



Planetary Precarity and Future Habitability

An International, online conference

February 18 & 19, 2022

Anxiety, job insecurity, zero-hour employment, environmental degradation, underfunded healthcare systems, zero-hour contracts, bioeconomies, and massive south-north migration, 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: i.e. 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, due to extreme weather events and overexploitation 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 (Sassen 2014) and develop innovative concepts about the planet as a shared home.

Increasingly, neoliberalism's impact in creating precarious labour, and environmental catastrophe 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 collective national action by Greta Thunberg ahead of the 26th UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow in November 2021 also highlight the urgent need for change. 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 situates the global crises in the flawed notion of modernity and selective progress (2016). These give further credibility to Rob Nixon's definition a decade ago of neoliberal violence as slow but cumulatively damaging (2011).

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 example, for recommendations on how looming disasters glimpsed in the rear mirror, such as the lurking sixth extinction of the planet, can be averted; or 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-nonhuman 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
- dystopias (conscience stirrers) and utopias (impossible solutions)
- technology as life-saving or -wasting instrument

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 together with a 50-word bionote. Proposed panels of 3-5 scholars from different university affiliations are also welcome. These should include a 300-word topic introduction together with each of the abstracts, underlining how these relate to each other and/or the panel topic.

Timelines:

Submission of abstracts: NEW DEADLINE: 14 January 2022

Acceptance email: NEW ACCEPTANCE DATE: 28 January 2022

Abstract proposals need to be submitted to the following email addresses:

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Organisers:

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Conference Chair:

Prof Nilanjan Chattopadhyay, Dean, School of Management (Bennett University)



Relevant Reading:

- 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.
- Nixon, Rob. 2011. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Rigby, Kate. 2019. "Weaving the Environmental Humanities: Australian Strands, Configurations, and Provocations." *Green Letters* 23 (1): 5–18.
- Sassen, Saskia. 2014. *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP.
- Wallace-Wells, David. 2019. *The Uninhabitable Earth: A Story of the Future*. New York: Tim Duggan Books.

