

## Book Series **MORE-THAN-HUMAN HUMANITIES**

### A Routledge Focus Series

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The classical humanities, grounded in Euro- and andro-centric traditions, and built upon the normative figure of the Universal Man, have failed to adequately address urgent social, cultural, environmental, ethical and political problems. They have often exacerbated these issues further and extended them into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The effects of this have long been pointed out and discussed by feminist, crip- and queer, postcolonial and decolonial commentators, environmental and animal rights activists. Traditionally, the humanities have approached the climate, environment, nonhuman species, technologies, and even society as 'mere' objects for human use. Yet, such an anthropocentric approach fails to take into account the dynamics of forces that escape the control, or even grasp, of both humans and the humanities.

*More-than-human humanities*, on the other hand, refers to emerging inter-, post- or even extra-disciplinary approaches that challenge a human-centred view of the universe. It invites us to carefully and curiously consider humans – in their different positions to power – as always already entangled in relationships with a multitude of other beings (animal, vegetal, digital and geological) and the ways they affect one another. By doing so, more-than-human humanities expands our all-too-narrow anthropocentric social imagination and zooms in on the interconnectedness of all beings, human and nonhuman, as well as on understanding the specificities of each situated entwinement of relations that make or break, enable or disable lives in co-existence. More-than-human humanities, as here envisioned, welcomes thus a multitude of ongoing discourses into play. Some of them harken back to antihumanisms of Foucault and Althusser, some to theories of the cyborg, others to decolonial and posthuman critiques or to the ecological or environmental humanities in their widest capacity. More-than-human humanities responds to such different forms of feminist, critical and creative forms of **new humanities** *without excluding those thinkers that do not feel quite comfortable with either the posthuman or the traditional humanities*. Thus, more-than-human humanities of this book series is broader in scope than traditional disciplinarity, and even broader than now mundane interdisciplinarity. Yet, it retains a sharp critical focus on the

decentring of a universalised figure of Man in an all-too-humanised world and its interconnected discontents.

This focus on interconnectivity, bonds made and unmade, has allowed an upsurge of creative and critical approaches unearthing the complexity of specific problems that we are currently facing. For example, renewed imperialisms and military violence or issues of environmental health and environmental justice, such as climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic, are rooted in the interrelation of human and nonhuman beings in a globalised world. A set of actions on part of humans has led to massive environmental disruption, disease, suffering and death on a planetary scale. Solutions to such complex and large-scale problems may only be found in new ways of fostering collaboration and respect among different fields of expertise, critical and creative insights and nuanced *in-situ* understandings that do not, by force or by habit, continue to privilege a select set of humanistic goals over those marginalised others, both humans and nonhumans alike. In a similar vein, socio-political problems linked to the massive expansion of possibilities through the use of new technologies and media will never find suitable, democratic and sustainable solutions if we continue to approach these issues from a human-centred mindset of traditional humanities. As indicated by the antihumanism of the 1960s and further emphasised in contemporary philosophy and poststructuralist theory, our idea of the human is fundamentally reaching its limits and changing. This requires reinventing and retooling the idea of the human for a more- than-human world with more-than-human ethics, epistemology and aesthetics. In science, the nonhuman and nature have certainly long had a central role, though, more as a passive resource for human exploitation than as a significant co-player. Various indigenous systems of knowledge have even more refined traditions of thinking and doing things founded on various ideas and practices of ethical co-existence with the environment, and such diverse insights are still developing and in need of acknowledgement. The art world of today is teeming with efforts to integrate the nonhuman, and with creative fervour to expand our all too narrow social imaginations on anything from AI to algae. Creative and artistic practices are, alongside indigenous and scientific works, increasingly integrated into for instance environmental humanities and feminist posthumanities.

Last, but not least, feminist thought plays a surprisingly crucial role here – in all these domains. The homogenisation of humanity into the universal figure of Man, denying diversity and other social differentiations, along the intersecting lines of race, gender, sexuality, ability, age and

other identity-shaping norms, have long been a pinnacle of feminist critique. Right from the outset, practitioners of *feminist science studies* have insisted on the importance of attending to the reciprocal constitution of subjects and objects, nature and culture, humans and nonhumans, and science and society. *Ecofeminist* philosophies have contributed generously with critiques of modern illusions of mastery and domination, and the imperative to engage with environed embodiment and embodied environments. Nature and the nonhuman are in these feminist registers – including more recent formulations of *new materialism* and posthumanisms – often understood as a force with agency rather than as a passive chunk of inert matter anticipating the inscription of man-made culture. Feminist theory-practices at large mark thus a particularly salient form of the more-than-human humanities, evidenced in contemporary posthumanities, environmental humanities, and in more established forms of interdisciplinary studies (such as science and technology studies, gender studies, cultural studies).

### **About the series**

If the humanities is to be defined at large by its concern with the understanding and self-reflection of the human species, the more-than-human humanities book series aims to attend to human differences entangled with environmental justice, information technologies, AI, synthetic biology, surveillance systems, species extinction, and drastic ecological change. More-than-human humanities faces many urgent societal challenges of today's world.

This [Focus book series](#) publishes short and concise pieces of original (or revised) research in the areas of feminist posthumanities, environmental humanities, and inventive thought from media and science studies aiming to decolonise the human-centred humanities. This wide and versatile understanding of the human, embedded in a more-than-human world, involves recognising differences within the human species. The scope of the book series will take advantage of and contribute to the great scholarly and increasingly artistic and public interest in issues of co-existing in a more-than-human world. Each short book volume will deal with a novel insight, a specific angle or case, while contributing to the series, where each individual book is in implicit conversation with one another.

This Focus series meets up with the novel surge in interdisciplinary humanities, art and social sciences for more-than-human research. The type of books that this series publishes are authoritative overviews of emerging topics and exemplary case studies, lengthier rewrites of previously published research pieces – perhaps for a broader audience, responses to

developments and debates, as well as explorations of theoretical concepts and ground-breaking methodologies. The books give social issues a philosophical slant in the meeting between art, humanities, and sciences. They promise surprises as well as emerging new schools of thought. The book length is 20-50, 000 words, including references and potential index.

The series offers both established and up-and-coming scholars cutting edge opportunities to publish with a quick turnaround. The specific short format of the volumes, drawn from the heat of intellectual encounters and ongoing dialogues, is perfectly suited for fields of investigation undergoing rapid development. The concise format allows for deep-seated conversations in a timely fashion.

*More-than-human humanities* draws attention not only to the creativity and potentiality of this reinvention of arts and humanities, but also to that which delimits or wounds conditions of life on earth. Importantly, it addresses the question of how we may learn to live with those wounds and limitations in everyday practice. Postdisciplinary practices and innovative methodologies are especially crucial in this regard, and in high demand. This is evidenced in many new research areas, synergies, and convergences of fields today. There is a thirst for more-than-human insights and praxis in fields like feminist posthumanities, queer death studies, critical animal studies, plant theory, digital environmental humanities, field philosophy, decolonial studies, medical humanities, bioart and eco-art, transgender studies, multispecies humanities and extinction studies.

Accordingly, this book series on more-than-human humanities focuses on such critique and creativity of contemporary scholarship as it is about to take shape. The books in this Focus series provide insights into the state-of-the art within new humanities research, set in the midst of a changing world.

If you would like to publish your work in the series, please get in touch with the series editors: [cecilia.asberg\[at\]liu.se](mailto:cecilia.asberg@liu.se) and [marietta.radomska\[at\]liu.se](mailto:marietta.radomska@liu.se).