

MACIEJ CZERNIAKOWSKI

## CYBER NOMADS IN A TRASH-HUMAN DYSTOPIA: A POSTHUMANIST ANALYSIS OF *CYBERPUNK: EDGERUNNERS*

**Abstract.** The article discusses how the miniseries *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners* critiques a world driven by unregulated technological progress and market dominated transhumanist ideals. While a dystopian vision of the future has been a well-established part of cyberpunk universes since the release of *Neuromancer* by William Gibson in 1986, this anime series introduces a fresh and noteworthy dimension to the cyberpunk's assessment of the future. It achieves that by depicting the tragic fall of its protagonist, David, whose life stands as an illustrative symbol of the human cost in a world where progress takes priority over people. The article sets to interpret this bleak scenario of *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners* by placing it in the context of Jaime del Val's vocal criticism of hyperconsumerism and hyperhumanism, which leads to replacing an unsustainable union between humans and technology with a new figure of the metahuman.

**Keywords:** critical posthumanism; transhumanism; hyperhumanism; hyperconsumerism; cyberpunk

### CYBERNETYCZNI NOMADZI W TRASH-HUMANISTYCZNEJ DYSTOPII: POSTHUMANISTYCZNA ANALIZA *CYBERPUNK: EDGERUNNERS*

**Abstrakt.** Przedmiotem niniejszego artykułu jest ukazanie, w jaki sposób miniseria *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners* dokonuje krytyki świata rządzonego rozwojem technologicznym oraz zdominowanymi przez prawa wolnego rynku ideami transhumanizmu. Choć dystopijna wizja przyszłości od dawna stanowi istotną część uniwersów cyberpunkowych – począwszy od publikacji *Neuromancera* Williama Gibsona w 1986 roku – to właśnie ten serial anime wnosi nowy i istotny wymiar do cyberpunkowej refleksji nad przyszłością poprzez ukazanie tragicznego upadku swojego protagonisty, Davida, którego życie staje się jaskrawym symbolem ceny, jaką przychodzi zapłacić ludziom w świecie, gdzie postęp technologiczny ma pierwszeństwo przed człowiekiem. Niniejszy artykuł interpretuje ten ponury scenariusz *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners* w kontekście wymownej krytyki hiperkonsumpcjonizmu i hiperhumanizmu dokonanej przez Jaime del Vala, która prowadzi do zastąpienia wyniszczającej unii między człowiekiem a technologią przez osobę metaczłowieka.

**Słowa kluczowe:** posthumanizm krytyczny; transhumanizm; hiperhumanizm; hiperkonsumpcjonizm; cyberpunk

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MACIEJ CZERNIAKOWSKI, PhD, Assistant Professor at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Institute of Literary Studies, Department of American Literature and Culture; e-mail: [maciej.czerniakowski@kul.pl](mailto:maciej.czerniakowski@kul.pl); ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6841-3480>.

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Human health is predicated not on purity or  
on lack of contamination of one species by others,  
but on the many organisms that make up a healthy human body  
behaving together with energetic efficiency as a community.<sup>1</sup>

*Cyberpunk: Edgerunners* is a cyberpunk anime series released in September 2022 as a prequel to a video game *Cyberpunk 2077*, which was published by CD Projekt two years earlier. The 10-episode miniseries certainly lacks the originality of its famous predecessor *Neuromancer* by William Gibson. While the latter established a whole new literary genre, the former seems to be an anime mirror reflection of the original characters, plot lines, and themes. Its protagonists, David Martinez and Lucy, very much resemble Case and Molly of *Neuromancer* not only in how their bodies are integrated with technology, but also how they meet and end up struggling with corporate bosses and/or artificial intelligences. To do so, David and Lucy have to navigate the world of cutting-edge technologies. In the case of David, these are military standard exoskeletons, while in the case of Lucy it is technology which makes netrunning possible for her—both types reminiscent of technologies featuring in *Neuromancer*.

Nonetheless, *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners* strikes the viewers with an exceptionally well-drawn dystopian vision. These images converge with scenarios of AI-dominated future that have emerged over the last few years following a rapid development of AI-based technologies, such as large language models and humanoid robots equipped with artificial intelligence.<sup>2</sup> Feelings around these technological breakthroughs have ranged from nagging anxiety concerning e.g. a potential loss of jobs in favour of artificial intelligence to great optimism built on a promise that human augmentation shall benefit human life. The first scenario tells a story of displacing humans from their dominant present position in the chain of beings. The second path would lead to creating humans far exceeding capabilities of their ancestors. Not everybody, however, shows the same enthusiasm as regards this option. On the contrary, many critics protest against it, listing potential threats not only to human life, but also to the life of the entire planet. What all these feelings

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<sup>1</sup> Jessica Hope Whiteside and Dorion Sagan, “Medical Symbiotics,” in *Chimeras and Consciousness: Evolution of the Sensory Self*, ed. Lynn Margulis, Celeste A. Asikainen, and Wolfgang E. Krumbein (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 208.

<sup>2</sup> AI Tech Academy, “Ameca Robot Vs Sophia Robot | Tesla Optimus Humanoid Robot: 2024 AI Robots,” posted July 11, 2024, by AI Tech Academy, YouTube, 00:25:25, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KtPfW9y9Zx4>.

reflect is an uncanny belief that whether AI brings positive or negative changes to the human world is not much of an issue. One must rather consider what incremental changes shall be forced upon humans, and hence upon the subject of knowledge.

*Cyberpunk: Edgerunners*, whose release coincided with an unprecedented development of artificial intelligence, makes an important statement in the discussion. To appreciate its gravity, the present study links the analysis of *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners* with a theory of “trash-human unhancement [*sic*]”<sup>3</sup> presented by Jaime del Val in the article “Trash-human Unhancement and Planetary Health. Undoing the Planetary Holocaust by reinventing movement and the body: A Manifesto for cosmic response-ability and the future of life”, also published in 2022. The aim is to investigate whether the new subject of knowledge is a promise of a better future or perhaps a warning against hyperconsumerism and hyperhumanism.

Admittedly, Jaime del Val’s term “trash-human unhancement”<sup>4</sup> alludes to a more popular concept of transhuman enhancement, which denotes the process of enhancing the human body by means of integrating it with various technologies. Some of these technologies may already be available, while others are still purely speculative. Francesca Ferrando lists among some of them various discoveries ranging “from regenerative medicine to nanotechnology, radical life extension, mind uploading<sup>5</sup> and cryonics, among other

<sup>3</sup> Jaime del Val, “Trash-Human Unhancement and Planetary Health. Undoing the Planetary Holocaust by Reinventing Movement and the Body: A Manifesto for Cosmic Response-Ability and the Future of Life,” *Journal of Posthumanism* 2, no. 1, Special Issue (2022): 5, <https://doi.org/10.33182/joph.v2i1.1876>.

<sup>4</sup> Del Val, 5.

<sup>5</sup> The idea of mind uploading, which is an inherent element of any cyberpunk world, was famously discussed by Hans Moravec in his book *Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence*. This is how Moravec explains his theory: “More radically, we could ‘download’ our minds directly into a body in the simulation and ‘upload’ back into the real world when our mission is accomplished. Alternatively, we could bring people out of the simulation by reversing the process—linking their minds to an outside robot body or uploading them directly into it. In all cases we would have the opportunity to recreate the past and to interact with it in a real and direct fashion.” Hans Moravec, *Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 123–24. This statement has generated controversy among scholars, some of whom expressly protested against it. For instance, Katherine Hayles advanced the following criticism: “How, I asked myself, was it possible for someone of Moravec’s obvious intelligence to believe that mind could be separated from body? Even assuming such a separation was possible, how could anyone think that consciousness in an entirely different medium would remain unchanged, as if it had no connection with embodiment? Shocked into awareness, I began noticing he was far from alone.” Katherine N. Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago, IL: University

fields”.<sup>6</sup> The scholar also introduces an important division whose main criterion is access to these new technologies. Ferrando thus explains her point:

Libertarian transhumanism advocates free market as the best guarantor of the right to human enhancement. Democratic transhumanism calls for an equal access to technological enhancements, which could otherwise be limited to certain socio-political classes and related to economic power, consequently encoding racial and sexual politics. The principles of extropianism have been delineated by its founder Max More as: perpetual progress, self-transformation, practical optimism, intelligent technology, open society (information and democracy), self-direction, and rational thinking.<sup>7</sup>

Bearing in mind the present shape of global economy dominated by highly competitive international corporations which carefully price their products and services, one can justifiably assume that the second and third type of transhumanism strike as rather idealistic. Arguably, equal access to technology has always been at best limited even in the West, whose technological development has far exceeded many underprivileged states. The same seems to be true for extropianism, whose principles have remained unattainable for millions of people around the world. Libertarian transhumanism, where access to technology and augmentation is regulated by free market economy, stands as the only option of choice. Admittedly, however, this direction raises mounting concerns over the present and the future condition of humanity. This is because stimulating the growth of unsustainable free market economies steered by large corporations already poses in the opinion of many a serious threat to planetary life.

Such disquietude finds its manifestation in forceful criticism of exploitative economies levelled by Jaime del Val, who has been extremely vocal in

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of Chicago Press, 1999), 1. Interestingly, however, Moravec’s idea has been to some extent implemented by the company DeepBrainAI, which has helped to create avatars of deceased family members since 2022. As DeepBrain AI announces on its website: “DeepBrain AI has unveiled its latest innovation, Re;memory 2, an AI-powered memorial service that significantly enhances the creation process. This service allows users to create highly realistic AI avatars of deceased loved ones, preserving their likeness, voice, and expressions.” “Remember Your Loved Ones – Re;memory2,” *AI Studios* (blog), September 21, 2022, accessed May 11, 2025, <https://www.ai-studios.com/blog/remember-your-loved-ones-deepbrainai>.

<sup>6</sup> Francesca Ferrando, “Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Antihumanism, Metahumanism, and New Materialisms: Differences and Relations,” *Existentz* 8, no. 2 (2013): 27.

<sup>7</sup> Ferrando, 27.

his condemnation. Chastising short-term planning and obsessive anthropocentrism, del Val thus explains his point:

This extreme form of domination, itself unjustifiable, causing unimaginable damage, also implies, and is unleashing a **planetary extinction cycle** that also threatens the dominant species and the planet at large: an exponential process whose crisis point (**extinction singularity**) could be reached over the coming decades, and whose symptoms (pandemics, climate change, rates of species extinction, ecosystem disruption, etc.) have become increasingly visible over the past two years, as symptoms of a deeply damaged **Planetary Health**.<sup>8</sup>

In this passage, del Val points to the absurdity of global systems humanity has created. Not only do humans use the planet's resources irresponsibly by strip-mining the Earth for whatever commodity that can be traded. Humanity has enforced the system that adversely affects every single out of millions of species inhabiting the planet, including humanity. In other words, humanity poses a grave threat to the planet by drawing it into a vicious circle of extinction.

This happens by means of two phenomena humanity seems to be trapped by: hyperconsumerism and hyperhumanism. Del Val illustrates the former, for instance, by referring to animal suffering on everyday basis so that human population can be fed: "The sheer fact of immobilising and abusing 100 billion animals in farms is a cosmic crime against evolution, unsustainable in every single aspect due to the resources, waste and transportation, not to speak of the suffering involved."<sup>9</sup> The latter, i.e. hyperhumanism, has been identified by del Val with transhumanism in general.<sup>10</sup> Del Val states that it originates in "the humanistic and trans-/**hyperhumanistic** idea of the body-world as being intrinsically quantitative, calculable, manipulable, controllable, appropriable, based on old humanistic fears and domination dreams, and on a *deep cosmological ignorance*: the idea of a world centred around us, at our disposal, for us to control, and of infinite resources".<sup>11</sup> In explaining the above, del Val does away with discriminatory anthropocentric views which disregard the right of non-human and human persons to live in environmental homeostasis, or embrace—as Bruce Clarke explains—the Gaia paradigm. Clarke thus defines Gaia:

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<sup>8</sup> Del Val, "Trash-Human Unhancement," 3–4.

<sup>9</sup> Del Val, 12.

<sup>10</sup> Del Val, 12.

<sup>11</sup> Del Val, 5.

Gaia is a self-referential system of planetary cognition operating to produce globally regulative processes binding geological and biological processes and developments into a network of interdependent systems whose differential evolutions are mutually contingent in the final instance but not necessarily in the individual one.<sup>12</sup>

Hyperconsumerism and hyperhumanism disrupt this self-regulating network of systems by hindering their regenerative functions, thus pushing humanity on the verge of “trash-human unhancement”.<sup>13</sup> Crucially, del Val is not alone. His statement resembles that of Rosi Braidotti when the philosopher defines the anthropocene as “the historical moment when the Human has become a geological force capable of affecting all life on this planet”,<sup>14</sup> and when she explains that the human species is “the primary cause for the mess”;<sup>15</sup> the mess which finds its artistic realisation in *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners*.

The miniseries opens with a bird’s-eye view of Night City whose nature becomes instantly clear to the viewers. Night City embodies a highly technologized setting largely inhabited by dysfunctional individuals frequently driven to the brink of madness by technology. The ultimate specimen of this insanity is a cyberpsycho, i.e. an individual whose body has been so excessively integrated with technology that their nervous systems snap and consequently their identity disintegrates. Regular police force cannot deal with these freaks of technology since their augmented bodies allow them to harness unimaginable power. Only the so-called MaxTac units can neutralise a cyberpsycho, which usually leads to a bloodbath. The very first minutes of *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners* feature one such carnage which ends with a cyberpsycho—former Lt. Col. James Norris—getting his head shot off. The creators further strengthen this image by scenes of moral and social degeneracy: alcohol and drug addicts lying on the pavement, women vomiting and masturbating in public, and burning buildings. All this happens to an upbeat song titled “Who’s ready for tomorrow?” when the protagonist, David Martinez, is on his way to school.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Bruce Clarke, *Gaian Systems: Lynn Margulis, Neocybernetics, and the End of the Anthropocene* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), 93.

<sup>13</sup> Del Val, “Trash-Human Unhancement,” 5.

<sup>14</sup> Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2013), 5.

<sup>15</sup> Braidotti, 66.

<sup>16</sup> Hiroyuki Imaishi, *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners*, season 1, episode 1, “Let You Down,” aired September 13, 2022, on Netflix, Studio Trigger.

While David clearly shows that he is used to such situations, this moral decay is contrasted with a happy image of a loving family. Between the scene showing Col. Norris's head being torn apart by a rifle with a triangle barrel and the moment when David passes by a masturbating woman, he has a perfectly normal conversation with his mother. The viewers, however, will not be mistaken to conclude that this haven of family life has any chance to survive. After David has modified the headset used for studying in Arasaka Academy and damages the school's system, his mother is called to pick him up. On their way home, their car is caught in crossfire and, as a result, they suffer from an awful accident. Trauma Team, *Cyberpunk*'s medical emergency unit, which appears on site resolves not to help them. After he and his mother are scanned, David hears Trauma Team members say: "He's not a client." ~ "Neither is she."<sup>17</sup> Shocked, David learns that they are supposed to be left "to the city meat wagons",<sup>18</sup> as a result of which his mother dies. What also dies with David's mother is her dream for her son to graduate from Arasaka Academy. Following her death, he joins a gang of edgerunners commanded by Maine, frequently employed by a Militech fixer, Faraday.

*Cyberpunk: Edgerunners* manifestly illustrates hyperconsumerist exploitative economy described by del Val. Already in the first minutes of the series, the story revolves around the three most crucial institutions for a reason. By drawing on basic spheres of social life, i.e. law enforcement, education, and healthcare—institutions any sustainable society must rely on—the story reveals abusive mechanisms of power enforced by two powerful corporations: Arasaka and Militech. In the world of *Cyberpunk*, the state provides citizens with these services to a very limited extent. A citizen, rather, becomes a client of legal, educational, and healthcare institutions, whose services need to be paid for, or otherwise citizens are left to their own devices. Therefore, law and order, knowledge, and health become commodity products of unregulated free market economy. As long as citizens can afford these services, they are freely available. This system, however, fails to account for life situations David and his mother find themselves in. Without sufficient financial means, they cannot benefit from the advanced technology which may be within arm's reach but whose cost can hardly be borne by an average family. Citizens can therefore find little consolation in the state whose regulatory power has been diminished in favour of free market economy

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<sup>17</sup> Imaishi, *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners*, season 1, episode 1, "Let You Down."

<sup>18</sup> Imaishi, *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners*, season 1, episode 1, "Let You Down."

and commodification of rights everyone should enjoy by virtue of being a living entity. As David understands during the accident, his body is treated as disposable meat, or—as del Val has it—he falls prey to “trash-human unhancement”.<sup>19</sup>

In this sense, *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners* seems to formulate a bitter commentary on idealistic propositions concerning equal access to technology by all citizens. Instead of glorifying a bright future where augmented humans benefit from technological advancements, *Cyberpunk* draws a picture of trash-humanity whose participants are enslaved by corporations wielding power over the world. In this version of reality, humans—irrespective of their skin colour—resemble Black slaves of the American South who “fall into the landscape and disappear. It is as if the foundation or basis for this world is made out of repudiated, throwaway bodies that mire the earth: a landscape built over and upon the melancholic detritus, the disposable bodies.”<sup>20</sup> This fate becomes the fate of numerous characters of *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners*, including David’s mother, which inescapably pushes him towards his own downfall.

After his mother’s death, David gets hold of a military grade exoskeleton—a Sandevistan—which constitutes a trans-/hyperhuman turn in his life and offers a delusional promise of a better or perhaps just less trash-human life. To install it, he visits Doc and says bluntly, “High time I chromed the fuck up.”<sup>21</sup> Doc, who initially protests, eventually decides to strike a deal. He says, “Fuck it, man. I’ll bite. I’ll chip you up. But when you come back crying to yank it out because it’s poaching your brain, the Sandy is mine for free.”<sup>22</sup> Doc, who comes across as a highly dysfunctional figure himself, is actually right about David’s future. Attached to his spine and plugged into his nervous system, the exoskeleton gives David superpowers, but at the same time it is gradually draining his brain and entire body. Even though David proves to be exceptionally immune to the side-effects and it will take him much longer to share the fate of Lt. Col. Norris, whose nervous system was corrupted by the very same device, he is on his way to cyberpsychosis. This moment, however, is delayed in the series so that the viewers can observe David’s seeming escape from his trash-human existence. He meets

<sup>19</sup> Del Val, “Trash-Human Unhancement,” 5.

<sup>20</sup> Patricia Yaeger, *Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women’s Writing, 1930–1990* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 15.

<sup>21</sup> Imaishi, *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners*, season 1, episode 2, “Like A Boy.”

<sup>22</sup> Imaishi, *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners*, season 1, episode 2, “Like A Boy.”



Lucy, who he seems to fall in love with, gains recognition of his gang owing to his superhuman abilities, and even manages to take partial revenge on Arasaka. Nonetheless, he needs to use immunoblockers—drugs administered by Doc—to alleviate the side-effects of using the exoskeleton too many times a day. He risks then either being fried by his new toy or intoxicated by drugs he needs not to go mad, and thus he fails to escape from his trash-human existence. His entry into a hyperhumanist stage of his life shall undoubtedly change David as a human being and consequently as a subject of knowledge by expanding his cognitive powers and amplifying his physical capabilities. This apparent progress is nevertheless fraught with pitfalls. By severing the link with his biological self, David only proves the fact that his body is ultimately just disposable meat incapable of living with fragmented identity which cannot anchor him in reality.

David's transition from a biological human being into a hyperhuman cyborg augmented with an exoskeleton reminds of Rosi Braidotti's formulation of the evolution of the subject of knowledge. Initially, David—an ordinary teenager—hardly stands out from the crowd. He does live in the world of futuristic technologies, but he uses them like any other teenager would use technology that is made available at any other time. Up to the point when Doc upgrades his body, David remains an ordinary human being whose cognitive and physical abilities are just average, and he shows little intention to transgress the dualistic categories that organise his life. As such, David could be described as a classical subject of knowledge, which is thus defined by Braidotti:

The classical vision of the subject of knowledge had, in fact, fixed the subject in a series of dualistic oppositions: body/mind; passion/reason; nature/culture; feminine/masculine, and so on, which were organized hierarchically and provided the basic structure for the organization of knowledge.<sup>23</sup>

This changes, however, after Doc installs the first implant triggering an evolution process which only accelerates after his body integrates with the latest military grade exoskeleton in episode nine ironically titled "Humanity". While the first implant allows David to play with a space-time continuum, the second combined with the functionalities of the former renders

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<sup>23</sup> Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 45.

David almost undefeatable. Not only can he meddle with time and space, but he can also use it to “generate unidirectional grav fields, magnetic forces”.<sup>24</sup>

These body modifications are implemented at a price. Ray Kurzweil’s dream of the Singularity, i.e. “a future period during which the pace of technological change will be so rapid, its impact so deep, that human life will be irreversibly transformed”<sup>25</sup> comes true for David. Technological components augment both his body and mind so that he can transgress dualistic divisions and experience the world in ways inaccessible for ordinary humans. This is, however, where this dream turns into a nightmare. Kurzweil’s hope that “the Singularity will allow us to transcend ... limitations of our biological bodies and brains”<sup>26</sup> comes to nothing when David’s body and identity are being rapidly unhanced. Even though David receives impossible dosages of immunoblockers, he eventually loses touch with reality. Surrounded by complete entropy, his body and mind—which temporarily experience biology-technology singularity—are eventually corrupted. At this point, David’s mind falls back on the core of his human self, i.e. the memory of his mother. However, overwhelmed with information input, David disintegrates completely and his humanity drowns in a technological black hole.

By gradually entering into technological singularity, David evolves into a trans-/hyperhuman entity whose cyborgian nature departs from its original biological self. Simultaneously, David desperately struggles to cling to his former self since deep down he understands that there will be no return for him. Even though he is bound to fail, David tries to bridge the gap between the two versions of himself, which—for a moment—turns his mind into a site where different ways of experiencing reality intersect. An attempt to navigate this uncharted territory drains him at every level of existence since the process which alters him as the subject of knowledge proves unbearable for a human being. Thus, he transforms into an entity corresponding with Braidotti’s “nomad”, which the philosopher employs to illustrate the nature of the new subject of knowledge:

As a figuration of contemporary subjectivity, therefore, the nomad is a postmetaphysical, intensive, multiple entity, functioning in a net of interconnections. S/he cannot be reduced to a linear, teleological form of subjectivity but is rather

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<sup>24</sup> Imaishi, *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners*, season 1, episode 2, “Like A Boy.”

<sup>25</sup> Neil Kurzweil, *The Singularity Is Near. When Humans Transcend Biology* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2005), 24.

<sup>26</sup> Kurzweil, 24.

the site of multiple connections. S/he is embodied, and therefore cultural; as an artifact, s/he is a technological compound of human and post-human; s/he is complex, endowed with multiple capacities for interconnectedness in the impersonal mode. S/he is a cyborg, but equipped also with an unconscious.<sup>27</sup>

By blending cyborgian and human experience, David transgresses his humanity to stand as a bio-technological embodiment of interconnectedness, or—as Braidotti explains above—“a technological compound of human and post-human”.<sup>28</sup> The compound, however, proves unsustainable, and this transhuman promise of hyperhuman evolution degenerates into “trash-human unhancement”.<sup>29</sup>

Arguably, this conclusion may be unexpected since Braidotti’s formulation supposedly presents an evolutionary scenario in which humanity evolves into its better version. Put in this context, however, Braidotti’s nomad seems to be more of a tragic figure, and so is David in *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners*. The hyperhuman evolution of the latter, which was going to convert him into “a postmetaphysical, intensive, multiple entity”,<sup>30</sup> produces “an impoverished, atrophied body”.<sup>31</sup> David’s handicapped carcass eventually loses all capacity for sustaining life and hence Doc’s prediction that the exoskeleton will poach David’s brain comes true.<sup>32</sup> The final scenes of the series indicate that human integration with technology can hardly have a positive impact on human life since humans are inherently biological entities. As such, they belong to the animal kingdom where they are to remain. This corresponds with Jaime del Val’s call for “regaining the body the capacity to move, vary and feel: **BI (Body Intelligence)**”.<sup>33</sup> To achieve this end, del Val replaces an unfeasible union between humanity and technology with another figuration—a symbiotic metahuman. As he states, “[t]his evolution is the shift from an unhanced, atrophied (trash-)human, to a symbiotic and mutating metahuman.”<sup>34</sup>

In conclusion, *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners* serves as a compelling critique of the unchecked advancement of technology and the ideology of libertarian

<sup>27</sup> Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 36.

<sup>28</sup> Braidotti, 36.

<sup>29</sup> Del Val, “Trash-Human Unhancement,” 5.

<sup>30</sup> Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 36.

<sup>31</sup> Del Val, “Trash-Human Unhancement,” 5.

<sup>32</sup> Imaishi, *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners*, season 1, episode 2, “Like A Boy.”

<sup>33</sup> Del Val, “Trash-Human Unhancement,” 4.

<sup>34</sup> Del Val, 4.

transhumanism, highlighting the dangers of a society where human augmentation and corporate power are governed exclusively by the forces of free market economy. As such, the series uncovers the truth behind hyperconsumerism and hyperhumanism, which under a veneer of progress bring destruction to David and the entire world of *Cyberpunk*. Transhumanists may claim “that science and technology will enable humans to develop beyond all limits presently known, possibly to the extent that we will see the immortal human with intellectual and emotional capacities that vastly overshadow what is known today.”<sup>35</sup> Nonetheless, the speculative cyberpunk world proves otherwise. A symbiotic metahuman, who reestablishes their connection with the planet, stands as a panacea for the dystopian trash-human reality of *Cyberpunk: Edgerunners*. By denouncing hyperconsumerism and hyperhumanism, del Val’s metahumans reinscribe themselves into “globally regulative processes binding geological and biological processes”.<sup>36</sup> While this admittedly means imposing some restrictions on human freedoms, for example reproduction,<sup>37</sup> humans will be able to benefit from the planets regenerative powers. In this sense, del Val’s metahuman reminds of Braidotti’s later recommendation for the posthuman body where the philosopher focuses on posthuman relationality. Braidotti offers the following suggestion: “I propose to reinscribe posthuman bodies into radical relationality, including webs of power relations at the social, psychic, ecological and microbiological or cellular levels.”<sup>38</sup> Braidotti’s contention, which here seems to be more posthuman than transhuman, rightly points out to the need for reconnecting humans to their natural habitat which has become heavily technologized only in the last few centuries. What both philosophers advocate then is putting a stop on a reckless technological development whose outcome is embodied in David’s atrophied carcass.

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<sup>35</sup> Knut Alfsvåg, “Transhumanism, Truth and Equality: Does the Transhumanist Vision Make Sense,” *Theofilos* 7, no. 2 (2015): 256.

<sup>36</sup> Clarke, *Gaian Systems*, 93.

<sup>37</sup> del Val, “Trash-Human Unhancement,” 26.

<sup>38</sup> Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 102.

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