, p. 92) about a smallpox outbreak. Due to the ease of getting infected and contracting Covid-19, people changed their daily habits, marked by the regular need of wearing masks, the use of hand sanitizers, and the shift of most activities to digital platforms. While classes from primary school to higher education need computer applications such as Zoom or Skype, companies employees adopted the so-called home office. We are actually experiencing how important non-humans are in the process of expressing ourselves in a posthuman world. Thus, considering the theme of this *VIRUS* journal's issue, “We

have never been so digital”, the discussion about posthuman is an academic knowledge that provides mechanisms for dealing with emerging issues.

The subject constituted by the pandemic is a cyborg, a figuration of the posthuman. Its main feature is the ambiguity between the organic and the technological, as explained by Donna Haraway in the 1990s. (Haraway 2000). The human, as a concept, is in a crisis that the pandemic will intensify. It has already been questioned (Foucault, 2007b) and, currently, it is dismantled by the effect of biotechnologies and the economy (Bradotti, 2013). At the same time, as a positive effect of this crisis, it opens the path for post-human subjectivities, characterized by hybridism.

Nevertheless, the Humanities and Language studies lack a theoretical-methodological framework to approach posthuman subjectivities, such as the cyborg. From the Cartesian concept of subject to the psychoanalytical discussions (Lacan, 1996), there is an ontological split between human and technology (Latour, 2013). Therefore, we must look for a solid framework to think about cyborg subjects as well as subjectivities as a means to approach the posthuman. Transhumanism and critical posthumanism are the two major discourses about the posthuman in contemporaneity. The former inherits values from the Enlightenment (Ferrando, 2019) and it defends a (neo)liberal view of an evolution based on the use of technology, embedding it in our bodies and lives. On the other hand, the latter appears in academic discourse and, while it perceives how beneficial technologies may be, it questions the concept of human, taking advantage of its dissolution to propose new possibilities regarding subjective expressions in cooperation with non-humans, who were excluded until now (Braidotti, 2013; Ferrando, 2019; Hayles, 1999).

Given the need for a theoretical framework to research posthuman subjects, this article intends to argue that the Foucauldian theory of the subject, once in dialogue with certain concepts from the Actor-Network Theory (henceforth ANT), as seen in Bruno Latour’s work (2000; 2012), offers powerful theoretical-methodological tools to think about the constitutive process of cyborg subjects. On the one hand, Foucault’s work provides the fundamentals to comprehend power relations and subject as an individual conducted by an apparatus, while ANT provides the concept of non-human agency, the means through which it exercises power or has it delegated to them. Since both authors converse (Pyyhtinen, Tamminen, 2011), Foucauldian theory might benefit from the general postulates of the so-called New Materialisms (Monforte, 2018) as the theoretical and methodological groundwork to reflect on the posthuman and the cyborg.

The sections in this piece are divided in the following way: a brief general introduction is made about posthumanism and the posthuman; after, a summary of Foucault’s work regarding his concept of apparatus and its role in the constitution of a subject. The next section concerns the properties of actor-network as well as ANT’s theoretical-methodological principles that underlie an alternative concept of the subject, even though it is not identical to Foucault’s, it is compatible with it. In the end, an initial exploratory analysis of some of the data collected through observation in the context of projects on the insertion of electronic mechanisms inside bodies illustrates how efficient the theoretical-methodological framework is.

## **2 Posthuman aspects**

The posthuman has become a term adopted by several distinct groups nowadays (Ferrando, 2019). More than one cultural movement utilizes it, idealizing different subjects. Because of that, this section presents some of these different notions regarding the posthuman, intending to contrast their differences, defend, in the end, that we take a stance closer to the critical posthuman. Among the types of posthuman presented here, there is 1. the one that emerges from the transformation of the subject into information; 2. the one who abandons their organic form through technological intervention; and 3. the one resulting from the process of deconstructing the human imaginary, which is derived from specific cultural movements, through the medium of critical discourse from the academic community.

The transformation of human beings into data has been strongly influenced, since the 1950s, by the field of cybernetics, which understands them as being similar to self-regulating machines (Hayles, 1999). This is why humans could be programmable and subject to emerging attitudes, in other words, machines that would be able to modify their behavior according to information received (Wiener, 1954). In contrast, humans could be replicated outside their bodies, given that the information which describes them could flow similarly but in a different infrastructure, for example, in a computer’s hard disk. Therefore, this concept foresees a digitized posthuman, instantiated by its environment and a being of data.

The second concept of posthuman emerges from the influence of technological artifacts in human behavior and evolution, exemplified by artificial intelligence (Tegmark, 2017) and implants (Hayles, 1999). As the transhumanist idea of posthuman, this version is characterized by the goal of taking life beyond an organic threshold, through gradually merging it with the technological apparatus. As a result of this process, even avoiding death would be possible, creating a post-organic human, as conceptualized by Paula Sibilia, a trace of

“an unstoppable impulse to subdue and appropriate nature, outside or inside the human body” (Sibilia, 2014, p. 50, our translation).

Subsequently, the third concept is the critical posthuman (Braidotti, 2013; Ferrando, 2019), which criticizes human exceptionality, and seeks to comprehend human existence in relation with non-humans, since it is substantially influenced by the anti-humanism movement. By detailing the representation of humans as being constituted by a dichotomic argument which, historically, was constructed as a common denominator based on a specific group (white, heterosexual, European men), the critical posthuman aims to give voice to those socially excluded and seen as non-humans by western society (women, people of color, indigenous, homosexuals, animals, nature, etc.).

## **2.1 Critique about the transhumanist utopia and the proposal of a critical posthuman**

The posthuman condition marks a conflict amongst the technologies that condition the subject's agency and their desires. Once reconfigured by them, desires push moral thresholds of what was considered specific to human beings. Transhumanism seems to be at the head of this movement, whose ideas unfold might be questioned.

At first, the effects on the human regarding its relationship with technology must be addressed. According to the Philosopher Slavoj Žižek, technologies put the human essence in danger, since “techno-scientific progress is perceived as a temptation that can lead us into ‘going too far’ – entering the forbidden territory of biogenetic manipulations and so on, and thus endangering the very core of our humanity” (Žižek, 2018, p. 3). Another critic of the transhumanist posthuman is Francis Fukuyama (2003). He argues on the inequality of access regarding technologies, such as biotechnologies, advocating how this situation would intensify social inequalities among social classes, and cause the loss of important human characteristics. Such arguments are common among people who stand for a humanistic perspective or, in other words, according to Braidotti (2013), those with a reactive view on the posthuman.

At the same time, other approaches to the posthuman face the presence of technology in the constitution of the posthuman in an optimistic and critical way, and present non-essentialist perspectives. Braidotti (2013) and Hayles (1999), particularly, defend the possibility of a critical post-human subject who takes advantage of opportunities offered by technologies. Braidotti seeks to introduce a new approach based on a transversal look between human and non-human, instead of an appeal for wiping the former out in order to benefit the latter. Therefore, the author suggests considering the critical posthuman subject as being within

an eco-philosophy of multiple belongings, as a relational subject constituted in and by multiplicity, that is to say a subject that works across differences and is also internally differentiated, but still grounded and accountable. (Braidotti, 2013, p. 49).

Contrary to demonizing the technology, Braidotti understands it as another non-human, in the midst of others such as the planet and the animals, which constitutes a vast network.

Having been questioning transhumanism since her first work about the posthuman, Hayles (1999) develops a direct critique of the project to dematerialize the body using metaphors from the digital world, in which informational patterns replace subjective presence. Hayles does not disagree on the positive possibilities that techno-scientific development might bring, although she believes the organic element of the individual is fundamental in order to keep something human within, not as an essence, but as a living being with dignity. As she explains,

my dream is a version of the posthuman that embraces the possibilities of information technologies without being seduced by fantasies of unlimited power and disembodied immortality, that recognizes and celebrates finitude as a condition of human being, and that understands human life is embedded in a material world of great complexity, one on which we depend for our continued survival (Hayles, 1999, p. 5)

Once the critiques are posed to the transhumanist project, we believe it is made clear, how fundamental the principles upon which the critical posthuman perspective is based on and that it presents itself as an important concept. In the next section, Foucault's (1988; 2014; 2017) concept of dispositive is going to be presented, since it plays a pivotal role in the progression of our argument on how contemporary individuals are conducted to posthuman subjectivities via a combination of institutional and material forces.

### 3 Subjectivation networks and Foucault's subject

In his work, be it either of an archeological or genealogical nature, Michel Foucault studied texts and developed his reflections through documentary analysis. This approach contributes to the comprehension as well as the analysis of social-historical aspects related to the constitution of subjects. Amidst his important concepts there is the dispositive which, albeit not as extensively refined by Foucault, it is used as a framework to think about a network of heterogeneous elements that constitutes the subject. At first, the concept of power will be briefly addressed, since it is crucial to understand the dispositive.

#### 3.1 Power relations

Foucault sought to reconceptualize the idea of power beyond its juridical model (Agamben, 2010), shifting from a metaphysical dimension to a practical dimension. According to the author, power is not owned by an individual, but instead the effect of relations. He affirms that "we have, at first, the assertion that power is not given, traded, nor retaken, but it is exercised and only exists as an act" (Foucault, 2010, p. 15, our translation)<sup>1</sup>. Thus, while referring to power, the philosopher is actually speaking about "power relations". As an example, in a classroom, a student's choice to behave in accordance with the teacher's orders is the consequence of negotiations realized through a myriad of practices, such as potential punishments, being sent to the principal's office or being penalized in their grades. The power that acts over the student does not lay in the teacher, but is a consequence of the application of strategies, such as those mentioned previously.

Another important characteristic in the Foucauldian concept of power is resistance. There is always a place of resistance, the power's "relentless interlocutor" (Foucault, 1988, p. 106, our translation), since every power relation aims to lead the other, who has the choice to resist (the student could actually ignore all the punishments that could be applied by the teacher). Therefore, according to Foucault (2009),

the exercise of power consists in 'conducting behaviors' and in ordering probability. Power, in fact, is less from a dimension of confrontation between two opponents, or the bond with each other, than from a dimension of 'governing'... Governing, for that matter, is structuring other's possible field of action. (Foucault, 2009, p. 244, our translation)<sup>2</sup>

Power through the act of governing determines actions, in addition to imposing unto the individual who they are and what they can or cannot do. Foucault's subject is not necessarily an individual whose desires were exterminated by power, but one reconfigured according to practices and strategies that had captured them.

#### 3.2 Subjectivation of the individual through a dispositive

The term "dispositive", as employed in Foucault's work, has its origin in the Greek notion of *oikonomia* which, in Latin, turn out to be *dispositio* and refers to the function of managing something, usually related with taking care of the house (Agamben, 2005). In its core, it sustains the idea of conducting a person through heterogeneous elements, which form a network that captures the individual. A dispositive aims to "manage, govern, control, and guide, in a sense that it is supposed to be useful, human behaviors, gestures, and thoughts. (Agamben, 2005, p. 12, our translation). In accordance with Foucault (2017), regarding the constitution of a dispositive, it can be summarized as,

in first place, an undoubtedly heterogenous set which embraces discourses, institutions, architectonic structures, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific formulations, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions. In essence, the spoken as well as the unspoken are part of an apparatus. The apparatus is the connection possible to be established among these elements. (Foucault, 2017, p. 364, our translation)<sup>3</sup>

Assuming this definition, the apparatus can be understood in itself as a network which is not only constituted by institutions, people or discourses, but also by technologies, revealing itself to be an entanglement between such elements. Returning to the teacher/student relation example, both individuals were constituted by an apparatus formed not only by educational guidelines, curriculum, but also by material elements, like the spatial disposition in the classroom, the class diaries in which a student's absence is registered, to tests containing grades, etc. An apparatus Foucault discusses in his work is sexuality which constituted sexual subjects from the 18th century. Seen as a massive web, this apparatus focused on the "stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement of discourses, the development of knowledge, the reinforcement of controls and resistance" (Foucault, 1988, p. 116-117, our translation), acting as strategies of knowledge and power.

The other apparatus found in Foucault's work (2014) is the disciplinary, based on the idea of a moldable and disciplinable body, a concept derived from 18th century military discourse. Recruits had their movements, desires and even their time strictly regulated, measured and meticulously controlled, since they were seen as "man as machine". The control, modification and stimuli of their bodies happened in two fronts: an anatomic-metaphysical vision, originated from Descartes and the medical discourse which was developed by philosophers; and a techno-political vision, formed by "a set of military, scholarly, hospital rules, and by empiric, reflected processes to control or correct body operations" (Foucault, 2014, p. 134, our translation). Along with this discourse, an apparatus was instituted, which prisons and cells are a part of, with the purpose of disciplining criminals in the 18th century.

Considering the cyborg, their agency is assumed as hybrid. They are not human subjects using machines, but subjects constituted via the integration of human and machine, emerging as a *new* subjectivity. The apparatus captures non-humans, machines, that constitute the subject, since the individual is placed into a net of relations. However, Foucault did not explore the idea of bestowing traces of agency to non-humans which were part of this apparatus, just as he did not explore a method of identifying them. Therefore, in the coming section, some of ANT's concepts are addressed, considering how they complement Foucault's apparatus, in order to achieve the goal of approaching the constitution of cyborgs.

#### **4 Latour and the non-human agency**

non-humans are everywhere, but they are hardly recognized as owners of their own actions, even the ones that are not conscious or intentional<sup>4</sup>. Yet, when a cyborg acts, the intention comes from their human component, as Hayles (2017) pointed out, the act is not enclosed in itself. Thus, there is no posthuman subject without non-human agency, which leads to Bruno Latour's work (2000; 2012).

Notwithstanding, not only Latour but also Foucault comprehend reality and its elements as constructs that emerged from performative networks, they differ because, while the latter takes the path of epistemology, the former reflects from an ontological perspective, focusing on semiotic processes in which existence unfolds as a consequence of relations. Therefore, if, on the one hand, Foucault thought about how a heterogeneous network is formed, in order to capture individuals and transform them into subjects, Latour presents, on the other hand, the necessary lenses to understand the role non-humans have in this process.

##### **4.1 Actor-network and constituting reality**

Latourian thinking has at its core the idea of generalized symmetry, in other words, the elements that constitute reality are not divided in supposedly naturalized dichotomies. The existence of something in the world, either subject or object, in a specific time and place, is supported by a network of relationships among heterogeneous elements whose existence is based on the same principle. They do not pre-exist as a unit, but they stay in an eternal process of subjectivation and objectivation, existing always in a state of quasi-subjects and quasi-objects (Latour, 2012).

The way Latour (2012) thinks about construction is not in opposition to destruction. On the contrary, he proposes an objectified reality through mobilized entities, such as discourse and representation, but also machines, animals, objects, etc., which act in the process. An element exists once it is produced by relations that objectify it using a network of human and non-human performances which stabilizes itself. Be it humans or non-humans, all of them are actor-networks.

What differentiates an actor, compared to the classical subject from sociology, is that the concept contemplates not only humans. Accordingly, to Latour (1992), ANT "does no limit itself to human individual actors but extend the word actor – or actant – to non-human, non-individual entities." (Latour, 1992, p. 2). An actor is constituted when their agency is captured by a network and deflected by other actor's actions, which is similar in the Foucauldian apparatus. Nevertheless, in contrast to Foucault, Latour indicates explicitly how important non-humans are in the workings of power. Thus, Foucault's subject could be taken as the product of a stable network in a collective/institutional/global level, while the actor-network works in an individual/daily/local level.

As fundamental factors to understand the functioning of the network, there are the intermediaries and the mediators. Inside a stable net, actors have the role of intermediaries. Whenever an action goes through them, it returns in a predictable and constant manner to those they have a connection with. On the other hand, an actor might have the role of mediator, transforming every action received into a contradictory or unpredictable version, disrupting the order of the network and putting the existence of the object constituted by it in check. Restabilizing the net depends on the addition of other actors into it.

Consider a (second) stable classroom. All actors involved in its constitution are intermediaries. Although, after a rainy day, a leak is found leading to a change in the desk organization as well as student's dissatisfaction. The room has been destabilized, since the leak (and rain, two actors representing the same actant) produces undesired behaviors, which work as mediators. To stabilize the web, the teacher, drawing a map of the classroom on a sheet of paper, separates the students which generates conflict. This paper, a non-human, is a new actor added to the network and, as long as it is not crumpled or burned, it will help stabilize the latter.

Taking into account the Latourian principle of having non-humans as constitutive entities of a network, it is possible to propose an approximation between two sets of concepts: Latour's network and Foucault's apparatus; Latour's actor-network and Foucault's subject. Apparatuses are like large scale actor-networks which acts upon local contexts having humans and non-humans as intermediary actors. The apparatus produces subjects who could be understood as actor-networks, that are also a network but in a smaller extent constituted by mediators and intermediaries. In the following section, non-human agency and what its prescriptions are will be discussed in order to establish a better grasp of their role in the whole process of forming a subject.

#### **4.2 How to follow non-human agencies and how they constitute individuals**

As a means to reach the discursive dimension of non-humans, Latour (1992, p. 155) suggests, based on his notion of translation<sup>5</sup>, that "every time you want to know what a non-human does, simply imagine what other humans or non-humans would have to do were this character not present". His take sustains itself in his interpretation that a human is, sometimes, translated into a non-human in order to make the latter fulfill a role initially given to the former. Latour exemplifies this process using a spring which assumes a person's function of closing doors. In order to understand the important meanings produced by non-humans, it is fundamental to "listen to their voices", as Latour proposes. About non-humans, according to Latour (1992),

By replacing them by strings of sentences (often in the imperative) that are uttered (silently and continuously) by the mechanisms for the benefit of those who are mechanized: do this, do that, behave this way, don't go that way, you may do so, be allowed to go there". (Latour, 1992, p. 157)

The spring attached to the door says "Leave it closed". In this situation, closing the door was not only an obligation, but also needed and correct. This type of formulation made by non-humans is called prescription by the author, "the moral and ethical dimension of mechanisms" (Latour, 1992, p. 157), which functions as "programs of action" disciplining individuals. Another example given by Latour is the case of an alarm which rings and a lock which prevents a driver from turning on his car if he is not wearing the seat belt, implying it should be used by the people inside the car. In this case, non-humans enforce socially accepted behaviors as correct onto the users. To understand the moral effect produced by the non-humans, one must apply the same principles of listening to their voice. Once actors are followed and their role inside a network is understood, their prescriptions can be translated into words.

Latour's instructions regarding the morality incorporated by non-human agency provide a solid methodological framework which helps in comprehending non-human roles in the processes of subject constitution. The directions exemplify how an apparatus (a large-scale actor-network) can freight, translate and utter formulations, linked to specific discourses which conduct individuals, transforming them into subjects. This framework allows suppositions, such as the formulations which constitute an individual captured by the posthuman apparatus to be found in articulations made by non-humans. One must only translate it correctly, taking the formulation from its mechanical-cybernetic dimension to the discursive dimension.

Since the commentary regarding Latour's concept is finished, the theoretical section has ended. Therefore, we seek to illustrate the theoretical-methodological formulation's efficacy presented in previous sections via applied data related to posthuman subjectivities.

### **5 Following a chip, finding subjects**

Serving as an exploratory exercise to exemplify the concept's applicability, this section presents an initial analysis in which biochips, as actors, are followed<sup>6</sup>. It is part of an apparatus of biopower which captures the body and normalizes the subject in order to place them into an informational discourse. How the relation between body, machine and information approached here is useful to understand the games of power between humans and non-human during the coronavirus pandemic.

Starting in the 2019 Hackers to Hackers event, which took place in the city of São Paulo, in the southeast region of Brazil, with the purpose of covering the practice of hacking on many fronts, from workshops to talks.

During the event, some participants had biochips implanted in their hands, a rice-grain sized electronic device which could be accessed by machines equipped with a radio-frequency reader. Procedures were done by an international guest from the event and were held in some of its public tables. On that day, three procedures of biochip insertion could be observed, which were sold at their cost price.

Among the ones interested in inserting biochips into their bodies, we could identify at least one specific group<sup>2</sup> which utilized it as a mediator in order to interact with certain devices with sensors and electronic actuators. This movement is coherent with the informational paradigm (Hayles, 1999), since it seeks to store an individual's presence in the form of a sequence of information. The chip replaces keys or credit cards, allowing doors to be opened as well as bills to be paid merely by the device's interaction with these interfaces. This scenario is similar to what is explained by Frischmann and Selinger (2018, p. 33) that "our bodily engagement with the physical world becomes seen as a logistical and navigational transaction cost to be minimized, even eliminated if possible."

Non-humans, such as biochips, locks and credit card machines, demand from individuals a type of interaction in a symbolic dimension, difficult for humans to comprehend or formulate, but it translates the most prosaic aspects of the human identity. As described by Buzato (2016),

now there is the need to offer logical-mathematical performances to the system in which meanings are beyond our cognitive capability. If we cannot carry out these performances by any reason, we are not going to be only without voice, but our existence as agents in a logically and formally shaped simulacrum of reality will be removed. (Buzato, 2016, p. 176, our translation)

Devices like these can be part of the apparatus which would lead an individual to digitize themselves in the form of data. In the aforementioned case, once the biochip is questioned and translated, as indicated by Latour (1992), we find performatic formulations (Derrida, 2004), such as "this is who I am", "open", "here is my money". While the device carries passwords or informational patterns replacing keys, it does not display a corporeal or biographical representation of the individual, but its datafied equivalent. On the one hand, people could interact with their doors as well as pay their bill using regular keys or cards, but, once the chip is inside their bodies, the relation between human and machine is deceptively transformed into something more direct, bringing these individuals close to their ideal of the cyborg present in the transhumanist imaginary. In the end, besides having the biochip communicate to other non-humans who the individual is, the latter ties his condition as subject to a necessity of coexisting with the former.

In this relationship, even though the body remains, resisting the transhumanist imperative, the biochip captures and subjects it to informational games of power, from a non-human agency. Whilst, there is the transformation of the individual into data, carried by the biochip, which performs its existence. An informational container such as the biochip is not able to transit without the individual's biological body. However, how far they can go is determined by the biochip. After all, this small device proves itself as a good example of non-human agency. Cyborgs are individuals captured by an apparatus that conducts their body which, then, transforms them into a subject, configuring what Foucault (2012) named biopower, but in a posthuman version.

## **6 Final remarks**

The reflection here proposed directly contributes to another one, which arises from the idea of "we have never been so digital", a firmament for this journal's issue. During the current pandemic, our bodies are conducted by non-human agencies (hand sanitizers, masks, computers, and the Internet, for example), in favor of a power which determines the transit as well as the normalization of the subjects.

However, without an efficient framework to reach non-humans, whose statements are often found in the mathematical-computational sphere, we can not question their implication upon our lives, either viruses, computers, or biochips. Therefore, only the solid framework left by Foucault is not sufficient to approach the constitution of a subject as well as the role of apparatuses in this process. In contrast, through a dialogue with Latour's concept, we might find a way to interrogate non-human actors and their role in the conduction of posthuman subjectivities.

Bringing both authors closer marks the creation of a rich theoretical toolbox in order to deal with the (post)pandemic world in which the posthuman, an already effective reality, will be more present and explicit. In a world shaken by the coronavirus pandemic, these tools will allow us to resist the inhuman process of subjectivation, and also introduce as well as legitimize posthuman modes of existence, like the cyborg. When facing the posthuman issue critically, we can think of a possibility to constitute a world more (post)humanized for all.

## References

- Agamben, G., 2005. O que é um dispositivo? *Outra travessia* [online]. 5, 9-16, 2005. Available at: <https://periodicos.ufsc.br/index.php/Outra/article/view/12576/11743>. Accessed 22 May 2020.
- Agamben, G., 2010. *Homo Sacer: o poder soberano e a vida nua I* [Homo Sacer Sovereign Power and Bare Life]. 2nd ed. Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG.
- Braidotti, R., 2013. *The Posthuman*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Buzato, M., 2016. Cidadania pós-social e encontros pós-humanos: integrando sentido, informação e emoção [Postsocial citizenship and posthuman confluences: integrating meaning, information, and emotion]. In: M. Buzato, ed. *Cultura digital e linguística aplicada: travessias em linguagem, tecnologia e sociedade* [Digital Culture and Applied Linguistics: crossings in language, technology, and society]. Campinas: Pontes. p. 173-204.
- Derrida, J., 2004. *Papel-máquina* [Paper Machine]. São Paulo: Estação Liberdade.
- Ferrando, F., 2019. *Philosophical Posthumanism: Theory in the New Humanities*. Kindle 10th generation. 1st ed. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Foucault, M., 1988. *A história da sexualidade I: a vontade de saber* [The History of Sexuality 1: An Introduction]. Rio de Janeiro, Graal.
- Foucault, M., 2007a. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-78*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M., 2007b. *As palavras e as coisas: uma arqueologia das ciências humanas* [The order of things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences]. 9th ed. São Paulo: Martins Fontes.
- Foucault, M., 2009. O sujeito e o poder [The Subject and The Power]. In: H. Dreyfus, P. Rabinow, eds. *Michel Foucault: uma trajetória filosófica* [Michel Foucault: A Philosophical Trajectory]. Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária. p. 231-249.
- Foucault, M., 2010. *Em defesa da sociedade* [Society Must be Defended]. 2nd ed. São Paulo: WMF Martins Fontes.
- Foucault, M., 2014. *Vigiar e punir: nascimento da prisão* [Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison]. 42th ed. Rio de Janeiro: Vozes.
- Foucault, M., 2017. Sobre a história da sexualidade [About The History of Sexuality]. In: R. Machado, ed. *Microfísica do Poder* [Microphysics of Power]. 6th ed. Rio de Janeiro/São Paulo: Paz e Terra. p. 363-406.
- Frischmann, B., Selinger, E., 2018. *Re-engineering humanity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fukuyama, F., 2003. *Nosso futuro pós-humano: consequências da revolução da biotecnologia* [Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution]. Rio de Janeiro: Rocco.
- Haraway, D., 2000. Manifesto Ciborgue [A Cyborg Manifesto]. In: T. T. da Silva, ed. *Antropologia do ciborgue: as vertigens do pós-humano* [Cyborg Anthropology: posthuman dizziness]. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica. p. 35-118.
- Hayles, N. K., 1999. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literatures, and Informatics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago.
- Hayles, N. K., 2017. *Unthought: The Power of the Cognitive Nonconscious*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lacan, J., 1996. O estágio do espelho como formador da função do Eu [The Mirror Stage as Formative of The Function of The I]. In: S. Žizek, ed. *Um mapa da ideologia* [Mapping Ideology]. Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto, p. 97-103.



Latour, B., 2000. *Ciência em ação: como seguir cientistas e engenheiros sociedade afora* [Science in Action: how to follow scientists and engineers through society]. São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2000.

Latour, B., 2013. *Jamais fomos modernos* [We Have Never Been Modern]. 3th ed. São Paulo: Editora 34.

Latour, B., 2012. *Reagregando o social: uma introdução à teoria Ator-Rede* [Reassembling the Social]. Salvador: Edufba.

Latour, B., 1992. Where are the missing masses? The sociology of a few mundane artifacts. In: E. Bijker and J. Law, eds. *Shaping Technology/Building Society: studies in sociotechnical change*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, p. 225-258.

Monforte, J., 2018. What is new in new materialism for a newcomer? *Qualitative research in sport, exercise and health* [online]. 10(3), 378-39. Available at: doi: 10.1080/2159676X.2018.1428678. Accessed 21 May 2020.

Pyyhtinen, E., Tamminen, S., 2011. We have never been only human: Foucault and Latour on the question of the Anthropos. *Anthropological Theory* [online]. 11(2), 135-152. Available at: doi: [10.1177/1463499611407398](https://doi.org/10.1177/1463499611407398). Accessed 13 April 2020.

Sibilia, P., 2014. *O homem pós-orgânico: a alquimia dos corpos e das almas à luz das tecnologias digitais* [Postorganic man: the alchemy of bodies and souls according to digital technologies]. 2nd ed. Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto.

Strum, S., Latour, B., 1990. *Redefining the social link: from baboons to humans*. In: G. A. Schubert and R. D. Masters, eds. *Primate politics*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, p. 73-86.

Tegmark, M., 2017. *Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Wiener, N., 1954. *Cibernética e sociedade: o uso humano de seres humanos* [The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society]. 2nd ed. Editora Cultrix São Paulo.

Zizek, S., 2018. *Like a thief in broad daylight: Power in the era of post-human capitalism*. New York: Seven Stories Press.

---

**1** We can already point out how Latour dialogues, in a certain way, with Foucault, since this perspective is close to what Latour (2012) – and, before him, Strum and Latour (1990) – called “performative conception of society”. According to these authors, social cohesion is nothing more than a set of stabilized practices. This condition unfolds from an action made by connected elements, humans or non-humans.

**2** In Latour (2012), there is a formulation which is compatible with the Foucauldian perspective in order to explain that disciplined entities can betray the rest of the network. In Latourian terms, it is all about the conversion of intermediaries (disciplined actors) in mediator (entities who resist or disturb the order). Power is exercised when a mediator is transformed into an intermediary by action of others like them.

**3** We assume the author refers to non-discursive as well as interdicted formulations when he mentions the “spoken and the nonspeaking”.

**4** To think about agency, Latour works based on the fact that humans and non-humans actors have different agencies. While the latter have no intention or desires, but can condition, conduct and resist. Some thinkers, such as Foucault, for excluding non-humans as important elements in networks, end up using metaphysical entities, as the social, to justify the cohesion between humans and non-humans.

**5** Latour defines translation as an act of transformation that occurs to replace an actor by another.

**6** This is part of our Ph.D. project entitled “The Cyborgs Among Us”, which is being conducted at the University of Campinas in Brazil.

**7** Other groups were found, but they were not analyzed in the present article. We are planning to develop such studies in future works.