

## ***The Sentimental Disposition of (Popular) Trans- and Posthumanism***

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My contribution looks at popular trans- and posthuman TV fictions in the second half of the 2010s – in the US, the first three seasons of HBO's *Westworld* (released in 2016, '18, and '20), and in the UK, Channel 4's *Humans* (2015–18). Mainly as a contrast, I will briefly touch on two films, *Blade Runner 2049* (2017) and *Ghost in the Shell* (2017), as well. All these productions are replete with sentimental tropes and scripts – those inherited from an 18th/19th-century sentimental tradition and the affective-political ones that allow sentimentality to continue to operate today, as a communicative code in an arena of 'public feelings'. Here, it is activated in times of crises and to hedge in experiences of radical contingency. Uncanny encounters with trans- or posthuman forms arguably constitute such moments of crisis. But how can sentimentality do its cultural work if these encounters threaten to decentre its humanist foundations as well? I will look at how in the texts in question, sentimental scripts are partially revised, develop ambivalent, multi-coded forms and are employed self-reflexively, both in the TV shows' diegesis and in the way they address their audience: In 'quality TV' drama, posthuman fictions seem to engender a 'meta-sentimentality'. My paper will conclude with possible points of connection between critical posthumanism and sentimentality's potential for self-reflexivity.