



Hawking Incorporated: Stephen Hawking and the Anthropology of the Knowing Subject

Hélène Mialet

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These days, the idea of the cyborg is less the stuff of science fiction and more a reality, as we are all, in one way or another, constantly connected, extended, wired, and dispersed in and through technology. One wonders where the individual, the person, the human, and the body are—or, alternatively, where they stop. These are the kinds of questions Hélène Mialet explores in this fascinating volume, as she focuses on a man who is permanently attached to assemblages of machines, devices, and collectivities of people: Stephen Hawking.

Drawing on an extensive and in-depth series of interviews with Hawking, his assistants and colleagues, physicists, engineers, writers, journalists, archivists, and artists, Mialet reconstructs the human, material, and machine-based networks that enable Hawking to live and work. She reveals how Hawking—who is often portrayed as the most singular, individual, rational, and bodiless of all—is in fact not only incorporated, materialized, and distributed in a complex nexus of machines and human beings like everyone else, but even *more* so. Each chapter focuses on a description of the functioning and coordination of different elements or media that create his presence, agency, identity, and competencies. Attentive to Hawking's daily activities, including his lecturing and scientific writing, Mialet's ethnographic analysis powerfully reassesses the notion of scientific genius and its associations with human singularity. This book will fascinate anyone interested in Stephen Hawking or an extraordinary life in science.

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