

More-than-Human Worlds

Introduction to the series

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Within much of the humanities and social sciences nonhuman or multispecies approaches have become an increasingly prominent strategy of researching and writing over the last decade. Such epistemological moves underscore how humans are ever-entangled with nonhuman animals, technologies, the environment and spiritual entities, as well as ideologies and ideas. Anthropology, arguably, has always focused on relationships beyond human sociality: from spirit guides, to cherished cattle, from the lively history of *kula* bands, to the branding of PTSD as disease. Yet anthropologists, perhaps due to the centrality of *anthropos* in the discipline, were slow to respond these broader moves to decentre the human subject.

The publication of *Thinking through Things* (2007) in Europe and *Anthropology as a Critique of Reality* (2011) in Japan, as well as the special issue “The Emergence of Multispecies Ethnography” in the American journal *Cultural Anthropology* in 2010, prompted a growing number of anthropologists to focus on more-than-human conceptualizations as valuable in understanding and describing everyday interactions through natures-and-cultures. This journal, as its name suggests, has been actively involved in these changes from questioning the social basis humanity in the inaugural issue (Volume 1), through introducing recent posthumanist trends (Volume 3) to engaging in discussions around emergent forms of life through scientific and technological innovation (Volume 4).

The present blog series is an attempt to extend these currents beyond the world of scholarly articles. More-than-human worlds are, or so we believe, more experimental and perhaps more ambient places that require us to move beyond orthodox forms of writing. This series emerges from a roundtable at the annual IUAES/CASCA meetings conjoined in Ottawa in 2017 and over the next year we hope to extend ideas and

engagements beyond the conference venue in order to offer a variety of takes on the same question: how do nonhumans force us to rethink and reconstruct our places in the world?

As many of the authors in the coming weeks and months will argue, such a work of reconstruction is not only an ethical problem, but also an important methodological issue for anthropologists, historians and STS scholars, among others. Cross-species coexistence in the 21st century, we argue, is fundamentally a techno-social issue. Rather than looking for something lost or damaged, we see it as an opportunity for tinkering and invention, in which comparative, ethnographic and other methods are being implicated *laterally*. We invite contributors to add to ongoing debates and discussions around multispecies ethnographies, environmental infrastructures and posthumanism in order to learn more about more-than-human entanglements.