

Being Non/Human: Bodily Borders

'Being Non/Human' is organising a conference for 2015 on the topic of 'bodily borders' and we invite any postgraduate or early career researcher interested in this theme to submit an abstract or propose a panel. Being Non/Human is an interdisciplinary group that engages with research on interactions between the human and nonhuman, providing a forum for graduate students and early career researchers to present current research. We hope this conference will offer a similar opportunity.

Transforming human skin into fur or scale; combining living tissue with metal; breaking through membrane into disembodied existence. Factual and fictional narratives of bodily metamorphosis are common. But what does it mean to exist in the middle – in the moment between pre- and post-transformation? What does it entail when we speak of change, adaptation and mutation? We are looking for papers and panels which explore this suspension between the non/human and open it up to analyse the borderlands of non/humanity, examining how such borders are defined, transgressed or denied altogether.

This is an interdisciplinary conference and as such we welcome papers and panels from a range of backgrounds. We are looking for examinations of bodily borders within literature and popular culture, the limits of the human in medicine, the impact of technological developments on how we define the borders of the 'human', the place of the non/human in ethics, anthropological approaches to how the human body may have changed over time, the concept of liminal embodiment in theology, discussions of the boundary between human and animal, and so forth.

How human is the cyborg's touch? What does it mean to cross species' boundaries or create chimeras? What is the experience of shifting beyond an animal body into vegetal or ecological vibrancy – to become cold as ice, turn into stone, be reduced to ash or mud? Is the transformation between the non/human merely physical?

Possible focuses might include:

- Posthuman embodiment
- The hybrid, mutated or mutilated form
- The animalistic or inorganic body
- Subhuman, superhuman or sublime existence
- The lifeless body
- The disembodied

Please send abstracts (250 words) for twenty minute papers or panel proposals to: being.non.human@gmail.com. The deadline for abstracts is Monday 2nd February 2015.

The conference will take place on Wednesday 17th June 2015 at Queen Mary, University of London. It is organised by Sophia Wilson (King's College London) and Lydia Zeldenrust (Queen Mary, University of London).

Being Non/Human
www.beingnonhuman.wordpress.com