The figure of the human that emerges from Renaissance and Enlightenment discourses is an unmistakably imperialist entity, excluding all that it perceives as a negation of itself. This ostensibly fixed category of the human informs, if not dictates, the ways in which those who are positioned outside of “the human” experience what we call “the self.” This is to suggest that those who wish to be, and behave as, human must, as the philosopher Sylvia Wynter argues, “circumcise themselves from themselves in order to become fully human.”

The processes of self-making and/or self-shaping are the primary interests of this conference. We welcome rigorous, imaginative papers that explore examples of, and grapple with, questions such as: What is the self? What is the relationship of the self to the category of human? To what degree is the self unique to an individual? What is the role of race, gender, and/or sexuality in formulations of the self? How are these questions addressed in literary and other cultural representations? We are especially interested in inquiries into the value and purpose of the self as a means of understanding humans—or nonhumans—within and across literary and historical periods.

Topics that explore the self might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Aesthetics and Self-Fashioning
- Race, Sexuality, Gender
- Hybridity and Post-Human Subjects
- Intersectionality and Assemblages
- Slavery and Self-Making
- The Self and/in Speculative and Science Fiction
- Self-Making and Visual Cultures

Email abstracts of no more than 300 words, for twenty-minute presentations, by December 15, 2017 to riceenglishsymposium2018@gmail.com. Please include presenter name, email, paper title, academic affiliation, and a brief (100-150 words) biography.