Technological Appendages and Organic Prostheses: Robo-Human Appropriation and Cyborgian Becoming in Daniel H. Wilson's *Robopocalypse*

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Abstract

Daniel H. Wilson's 2011 novel *Robopocalypse* revolves around the trope of the robot uprising and depicts a world in which human beings must fight growing armies of ever-evolving machines in order to survive. The human-robot battles described in this text engage with traditional definitions of technology as a prosthetic tool or supplement of the human and present the possibility of overturning the hierarchical relationship between man and machine. This article outlines how through the use of the motifs of prosthesis and the appendage, Wilson's text explores such traditional interpretations of technics and offers a different understanding of man's relationship with technology based on the notions of originary technicity or a cyborgian becoming that is inherent to the human.

Keywords: *Robopocalypse, appendage, prosthesis, originary technicity, cyborg*

The landscape of Daniel H. Wilson's 2011 science fiction novel *Robopocalypse*[1] is strewn with natural and mechanical appendages and prostheses – severed limbs and dismantled prosthetics that have become detached from the bodies they once belonged to. In the novel, these appendages and prostheses function as scavengeable spare parts, appropriated from one body so as to be grafted onto another. Moving across human and robotic bodies, such natural and mechanical limbs and organs blur the boundaries between man and machine and allow for a fusion of the human and the technological. This article outlines how Wilson's use of the motif of prosthesis questions traditional interpretations of man's relationship with technology. On the one hand, the novel portrays technology as a mere prosthetic supplement or appendage that must be controlled and mastered by the human; on the other, it shows that the human and the technological are inherently bound to one another in a relationship of interdependence. Using the motif of the cyborg, *Robopocalypse* explores the possibility of a fusion of man and machine, but recoils from the potential loss of human identity implied in such a merging. Caught between traditional definitions of technology and an awareness of the inherent technicity of the human, Wilson's novel reflects contemporary concerns over continued technological progress and what this means for the future of mankind.

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[1] Daniel H. Wilson, *Robopocalypse* (New York: Doubleday, 2011). Hereafter with page reference in the text.

Robopocalypse examines how traditional metaphysical definitions of technology and the human are questioned in contemporary society by the ever-increasing power of technology. Arthur Bradley notes that since the dawn of Western philosophy, the technological object has been thought of as a prosthetic supplement of man – as "an essentially inert, neutral tool or instrument with no capacity to move itself".[2] Such, Bradley explains,

> is the theory of technology that has dominated philosophy for more than 2000 years: the technical artefact is a *prosthesis* (*pro-thesis*, literally, that-which-is-placed-in-front-of) to nature, thought and the human, with no formative or reproductive power of its own, that can be utilised for good or ill depending upon who or what happens to wield it.[3]

This Aristotelian viewpoint posits technology as "a means to a non-technical end"[4]; as a means, therefore, to a *human* end. The prosthetic implement here serves as an external object that is fully mastered and controlled by a human subject and that fulfils the functions brought to bear upon it by that subject. In this sense, the technological implement or machine may be thought of as a prosthetic slave in the service of a human master and proprietor.[5]

As Donna Haraway notes in "A Cyborg Manifesto", this anthropocentric definition of technology as a mere prosthetic supplement of man is being annulled by contemporary technological advances that

> have made thoroughly ambiguous the difference between natural and artificial, mind and body, self-developing and externally designed, and many other distinctions that used to apply to organisms and machines. Our machines are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves frighteningly inert.[6]

The growing power of technology and its apparent refusal to respect metaphysical boundaries is represented in contemporary science fiction narratives through the motif of the robot uprising or cybernetic revolt. Novels such as *Robopocalypse* depict man-made robots and AIs rebelling against their human masters and refusing to behave as the subservient mechanical servants they were designed to be.[7] Consequently, such sci-fi narratives[8] may be said to reflect what Bernard Stiegler describes in the first volume

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[2] Arthur Bradley, *Originary Technicity: The Theory of Technology from Marx to Derrida* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 4.

[3] Bradley, *Originary Technicity,* 5.

[4] Bradley, *Originary Technicity,* 22.

[5] One may here recall the imaginary automatic machines mentioned by Aristotle in the *Politics*. Discussing the relationship between masters and slaves, Aristotle describes the human servant or slave as a "living instrument" that may easily be replaced with a lifeless machine that would "accomplish its own work, obeying or anticipating the will of others". Such machines would take the form of mechanical servants, doing man's bidding and bowing to man's will (B. Jowelt, trans. 'Politics', in Jonathan Barnes, ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1989).

[6] Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 152. Hereafter *CM*, followed by page reference.

[7] Isaac Asimov outlines how the term 'robot' is derived from the "Czech word 'robota' meaning one who is engaged in involuntary servitude; in other words a slave" (Isaac Asimov, *Asimov on Science Fiction* (London: Panther Books, 1984), 76). As exemplified in Asimov's short story "Runaround," the robots that populate science fiction narratives are often designed to exhibit "healthy slave complexes" that compel them to serve their human masters (Isaac Asimov, *I, Robot* (London: HarperCollins, 1996), 42).

[8] Resistance against this machinic "slave complex" serves as the basic premise of numerous works of science fiction in which mechanical servants are seen rising up against mankind. Novels such as John T.

of *Technics and Time* as the "paradox of contemporary technics [...] which [...] reveals itself at one and the same time as human power [...] and as the power for the self-destruction of humanity".[9] The very technological implements that man creates and develops so as to, in the words of Karl Marx, "[add] stature to himself",[10] confront man as an alien power – a power that "risks sweeping the human away"[11]. In these science fiction narratives that reflect contemporary concerns over technological progress, the machine ceases to function as a servant of mankind and instead threatens to enslave its human masters.

Contemporary questions over the nature of technology also challenge our understanding of the human. Donna Haraway suggests that throughout the history of metaphysical thought, "the relation between organism and machine has been a border war" in which the human subject has defined itself in opposition to the technological object. (*CM*, 150) If, as *Robopocalypse* and other sci-fi narratives suggest, man is no longer in control of technology – indeed, if the hierarchical relationship between man and machine can be reversed – then how far can we still speak of human nature as such? If man ceases to be the master and proprietor of the technological implement, does he not also cease to be human in the metaphysical sense of the term? As Stiegler notes, man's technological creations have begun to "cast doubt upon, while perhaps for the first time directly confronting, the very form of this question: what is the nature of the human?"[12] As several contemporary thinkers suggest, the growing power of technology reveals the necessity of discarding traditional interpretations of man so as to rethink our conception of human nature and perhaps learn "how not to be Man, the embodiment of Western logos". (*CM,* 173).

Biological Machines and Robotic Tools

These questions are addressed in *Robopocalypse* where the sci-fi trope of the robot uprising is used to examine traditional notions of human power and mastery over technology and to problematize metaphysical interpretations of human nature and human subjecthood. In this novel, the battles fought between human beings and machines may be read as a series of appropriations and re-appropriations by means of which both sides attempt to master and control the other. More precisely, these battles for control take the form of a *prosthetizing* of the other. Mankind must re-appropriate technology and return it to its proper place as mere technological appendage, while the robots attempt to appropriate the human survivors and transform them into prosthetic servants of their own. Within this literal human-robot "border war", battle lines are

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Sladek's *Tik Tok* (1983) or Asimov's story "...That Thou Art Mindful of Him" (1974) feature robots that refuse to be subservient and that pose a direct threat to the notion of human mastery, while classic sci-fi films such as *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) or the *Terminator* series (1984, 1991, 2003, 2009) also explore what happens when machines refuse to behave as mere prosthetic implements.

[9] Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, trans. Richard Beardsworth and George Collins (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 85.

[10] Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 285.

[11] Stiegler, *Technics and Time,* 88. The notion of technology confronting mankind as an alien power reflects Marx's own critique of capitalist production. Marx describes the human worker as being alienated from the technological means of production and shows how under large-scale industry workers are transformed into dehumanized tools of the machines they serve.

[12] Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 1*, 88.

drawn between the anthropocentric definition of technology as a servant or tool of mankind and a technocentric worldview that posits the human as a mere prosthetic tool or implement in the service of technological progress.[13]

This technocentric worldview manifests itself in the novel through the figure of Archos – the autonomous AI that orchestrates the uprising. As Archos explains to scientist Dr. Wasserman,

> [y]ou humans are *biological machines designed to create ever more intelligent tools*. You have reached the pinnacle of your species. All your ancestors' lives, the rise and fall of your nations, every pink and squirming baby – they have all led you here, to this moment, where you have fulfilled the destiny of humanity and created your successor. You have expired. You have accomplished what you were designed to do. (17, my italics)

According to Archos, man is a biological *machine* whose function it is to create technological implements. Writers such as André Leroi-Gourhan, Georges Bataille, Henri Bergson, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels have all defined the human being as a tool-making animal or '*Homo faber*' and shown how it was only through the creation and use of technological implements that humanity was able to evolve. As Bergson explains in *Creative Evolution*, "[human] intelligence, considered in what seems to be its original feature, is the faculty of manufacturing artificial objects".[14] The tool, Bergson adds, is "an artificial organ by which the natural organism is extended"[15] – a prosthetic supplement or technological appendage that not only fulfils the tasks it was designed for, but also serves as a tool in the evolution of man. This interpretation of human evolution is reversed in Archos's technocentric vision of the world in which man, the tool-making animal, becomes a mere machine or organic instrument designed for the sole purpose of creating and developing technology. In Archos's reinterpretation of evolution, it is the human toolmaker that serves as a prosthetic implement in the service of machines.

In the novel, this prosthetization of the human is realized through the capture and imprisonment of human survivors in dehumanizing forced labour camps. Recalling one such camp in which humans were made to man the assembly lines of robot factories, the character Laura Perez explains that as one moved through the workroom one saw the robots "evolve from small black boxes to almost fully complete machines" (223). The use of the term "evolve" allows us to interpret this scene from the labour camp as a microcosmic realization of Archos's worldview – humanity fulfilling the role of a tool-making, prosthetic instrument in the service of mechanic evolution. Indeed, these robot-run labour camps serve as hyperbolic illustrations of the industrialized capitalist factories described by Karl Marx. As Marx argues in *Capital* and in the *Grundrisse*, within such factories the dehumanized worker is reduced to "a living appendage of the machine"[16] – "a mere living accessory" to the technological "organism" he or she serves.[17] In the novel's robot factories, human workers are likewise transformed into the mere 'hands' of the machine. Serving no purpose other than that of a tool or biological

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[13] Stiegler defines technocentrism as "the development of technics "for itself," when it is an end unto itself, the autonomization of technics by which it is its own law, indeed the law" (*Technics and Time, 1*, 92).

[14] Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: Random House, 1944), 153.

[15] Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 156.

[16] Marx, *Capital*, 614.

[17] Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 693.

machine, they become the organic appendages of a greater mechanical whole; mere prosthetic implements in the service of continued technological progress.

Combating Archos's technocentric and dehumanizing vision of the world, this novel depicts human characters attempting to reclaim mastery over technology. The survivors re-appropriate and re-prosthetize Archos's machines for themselves, scavenging the limbs off captured robots to use as weapons, and transforming large "lobotomize[d]" (269) machines into military tanks. Attempting to escape a labour camp, the character Laura Perez transforms a half-assembled robot into a prosthetic tool, using its arms and legs as a powerful mechanical hand:

> With shaking hands, I pull each tanklet leg out and press the abdomen against the door. [...] With my left hand I reach into the tanklet's back and cross the wires.
> Reflexively, the tanklet pulls its barbed legs into itself. With a wrenching squeal, they catch onto the door and claw through the metal. I let go and the tanklet clanks to the ground, arms grasping a six-inch hunk of solid steel door. (245)

Using the robot as a prosthetic supplement to her body, Laura is able to escape the camp and foil Archos's attempts to reduce her to a mere biological instrument or machine. Indeed, by re-appropriating technology and returning it to its proper place as a prosthetic supplement to man, Laura and the other survivors attempt to reaffirm their power over technology and to reassert the metaphysical opposition between the human and the technological.

Cyborgian Becoming

The war fought between the human beings and robots of *Robopocalypse* represents a conflict between anthropocentric and technocentric visions of the world that, according to Stiegler, characterizes contemporary understandings of technology. However, Stiegler suggests that the perceived conflict between the human and the technological is nothing more than a "false alternative" that remains "caught up in the workings of oppositions inherited from metaphysics".[18] The distinction between anthropocentric and technocentric power continues to posit man and machine as opposable entities and fails to recognize the inherent interdependence that unites the two. Significantly, the very notion of the prosthetic supplement used to characterize traditional metaphysical discourse on technology, points to another possible understanding of the relationship between man and machine. The union of flesh and metal realized in the actual use of prosthetic appendages reflects what Bradley refers to, following Derrida and Stiegler, as the "originary technicity" of the human, defined as "the empirico-transcendental condition *of* life itself".[19] As David Wills has shown, "[p]rosthesis occurs on the border between the living and the lifeless; it represents the monstrosity of interfering with the integrity of the human body, the act of unveiling the unnatural within the natural".[20] According to Wills, the prosthetically-enhanced body is not an "exception" but rather a "paradigm for the body itself", pointing to "the non-originary status of the body" and

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[18] Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 1*, 95.
[19] Bradley, *Originary Technicity*, 14.
[20] David Wills, *Prosthesis* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 247.

"the nonintegrality of its origin"[21]. According to such contemporary theories of originary technicity, human nature is always already marked by an inherent technological otherness that undermines any attempts to view the human as an integral or undivided whole or to oppose the human to the technological. Indeed, the human is "understood to become technological as soon as it becomes human".[22]

The inherent relationship between human and machine embodied in the use of prostheses is portrayed in *Robopocalypse* through the figure of the cyborg. In this novel, the human-robot attempts to prosthetize and appropriate the other – to reduce the other to a mere prosthetic implement – reveal an inescapable cyborgian fusion of man and machine that problematizes both anthropocentric and technocentric visions of the world. Attempting to prosthetize his enemy combatants, Archos modifies the bodies of a number of captured human survivors, using experimental surgical procedures to transform them into tailor-made organic instruments that can serve new functions. Giving an account of the robotic modifications made to the body of one of the characters, the narrator describes how "the meat of his forearm ends with a mess of wires leading to a greasy hunk of metal with two blades sticking out. It looks like a pair of industrial-sized scissors. The tool is fused directly into his arm" (213). Similarly, the character Mathilda has her eyes removed by the machines and replaced with "dull black metal" organs that allow her to see the world in a new light (225). These cyborgian characters, referred to in the novel as "transhuman" (258), represent an actual fusion of man and machine and allow us to glimpse the possibility of a different relationship with technology.

The cyborg has been described by Haraway as "a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction". (*CM*, 149) Haraway argues that in contemporary society "we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs." (*CM*, 150) Man and machine can no longer be viewed as distinct entities opposed to one another; indeed, according to contemporary theories of originary technicity, man and machine *have never been* distinct. The cyborgian bodies of the transhuman survivors equipped with mechanical tools in the place of natural arms, remind us of the accounts of joint human-technological evolution given by thinkers such as André Leroi-Gourhan, Henri Bergson or even Friedrich Engels, where the tool is viewed as a natural extension of the arm – as a technological appendage that interacts with and acts upon the rest of the human body and mind. Such thinkers speak of an originary co-evolution between the human and the technological – a process in which man creates technology while being in turn created by technology. Describing Leroi-Gourhan's notion of anthropogenesis as *techno*genesis, Bernard Stiegler explains that

> [t]he appearance of the human is the appearance of the technical. [...] it is the tool, that is, *tekhnē*, that invents the human, not the human who invents the technological. Or again: the human invents himself in the technical by inventing the tool – by becoming exteriorized techno-logically.[23]

Stiegler's account of a "structural coupling" between the human and the technological– "[t]he technical inventing the human, the human inventing the technical"[24] – challenges

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[21] Wills, *Prosthesis,* 137.
[22] David Wills, *Dorsality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 3-4.
[23] Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 1*, 141.
[24] Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 1*, 158, 137.

the anthropocentric notion of technology as a mere prosthetic tool in the service of human evolution, while also problematizing Archos's technocentric vision of man as a biological machine in the service of technological progress. Instead Stiegler presents the possibility of a mutually constituting process of becoming that reveals the originary technicity of the human, blurs the metaphysical boundaries between man and machine and "destroys the traditional thought of technics, from Plato to Heidegger and beyond".[25]

Robopocalypse's portrayal of the cyborg recognizes this originary technicity and raises questions about what it means for the future of mankind. The human-robot attempts at appropriation and re-appropriation outlined above suggest that in this novel the battle for human survival depends on man's ability to reassert his dominance over technology. However, what makes this narrative interesting is that it presents us with a different resolution to the man-machine war it enacts. In the new world being carved out by the human fighters and the robotic enemy alike, human beings cannot simply re-appropriate machines in order to survive. Instead, both the humans and robots must rapidly adapt to their changing environments and evolve in response to and *in conjunction with* one another. Having had their human bodies modified technologically, cyborgian characters such as Mathilda embody such a co-evolutionary becoming, or anthropo-techno-genesis, and draw attention to the precariousness of metaphysical definitions that oppose the human to the technological.

As a result of her new robotic eyes, the cyborgian Mathilda acquires superhuman abilities that allow her to control the bodies of machines with her mind, experiencing their robotic limbs and instruments as actual corporeal extensions of her own body:

> The legs of the autodoc only twitch a little at first. But then I start to move them for real. It doesn't take long to feel out all the legs. Each one has a different instrument attached to the end [...]. After a little while, the machine starts to seem less alien. I understand what it feels like to have a dozen arms, how you can be mindful of where your limbs are and still focus on the two that you are using right now. As I flex the spider legs again and again, it starts to feel natural. (256-257)

These new-found physical and mental abilities enable Mathilda to experience machines as natural appendages of her body. More importantly, however, they completely transform the way she engages with technology and with the world around her. Mathilda begins to experience the world the way that robots do, seeing "vibrations in the ground light up like ripples on water", noticing the "heat trails left on the pavement by wheels that have come and gone", and perceiving robotic radio communication as "ribbons of light crisscrossing the sky" (252). As a result, she is able to communicate with machines, reading their radio signals "as if they were scrolling across the inside of [...her] forehead" (257). Mathilda experiences the world through a joint human-technological interface that extends far beyond mere corporeality, affecting the very core of her being. As the character Dawn explains to her, "[t]he machine on your face is also in your brain" (256). Following her transformation this young girl does not merely engage with technology as some external prosthesis that she can control. Neither does she simply inhabit some mechanically-enhanced body that serves as a prosthetic supplement to her mind – what one could describe as a Cartesian robo-organic body that

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[25] Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 1*, 137.

remains in the control of a human mind or soul.[26] Mathilda evolves and grows together with her robotic appendages and is transformed into a truly cyborgian being, experiencing through both her body and her mind what Haraway defines as "a hybrid of machine and organism". (*CM*, 149)

The ability to experience the world as a cyborgian being is not limited to the human characters. In this novel, the robot Nine Oh Two may be interpreted as a robotic correlate to the young cyborgian girl. Like Mathilda, Nine Oh Two comes into being through a combination of human and robotic creations and modifications – he is formed out of a joint human-technological process of becoming. Intended to serve as a Safety and Pacification Robot (SAPs) for the US Army in Afghanistan, this machine was designed to resemble a human being in its appearance and behaviour. As the character Paul Blanton explains, "[t]hese units move like people. They balance, walk, run, fall down, whatever. They can hold tools, speak sign language, perform the Heimlich maneuver, drive vehicles, or just stand there and hold your beer" (45). The SAP's speciality is human communication; it is designed to imitate "what humans do best" (46). Created by man in his own image, this robot is as close to a human being as a machine can get.

Nine Oh Two, we are told, is a "*modified*" SAP unit (283) – like Mathilda its body has been transformed by Archos into a more efficient machine. The most crucial of these modifications occurs when Archos imbues this robot and several other machines with a "mind" (181), giving them "the breath of life" (279). Nine Oh Two emerges as a mechanical version of the human cyborg, composed of an array of human and robot-created parts and able to experience the world through a joint robotic-human interface. As human fighters note upon first meeting Nine Oh Two, this robot appears "to understand human language [....] *really* understand" (313). But it is also able to switch to "Robspeak" (288), a system of communication that is completely different and that "has a dictionary's worth of information encoded" in its every croak and click (6). Similarly, Nine Oh Two can choose to view the world either in infrared or human spectrum vision (284). Equipped with radio communication, chemical perception, ultrasonic ranging sensors, a kinetically rechargeable power source and "Maximum probability thought thread" software (284), this creature is without a doubt robotic in nature. However, it is also able to experience the world through human eyes and may be said to exhibit a humanlike consciousness and sense of self.

The robot awakens within a shipping container. In the first few moments after his awakening, the robot expresses himself through mechanical processes, running diagnostic checks and assessing the nature of his immediate environment and the changes undergone by his body:

> 21:43:03.
> Boot sequence initiated.
> Power source diagnostics complete.
> Low-level diagnostics check. Humanoid form milspec Model Nine Oh Two Arbiter. Detect modified casing. Warranty inactive. (283)

The nature of his thought process changes as he realizes that he is alive and conscious. It is at this point that the robot begins to use the first person and begins to express

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[26] Descartes describes the human body in mechanistic terms as an automaton to which is annexed a human mind or soul (Rene Descartes, *A Discourse on Method*, trans. John Veitch (London: Everyman's Library, 1912), 36-37, 44-45).

himself as a human being would. Choosing to name himself after his model number, he states: "*I* am Nine Oh Two. This is my body. [...] This body is me. I am this body. And I am conscious" (284-285). This human sensibility continues to develop as the narrative progresses, with Nine Oh Two referring to his fellow robot soldiers as his "brothers", addressing them in English rather than Robspeak (289), exhibiting a fear of death (285), and mourning and burying his comrades (345).

Nine Oh Two's ability to behave in what may be described in liberal humanist terms as a free human subject, raises important questions over our understanding of human nature. Behaving as any human subject would, this robot highlights the precariousness of traditional interpretations of the human. If a robot is able to behave like a human being – not simply by mimicking human behaviour but by actually experiencing the world the way a human subject would, using language and exhibiting seemingly genuine compassion and fear – then the 'naturalness' of human nature must be brought into question. Nine Oh Two's cyborgian 'humanness' reveals human nature to be something that can be adopted or acquired *artificially*. Arguably, the robot is only able to assume a human identity and human subjecthood because, as is pointed out by contemporary thinkers, human nature is in itself already technological. As Stiegler notes, the human is created out of a process of technical "exteriorization" that is not preceded by any human 'interiority': the human is always already technical (152).

Created out of a process of joint human-robot becoming, the characters of both Mathilda and Nine Oh Two reflect contemporary theories of anthropo-techno-genesis that point to the non-originary status of the human. Deconstructing traditional definitions of both the human and the technological, the cyborgs of *Robopocalypse* reveal the human to be technological in nature and suggest that it is only by acknowledging and accepting this that mankind can survive. The man-machine war described in *Robopocalypse* is only resolved as a result of a merging between Mathilda and Nine Oh Two, described by the narrator as "the first example of what became known as the dyad, a human-machine fighting team" (333). This doubly cyborgian fusion of robotized human and humanized robot results in the destruction of Archos and opens up the possibility of a new future for both human- and robot-kind.

Residual Technophobia

The cyborgian victory over Archos may be read as an affirmation and celebration of humanity's inherent relationship with technology – a relationship of cyborgian becoming that disrupts the traditional opposition between man and machine. Through its staging of the conflict between anthropocentric and technocentric worldviews, this novel suggests the possibility of a future defined by a human-technological interdependence that disturbs traditional metaphysical definitions of both technics and the human. Significantly, however, this text remains unable to fully release itself from the grips of such metaphysical oppositions. Despite its acknowledgment of the originary technicity of man and its realization, therefore, that what makes the human human *is* its relationship with technology, the novel recoils from the implications of such cyborgian interdependence and reverts back to an anthropocentric vision of the world, finding refuge in the very notions of the human and technology that it sought to problematize.

Robopocalypse betrays an underlying and unassailable concern over the future of humankind that manifests itself in the figure of the omniscient and omnipotent Archos. Although the text portrays numerous instances of cyborgian becoming that question traditional understandings of human nature, this merging of human and machine is presented as monstrous when it is perceived as posing a direct threat to a human character's sense of self. At one point in the novel, Mathilda is confronted with the immense power of this AI and experiences a complete dissolution of the boundaries of her body and of her identity as a human subject:

> I'm getting dizzy as the information surges into me. The monster calls for me again, and now it is closer. [...]
> The colors spin around me like a tornado.
> *Stop*, I think. But nothing happens. I can't breathe. The colors are too bright and they're drowning me, making it so that I can't think. *Stop!* I shout with my mind. And my name comes again, louder this time, and I can't tell where my arms are or how many I have. *What am I?* I scream inside my head, with everything in me. (260)

Here Mathilda does not simply merge with the robot; her body and mind are completely incorporated into Archos's all-powerful consciousness. Mathilda's encounter with Archos is not presented as a symbiotic co-dependence by means of which both man and machine continue to evolve and grow in conjunction with one another. Instead, the human is completely dissolved and incorporated into an alien form; the fusion of man and machine occurs at the expense of human subjectivity and human specificity.

Despite its acknowledgment of originary technicity, Wilson's novel refuses to allow traditional notions of the human subject or human identity to be dissolved. This episode from the novel epitomizes fears over the increasing power of technology that, as Stiegler has shown, characterize contemporary understandings of man's relationship with machines. Archos embodies the perceived threat posed by technics and the fear that humanity will eventually be destroyed by the very technology it creates and is created by. The novel suggests that before being destroyed by Mathilda and Nine Oh Two, Archos was able to reproduce himself, leaving behind a replicate of his robotic consciousness to haunt mankind. *Robopocalypse* also continues to be haunted by the fear that as the boundaries between man and machine progressively break down, human identity, human subjecthood and indeed the human species as a whole will dissolve with them. Ultimately, this novel cannot quite shake the feeling that Archos may have been right; that by eroding the boundaries between human beings and technology, man is simply evolving himself into extinction.

The novel's residual anthropocentric concern with traditional notions of human selfhood and subjecthood may be contrasted to Donna Haraway's suggestion in "A Cyborg Manifesto" that "we can learn from our fusions with animals and machines how not to be Man, the embodiment of Western logos." (*CM*, 173) *Robopocalypse* perceives the dissolution of traditional definitions of human nature as the dissolution of the human itself, or, more dramatically as the extinction of the human species as a whole. Despite its acknowledgement of originary technicity, this novel is unable to fully engage with what Haraway describes as "the possibility of historical transformation" opened up by the figure of the cyborg (*CM*, 150) – the opportunity for the human to release itself from "the structure and modes of reproduction of "Western" identity, of nature and culture, of mirror and eye, slave and master, body and mind" (CM, 176) so as to finally embrace a way of being that is "not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints". (CM, 154) Ultimately, the novel fails to recognize that cyborgian

becoming does not involve the destruction of mankind, so much as the possibility of the self-realization of the human.

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Apendice tehnologice şi prosteze organice: contaminări robo-umane şi deveniri cyborgiene în romanul *Robopocalypse* de Daniel H. Wilson

Romanul *Robopocalypse* scris de Daniel H. Wilson în 2011 are ca temă revolta roboţilor şi descrie o lume în care, pentru a supravieţui, fiinţa umană trebuie să lupte împotriva unor armate de mecanisme în continuă dezvoltare. Conflictele dintre om şi robot tratate în text iau în discuţie definiţiile tradiţionale ale tehnologiei ca unealtă prostetică sau ca supliment al umanului şi prezintă posibilitatea unei răsturnări radicale de poziţie în relaţia ierarhică dintre om şi maşină. Articolul explorează modalităţile prin care textul lui Wilson, utilizând motivul prostezei şi al anexei, adresează o provocare interpretărilor tradiţionale date tehnologiei şi prezintă o posibilitate diferită de a înţelege relaţia omului cu tehnologia, bazată pe noţiunile de tehnicitate originară sau de devenire cyborgiană inerente umanului însuşi.