

The Posthuman Subject in Joma West's *Face* (2022): Embodiment, Embeddedness and Affect

Joma West's latest novel, *Face* (2022) is set in a near future where digital faces and digitally engineered babies determine characters' social status and power in an "ontology of visibility" (Citton 2014). Recalling Byung-Chun Han's *Society of Transparency* (2020), individuals in the novel are mere data that if exposed, are in danger of being besmeared. This data is divided into two types: biological information in "the Out" and the digital information in the virtual world "the In". The popularity of these two types are based on the aesthetics of perfection which comes in the form of transhumanist biologically modified individuals (the organic face) and the digital footprint or digitalized "face" in the In. Both worlds, physical boundaries and virtual traces, are represented as subordinations to surveillance and control. Social encounters present characters' internal affective sensation that in most cases manifests in the form of depression, anger, disgust or boredom. Paradoxically, through different narrative techniques, readers also discover the entrapment, fear and even ingrained disgust characters feel on the face of close and true contact, either physical or affective. The narrative style brings out questions on the distancing of bodies from the relational and affective standpoint in the urge to reconsider the natural organic and affective response via the fragmentation of the narrative and subjectivity. Through critical posthumanism, this paper will explore the fragmented narratives, embodiments and relationality to others through different narrators and points of views. *Face* provides a reflexive work towards how embodiment, embeddedness, collectivity and the natural affective response is intertwined with not only an ethical, healthy encounter with the other, but also with establishing one's own subjectivity.