

Call for Papers



Utopia after the Human

The 5th symposium of the *Imaginaries of the Future: Historicizing the Present* International Research Network supported by the Leverhulme Trust.

April 11-12, 2017 (two full days); Cornell University (Ithaca, New York)

There is no cost to attend and travel bursaries are available. Please see below for more information.

Call for Contributions

What subjectivities exist within, against and beyond our present? Is 'the human' still a viable subject for an emancipatory politics? And if not, what does this mean for utopianism? Is it even possible to think utopia apart from the human? How might we distinguish between technological futurisms that (re)centre the human and those that de-centre it?

The fifth *Imaginaries of the Future: Historicizing the Present* symposium will explore the relationship between utopia(nism) and subjectivity. We welcome proposals for twenty minute presentations that explore the relationship between the post-, trans-, more-than-, non-, and/or in-human and utopia(nism) from any academic discipline. We also welcome proposals from artists, film-makers, musicians, activists or indeed anyone else from outside the academy. This may include the presentation of artistic work, or presentations that do not otherwise conform to academic norms.

We particularly welcome proposals for presentations that challenge dominant narratives regarding the 'turn' away from the human. Particular racialized, gendered and disabled subjects have long been excluded from the category of 'the human', whilst many Indigenous cosmologies reject understandings of 'the human' that underpin Western thought. Many such subjects have also been excluded from and by various utopianisms, even as they develop forms of knowledge and praxis that might be thought of as utopian.

Papers should engage with the concept of utopia(nism) (or a related term: dystopia, anti-utopia, heterotopia, etc.), although this engagement can be critical. We do not expect all presenters to have familiarity with academic work on utopia.

“Utopia after the Human” will be a small, intimate, symposium with no parallel sessions. Participants are expected to attend all of the two-day program so that discussions can develop across the whole symposium. Consequently, we will not accept virtual presentations unless this forms an integral part of the presentation’s content, and where someone will be able to be physically present during the symposium.

Specific topics through which presentations may interrogate the relationship between posthumanism and utopianism include but are not limited to:

Posthuman bodies, posthuman subjects

- Posthuman, transhuman, more-than-human and/or inhuman?
- Intersections/co-constitutions of race, gender, class, (dis)ability and queerness
- Cyborgs and post-cyborgs
- Alien, animal, vegetable and mineral agency
- Health and aging
- (Dis)ability
- Prosthetics, drugs, body modifications
- Pregnancy
- Sexuality, sex, desire
- Consciousness and intelligence

Decolonizing posthumanism

- Indigenous cosmologies
- Afrofuturisms
- Indigenous futurisms
- Posthumanism and the Black Radical Tradition
- Beyond decolonization as metaphor

Posthuman technologies

- Neither technophobia nor technophilia
- Ecology as technology
- Computing, robotics, cyberspace
- Mobile technologies
- Posthuman architectures
- Biomimicry
- Transhumanism, singularity, immortality

Posthumans, home and community

- (Anti-) posthumanism in intentional, religious and utopian communities
- Cyberspace and online communities
- Beyond the (nuclear) family
- New territories: posthumans in space, under the sea...

Extrapolations, fictions, visions

- Novels, short stories, poetry, comics
- Computer and video games
- Music

- Film and television
- Art (visual, digital, plastic, sound, participatory...)
- Apps and locative media

The political economy of posthumanism

- Capitalist posthumanisms
- Post-capitalist, socialist and communist posthumanisms
- Gendered, racialized and classed work
- Posthumanism through/within/against/beyond the state
- Social reproduction and care work
- Automation and its discontents

Posthumanism and the state

- Military posthumanisms
- Posthuman colonialism
- Police and state violence
- Law, justice and posthumanism
- Posthuman rights/post 'human rights'

Posthuman ecologies

- Posthumans in/as ecology
- The anthropocene, capitalocene, plantationocene, ctulhucene, homogenocene...
- Beyond the nature/culture divide
- Non-Western ecologies

Posthuman cosmologies

- Posthumanism and religion
- Spirits, ghosts, demons, angels
- Posthumanism as/after postmodernity

Spatializing the Posthuman

- Posthumanism Cities
- Posthuman Architecture
- Posthuman Interiors
- Posthuman Domesticity

Proposal Deadline

Please send proposals (format of your choice) to utopiaafterthehuman@gmail.com by midnight (UTC) **Monday 23rd January, 2017.**

Special journal issues

The *Imagaries of the Future: Historicizing the Present* network is producing four special issues of the open access *Open Library of Humanities* journal. These will feature versions of papers presented at our six symposia. There is no obligation to publish, but we hope that many presenters will consider submitting a paper for consideration.

Costs and Bursaries

There is no cost to present at *Utopia After the Human*. Lunches and refreshments will be provided.

In addition, we are pleased to offer five bursaries of up to £350 and two of up to £1000 to support travel costs. These can be used to reclaim costs accrued through travel, food and accommodation (regrettably, bursaries cannot be paid in advance). We particularly welcome applications for these from people of colour, people from indigenous backgrounds, those whose gender identities do not conform to hegemonic gendered norms, and disabled people.

To apply for a bursary please include the following with your proposal:

- An estimation of your costs for the trip and details of any other sources of funding available to you.
- A mini-CV (maximum two sides A4) *or* a brief account of any information pertinent to your application (maximum one side of A4). This might include information on current, former or future projects (academic, artistic, activist, literary, etc.).

About the network

Imagineries of the Future: Historicizing the Present is a Leverhulme International Research Network designed to think through how we might think about the future. Based at Newcastle University in the UK, it does not advance specific visions of the future as such, but rather seeks to develop strategies for conceptualising 'the future', without doing violence to the bodies that might inhabit and (re)produce it. It is utopian rather than futurological in orientation, and believes that the utopian should not be reduced to the fanciful, impossible or authoritarian. It is organizing six symposia and four publications between 2014-2017.

Leverhulme Trust Investigators/Conveners

Nathaniel Coleman (PI), Reader in Architecture Theory and History, School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, Newcastle University, UK.

Keith Evan Green (local host for this Cornell event), Professor of Design + Environmental Analysis and Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering, and Director of the Architectural Robotics Lab, Cornell University, USA

Brian Greenspan, Professor and Director of Hypertext and Hypermedia Lab, Department of English Language and Literature, Carleton University, Canada

Dan Smith, Senior Lecturer in Fine Art Theory, Chelsea College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London, UK

Michael G. Kelly, Director of the Ralahine Centre for Utopian Studies, School of Languages, Literature, Culture and Communication, Limerick University, Ireland.

Susan McManus, Lecturer, School of Politics, International Studies and Philosophy, Queens University, Belfast, UK.

Kenneth Hanshaw, Lecturer in Slavic Literature (Czech, Polish and Russian, Bosnian / Croatian / Serbian) Department of Slavic Studies, University of Regensburg, Germany.

Further details can be found at:

imaginariesofthefuture.wordpress.com

If you have any queries about any aspect of this call, please email david.bell@ncl.ac.uk.