

# Posthumanism and the Posthuman Chances and Challenges in German and European Literature and Culture

Institute of Languages, Cultures, and Societies  
University of London

23-24 March 2023

Conference website: <https://www.posthuman-chances-challenges.com/>

Venue website: <https://ilcs.sas.ac.uk/>

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## Conference organizers:

Robert Craig (Universität Bamberg)

Annegret Märten (King's College London)

Rebecca Wismeg-Kammerlander (King's College London)

## Conference outline:

'Not all of us can say, with any degree of certainty, that we have always been human, or that we are only that. Some of us are not even considered fully human now, let alone at previous moments of Western social, political and scientific history.' As the philosopher Rosi Braidotti reminds us, one of the central achievements of posthumanism and 'the posthuman' has been to enrich and diversify our sense of what it *could* have meant to be human, and what it might still mean.

At a time of intersecting global crises, this two-day conference seeks to re-evaluate the categories of humanness and 'the human' through the lenses of the posthuman and the transhuman. With a particular focus on German literature, culture, film, and thought from the eighteenth century to the present, we will be exploring posthuman(-ist) conceptions and figurations of gender, sexuality, interpersonality, ecology, ontology, and – of course – artificial intelligence. Our keynote speakers are **Prof Dr Karin Harrasser (Linz)** and **Dr Stefan Herbrechter (Heidelberg)**; and we'll be hosting a 'writer's workshop' in German with the prize-winning graphic novelist **Olivia Vieweg**.

# Conference programme:

## Day 1: Thursday 23 March:

**10:30**

*Arrival, Registration & Coffee*

**11:15**

*Welcome*

**11.30 – 12:30**

*Panel 1: Proto-Posthumanism (i)*

Elena Fabietti (Regensburg): 'Posthuman Fantasies in the Age of Enlightenment: A Man with a Window on the Heart in Christian Heinrich Spieß's *Biographien der Wahnsinnigen* (1796)'

Kerstin Borchhardt (KU Linz): 'Of Man and Superman: The Afterlife of Nietzsche's "Übermensch" in Politics, Science, and Popular Culture'

**12:30 – 13:30**

*Lunch ('Street Food': venue catering)*

**13:30 – 14:30**

*Panel 2: Proto-Posthumanism (ii)*

Ombre Tarragnat (Université Paris 8): 'Reassessing the Proto-Posthumanism Claims in Jakob von Uexküll: Parasitic Readings of Umwelt Theory from the Tick to the Autistic'

Kate Foster (King's College London): 'The Doppelgänger: Weimar Cinema and the Posthuman'

**14:30 – 15:00**

*Coffee Break*

**15:00 – 16:00**

*Panel 3: Ontologies, Ecologies and Geographies (i)*

Teresa Ludden (Newcastle): 'Nonhuman Agency and Differential Becomings in Texts by Michael Donhauser and Oswald Egger'

Henrik Wehmeier (Hamburg): 'The Blurred I: Posthumanist Concepts of Subjectivity in Contemporary Poetry'

**16:05 – 17:00**

**Keynote I:**

**Stefan Herbrechter (Heidelberg):**

**‘Posthumanism’s German Genealogies’**

**17:00 – 17:30**

*Wine Reception*

**17:30 – 19:00**

*Guest Author Reading & Workshop with Olivia Vieweg*

**19:30 onwards**

*Conference Dinner: TAS Anatolian Restaurant, Bloomsbury (separate payment)*

## **Day 2: Friday 24 March:**

**09:00 – 10:30**

*Panel 4: Ontologies, Ecologies and Geographies (ii)*

Dana Bönisch (Bonn): ‘Entanglements: Posthumanist Poetics and Relational Ethics’

Peter Arnds (Trinity College Dublin): ‘Transhuman Moments in Norbert Scheuer’s Novels on War and Forced Migration’

Sarah Pogoda (Bangor): ‘The Buoy in the Elevator – Artistic Research into Heiner Müller’s Posthuman Utopia’

**10:30 – 11:00**

*Coffee Break*

**11:00 – 12:00**

*Panel 5: (A)lterity, (I)dentivity and Connection (i)*

Maria Roca Lizarazu (Galway) and Simone Pflieger (University of Alberta): ‘In Touch with the In/Human’

Marlene Reich (New York University): ‘Hybrid Matters in Berit Glanz’s *Pixeltänzer* (2019)’

**12:05 – 13:00**

**Keynote II.**

**Karin Harrasser (Kunstuniversität Linz):**

**‘Para, not post’**

**13:00 – 14:00**

***Lunch*** (own arrangements)

**14:00 – 15:00**

***Early Career Researchers' Workshop***

**15:00 – 16:30**

***Panel 6: (A)lterity, (I)dentify and Connection (ii)***

Benjamin Schaper (Oxford): “Nicht einheimisch, aber auch nicht exotisch: Briten eben”: Loneliness and Human-Machine Interaction in Maria Schrader's *Ich bin dein Mensch* (2021)

Tobias Heinrich (University of Kent): ‘My Friend Robot: Emotional Relationships with Artificial Intelligence in Fiction and Beyond’

Nicole Brandstetter (Munich University of Applied Sciences): ‘Digitalisation, Artificial Intelligence, Social Media: Narrative Representations of Posthuman Societies’

**16:30 – 17:00**

***Coffee Break***

**17:00 – 18:30**

***Panel 7: Rupture, Catastrophe and Renewal***

Georgia Panteli (Vienna): ‘Pinocchio and Other Posthumans: The Art of Ausonia’

Suman Singh (Wuppertal): ‘Human and Non-Human Encounters in Arno Schmidt's *Schwarze Spiegel* (1951) and Georg Klein's *Mikro* (2018)’

Friederike Reents (Eichstätt-Ingolstadt): ‘Rupture as Creative Potential in Posthuman Scenarios in Philipp Weiss' *Der letzte Mensch* (2019) Anja Utler's *kommen sehen* (2020) and Jean-Luc Lagarce's *Cartage, encore* (1979)’

**18:30**

***Closing Remarks & End of Conference.***