

**18<sup>th</sup> International Conference  
on Contemporary Narratives in English**

**Recent Approaches to the Posthuman:  
Cultural Reflections on the (Post-)Human Condition**

**May 15-17, 2023**

**University of Zaragoza (Spain)**

<http://typh.unizar.es/>

Since the 1990s, critical posthumanism has been questioning human beings' universal and transhistorical essence, inspired by Donna Haraway's approach to the crisis in humanism through the cyborg as a metaphor for our posthuman condition, and N. Katherine Hayles's announcement that we had become posthumans.

In the wake of Haraway's and Hayles's groundbreaking work, many others have provided an account of posthumanism that explores how modern technoscience has radically undermined the grand narrative of the humanist subject. In recent years, one of the main issues addressed by techno-posthumanism is the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution and its consequences for the definition of being. According to Klaus Schwab, the changes brought about by this fourth revolution are transforming not just how we do things, but also who we are and how we define ourselves. At the same time, while some transhumanist thinkers go as far as to see a chance to leave biology behind in the latest and future developments in the fields of computation and neuroscience, other scholars reflect on the ethics of human enhancement and highlight the importance of regulating emerging technologies.

Posthumanism is not just a question of technology, though. Other strands of scholarship have emerged in more recent years that have widened the scope of critical posthumanism towards a wider consideration of the radical interdependence between the (post-)human and the nonhuman. Thanks to the work of theorists such as Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti, Cary Wolfe, Karen Barad and Stacy Alaimo, among others, recent approaches to the posthuman have established connections with other related disciplines, such as critical animal studies, new materialisms and disability studies among others, highlighting the posthuman subject's embodiedness and embeddedness.

Finally, probably fostered by the growing concern with environmental destruction, the idea of the posthuman has also become intertwined with the issue of anthropogenic exploitation and degradation of the natural world in the Anthropocene epoch. An ecologically-informed posthumanism emphasizes the embeddedness, relationality and kinship of all beings, and forces us to "stay with the trouble of living and dying in response-ability on a damaged earth" (Haraway 2016, 2).

All these ideas continue to shape twenty-first century understandings of the (post)human subject, the task of (re)defining what it means to be human perhaps being now more prescient than ever. This conference seeks to explore recent reflections on the posthuman condition in literature and other media, as well as recent developments in the fields of critical

posthumanism, transhumanism, critical animal studies and the new materialisms. This conference also aims to bring to the fore the ethical and political implications of the representation of the embeddedness and relationality of the (post)human, the machine, the nonhuman animal and matter, while also exploring the connection between literature and other media, criticism and the world.

Possible topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Recent representations in literature and other media of human enhancement, cyborgs, digital posthumans and transhumanist beliefs, as well as non-human and more-than-human beings in fiction.
- Recent ideological positions and explorations of the contradictions of the posthuman in fiction and popular culture.
- Racial, social, and sexual identities that challenge historical definitions of the human.
- New aesthetic and narratological approaches to the posthuman, the non-human and the more-than-human.
- Speculative fiction and other genres and their approach to the posthuman, the non-human and the more-than-human.
- Utopian and dystopian approaches to the posthuman, the non-human and the more-than-human.
- Recent ethical and political concerns and challenges related to the posthuman, the non-human and the more-than-human.
- Changes in the literary field and consequences of the posthuman.
- Recent posthumanist, new materialist and eco-critical approaches to the Anthropocene in literature and popular culture.
- Human and nonhuman embodiments, posthuman bodies in literature.
- The overlaps, intersections, and contradictions between critical posthumanism, critical animal studies, new materialisms, disability studies, eco-criticism and other entangled disciplines.

**Confirmed Plenary Speakers:**

Sherryl Vint, Professor of Media and Cultural Studies at the University of California, Riverside (USA).

Ivan Callus, Professor of English at the Faculty of Arts, University of Malta.

Kevin LaGrandeur, Professor Emeritus at the New York Institute of Technology (NYIT), Fellow of the Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technology and co-founder of the NY Posthuman Research Group.

Miriam Fernández Santiago, Senior Lecturer at the Department of English and German Philology, University of Granada.

**Guidelines for submission of abstracts:**

Paper proposals should be 200-300 words, including a title. Please submit proposals, along with a bionote (around 100 words) and email address to the conference organizers at [posthumanconference2023@gmail.com](mailto:posthumanconference2023@gmail.com)

Paper presentations will be allowed 20 minutes, plus 10 minutes for questions and discussion.

**Key dates and information:**

Abstract submission deadline: December 19, 2022.

Notification of acceptance: January 31, 2023.

**Conference venue:**

María Moliner Library and School of Law

Campus San Francisco

C/ Pedro Cerbuna 12, 50009 Zaragoza (Spain)

**Registration:**

Conference fees (including coffee breaks, conference pack and welcome reception):

(a) Early bird registration (from January 31 to February 28, 2023):

- Regular participants: 120€
- Students (attendance only): 50€

(b) Late registration (from March 1 to May 8, 2023):

- Regular participants: 150€
- Students (attendance only): 50€

**Organizers:**

The conference is organized by the members of the research project "Contemporary North American Fiction and the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution: From Posthumanity to Privation and Social Change" (PID2019-106855GB-I00), which is part of the research group "Contemporary Narrative in English" (H03\_20R) at the Department of English and American Studies of the University of Zaragoza, Spain.

**Conference chairs:**

María Ferrández San Miguel

Carmen Laguarda Bueno

Esther Muñoz González

**More information:**

<http://typh.unizar.es/conferences/2023-2/>

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