

Workshop in a Nutshell as part of the Teaching Assistantship Programme 2020

Transhumanism: Humanism “on Steroids” or Alternative Transcendence?

Organizational details

Instructor: Aleksandar Talovic

Date: November 26, 2020, from 2–6pm

Location: Online (link will be sent after registration via info@ggs.uni-giessen.de)

Content

This workshop tends to shed more light on how to think Transhumanism, both as a theoretical paradigm in all its plurivocal vectors and as an active component of new technological endeavors for human nature’s “ontological boost”. Unlike certain, at first glance more tightly related, but conceptually fairly different movements (such as Posthumanism, Antihumanism, Metahumanism et sim.), the operative source of Transhumanism lays in its constitutive bond with the 18th Century Enlightenment tradition and its key emphasis on Human Reason as a pivotal drive of both historical and eschatological horizons (Ferrando 2019). Thus, on the one hand it promotes human enhancement in all its possible forms, considering to some extent human intellect and physiology as a raw material for further upgrades towards almost infinite potentialities, which certain critically oriented authors denoted as overenthusiastic and non-critical “ultra-humanist” approach (Onishi 2011). On the other hand, there are certain voices that detected specific spiritual and/or theological inspiration within Transhumanist movement that lays beneath the high praise of technology as an ultimate value and goes far beyond strictly rational foundations of Kantian philosophical heritage (Noble 1997; Tirosch-Samuelsen and Mossman 2012). Conclusively, the film (and its related formats) as a medium that proved itself as one of the most democratic and receptive artistic expressions of various public domains, as well as a vibrant tool for tracing even most radical shifts and trends in (post)human societies, is intended to bring a fruitful context of analysis for the purpose of this workshop. In this regard, apart from intended theoretical foci, the participants will get the opportunity to contemplate on 2014 American fiction thriller “Transcendence” that grapples in a dynamic and no less critical way with (not only) the matters of the above-mentioned Transhumanist techno-religious trajectories, with a special emphasis on mind uploading procedure.

Learning Targets

- Theoretical mapping of Transhumanism(s) and its Humanist heritage
- Exploring various techno-driven and/or cultural phenomena connected with the movement
- Analyzing the Transhumanist religious (or quasi-religious) facets through the “Transcendence” (2014) as one of its artistic expressions

Target group

Students, Doctoral Candidates and Postdocs of all Faculties

Course language

English

Registration

Please register **by November 23, 2020** via e-mail at info@ggs.uni-giessen.de.