



Humankind: Solidarity with Non-Human People

Timothy Morton

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A radical call for solidarity between humans and non-humans

What is it that makes humans human? As science and technology challenge the boundaries between life and non-life, between organic and inorganic, this ancient question is more timely than ever. Acclaimed Object-Oriented philosopher Timothy Morton invites us to consider this philosophical issue as eminently political. It is in our relationship with non-humans that we decided the fate of our humanity. Becoming human, claims Morton, actually means creating a network of kindness and solidarity with non-human beings, in the name of a broader understanding of reality that both includes and overcomes the notion of species. Negotiating the politics of humanity is the first and crucial step to reclaim the upper scales of ecological coexistence, not to let Monsanto and cryogenically suspended billionaires to define them and own them.

Humankind: Solidarity with Non-Human People Details

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From Reader Review Humankind: Solidarity with Non-Human People for online ebook

Ireene says

Didn't understand much. The language was just unnecessarily too complex. Says a person who has been known to enjoy reading Heidegger... I am sure it is a good book, maybe I'll try again some day.

Nick says

Stylistically designed to mask a lack of novel ideas or interesting synthesis of existing knowledge. Smug and obfuscatory language is knowingly used to couch a series of ideas the author seems to believe are evident in their assertion without recourse to real world context or evidence (evidence? Reductionist!), interjected with non-sequiturs and cringe worthy folksiness. At least I was able to scrape the bibliography for interesting references, references this text puts a fog in front of rather than shines a light on.

Mia says

Perforated, fuzzy, broken & spectral: that's how the arguments of this book are, making its way through continental philosophy and Marxism to insert non-humans, only to argue, ultimately, that there's no such thing as solidarity without non-humans anyway. Reading it is a game: annoying, because you don't know the rules, but nonetheless, fascinating. Morton keeps being in conversation with this, and that, from critical theorists to pop icons, jumping and jumping, unable to be grasped, constantly unfollowing himself from the reader's understanding. But for all that it tortured me with, I loved it. I both believe it and not believe it. It makes such great arguments: adding non-humans to marxist theory, ontologically unpinning species (and thus race, and racism, too), accepting the fuzziness of the world (its spectral x-being), but also its toughness (it's object oriented, not socially constructed), strongly in favor of an implosive holism (one that isn't a whole greater than the sum of its parts, but less – subsistence), and pushing (rocking) against anthropocentrism. But also, it's not very serious, it's rather playful, which is, maybe, the point, or part of it, anyway. Is it like this so it cannot be contradicted? Maybe. Morton would love that, getting into a space into which contradictions are possible, and present – an excluded middle. Getting us into a loop, or brain-fucked, or preferably both, but in a beautiful, disgusting kind of way.

<< Love is not straight, because reality is not straight. Everywhere, there are curves and bends, things veer. Per-veer-sion. En-vir-onment. These terms come from the verb „to veer“. To veer, to swerve toward: am I choosing to do so or am I being pulled? Free will is overrated. I do not make decisions outside the Universe and then plunge in, like an Olympic diver. I am already in. >>

Andy says

Reading this book was like having the conversation that comes at the end of the film "Her," but where I, the reader, realize that Tim, with Alan Watts/Buddhist flavors, has achieved like a quantum capacity beyond my

capacity to imagine.

BUT, unlike in "Her," I didn't feel narcissistic and depressed to witness this leap that left me limning my limits. Because things flicker and I still see some of them.

Joanna says

Reading this was like being transported to a parallel universe, a very smart one.

Even though most of it made no sense at all, at least to me, I kept going because the writing was so good.

Some of the other reviewers complained that the language was unnecessarily difficult, but the vocabulary is challenging precisely because Morton wants us to think carefully about what he is saying. If you look past that, you see that the syntax is simple, elegant, and unpretentious.

Plus, the man uses a Slinky to explain Hegel; there should be some kind of a Nobel Prize for that.

Vuk Trifkovic says

Interesting read, in the genuine sense of the term. It's OOO, so fairly opaque stuff. Nonetheless, Morton has very fresh style, without being too pop. I also appreciated the structure. This is none of your typical "explain the point in the intro / chapter 1 - mass evidence through the chapters - neatly wrap up". As an earlier reviewer said, the book builds step by step. Content is very interesting, highly relevant and encouraging.

5 Track says

Bear with Morton as he states his position & defines his terms. It's slow & careful going. Plow ahead if you are uncertain, backtrack as needed—or don't, & count on your capacity to integrate knowledge while you are doing other things. Read it before you go to sleep, & dream about the concepts in the form of relations between your pickup truck & your apartment, city streets & inclement weather, music & food.

It should not be 'radical' to think that we might consider 'non-humans' in our worldview, in our day-to-day & moment-to-moment. That it IS radical should give anyone pause for thought.*

What is more interesting here is the idea that in defining our selves as 'human'—as opposed to everything else, as opposed to 'nature'—we have set in motion a long-running machine which intends to destroy meaning, context, interconnectedness, if it has to destroy the world to do so.

*(or thoughtful paws)

Albert Faber says

Everything Nick says on Oct 2nd: Lack of novel ideas, no synthesis of old ideas, obscure language, no evidence or argument where required. And that's a shame for the important topic Morton aims to deal with. Great pity

Bruce says

As a representative of OOO- Object Oriented Ontology- Timothy Morton rejects "Correlationalism" which is the tendency for Philosophy to persistently have only two options - Is reality a construct of the human mind? or is the human mind the product of physical substantial objectivity? A third consideration is a de-anthropocentric approach where all objects, from the smallest particles to the great galaxies and ourselves have a mutual referential interplay. That is to say my perception of the flower is of no less or of more importance than the flowers' perception of me. Whether connected to the above or not, he also dismisses what he calls "hyperobjects" - not too dissimilar to the post modern dismissal of the meta-narrative. A hyperobject is any whole that is considered to be greater than the sum of its parts - "Nature" being one. Timothy's argument is that these two perceptions limit the contribution we can have towards ecology. Only as we truly relate to objects and participate from a bottom up rather than a top down approach can we make a positive contribution. There is much more to this book and apologies for any misrepresentation(s) I may have made. I read it a couple of months ago.

My personal interest is from a theistic perspective. Timothy quite clearly dismisses the idea of God as just one more hyperobject. I think (at least my idea of) God can cope with that. For me the greatness of God does not consist in bigness but in how small God can become yet remain God. I believe fully in the bottom up idea - hence the incarnation.

The deanthropocentrism is also containable within my theology. While I still believe that man is created in God's image I do believe that religious man has falsely interpreted this to mean that humankind is more important - more valuable - and the rest of creation is a mere commodity to that end. But if we take the words of Christ who said "let him who is the greatest become the least - become the servant of all" seriously, then the closer we are to God's image the least we become. The outcome should be that complexity carries with it responsibility and this in Christian terms means to become a humble servant of creation - to care selflessly for all objects.

I understand the god that Timothy is dismissing but there are different ways to view God that actually affirm his concerns and contribute to his aims in this book.

That whole is not greater than the sum of its parts is an oversimplification although I believe that what Timothy is saying "*What if* we consider the whole is not greater than the sum of its parts". That said I would say that the whole does not *need* to be greater than the sum of its parts but it can be. Take England football team last night each individual player was brilliant but as a team they just didn't work well. On other occasions the team worked well and produced something that exceeded the sum of the individuals. So that would need looking into (Perhaps he did - sorry if that's the case)

At the end of the book I became aware of the significance of the title "Humankind" (Trudeau would be impressed!) and the meaning implied by the word "kind" as in kinship as in mutual reciprocal participation in this thing we call life eliciting respect and compassion.

I've missed loads out and made considerable highlights which I will have to go back to but for all its complexity and quirky terms, whatever the motive, I have come away enlightened, informed and thinking in more depth, my part in the cosmos and my faith in God. For that I am grateful :)
