



Inaugural Lecture: *Ending the Humanities*



Prof. Johanna Seibt

In 2019, Johanna Seibt was appointed Professor of Philosophy at the Department of Philosophy and History of Ideas. In celebration of this, all are invited to her inaugural lecture, followed by a reception.

The question is not *whether* but *who*. *Who* is ending the humanities? Is it educational politics and university management? Is it us, the researchers in the humanities, or us, society at large? Or is it technology that is ending the humanities—technology that simulates the human mind and social agency? And what is being ended—is it merely the cancellation of certain types of academic activity?

Prompted by recent disturbing achievements in AI, the lecture explores answers to these questions from the angle of Robophilosophy, Human-Robot Interaction (HRI) research, and process ontology. As our conception of knowledge slides towards the (automatable) ability to generate useful patterns, strategies for justifying the humanities in terms of their extrinsic value or usefulness become self-undermining. More promising are strategies to integrate the intrinsic values of humanities research directly into the development of relevant technologies. This is the aim of international initiatives for “Human-centered AI”, “Digital Humanism”, or “Responsible Robotics,” and, in particular, of “Integrative Social Robotics” (ISR), developed by our local research unit. ISR can create substantive employment opportunities for humanities graduates, preserve the intrinsic value of phenomenal experience, and protect industry from technology failure. However, the integration of Humanities research into technology development requires the reorganization of education and research at universities. If this is the answer the question *who*, it would, in view of the history of the humanities, explain why we do not need to ask whether.

Thursday June 9, 2022
13:15 – 16:00
Auditorium 1 (1441-012)
Tåsingegade 3