

Annotated Bibliography

Armstrong, Heather L. "Michel Foucault" In *Encyclopedia of Sex and Sexuality: Understanding Biology, Psychology, and Culture* [2 Volumes]. Santa Barbara, California: Greenwood, 2021. <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=2749025&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

Since this is the first time that I am encountering the work of Michel Foucault, I wanted to understand his scholarship broadly. This particular encyclopedia entry focuses on the contributions Foucault has towards ideas of gender and sexuality. For example, Armstrong discusses the fact that Foucault regarded sexuality to be a socially constructed identity, subjected to the culture surrounding it. Though this may seem elementary, it is vital in understanding the human as a participating agent in social minority formation, humans versus cylons, within Battlestar Galactica.

Throughout the reimagined Battlestar Galactica series, heterosexual sex is most often used to demonstrate the "humanness" of cylons. Characters Baltar and Six are the main example of this as early as episode one, where Six is alluded to have a psycho-sexual connection with Baltar even when the two are no where near each other in the galaxy. Sexuality is a vital part of understanding the Cylons as a being both beyond human and recognizably human. In addition to arguing that sexuality was a social construct, Foucault claimed that by alienating "homosexuality", society created a "different species". Similarly, in the same way Cylons border this conceptualization of "new species" within the show, even though they were entirely man-made. Cylons could be read as the "homosexual" with a queer reading of the series. For my purposes, it is important to declare sexuality as a social construct and understand the Cylons sexual interactions as declarations of their own humanity.

Bialecki, Jon. "Future-Day Saints: Abrahamic Astronomy, Anthropological Futures, and Speculative Religion." *Religions* 11, no. 11 (2020): 612.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11110612>.

While this particular article does not tie itself directly to *Battlestar Galactica*, instead Jon Bialecki establishes the precedent for Mormonism and science fiction to have a solid, interconnecting relationship. Even more so, Jon Bialecki argues that Mormonism and speculative fiction coincide, the apex of his argument residing in his discussion and analysis of the Mormon Transhumanist Association. He begins by analyzing a popular Mormon fictive work called "Future-Day Saints". Future-Day Saints takes the narrative put forth by the Book of Mormon, mainly that there were established peoples in North America whom Jesus Christ appeared to after his death and resurrection, only to expand that narrative further to include speculative planets throughout the galaxy. In his analysis, Bialecki argues that analyzing works of Mormon speculative fiction, like Future-Day Saints, can work like outsider social theory and glean insights from the imaginations of Mormons. However, speculative fictions are not uniform. Therefore, Bialecki argues that the wealth of insights to be made by these works of fiction are plentiful because speculative thought throughout Mormonism has physical and lasting consequences that he believes should be studied.

The theoretical ideas that Bialecki puts forth throughout his paper are further expanded upon with his discussion about the Mormon Transhumanist Association. Bialecki outlines a basic definition for transhumanism that is far too broad for my own analysis, however provides readers with the basic understanding that transhumanism is a movement in which individuals and/or organizations believe that humanities apex will come with the innovation and integration of bodily technologies, blurring the lines of human and machine, into the physical embodiment of humans. Bialecki argues that there are four aspects of Mormonism that allow organizations like

the Mormon Transhumanist Association to thrive: Mormonism as a thoroughly materialist religion, miracles do not transgress the idea of natural order, an implicit ideology that natural law precede God, and finally Mormon theosis or becoming a God. Mormon cosmology begins in the Book of Moses, a retranslation of the Bible done by Joseph Smith, where God shows Moses the multiplicity of worlds that he has created other than Earth and will continue to create. In addition to Moses, Bialecki includes the Book of Abraham which expands this cosmology to include the star called Kolob, which is described as the star closest to the physical spot in the universe where God resides. Bialecki cites Erich Paul's 1992 work calling this cosmology Abraham Astronomy. Abraham Astronomy illustrates the interesting relationship between Mormon theology and cosmology that is further supported by the creations of works such as Future-Day Saints and organizations like the Mormon Transhumanist Association.

I intend to use Bialecki to illustrate the connection between Mormonism and science fiction as a complex social relationship based upon notions of cosmology as the mechanism that connects these two ideological principals. Science fiction in Battlestar Galactica illustrates an interesting tension between the "final frontier" of space and a return to Earth to the diasporic cosmology of Mormonism and the separation between God and humans. Furthermore, the social agency of the Mormon Transhumanist Association illustrates the ways in which posthumanism present within the Book of Abraham and Moses define the complex reality of Mormon Transhumanists and how that complex reality is reflected within Battlestar Galactica.

Bruni, John. "Watch the Critters: A Reply to Stefan Herbrechter." Electronic Book Review: Digital Futures of Literature, Theory, Criticism, and the Arts, June 13, 2018.
<https://electronicbookreview.com/essay/watch-the-critters-a-reply-to-stefan-herbrechter/>.

This reply from Bruni to Herbrechter is short comparatively and fully articulates my own skeptics may regarding Herbrechter's monograph. Though I think Herbrechter's argument is

overall compelling, the points of contestation articulated by Bruni are equally as convincing. Bruni motions for Herbrechter to think not only about the end goals of posthumanism, but how posthumanism is to occupy an in-between space of critical theory. Namely, between the humanism Herbrechter argues that we as scholars are currently in, and the posthumanistic future he imagines for us. Bruni reminds readers that there is a history of narratives present in current humanistic studies. A future with posthumanism cannot exist without examining the ways scholars have used those narratives to create a humanistic discourse in conversation with questions posed by posthumanists. I think this conversation between Bruni and Herbrechter is important when discussing the application of posthumanistic theory to religious studies, as I am doing. It represents the tension between the advocacy for posthumanism as a separate critical theory that looks beyond the conceptualization of “the human” and dealing with a very human phenomenon such as religion. In many ways, I wonder if the study of religion belongs in a Herbrechter posthumanist academia. But the substance of my project argues that by positioning the scholar outside of the categorization of “human” and applying posthumanism to understand non-human categories, we can better understand theological thought in its physical consequences. In short, by analyzing how *Battlestar Galactica* represents the broader cosmic Mormon imagination and invokes the destruction and reconstruction of “the human” in fascinating ways.

Bruni, John. “Where Do We Find Ourselves? A Review of Herbrechter's ‘Critical Posthumanism.’” *Electronic Book Review: Digital Futures of Literature, Theory, Criticism, and the Arts*, June 14, 2018. <https://electronicbookreview.com/essay/where-do-we-find-ourselves-a-review-of-herbrechters-critical-posthumanism/>.

John Bruni’s book review of Stefan Herbrechter’s ‘*Posthumanism: A Critical Analysis*’ provides an interesting overview of the main ideas and examples presented within the book. The

monograph details exactly what it promises by its title and provides a critical analysis of the concept of posthumanism as it relates to the study of the humanities, or rather moving beyond humanism. Bruni discusses the main cultural example repeated throughout the book which is Herbrechter's own analysis of *The Terminator 2: Judgement Day* released in 1991. An important point stressed in Bruni's review is that Herbrechter sees movies as "cultural automatic writing". Along with this attention on Herbrechter's cultural example, stressed throughout this book review is Herbrechter's repeated argument against humanism's 'deficits' to which Bruni identifies as "its ideological belief in an essential humanity that might stand outside historical change. These two points, cultural automatic writing and humanity outside of historical change, provide excellent analysis and expansion within this project.

The reimagined *Battlestar Galactica* is considered to be my interpretation of "cultural automatic writing". Instead of focusing on broad societal anxiety, like Herbrechter does with *The Terminator 2*, I intend to argue that *Battlestar Galactica* represents a Mormon anxiety with questions of humanity, technological innovation, and personal salvation. This relates to the second point stressed by Bruni and Herbrechter which is that "essential humanity" somehow lives outside the realm of historical change. *Battlestar Galactica* and the Mormon influences within the series represent a calcification of Mormon questions about salvation, humanity, and technological innovation.

Çetiner Öktem, Züleyha. 2018. "The Eternal Return: Gnosticism and *Battlestar Galactica*." *Interactions: Ege Journal of British and American Studies/Ege İngiliz ve Amerikan İncelemeleri Dergisi* 27 (1-2): 39-52. <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mlf&AN=2018701128&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

Öktem presents an argument focused on the “multiplicity” of theological interpretations within the reimagined *Battlestar Galactica* series, mainly that of gnosticism and diaspora. They make mention to the Mormon beginnings of the series, focuses on the original 1978 series whose Mormon themes are apparent. This shift, Öktem claims, is meant to make *Battlestar Galactica* “eternally relevant” and “more inclusive”. While I think their argument is provocative, I disagree with its broadness. The ideas of gnosticism and diaspora, in my interpretation, are equally as traceable in Mormon narratives of belonging and theological interpretations of the self in relation to a global redeemable community. Themes of diaspora and gnosticism do not make the story more relevant for a particular religious audience, rather reflect real shifts in theological focus and interpretation from Mormonism in the seventies to 2008. Öktem claims that the representations of redemption through self-knowledge are evidences for gnosticism to be an inherent theme in the story. Yet, in Mormonism, knowing ones identity is part of the Plan of Salvation and the cyclic nature of time. The gnosticism within the series is there, however, it is not as a movement of inclusivity, rather an expansion of the Mormon theology that was essential for the show to make sense.

However, for my purposes, Öktem outlines a very detailed explanation of the series, particularly focused on the relationships of humans and cylons. Dr. Gaius Baltar and Number Six have a persistent psycho-sexual connection because of Six’s abilities as a cylon. Even more so, Six herself believes in “the One True God” and continually proselytes to Baltar. This relationship continually shifts the ideological boundaries between human and cylon. Six herself a religious cylon and Baltar as the disbelieving human. It is only through a series of interesting coincidences, or miracles, that Baltar is convinced of the existence and belief in The One True God. The second relationship that Öktem focuses on is Kara “Starbuck” Thrace and Leoben

Conoy. Starbuck and Leoben's relationship is one of antagonism and furthers muddies the distinction between human and cylon. Starbuck physically tortures Leoben, a testament against her own humanity and instilling sympathy for Leoben the cylon. By focusing on these two relationships, I intend to chart and analyze the cylon-human pairs to describe the posthumanization that undergoes these relationships.

Dillon, Grace L. 2012. "Diaspora Narrative in Battlestar Galactica." *Science Fiction Film and Television* 5 (1): 1. <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsgao&AN=edsgcl.285532749&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

Similarly to Öktem's article about gnostic themes in the reimagined Battlestar Galactica, Dillon's article focuses solely on the diasporic narrative within the original and mini-series. Her argument focuses on the ways in which the series, both original and mini, focus on exodus and diaspora of humanity simultaneously using diasporic theory. The narrative of diaspora and exodus are central to the narrative arc of Battlestar Galactica, both experienced by the humans and cylons. Similarly, Mormon diasporic narratives are plentiful and involve four stages, according to Dillon: dispersal, journey, arrival, and assimilation. Although Dillon does not discuss the reimagined series, I want to use the basis of her arguments and extend them to the posthumanization of cylons within the reimagined series and discuss the tensions present within diaspora and nonhuman agents. Such tensions include an analysis of paranoia on board Galactica as the boundaries between what makes a human and what makes a cylon are eroded away. The more human the cylons become, the more intense the need for diasporic return.

Herbrechter, Stefan. "Beyond Repair: A Reply to John Bruni ." Electronic Book Review: Digital Futures of Literature, Theory, Criticism, and the Arts, June 13, 2018.
<https://electronicbookreview.com/essay/beyond-repair-a-reply-to-john-bruni/>.

In his reply to John Bruni's book review, Stefan Herbrechter discusses the main points of analysis from his book to provide clarifications and reaffirmations of ideas presented thereof. He begins by reaffirming that his idea of posthumanism is a discourse in the Foucaultian sense. Much like the ways in which theory is discussed critically in the field of religious studies, Herbrechter argues for posthumanism to be thought of in the same way but applied more broadly to the humanities, with a particular focus in anthropology. He discusses the persistence of French theory in academia and the position he envisions posthumanism within that existing structure. For example, to Herbrechter, posthumanism occupies a discourse within academia that positions itself as "critical continuity" and away from poststructuralism and deconstructive phases to focus on "actor network-theory, systems theory, object-oriented-ontology, new materialism or new realism, etc."

By far the most provocative and useful analysis provided by Herbrechter in this response is his perspective on multiple "humanities". He argues that there are several "humanities" existing at once within academia today. The first being the tradition that views humanism as a demystifying, anti-church, scientific promoted affair. However, the second humanities following the Renaissance. Finally the third that harkens back to "Greek antiquity, Ciceronian rhetoric and Christian Neoplatonism." All of which, he argues, that posthumanism as a social theory should take into consideration by acknowledging that humans occupy the realm of both object and subject. With these final thoughts on the part of Herbrechter, I intend to extend his thoughts further by analyzing social formation, in regard to religious inclusion and exclusion, illuminate the ways that the categorization of "human" is a privileged category within the reimagined

Battlestar Galactica series. Moreover, how the series stresses the tensions present within the Mormon imagination about what it means to be human and thus saved by God and how Mormon cosmology establishes a radical posthuman conceptualization of humanity.

Herbrechter, Stefan. *Posthumanism a Critical Analysis*. Bloomsbury, 2013.

This monograph details the history and emergence of posthumanism as a critical social theory that wants to analyze the crisis of studying “the human” when technology blurs the lines between man and machine thus understanding the end of the conception of human promoted by humanistic studies. Stefan Herbrechter begins with advocating for posthumanism as a critical social theory as opposed to a phenomenon similar to transhumanism, or what he believes to be the antithesis of posthumanism. Transhumanism to Herbrechter is more so a popularized form of posthumanism devoid of the critical analysis and lacking meaning, rather a simplified acceptance of the mechanisms of the post-human without the analysis of the social, political, economical implications of a post-human state. Herbrechter situates posthumanism as an interesting paradigm that should be used to understand what happens when the boundaries of what make “the human” are challenged by the advancement of technology.

In no way does he see posthumanism as an evolutionary successor of humanism, rather posthumanism as the lens and set of questions that must be asked when the category of human is eroded. He discusses how posthumanism arises out of Nietzschean influence and the observations of technological innovations over the last two decades. The problem present in Herbrechter’s genealogy of posthumanism is that it is a dialogue, in the Foucauldian sense, subjected to multiple fields, applications, interpretations and so on. As such, posthumanism has become an umbrella term to describe many different concepts. Between conversations about post-modernism and post-structuralism, Herbrechter challenges the notions of other “posthumanisms”

that center humanism conceptions of “the human”. He meditates on the challenges that arise in culture politics when the hybridization of technology and man continue to conflict and erode humanistic arguments about humanity as a separate and distinct category.

The most pertinent argument Herbrechter makes for my own project is the way in which the technology was an item that was “applied” rather than “embodied”. He dedicates an entire chapter, “Posthumanism and Science Fiction” to discuss the ways in which technology creates a skepticism of category. Now more than ever, technology is something to be “embodied”. It walks with us. It talks with us. In many ways, technology has made us. Curiously, it has also unmade us. Herbrechter discusses the physical embodiment of technology in children living in virtual realities and athletes like Oscar Pistorius who ran in the Olympics as an amputee. As technology becomes more embodied in the real world, fictive realities can reflect that embodiment in ways that were once unthinkable. This is how Herbrechter’s embodied technology relates to my own project. As technology becomes more embodied within humans, imaginary worlds that are created reflect that embodiment, often blurring the lines of human and cyborg. My example is the cylon race in 2004 remake of Battlestar Galactica. One of the main conflicts within the series is that the cylons can infiltrate the human race seamlessly. They are cyborgs that were built by humans however after a rebellion made it their goal to eradicate the human race for enslaving them. However, throughout the series, a group of rebel cylons wish to aid humanity and the humans by helping them find the fabled 13th human colony known as Earth. The cylons are only detectable by a blood test created by one of the series characters, Gaius Baltar. Other than that, there is no physical difference between the humans and cylons. Herbrechter’s monograph establishes the critical social theory needed to understand this

relationship between humans, cylons, technology and Mormon imaginations about what it means to be human.

Mitchell, Timothy. "Battlestar Mormonica: The Church of Latter-Day Space Cadets." *American Atheist Newsletter*, January 2004, 8+. *Gale General OneFile* (accessed November 2, 2022). <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A114478917/ITOF?u=tusc49521&sid=bookmark-ITOF&xid=dd452477>.

This short article written by Timothy Michell is an analysis of the Mormon connections within the original *Battlestar Galactica* series. It's analysis is shallow and rather surface, repeating the same connections discussed at length on various Internet forums about the same topic. His flippant attitude against Mormonism is apparent when he addresses himself as a "full-time" heathen. Mitchell's heathen status is further exemplified by the anti-Mormon pieces he cites later in the article, like *Mormons in Space* written by Dr. P. Bradley Carey who urges watchers of the original series to "be careful, so that you don't plant a seed that may be harvested by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." It is apparent that the scholastic purposes of these articles should be in question.

However, what I think is happening here is a fascinating case of posthumanism through rhetorical degradation. *Battlestar Galactica*'s story is in many ways a story of accepting those beyond humanity, critically understanding the potential for technology to walk, talk, and feel like we do and how we can shift the focus to questions about what it means to be human in an age of technology. Mitchell's piece goes in depth trying to articulate the deviousness of Glen Larson, the creator of the series, and his intentional integration of Mormon theological themes into *Battlestar Galactica*. "It reflects how religions aren't above using the conventions of secular entertainment to promote their faith and how they can sometimes fail miserably at doing so." In trying to dissect Larson's intentions, Mitchell makes *Galactica* into a posthuman entity in and of

itself. He degrades the original series for its “overt Mormon themes” and yet praises the reimagined series when those themes are still readily apparent. In his rhetorical critique of the series, he materializes tensions articulated by Herbrechter: “In its ontological liminal it’s the monster ‘polices’ the boundaries between the possible and its realization, especially in a technological society, and it functions as a warning: if ‘you’, if ‘we’ transgress this boundary, we ourselves are in danger of becoming monsters! But in fact this warning should read: then we no longer know ‘who’ or ‘what’ we are.”

Neumann, Iver B. “Unexpected Enchantment in Unexpected Places: Mormonism in Battlestar Galactica.” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 16, no. 2 (2012): 226–43.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549412467176>.

Neumann’s journal article is an interesting analysis of the Mormon themes in the reimagined Battlestar Galactica series. Season by season Neumann provides detailed arguments about the various ways Mormonism is thematically present throughout the series. His conclusions urge scholars to identify and analyze religious thinking to understand what is socially at stake by missing hermeneutical data. In many ways, Neumann’s article stands opposed to Öktem’s article, focusing specifically on the Mormon origins of the series and noting the shifting theological paradigms.

The main purpose of Neumann’s article is to provide myself with a robust series explanation. There is a practical reason for this which is to say that I have been unable to watch the entirety of the show. With four seasons worth of content, each an hour long, I see Neumann’s article as a scholastic medium, intended to describe the connections to Mormonism present within the series while also providing a detailed explanation of the narrative. Neumann discusses the connections between Kobol and Kolob, The Book of Pythia and The Book of Mormon, the

12 Tribes of Kobo and the 12 Tribes of Israel with a secret 13th tribe pertaining to both. All of these connections are vital in understanding the Mormon themes within the series and how they reflect anxiety about what it means to be human.

Thacker, Andrew. "Michel Foucault". *The Literary Encyclopedia*. First published 15 March 2003 <https://www-litencyc-com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=1599>, accessed 06 November 2022.

Andrew Thacker presents a robust encyclopedia entry on Michel Foucault, of whom I knew very little about. Within my research on posthumanism, Foucault is used in a variety of ways to illustrate a dissonance between academic evolution and the displacement of humanities focused research within academia. Foucault's influence is widespread as he has become a widely cited scholar in the humanities. His work on paradigms of power and the function of constructed concepts within society have often allowed his research to flourish in an age of poststructuralism and postmodern scholarship. Foucault focused on understanding society critically, under the mechanism in which society was built and flourished upon. Thacker discusses at length Foucault's, *Birth of the Clinic and Madness and Civilization* and *The Order of Things*, where Foucault analyzes the conditions that he believed allowed the sciences of philology, political economy and biology to emerge. Thacker writes, "This approach, argued Foucault, gave a truer picture of the cultural and intellectual field in which scientific knowledge operated, unhindered by the need to give overwhelming credit to individual thinkers." Foucault's emphasis on "genealogy" and the impact of discourse in correlation with power provided me with the necessary background information to understand how and why Herbrechter and other posthumanists point to Foucault as a founder of thought within posthumanism. Though I do not intend to use this encyclopedia entry in my project, it was vital information for understanding the

emergence of posthumanism as a critical theory and how the questions that posthumanists ask are tied up in the traditions of postmodernism and poststructuralism.