

Jarek Lustych \*

*Hear Us*

*Ouçá-nos*

## ABSTRACT

The article situates the geological turn in art in the sense of human finitude, defining it both in individual categories and in terms of the entire species. The author applies agency theory to introduce a figure of symbiotic authorship and its surrounding subordinate elements - especially those that can be used to meet the needs of agency development. Abandoning the former patterns of superficial artistic attitudes that continued human expansion, the author postulates the interaction of human and non-human entities as ethical and at the same time more creatively promising, based on the concepts of radical immanence, and relational ontology. A particular concern motivating presented research has been to shift the weight of emphasis both conceptually and methodologically away from anthropocentric vision.

**Keywords:** Posthuman; Critical Post-humanities; Symbiotic Authorship; Affirmation.

## RESUMO

O artigo situa a virada geológica na arte no sentido da finitude humana, definindo-a tanto em categorias individuais quanto em termos de toda a espécie. O autor aplica a teoria do agenciamento para introduzir uma figura de autoria simbiótica e seus elementos subordinados circundantes - especialmente aqueles que podem ser usados para atender às necessidades de desenvolvimento do agenciamento. Abandonando os antigos padrões de atitudes artísticas superficiais que continuaram a expansão humana, o autor postula a interação de entidades humanas e não humanas como ética e ao mesmo tempo mais criativamente promissora, com base nos conceitos de imanência radical e ontologia relacional. Uma preocupação particular que motivou a pesquisa apresentada foi mudar o peso da ênfase, tanto conceitual quanto metodológica, para longe da visão antropocêntrica.

**Palavras-Chave:** Pós-humano; Pós-humanidades Críticas; Autoria Simbiótica; Afirmação.



Mushrooms in their abundance begin to appear at the end of summer. It is as if only the growing night calls these organisms from their underground kingdom. This suddenness of appearance, so different from that of vegetables, has always been an object of human awe. Mysterious beings suddenly sprouting up in unpredictable places with their undoubted chthonicity simultaneously fascinated and aroused anxiety with their enigma. The obvious sensuality of their shapes, the thickness of the shaft, and the delicacy of the gills are also awkward. This form, carrying strong sexual connotations, has its justification. What we consider a fungus is just the reproductive organ of a larger organism hidden underground from our sight. The ambivalence of its traits – poisonous/edible - meant that mushrooms were used in magical practices. The well-recognized hallucinogenic properties of some species allowed the exit from the everyday world

into augmented reality. Hence, all these complex meanings gave rise to my interest in mushrooms as a partner in the study of the figure of the non-human artist.

Since the awareness of human finitude took on a personal aspect for me, my perception of the world and my work have changed, with a clear shift of emphasis. The approaching end made it clearer that we, as a species, are in a similar place on the timeline. We are beginning to accept the idea of the mortality of all mankind. And if we can disappear, it's hard to treat us as the crown of creation. This decentralization of the position of man results in philosophical thought in the re-articulation of the position of nature in the earthly order. The art that accompanies or replaces this reflection confirms the importance of cooperation and interdependence as the basic factors of survival.

Introducing non-human beings into the field of art as active participants and recognizing their subjectivity leads to empathy and activation of the affective cognition factor, and consequently to understanding. At the same time, it allows one to discover hitherto unrecognized possibilities and effects of shared creativity. This opens the way to accepting a concept in which human beings are no longer autonomous components of a humanistic ontology, but are constituted only in coexistence with many non-human actants. Thus, the beholder gains the chance to follow the network of relations



between things of all kinds, human and non-human, without prior judgments about the roles played by various types of subjects.



The symbiotic artist as a concept that makes it possible to leave the anthropocentric perspective contains the proposal of diffused authorship. The moment when a human author gives up autonomy opens up a chance for the emergence of a new form of symbolic practice. Works created in the field of wide-humanity, whose materials and technologies constitute interspecies cooperation, show a deeper connection with the biological nature of life. A symbiotic artist creates a work whose temporal and spatial boundaries are indefinable. Is revealing unknown aspects of non-human beings an art? It can be if we remember that the role of art is to search for truth, and each representation or experience "explains" the object. The unveiling of what was hidden also broadens the observer's field of reality and the sphere of his sensations.

There remains the question of the authorship of such an act of art. Should one assign them to the translator or the translation object? An object in translation reveals its hitherto dormant aspect and, regardless of the medium chosen by the translator, it is simply one of many manifestations of being. The role of the translator is therefore only to choose a medium that allows one to experience the discrete reality of the object. The synergy of human and non-human activities can change the current perception of the phenomenon of life and the place of man in the world, it can even lead to the extension of the habitus.

Mushrooms, although so far from man in biological systematics, may also prove to be his partner. Listening to the voices of their inner life, to the pulsation of energy is an attempt to reach their essence. These sounds can be juxtaposed or even combined with sounds audible under the skin of a human and recorded.

Although reaching them in both cases requires a physical breach/puncture/transgression of the body's integument. In this way, a dark space of subcutaneous connections between tangled shreds (threads, fibers?) will be revealed to the art participant, going beyond the biological nature of natural beings. It confirms that things become what they are and gain meaning only in and through a network of relationships, and as such it is related to the way of thinking about agency, and not as an exclusively human ability (conscious, reflective, and intentional actors), but of all participants in the environment.

Here I see a gap that allows us to cross the rigid boundaries of anthropocentrism and see the Real of all earthly beings.

*Hear Us* as a contribution to posthumanist thinking is associated with the reconceptualization of the position of human beings in the hierarchy of beings and considering them in relational categories.

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\* **Jarek Lustych** is a polish visual artist. Since 2000 his work involves the natural elements of the environment, thus allowing them to function as co-authors or active participants. In this way he is trying to overcome the anthropocentric worldview. By avoiding the production of any new objects, he is only revealing the hitherto unseen aspects of the environment.

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