

CULTURAL STUDIES IN THE ANTHROPOCENE: ENCOUNTERS WITH THE NONHUMAN

“Open Cultural Studies” (<https://www.degruyterbrill.com/journal/key/culture/html>) invites submissions for a special issue entitled “Cultural Studies in the Anthropocene: Encounters with the Nonhuman”, edited by Florian Cord (University of Bonn, Germany).

DESCRIPTION

In recent years, there has been a pronounced (re-)turn to questions of ontology, matter and realism in the humanities and social sciences. While theoretical formations such as actor-network theory, object-oriented ontology, the various manifestations of speculative realism or varieties of new materialism should by no means be conflated, what they have in common – and what they share with other, sometimes related, intellectual developments like affect theory, animal and plant studies or digital media theory – is their profound challenge to human exceptionalism. Taken together, these approaches have productively been described as constituting a ‘nonhuman turn’ which “is engaged in decentering the human in favor of a turn toward and concern for the nonhuman, understood variously in terms of animals, affectivity, bodies, organic and geophysical systems, materiality, or technologies” (Richard Grusin). Arguably, many of the approaches associated with the nonhuman turn have a particular relevance for thinking in and about the Anthropocene or Capitalocene, in which issues of the interrelation of the human and the nonhuman have acquired a heightened urgency everywhere.

How do these important theoretical developments affect (‘British’) cultural studies as an intellectual and political practice? And how does cultural studies relate to them in turn? More specifically, where are possible points of interconnection or cross-fertilization, and what does the necessary work of articulation entail? What novel questions or fields of investigation and intervention can be opened up for cultural studies? How do the respective genealogies of cultural studies and the approaches associated with the nonhuman turn relate to one another; what parallels, affinities or entanglements can be identified? What are sources of friction, contradiction or antagonism?

It is questions such as these that we want to address with our special issue. Our goal is to create and explore encounters, dialogues, and contact zones between cultural studies in the Birmingham tradition, associated with the work of people like Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Angela McRobbie, Paul Gilroy or Lawrence Grossberg, on the one hand and the more recent intellectual trends and movements on the other, and to investigate the (theoretical, methodological, political) potentials and opportunities as well as tensions and conflicts connected with this. We thus invite contributions that engage with a wide variety of issues, contexts, and theoretical approaches relating to the study of the non/human and that focus on theoretical and methodological issues rather than, say, readings of cultural artifacts (or if the latter are featured, they should mainly be used for the purpose of tackling the former). The idea, effectively, is to produce a collection of texts which together constitute an exploration of what a posthumanist cultural studies in or for the Anthropocene could look like.

HOW TO SUBMIT

Submissions will be collected until February 28, 2026 via the online submission system at <https://www.editorialmanager.com/culture/>

Please choose: “special issue: Cultural Studies in the Anthropocene”.

Before submission, authors should carefully read the Instructions for Authors, available at https://www.degruyter.com/publication/journal_key/CULTURE/downloadAsset/CULTURE_Instruction%20for%20Authors.pdf

All contributions will undergo critical peer review before being accepted for publication.

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