



Interdisciplinary Research Project “Non-Anthropocentric Cultural Subjectivity”
Coordinator: Prof. Paweł Piszczatowski

Call for Papers

**for a panel session at the 2nd International Congress
“Humanities – Society – Identity: EVOLUTION / REVOLUTION”**

Faculty of Modern Languages, University of Warsaw

December 6–7, 2023

Keynote speaker: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

The thematic focus of the panel session:

Evolutionary Aesthetics – Aesthetic Evolutions: Posthumanist Explorations with Darwin

In the humanistic discourse of the 21st century, primarily where it tests its own limits and seeks a transdisciplinary opening, the work of Charles Darwin is an important point of reference. It is enough to mention Jane Bennett’s book *Vibrant Matter* (2010) which is fundamental for posthumanist research, and in which the author discusses in detail Darwin’s concept of the “small agency” of worms or the monograph by Polish researcher Justyna Schollenberger *Stworzenia Darwina. O granicy człowiek–zwierzę* (2020).

In the context of the planned panel, the book *Wozu Kunst? Ästhetik nach Darwin* by the German comparatist Winfried Menninghaus (2011; English translation *Aesthetics after Darwin: The Multiple Origins and Functions of the Arts*, 2019) seems to be of particular importance.

According to Menninghaus Darwin was the first to explain the parallels between human and animal arts of singing and self-adornment using a general

evolutionary model of aesthetic representation. Menninghaus presents Darwin's reflections as an essential approach to a theory of arts that, in addition to music, also includes rhetoric, poetry, and the visual arts. Menninghaus reads Darwin's remarks against the background of today's knowledge in archeology and evolutionary biology as well as in the light of philosophical and empirical aesthetics and complements Darwin's analysis by examining the role of gaming behavior, technology, and symbolic practices in the hypothetical transformation of sexual courtship practices into human arts.

Based also on other concepts of evolutionary aesthetics, evolutionary musicology, Darwinian literary studies, and new-materialistic reading methods we will try to consider the possibilities for understanding human artifacts that may result from their diffractive view through the prism of Darwinian concepts.

The Congress will be held in the form of traditional in-person sessions.

Conference fee: 100 euros

Proposals comprising a 250-word abstract in English and a brief biographical note should be sent to: p.piszczatowski@uw.edu.pl by **August 15, 2023**.

The final selection will be decided by the end of August.