

**Mapping Humanity and the Post-Human**  
**International Conference, Brest, Faculty V. Segalen**  
**5-7 September 2012**

This international conference will explore the frontiers of humanity at the dawn of the post-human. Even though the dichotomy between organic/natural beings and artificial ones dates back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, this conference will focus on the contemporary period and will welcome papers on both literature and the visual arts. Theoretical reflection on the post-human emerged after the second world war, when the possibility of a global death of humanity became a potential reality and trauma. The third industrial revolution then became synonymous with renewed technological evolution, characterized by experiments on the living. Through biotechnologies, computer technologies and nanotechnologies, the automaton has been replaced by cyborgs, clones and artificial intelligence.

Thus we propose to question the definition of humankind and the human species when faced with the trans-human or post-human which hint at an imminent disappearance of humanity as we know it. In a society which increasingly looks beyond the human (whether gendered or not), human identity is questioned through alterity, replication, hybridity and mutation. In addition, the encroachment of the virtual and of simulacra on the real has left a deep imprint on contemporary authors and artists who convoke the imagination to illustrate potential drifts of societies founded on images and illusions. Mapping humanity will thus also mean trying to ponder the emergence of a resistance of bodies (individual, collective, political, social) which would hint at a possible resistance of the human.

We will welcome papers ranging from traditional gothic or fantastic literature to post-modernist writing, speculative fiction, dystopias and post-cataclysmic novels or films as means of representing the frontiers of humanity and emphasizing the potential threat against the human. Papers may be rooted in various sociocultural contexts and should explore the ontological, epistemological, aesthetic, economic and political facets of the interactions between the human and the post-human. Theoretical texts ranging from Foucault to Baudrillard, Jameson, Virilio, Badiou or Nancy reveal a weakening of the human and the possible disappearance of humanity in a world in which the very nature of reality is also questioned. In recent years, numerous texts have also introduced the mirror of the post-human as a mode of mapping humanity. Haraway's *Manifesto*, Fukuyama or Dominique Lecourt's thoughts, the polemics around Sloterdijk's *Regeln für den Menschenpark* reveal that the issue of possible mutations of the species questions the very possibility of a common mode of representation of the human.

Guest speakers : Peter Childs (University of Gloucestershire), Thierry Hoquet (Université Paris Ouest), Gaïd Girard (Université de Bretagne Occidentale)

Proposals should be sent before the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2012 at : [helene.machinal@univ-brest.fr](mailto:helene.machinal@univ-brest.fr) or [gaid.girard@univ-brest.fr](mailto:gaid.girard@univ-brest.fr)

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