

Planetary Precarity and Future Habitability

February 18 & 19, 2022

Anxiety, job insecurity, zero-hour employment, environmental degradation, state violence, underfunded healthcare systems, zero-hour contracts, bioeconomies, and fragmented families are among the new conditions of the neoliberal age. These realities underpin the current discourse on precarity and precariousness in relation to the global environmental crisis: manifested as accelerated consumption and extraction of natural resources, acidification of oceans, chemicalization of life, deforestation, melting of the cryosphere, and increase in radioactive waste. These ongoing erosions and contaminations, following extreme weather events and exploitation of natural resources, continue to reduce the earth's sustainability and habitability. Planetary precarity demands collective actions and solidarities, a commitment to move beyond extractive measures and develop innovative concepts about the planet as a shared home.

Increasingly the connection between precarious labour, environmental catastrophe and neoliberalism has become linked in the public consciousness with demands for a Green New Deal such as those of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. These call for public policy to address climate change, support job creation in the transition to renewable energy, and reduce economic inequality. As UN Secretary General, António Guterres points out the world is on a knife edge in the race to halt accelerating climate change and worsening impacts. 2021 is a 'make or break' year. Demands for urgent action by Greta Thunberg ahead of the 26th UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in November 2021, create political waves. Others calling for planetary care and repair include Achille Mbembe, who urges decolonisation

(including that of the curriculum) on a planetary scale and to “reconstruct the world in common” (or “to reinvent forms of life in common that go beyond the requisite of the nation state, ethnicity, race, religion, and so on” (2019, online)); and Amitav Ghosh, who echoes Mbembe in situating the global crises in the flawed notion of modernity and selective progress (2016).

This international, online conference aims to examine these planetary crises with a demand for planetary thought-actions-praxis that acknowledges the interconnectedness of all forms of life. Our concept note is constructed in the hope that pressing issues facing humanity can be addressed collectively, blurring the divide of global north and global south. We aim for consciousness raising, for example, about how looming disasters glimpsed in the rear mirror, such as the lurking sixth extinction of the planet, can be averted; and how carbon democracies arising in the wake of neoliberalism can be challenged and dismantled.

Organized by the international research network, *Challenging Precarity*, this conference seeks to address (but is not limited to) the following sub-themes:

- curricula of planetary thinking and collective well-being
- the biopolitics of extraction and neocolonialism
- petro-capitalism and environmental catastrophe
- representations of politics of World energy in films and literature
- decolonization as a form of planetary thinking
- a planetary survival aesthetics
- queer ecology as planetary perspective
- eco materialism: human and human-non human interactions
- challenging neoliberalism and the challenges of the Green New Deal
- alternative modernisms and alternatives to modernism: Gulf Futurism, Afro-Futurism, Sinofuturism and Indigenous Futurism

- historicity of planetary imaginaries
- bio-inclusive and intercultural ethics

Analysis using any of these subthemes should be focused within the fields of literary and cultural studies. We invite abstracts of no more than 300 words. Proposed panels of 3-5 scholars are also welcome

Timelines:

Submission of abstracts: December 15th, 2021

Acceptance email: December 30th, 2021

Abstract needs to be submitted to the following email addresses:

om_dwivedi2003@yahoo.com

schmidt-haberkamp@uni-bonn.de

janet.wilson@northampton.ac.uk

Organisers:

Janet M. Wilson (University of Northampton, UK)

Om P. Dwivedi (Bennett University, India)

Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp (University of Bonn, Germany)

References

Adamson, Joni, and Salma Monani, eds. 2020. *Ecocriticism and Indigenous Studies:*

Conversations from Earth to Cosmos. London: Routledge.

Clark, Nigel, and Bronislaw Szerszynski. 2021. *Planetary Social Thought: The*

Anthropocene Challenge to the Social Sciences. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome, and Lowell Duckert, eds. 2015. *Elemental Ecocriticism: Thinking with Earth, Air, Water and Fire*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Coole, Diana, and Samantha Frost, eds. 2010. *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press,.
- Elias, Amy J., and Christian Moraru, eds. 2015. *The Planetary Turn: Relationality and Geoaesthetics in the Twenty-First Century*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Ghosh, Amitav (2016). *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*. Delhi: Penguin.
- Iovino, Serenella and Serpil Oppermann, eds. 2014. *Material Ecocriticism*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Kolberg, Elizabeth. 2015. *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*. London: Bloomsbury
- Mbembe, Achille (2019). "Thoughts on the Planetary." *New Frame*. <https://www.newframe.com/thoughts-on-the-planetary-an-interview-with-achille-mbembe/>
- Morton, Timothy. 2010. "Queer Ecology." *PMLA* 125 (2): 273–282.
- Rigby, Kate. 2019. "Weaving the Environmental Humanities: Australian Strands, Configurations, and Provocations." *Green Letters* 23 (1): 5–18.
- Wallace-Wells, David. 2019. *The Uninhabitable Earth: A Story of the Future*. Penguin.