



Humanities Graduate Students' Association at York University



## Traces of the Human

(Reiterated)

**How noble in reason, how infinite in faculties...  
and yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?**  
– Hamlet

**You cannot say, or guess, for you know only  
A heap of broken images**  
– Eliot, *The Waste Land*

The category of the “human” has been, if not entirely sidelined and stepped over, certainly desiccated of all sense by the technological and social upheavals of recent centuries, most noticeably in late modernity. It has become necessary, considering the resurgence of global political violence, to re-investigate human identity, with the rights and responsibilities it entails. Has empirical reductionism eliminated any real difference between humans and things? Is “the human” a social category? An ontological one? Is it something else entirely? How has the notion of humanity informed art and culture? How would its absence change them? Is the post-human sentiment reconcilable with our concern for the marginalized and those subject to dehumanization? Is it possible to evoke hope in the absence of the human, or as a non-human?

The York University Humanities Graduate Students Association invites proposals for conference papers exploring these and other related ideas, and the category of “the human” at large. If you are intrigued by and wish to respond to the question “what is the human?”, we encourage you to submit a proposal.

Relevant subject matter could, without being limited to examples, include:

- Realism or constructivism about “the human”
- Contemporary politics and dehumanization
- “The human” in relation to/with non-human others
- Different intellectual, literary and artistic traditions (post-structuralism, humanism, idealism, romanticism, modernism, Lacanian psychoanalysis, Platonic realism) on/and the category in question
- “The human” in myth and fantasy, in pop culture, and/or in cinema and visual media more broadly
- “The human,” (post)industrialism, and capitalism
- How does AI challenge one of the oldest legacies of humanity: storytelling?

The (replanned) conference is tentatively scheduled for after fall term reading week 2024. We invite you to submit a title and proposal (max. 300 words), along with a brief bio, to [aliaslan@yorku.ca](mailto:aliaslan@yorku.ca) by September 30th, 2024.

Although we welcome all proposals, priority will need to be given to those presenting in person.

We would like to especially invite Humanities undergraduate students to both attend and submit proposals. The conference will be an opportunity to explore what you find most intriguing and meaningful about the Humanities vis-a-vis the questions posed, and to engage in conversation with graduate students about your own and their work. We will endeavour to acknowledge all notable proposals, whether accepted or not.

Please Note: If you have already submitted a proposal, you need not worry about re-submitting, but are welcome to revise your earlier submission should you wish to.