

# Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human: Rethinking the Boundaries of Our Study

Anthropology, as a discipline, has traditionally focused on the study of human societies and cultures. However, in recent years, there has been a growing movement toward an anthropology beyond the human. This movement challenges the traditional boundaries of the field and considers the implications of expanding our focus to include non-human entities.



## How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human by Eduardo Kohn

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There are a number of reasons why anthropologists are beginning to move beyond the human. One reason is the increasing recognition of the importance of non-human entities in human lives. Animals, plants, and other organisms play a vital role in our societies and cultures. They are sources of food, medicine, and other resources. They are also companions, symbols, and objects of religious devotion. By ignoring non-human entities, anthropologists are missing out on a large part of the human experience.

Another reason for the move beyond the human is the growing awareness of the interconnectedness of all life. Humans are not separate from the rest of the natural world. We are part of a complex web of relationships that includes other organisms, the environment, and even the cosmos. By focusing on humans in isolation, anthropologists are failing to capture the full complexity of human existence.

The move beyond the human has a number of implications for anthropological research. First, it requires anthropologists to rethink the concept of culture. Culture is no longer seen as something that is exclusively human. Animals, plants, and other organisms also have cultures. These cultures are not as complex as human cultures, but they are still important for understanding the behavior of non-human entities.

Second, the move beyond the human requires anthropologists to develop new methods for studying non-human entities. Traditional ethnographic methods, such as participant observation and interviewing, are not always effective when studying non-human entities. Anthropologists need to develop new methods that are better suited for studying the behavior of animals, plants, and other organisms.

Third, the move beyond the human requires anthropologists to rethink their relationship with the natural world. Anthropologists can no longer see themselves as objective observers of the natural world. They are part of the natural world, and their research is inevitably shaped by their own experiences and biases. Anthropologists need to be aware of their own biases and to take them into account when conducting research.

The move beyond the human is a challenging but necessary step for anthropology. By expanding our focus to include non-human entities, we can gain a more complete understanding of the human experience and our place in the natural world.

## **Implications for the Future of Anthropology**

The move beyond the human has a number of implications for the future of anthropology. First, it will lead to a more inclusive and diverse anthropology. By including non-human entities in our research, we will be able to gain a more complete understanding of the human experience. This will lead to a more nuanced and complex understanding of human culture and society.

Second, the move beyond the human will lead to a more engaged anthropology. By recognizing the interconnectedness of all life, anthropologists will be more likely to see themselves as part of the natural world. This will lead to a more ethical and responsible anthropology that is committed to protecting the environment and the rights of all living beings.

Third, the move beyond the human will lead to a more creative anthropology. By challenging traditional boundaries, anthropologists will be more likely to develop new and innovative ways of studying the world. This will lead to new discoveries and a better understanding of the human condition.

The move beyond the human is a major challenge for anthropology, but it is also a major opportunity. By embracing this challenge, anthropology can become a more inclusive, diverse, engaged, and creative discipline.

The move beyond the human is a major turning point in the history of anthropology. By expanding our focus to include non-human entities, we can gain a more complete understanding of the human experience and our place in the natural world. This will lead to a more inclusive, diverse, engaged, and creative anthropology.

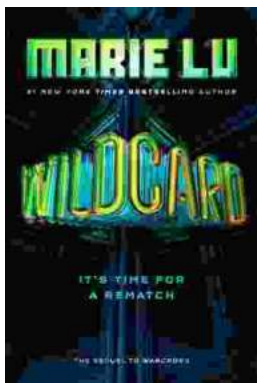


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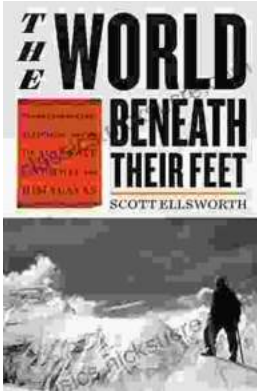
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