

What is Posthumanism? An NYU professor explains



Helping to **understand philosophical Posthumanism** and its difference from other schools of thought was philosopher **Francesca Ferrando's** objective in a virtual meeting with the [Tec de Monterrey](#) community, via the [Alfonso Reyes Chair](#) platforms.

"The most important message of Posthumanism is to understand a coexistence that not only encompasses human beings as group, but also ecology with animals, air, plants, and the cosmos. Technology helps us to understand who we are," says Ferrando.

Francesca Ferrando is a professor at [New York University \(NYU\)](#). She and her mentor, **Rosi Braidotti**, are world leaders in Posthumanist thought.



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For its part, the **Alfonso Reyes Chair** is a response to the need to strengthen the humanities when training teachers, students, and the community of the **Tec**.

Ferrando told those present that **Posthumanism** sees humans as enhanced beings, unlike **classical Renaissance humanism**. She believes it necessary **to provide meaning to the representation of human beings in the 21st century**.

*"We need every voice. There are many of us, all different but with a great deal in common. We need to have pluralistic dialog **with an answer to that question from the Posthuman movement** . It can't be the same answer as in the past because even the land is different."*

Human being + technology = Posthumanism

One characteristic of current humans is **their ability to generate technology**.

*"We must realize the impact of technology, which can't be understood as something we use. It's no longer just a medium. **It's something with ontological power, which explains the meaning of being, of existence,**" explained **Ferrando**.*

The professor illustrates this with computers, which shouldn't just be seen for their usefulness, but **for the way in which they've changed our perception of work**, as well as how our perspective on every human has changed from 50 years ago.



width="900" loading="lazy"> **Transhumanism vs. Posthumanism**

During the talk, **Francesca Ferrando** also emphasized the difference between other schools, such as **Transhumanism**, which **sees 21st century humans as beings that have transcended their limitations.**

She said that this school sees **human empowerment through transhumanism** as its most important result, i.e., only through technology.

*“It’s interesting because it embraces both known and emerging science and technology; it talks about nanotechnology, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and uploading minds to the machine; **radical possibilities that will change the genealogy of what we understand being human to be.**”*



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She also pointed out that **Posthumanism is the generation that comes after Postmodernist and Postcolonial reflections on gender and critical race theory**, a vision that comes from pluralistic voices which began after the seventies.

*“**Technology is a part of our planet**, so much so that we’re now talking about the hydrosphere from the planet’s water; the atmosphere from the air; as well as the technosphere. If you think about it, a third of the population would die in 25 days without electricity, without streets, and without machines. It’s a part of our survival. **Without technology, human beings wouldn’t exist.**”*

Posthumanism during the pandemic

For **Francesca Ferrando**, Posthumanism after the pandemic can only be existential, a philosophy that helps humans understand who they are **through self-questioning**.

*“The pandemic clearly reminded us that life begins but it also ends. Even the sun ends. **Everything ends eventually.**”*

Ferrando said that because of the pandemic, many people have asked themselves questions such as: **Who am I? What am I doing here? If I die tomorrow, what did I do with my life?**

*“Existence is all we have, and it’s a lot. It’s something we have to manifest honestly, **not just intellectually, but also personally and vividly.**”*

The philosopher considers the pandemic to be a tragedy, though **also enlightening**, since it **put humans in an extreme situation that made them take responsibility for their lives.**



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*“We should be aware of what we’re doing because we’re the people who are manifesting existence now. **The past and the future are now in the present.**”*

Academia after the pandemic

The **NYU** professor said that she has observed the limits of academic education due to the pandemic, as **it is only focused on the mental aspect.**

*“When I saw that life truly begins and ends, I understood that education should be more than that. **Looking at it as a form of existence and understanding, it isn’t just about what we write, but about how we live or how we treat people.**”*



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Ferrando said that academia is based on clear messages and scientific evidence. However, followers of Posthumanism have an **obligation to look towards other traditions, such as the mystical experience**, with people who understand human beings and individuals as a whole.

*“**The human species needs to feel heard. It needs to understand what’s happening. To do so, we can’t just put millions of references, we have to explain it in a language that can be understood,**”* concluded **Francesca Ferrando.**

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