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NOTES

- 1 See Jeremy Tanner, 'Ancient Greece, Early China: Sino-Hellenic Studies and Comparative Approaches to the Classical World: A Review Article', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 129 (2009), 89–109, and Alexander Beecroft, 'Comparisons of Greece and China', *Oxford Handbooks Online*: <<https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935390.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935390-e-14>> [accessed 11 March 2021].
- 2 Itself the basis for an essay collection: see Steven Shankman and Steven W. Durrant, eds, *Early China / Ancient Greece. Thinking Through Comparisons* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002).
- 3 I discuss these problems of comparison further in the introduction to Alexander Beecroft, *Authorship and Cultural Identity in Early Greece and China: Patterns of Literary Circulation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Rosi Braidotti and Maria Hlavajova, eds, *Posthuman Glossary*, Bloomsbury Academic Theory Series (London: Bloomsbury, 2018). 538 pp., ISBN 9781350030251, £95.00.

Rosi Braidotti is a thinker with a motto. Inspired by her education in Australia, and grounded in Deleuze's last work on immanence, her lectures and seminars often feature the imperative *Get A Life!* This is more than a catchphrase – it is an urgent call to action, one which follows a similar line to the feminist rallying cry *Don't Agonise, Organise!* coined by Florynce Kennedy and referenced in the title of Braidotti's 2016 piece for *e-flux*. But what, exactly, constitutes *A Life*? If we turn to Deleuze's words, *A Life* is 'the immanence of immanence, absolute immanence' (p. 27). This openness to the vital immanence of Life beyond the human is the first step in Braidotti's *The Posthuman* (2013), which strikes 'an alliance with the productive and immanent force of *zoe*, or life in its nonhuman aspects' (p. 66). The second step in the posthuman turn is to interrogate the concrete connections and arrangements of contemporary life: the situated specificities of *the* life in question as a slice of *A Life* itself. This is a crucial and critical task for the contemporary moment in which fascist movements are propelled by a toxic hybrid of conservative humanist rationalism and appropriated identity politics, in which so-called advanced capitalism is bolstering its continued acceleration on a dying planet under the auspices of 'Sustainability' and 'Development', and in which human and nonhuman life continues to be biopolitically hierarchized, managed, and systematically destroyed. To survive this posthuman convergence of the fourth Industrial Revolution and the sixth mass extinction, we need a guidebook.

The tricky thing is to imagine what such a guidebook might look like. It would certainly not be a list of, say, twelve simple steps for contemporary life—whatever the bestseller lists might say. It would necessarily be caught between the critical intervention of post-Anthropocentric thought on the one hand and the outwardly rigidly humanist traditions of academic institutions on the other. This problem is tackled by the gargantuan multi-author volume *Posthuman Glossary*, edited by Rosi Braidotti and Maria Hlavajova. In the introduction to the *Glossary*, the editors declare that ‘we cannot solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used to create them’ (p. 11). It is interesting, then, that the editors offer the form of a glossary—the humanist book *par excellence*—as the way to imagine a multifaceted and experimental posthumanism. Despite all declarations to the contrary, the humanist form of the book as word still exists. This is one of the strengths of the *Glossary*—its ability to look to the written past and to the speculative future simultaneously, to respond self-consciously to the contradictions, multiplicities, and challenges of the contemporary moment and to give it a shape and a significance.

The *Posthuman Glossary* is just that—an A to Z of the posthuman, with one hundred and sixty-eight micro essays beginning with ‘Affective Turn’ and concluding with ‘Zombie’. As one might expect, some contributions are brief and straightforward genealogies or definitions, such as Iris van der Tuin’s entry on ‘Naturecultures’, which traces the history of the term between Haraway and Latour. Others are longer creative deviations from the traditional form of the glossary using the entry term as a departure point to consider specific situations or possibilities. The entry on ‘Posthuman Disability and DisHuman Studies’ concludes with a new ‘DisHuman Manifesto’—a mission statement resulting from the collaborative work undertaken by the collective contributors Dan Goodley, Rebecca Lawthom, Kirsty Liddiard and Katherine Runswick-Cole. The entry for ‘Postglacial’ is an annotated video script of the film *Subatlantic* by Ursula Biemann, the creative text accompanied by detailed explanatory notes and high-quality illustrative stills from the film. In the editorial introduction to the *Glossary*, which sets out the history, rationale, and aims of the textual project as a whole, Braidotti and Hlavajova state that the *Glossary* is the practice and result of experimenting with new and creative ways of thinking. This creativity emerges stylistically in the writing itself, of course, but also in the presence of a number of sometimes abstract ‘visual essays’ as well as being embedded in the

composition of the book—some entries are the fruit of collaborative transnational interdisciplinary ‘hubs’. Anyone hoping to use the *Glossary* as an explanatory textbook for undergraduates may find this ethical commitment to creativity undermines its function as a pedagogical aid—but that depends, of course, on the classroom. Certainly, specific entries would be useful for inclusion on a syllabus reading list as short clarificatory texts for tricky concepts or interdisciplinary connections, such as the entry on ‘Planetary’ by Maja and Reuben Fowkes or the entry on ‘Xenofeminism’ by Helen Hester.

The book begins with a Series Preface, by Rosi Braidotti, which declares and affirms that ‘Theory is Back!’ (p. xiii). Following this is a biographical list of the one hundred and forty-three contributors to the volume, which is valuable in itself as a survey of the far-reaching tendrils of posthuman thought across and between disciplines. By my count, almost a quarter of the contributors have built their practice outside the walls of academic institutions. Alongside entries authored by recognizable names in contemporary posthuman theory such as Cary Wolfe, Donna Haraway, Jane Bennett and Rosi Braidotti, there are contributions by students, artists, activists and three interdisciplinary collectives. Its authors include academics from across the globe working in such diverse disciplines as Law, Robotics, Architecture, Literary Studies, Sociology, Media Studies, Pedagogy, and the Scientific Humanities, among others. Braidotti’s co-editor, Maria Hlavajova, is Founding General and Artistic Director of the Dutch art institute BAK, and the *Glossary* is as much informed by the world of art practice as the world of academic research. The general introduction by the editors outlines the importance of interdisciplinarity and foregrounds multiplicity—in terms of the ‘manifold and multi-layered’ axes of posthuman scholarship (p. 7), of the multi-faceted ‘intense affective economy’ of life in the posthuman convergence (p. 12), and of the multiple nature of the plural communities of the humanities—to ask ‘who are “we”, exactly?’ (p. 11). This ambitious question is, for the most part, realised in the *Glossary* itself, but if there is a limitation to the editors’ ambition, it is in their positionality as Europeans working within European arts and humanities institutions, as well as the contemporary locations of posthuman thought itself. Though a significant number of contributors work outside of the arts and humanities and outside of Western knowledge institutions, they are inevitably still in the minority. This is, of course, a problem with the field as a whole—for all its transdisciplinary and transformatory aspirations, the posthuman remains

as yet all too contained within Western humanist formations, structures and organizations. The *Glossary* is a step towards rethinking this.

The *Glossary* is a self-professed cartography of the posthuman—it attempts to explore and map all parts of the recent conversation, weaving the threads between such fields as ecocriticism, animal studies, algorithmic studies, and new materialism. The book includes entries on ‘Object-Oriented Ontology’ and ‘Transhumanism/Posthumanism’, even though these critical responses are in opposition to Braidotti’s own theory of the posthuman. Although the editors are not afraid to cite their theoretical adversaries, such as Nick Bostrom, the *Glossary* remains politically grounded in the ethical question at hand: how to critically address the ‘roller-coaster of exciting new developments and brutal old injustices which is characteristic to our times’ in order to imagine a different way of living (p. 14). The *Posthuman Glossary* is both a major contribution to and intervention in the field of the critical posthumanities. It concludes with a cumulative bibliography of more than sixty pages of sources. The book will be useful for students, activists, artists and researchers, and its exploration of the intersection of science and the humanities is not only helpful to scholars of literary studies but also crucial for our time.

Given the scope of the book, the reader will discover that the posthuman condition really entails reassessing what it means to be human. Proposed in the book is a new language of the human, an exploration of the semantic field of the posthuman and its various points of connection. A lexicon of the human still abounds, from entries on the ‘Ahuman’ to ‘Immanent Humanism’ to ‘The In-human’ and ‘In/Human’ and ‘MakeHuman’. With this in mind, a more fitting motto for the tackling the posthuman convergence might be *Get A Language!*

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Sandra Richter, *Eine Weltgeschichte der deutschsprachigen Literatur* (Munich: Pantheon, 2019). 728 pp., ISBN 9783570553947, €20.00.

1816 is often called the year without a summer. Climate abnormalities caused by the catastrophic eruption of Mount Tambora in modern-day Indonesia led to a drastic drop in temperatures across the northern