THE POST HUMAN WOUND

20TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVES IN ENGLISH

REIMAGINING TRAUMA, VULNERABILITY & AGENCY IN A MORE-THAN-HUMAN WORLD

JUNE 7-9, 2027
UNIVERSITY OF ZARAGOZA (SPAIN)

Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana Universidad Zaragoza
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CALL FOR PAPERS

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Since the turn of the twenty-first century, **trauma** has become a key framework through which contemporary culture understands subjectivity, identity and the disruption of both, leading critics to describe the present as a "wound culture" (Seltzer 1997), a "post-traumatic culture" (Farrell 1998) or a "traumaculture" (Luckhurst 2003). Simultaneously, the rapid transformation of an analog paradigm into an increasingly digital, technological and interconnected world has ushered in what Ursula K. Heise and Rosi Braidotti term a "**posthuman turn**" (Heise 2011; Braidotti 2013), questioning the centrality of a universal and transhistorical humanism. Although trauma studies and critical posthumanism have followed different trajectories, both fields share a concern with subjectivity, embodiment, agency and the relationship with the other. Trauma studies examine the psychic, cultural and political consequences of rupture, violence and loss, whereas critical posthumanism challenges the assumptions of autonomy, exceptionalism and self-sufficiency inherited from humanism. Increasingly, however, both approaches converge around a shared concern with relationality, precarity and the unstable boundaries of the human. It is this convergence that we propose to conceptualize as the posthuman wound, building on the research carried out within the project "The Posthuman Wound: Subject and Agency in the North American Literature of the 21st Century" (PID2022-137627NB-I00).

Such questions have become all the more urgent in the context of the profound technological, ecological and material transformations of the twenty-first century. The Fourth Industrial Revolution (Floridi 2014; Schwab 2016) is reshaping not only the ways humans interact with technology, but also the conditions under which identity, cognition and agency are understood. Artificial intelligence, algorithmic governance, digital infrastructures and ubiquitous datafication increasingly blur the boundaries between human and machine, producing new forms of technological dependence, distributed agency and digital vulnerability. Alongside these technological transformations, the Anthropocene has further challenged anthropocentric understandings of existence by exposing the entanglement of human life with geological and ecological processes (Parikka 2014; Bergthaller and Horn 2022; Calvo-Pascual 2026). Climate change, environmental degradation, mass extinction and toxic environments reveal forms of vulnerability that exceed the human, encouraging renewed attention to multispecies relations, environmental justice and more-than-human worlds.

Taken together, these technological and ecological transformations call for new conceptual frameworks capable of rethinking trauma, vulnerability and subjectivity beyond the limits of classical humanism. Rather than signalling only injury or loss, **the posthuman wound** foregrounds the constitutive **openness, relationality and interdependence as defining features of embodied existence** (Vinci 2014; Baelo-Allué 2022). As memory, cognition and identity become increasingly distributed across technological, ecological and biological assemblages, technological extensions generate new forms of dependence, exposure and vulnerability. However, vulnerability is no longer understood simply as a condition of injury but as the inevitable consequence of embodied, relational life.

Drawing on theories of **precarity, transcorporeality and embodied vulnerAbility** (Butler 2004; Alaimo 2010; Gámez-Fernández and Fernández-Santiago 2024), the posthuman wound emerges as a productive site from which new forms of agency, ethical responsibility and collective care may arise. At the same time, vulnerability is increasingly understood not merely as a condition of injury or deficiency but as the inevitable consequence of our embodied and relational existence. This relational understanding of vulnerability has become central to contemporary critical posthumanism, where concepts such as **transcorporeality, intra-action and material agency** challenge humanist assumptions of autonomy and self-sufficiency (Butler 2004; Barad 2007; Alaimo 2010; Braidotti 2013). From this perspective, vulnerability is not opposed to agency but constitutes the condition for new forms of ethical, political and more-than-human relationality. The posthuman wound thus ceases to be simply a metaphor for trauma or crisis, becoming instead a productive site from which new ethical, political and aesthetic imaginaries can emerge.

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It is from this theoretical perspective that the *20th International Conference on Contemporary Narratives in English* invites scholars to explore how contemporary literature, alongside film, television, digital media and other cultural forms, engages with these posthuman wounds. We welcome contributions examining the intersections between trauma studies, critical posthumanism, environmental humanities, new materialisms, critical animal studies, media studies, disability studies and related fields. By bringing these conversations together, the conference aims to investigate how contemporary narratives reimagine trauma, vulnerability and agency in a world where the human is increasingly understood as relational, embodied and embedded within more-than-human assemblages.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Dialogues between trauma studies, critical posthumanism and vulnerability studies in contemporary literature.
- Narratives of vulnerability, precarity and resilience in the posthuman condition.
- Aesthetic, formal and narratological approaches to trauma and the posthuman, the non-human and the more-than-human.
- Narratives of digital vulnerability: Artificial intelligence, algorithmic cultures, technoscience, surveillance, automation and datafication.
- The Anthropocene, climate fiction and environmental humanities: ecoanxiety, solastalgia, ecological grief and planetary precarity.
- Narratives of transhumanism, biotechnology, cyborg bodies and technological transformations of identity.
- New materialist and posthumanist approaches to matter, embodiment and the agency of nonhuman forces in contemporary narrative.
- Narrative representations of multispecies relations, critical animal studies and more-than-human forms of kinship.
- Disability studies, crip theory and posthuman approaches to embodiment, vulnerability and care in fiction.
- Feminist, queer and decolonial posthumanisms; alternative approaches to agency, ethics and relationality in literature and other media.
- Trauma and the posthuman across genres: science fiction, speculative fiction, crime fiction, horror, weird fiction and climate fiction.
- Posthuman narratives across media: film, television, graphic narratives, videogames, interactive fiction and digital storytelling.
- Ethics, care, justice and alternative futures in the representation of more-than-human worlds: death, mourning, extinction, repair, hope and collective forms of flourishing.

Guidelines for submission of abstracts:
Paper presentations will be allowed **20 minutes**, plus 10 minutes for questions and discussion.
Paper proposals should be **300 words maximum**, and include **title, email address and affiliation**, along with a **bionote** under 100 words. Please submit proposals using this **form**. Acceptance will be notified to the email address indicated in the form.

KEY DATES	
Abstract submission deadline	**15 January 2027**
Notification of acceptance	February 2027