

Call for Papers
(Deadline June, 16th 2019)

Cologne Summer School of Interdisciplinary Anthropology IV

“Beyond Humanism: Cyborgs – Animals – Data Swarms”

23rd – 27th September 2019

University of Cologne

During the last five decades, public, intellectual, and academic debates have created an increased awareness of so-called *transhumanist* discourses and social movements accompanied by a diverse body of theoretical works in philosophy, social sciences, and humanities which can broadly be described as *posthumanist*. Building on a three year long tradition (CSIA 2015–17) of interrogating what it means to be human in the 21st century from an interdisciplinary anthropological perspective, the *Cologne Summer School of Interdisciplinary Anthropology 2019* relaunches under the title *Beyond Humanism: Cyborgs – Animals – Data Swarms*. It picks up where the last CSIA left by taking a closer look at what a *trans- and posthumanist agenda* actually implies and how it relates to classic understandings of what it means to be human.

Organized by the *Collaborative Research Center 806 “Our Way to Europe”* and the *a.r.t.e.s. Graduate School for the Humanities Cologne*, we invite PhD students and early postdocs from all disciplines whose academic interests follow similar perspectives and questions to join us for an intense week of interdisciplinary exchange and controversial discussion. Not simply dismissing *new modes of humanisms* as mere social phenomena in an age of accelerated technological and cultural transformation, we aim at taking them seriously in order to understand better the shifts in contemporary concepts and controversies about the human being.

By historically tracing back modes of humanism and their counterparts (e.g. post- and transhumanism, animism, multispecies assemblages, anthropocene, cosmopolitics, etc.) and by excavating their ontological and epistemological conditions, we identify three relational contestations of what it no longer means and three imaginaries of what it nowadays means to be human. The contestations are: (1) the distribution of human subjectivity and cognition, (2) the disintegration of human individuality, and (3) the dissolution of humanity as a unique ontological category.

The imaginaries we aim to bring into a fruitful contrast and comparison with these contestations are (1) the *cyborg*, (2) the *animal*, and (3) the *data swarm*. Taken together, relational contestations and imaginaries serve as interrogative tools for focusing on key questions regarding the human/technology interface:

- What are the multiple epistemological and ontological repercussions of transhumanist and posthumanist attempts to rethink and/or replace the human as cyborg, animal, or data?
- How is the traditional understanding of the human as a subject belonging to a class of unique beings transformed if only one or two of the constituent properties (individual, subject, member of a unique class of beings) become contested? In other words: are post- and transhumanistic agendas, politics, and concepts more humanistic than proposed?
- How are these new modes of humanism reflected in the arts and in public opinion? How do they transform everyday actions and perceptions of others (both human and non-human)?

Regarding scholarly inspirations we would like to mention such diverse theories as Donna Haraway's materialist-feminist concepts of the cyborg and companion species/significant otherness (2016), Michael Tomasello's evolutionary psychology (2014), Philippe Descola's theory of animism (2013), Mario Blaser's reconceptualization of cosmopolitics (2016), Nick Bostrom's assumptions about singularity and super-intelligence (2014), Gregory Bateson's ecology of the mind (1972), Gilbert Simondon's technological humanism (1958; cf. Guchet 2010), Bruno Latour's modes of existence (2012), and recent trends in the continental and analytical traditions to rethink panpsychism and materialism, such as Galen Strawson, Karen Barad, and Jane Bennett.

The five-day summer school is jointly organized by Thimo Breyer (CRC 806 "Our Way to Europe"), Johannes Schick, Mario Schmidt (a.r.t.e.s. Graduate School for the Humanities), Christoph Lange (Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology), and Lars Reuke (Thomas Institute). It takes an interdisciplinary approach including perspectives from anthropology, philosophy, literature studies, and archaeology. Beyond these disciplines, we especially also encourage young researchers who develop interdisciplinary projects in visual and performing arts, informatics, engineering, design studies, cognitive, and the natural sciences to apply for our summer school.

Confirmed invited speakers are:

Roman Bartosch	University of Cologne (Germany)
Debbora Battaglia	Mount Holyoke College (US) <i>Evening Lecture</i>
Beatrice Fazi	University of Sussex (UK)
Seth Giddings	University of Southampton (US)
Chris Gray	University of California (US) <i>Evening Lecture</i>
Xavier Guchet	Université de Technologie de Compiègne (France)
Stephen Lilley	Sacred Heart University (Fairfield, US)
Anna Lukina	Vienna University of Technology (Austria)
Natalie Porter	University of Notre Dame, (South Bend, US)
Sina Seiffee	Free Artist Researcher (Brussels, Cologne, Teheran)
Janae Sholtz	Alvernia University (Reading, US)
Heather Swanson	Aarhus University (Denmark)
Julie Van der Wielen	Diego Portales University (Santiago, Chile)
Ingrid Vendrell Ferran	Freie Universität Berlin (Germany)
Pieter Vermeulen	Leuven University (Belgium)

Interested PhD students and early postdocs are invited to send their application (CV, draft of project, and motivational letter) to niklas.grouls@uni-koeln.de before **June, 16th 2019**.

For general questions and inquiries please contact interdisciplinary-anthropology@uni-koeln.de or visit [Beyond Humanism: Cyborgs – Animals – Data Swarms](#).

Beyond Humanism: Cyborgs – Animals – Data Swarms

University of Cologne

23rd – 27th September 2019

	Monday, 23 September	Tuesday, 24 September	Wednesday, 25 September	Thursday, 26 September	Friday, 27 September	
	CONCEPTUAL FRAMING	CYBORGS	ANIMALS	DATA SWARMS	EXPERIMENTAL FUTURES	
09:30 – 11:00	Introduction by the organisers	Project Presentations by the participants	Project Presentations by the participants	<i>Free Morning</i>	Imagination and Alternative Presents Marcello Muscari Rodrigo Sandoval	
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Coffee Break</i>					
11:30 – 13:00	Posthumanist Philosophy Janae Sholtz Julie Van der Wielen	Project Presentations by the participants	Project Presentations by the participants	Project Presentations by the participants	Fictional Emotions Ingrid Vendrell Ferran Marco Cavallaro	
13:00 – 14:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>					
14:00 – 15:30	Challenges of Transhumanism Stephen Lilley	Ontologies of AI Seth Giddings	Co-Species Assemblages Heather Swanson	Flocking Algorithms Anna Lukina	Future-Writing Roman Bartosch	
15:30 – 16:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>					
16:00 – 17:30	Technoscience Xavier Guchet	Anthropocene Pieter Vermeulen	Critical Bestiaries Natalie Porter	Cultures of Computation Beatrice Fazi	<i>Farewell</i>	
17:30 – 19:00	<i>Break</i>					
19:00 –	Dinner @ El Inca	Evening Lecture Chris Gray	Critical Bestiaries Performance-Lecture & Party Sina Seifec Christoph Lange	Evening Lecture Debbora Battaglia		
20:30 – 22:00		<i>Reception</i>		<i>Reception</i>		