

Inventing the Human

Conference, conversations, provocations, roundtables, and exhibition

30th November to 2nd December 2023

University of Melbourne (f2f and virtual)

Call for Papers

This interdisciplinary and hybrid conference sets out to place the (liberal-humanist) subject dispatched by posthumanism inside the much larger field of Enlightenment/Romantic thought on this topic—a field that, on the one hand, is no longer imagined as beginning and ending in Europe and, on the other hand, is always already in dialogue or conflict with non-European traditions, understandings, and discourses of the human. We take as our key themes the pasts, futures, and varieties of reason, imagination, liberty, and the body—terms crucial to modern understandings of the human. But we do this in order to ask, in a world where Europe is merely one centre among many, what of this legacy can be dispatched? What can be revised or extended by other traditions? What in the world's multiple humanities might open new possibilities for the future? And what does our answer to these questions mean for the methods, roles, and organising categories of the Humanities?

Confirmed Keynote Speakers / Provocateurs:

[Genevieve Bell](#), Director of the School of Cybernetics and Florence Violet McKenzie Chair at the Australian National University; a Vice President and a Senior Fellow at Intel Corporation.

[James Q. Davies](#), Professor of Music, University of California, Berkeley.

[Amanda Jo Goldstein](#), Associate Professor, English Faculty, University of California, Berkeley.

[Wantarri 'Wanta' Pawu](#), Warlpiri Elder; and Professorial Fellow in Indigenous Studies, University of Melbourne, University of Melbourne.

[Delia Lin](#), Associate Professor, Chinese Studies, University of Melbourne.

[Sujit Sivasundaram](#), Professor of World History, University of Cambridge.

Topics include:

- Enlightenment-Romanticism and/or its legacies and the invention of the Human
- Indigenous, Asian, Southern Hemisphere traditions and knowledges about the human
- Re-inventing the human (or why developing an understanding of plural humanity matters)
- The pasts, futures, and/or varieties of
 - reason / critique • imagination / creativity • knowledge • literary arts / performing arts / visual arts • cosmopolitanism / worldliness • religion / faith / the secular / the post secular • the body • place • tradition

--- or topics not included in this list important for a particular tradition on the human.
- Life writing / Writing about the human
- Ability / disability / differently abled
- Gender / transgender / non-binary

- Liberty / colonisation / slavery
- Non-European Enlightenments and Romanticisms and their histories
- The Human, the Non-Human, the Inhuman
- Dark or Counter Enlightenment and the human
- Cultures of food and the human
- Only human (the human as a site of weakness, vulnerability, limitation)
- Humanism / Post Humanism
- The *Humanities* / the Post *Humanities*

Types of presentation:

- *Research papers* (20 minutes);
- *Panels* (3 x 20 minute presentations);
- *Performances* (time, venue, and other requirements to be discussed with the conference convenors);
- *Roundtables* (to foster discussion with stakeholders beyond the academy in relevant fields).

Presentations (and attendance at the conference) can be online or f2f.

We are committed to ensuring equality of access to all attendees and presenters. If you have any access requirements or questions, please let us know.

Proposals should be submitted through the [conference website](#), which will prompt you for the information required.

Deadline for receipt of proposals: Monday 29 May 2023

Notification of outcome: Monday 12 June 2023

Enquiries: ER-CC@unimelb.edu.au

Conference website: <https://humanposthuman.joyn-us.app/>

Future Conferences: *Inventing the Human* is the first of three conferences. It will be followed by *Human / Non-Human* (2024) and *Human / Inhuman* (2025). The project as a whole, on *The Human and the Posthuman*, is described at <https://humanposthuman.joyn-us.app/pages/the-human-the-posthuman>.

For further information about the ERCC and its projects go to <https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/enlightenment-romanticism-contemporary-culture>