

PANEL 2: Planetary Poetics, Narrative Imaginaries

Moderator: Laura Ilea - Room C-1017-11

Planetary Elements as Narrative Agency in the Selected Novels by Ben Okri - Sola Ogunbayo

In *In Arcadia* (2002) and *The Age of Magic* (2014) Ben Okri, 1991 Man Booker Prize winner, explores the planet as an agency of signifiers to foreground the view that ethical issues are decipherable in the co-interactions of human and non-human agencies. As the characters in the novels travel from Paris to Basel, they relate with non-human agencies in the planetary elements like Arcadia, lakes and mountains such that the interactions create epistemological drifts that eventually determine the material development of the characters. The drifts include issues such as birth, rebirth, degeneration and regeneration which are narrated by agencies in the planet as the humans manifest their varying contradictions. The woods, lakes, deserts, mountains and gardens provide deconstructive templates which counter certain assumptions of the characters. Therefore, using the Material Ecocritical Theory of Serpil Oppermann and Serenella Iovino (2012) with detailed attention to the critics' notion of nature as "narrative agency", this paper reveals the patterns of drifts that the contacts between human and non-human agencies produce in Okri's selected novels. The concept of "narrative agency" is integral in explaining the drifts because the planetary elements provide epistemological tools to decenter some human rigidities that have created contamination, ethical decay, ozone depletion and other existential contradictions.

Keywords: Planetary Elements, Narrative Agency, Drifts , Nature

Experiencing planetarity across the *Dune's* cycle - Pierre-Louis Patoine

How do we experience planetarity? Can we feel and perceive the shared condition of being earthlings? Is the novel able to address Gaian scales and ontology?

In this presentation, I will explore these questions by studying how American writer Frank Herbert, in his *Dune* cycle – especially in the first volume (1965), and in the closing trilogy (*God Emperor of Dune, Heretics of Dune, Chapterhouse: Dune* 1981-85) – partly succeeds in producing a "sense of the planet" (Heise 2008). My study will focus on the potential for empathic, embodied reading afforded by Herbert's evocation of actions that stretch beyond the scale of individual human life (terraforming and geoengineering projects, programs of genetic optimization carried out across generations, age-long political orders and intergalactic wars, myth).

Through this study, I hope to measure the possibility of sensorimotor empathy for non-human, macro-scale geophysical forces, and to better understand what is at stake – in terms of ethics and aesthetics – in the literary representation of planetarity.

PANEL 3: Empiricism, Generative Thought, and Planetary Epistemologies

Moderator: Mathias Orhero - Room C-1017-11

So much empty space: attuning to absence amidst collapse and crisis - Jaxon Waterhouse and Chantelle Mitchell

Our presentation takes as its focus our ongoing research into absence as a taxonomic categorisation; a means of apprehending historical, present and future ecological absences amidst climate crisis. With particular attention to shrinking biodiversity, the acceleration of extinction, rising shorelines and increasingly catastrophic fire seasons, we draw from the work of Deborah Bird Rose, Jane Bennet and Simone Weil in developing a framework for attuning to absence. Extending Rose's theories of the shimmer and applying Bennet's notion of vibrancy, we position absence as a particular resonance. Whilst vibrancy and the shimmer operate as a sign of life, we present that resonance is a sign of where life was. Utilising these concepts in attuning to the more-than-human, we work toward our own 'absence taxonomies,' ways of holding that which is lost. In doing so, we redeploy Weil's theological thinking within an ecological frame, through her mode of attunement through attention, that 'rarest and purest form of generosity.' And with this, we offer a reverence; a sign of respect - a refusal to break eye contact with the Sun as it sets upon life on Earth. This presentation of Absence Taxonomies presents the theoretical frame for our ongoing research, alongside practice-based, site specific and pedagogical applications and explorations.

Modelled worlds: on diagramming a global climate model - Mariska Versantvoort

The contemporary Western understanding of climate as averaged weather is closely related to the practice of numerical modelling, which emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. Climate models are complex, technological artefacts, and critical engagement with these models in geography and science and technology studies often focuses on the epistemic geographies of climate science and/ or the generic spatial structure of global climate models. In other words, the literature has both examined the locations where climate models are made and has scrutinised the Cartesian grid on which global models are built. To date, little has been written on the spatial form of specific climate models. Nevertheless, climate models are important in the representation of climate change and geography. A key problem, I argue, is the relative inaccessibility of climate models as an object of analysis to researchers in the social sciences and humanities. In this paper, I discuss a transdisciplinary research approach to climate models, drawing on visual culture, literature, and science and technology studies. Via the urban tile scheme in HadGEM3-GC3.1 – the Met Office's latest general circulation model – I demonstrate how diagrammatic writing can visualise embedded notions of place, space, and territory in a global climate model.

PANEL 4: Planetary Reading: Representation, Empathy, and Translation Moderator: William Brubacher - Room C-1017-13

Transglossic Literature and Planetary Empathy - Sara Upstone and Kristian Shaw

In this paper, we examine in more detail one particular aspect of the transglossic, namely its development of a planetary consciousness which asks readers to construct empathy beyond the limits of the human and establish a form of inter-species transversality. In the second half of the paper, we examine how this theory is exemplified by Richard Powers's novel *Bewilderment* (2021). The story of a neurodivergent child and his heart-breaking attempts to find belonging, the narrative is situated within the context of global climate catastrophe, referencing a range of ecological concerns from the study of ornithology to developments in astrophysics. *Bewilderment* utilizes these shifts in scale from the personal to the cosmic in order to emphasise the shared precarity between human, non-human and material vulnerabilities. Through these parallels Powers constructs what can be seen as an 'intimate otherness' (Straube 2020) in which readers are asked to extend their empathetic identification beyond the human. Through this reading, the paper will demonstrate how the transglossic draws on cosmopolitan forms of relationality and simultaneity to advance planetary discourses and global citizenship.

Planet Clare - Catherine Leclerc

La municipalité de Clare, en Nouvelle-Écosse, abrite la plus grande communauté acadienne de cette province. Ici, la plus grande désigne une population de moins de 10 000 personnes, disséminée le long de villages côtiers et à travers les bois. Clare est un lieu reculé dont peu de gens ont entendu parler. On s'y exprime en acadjonne, un dialecte marqué, au rayonnement quasi inexistant (LeBlanc et Boudreau, 2016, 95). Ce lieu, la communauté artistique locale a cependant entrepris d'en faire une « number one first place » (Comeau, « Meteghan », 2014), grâce à une esthétique « du local planétaire » (Godin, 2015). La communication proposée traquera cette planéarité telle que l'esquissent la maison de production locale Tide School et les artistes qui s'y associent. Une de leurs collaborations est un documentaire-fiction justement intitulé Planet Clare (ou Planète Clare, Comeau et G. LeBlanc, 2019), dans un clin d'œil ludique au groupe new wave B-52. Dans « Allergic à la jinxx » le rappeur Arthur Comeau invite son confrère québécois Karim Ouellet à interpréter en acadjonne le refrain de la chanson. Microcosmopolitisme (Cronin, 2005)? Cosmopolitisme du terroir (Cronin, 2005)? Cosmopolitisme vernaculaire (Bhabah 1996 et 2000)? Planéarité comme altérité échappant à l'opposition entre local et global (Spivak 2012)? À tout le moins, on assiste à Clare à un réaménagement des rapports entre langues vernaculaires et véhiculaires, entre centre et périphérie, entre microcommunauté et monde. Il s'agira d'explorer de quelles manières il peut être appréhendé.

Rerooting Reconciliation: An Exploration of Considerations in Planetarity and Translation - Evi Cox

Postcolonial grief is far too large and varied to be healed by a simple apology, or to be resolved by milquetoast political or governmental action that comes too late. Further, we humans are seemingly unable to stop the creation of entirely new occasions to wound ourselves and others. Enter reconciliation – a process and a means to redress colonial era ills, a way to come to a

deeper understanding of the wounds we inflict on others through our actions or inaction, and a step towards collective responsibility for the past that will, it is hoped, lead to a more integral future. Despite its promise, reconciliation remains difficult to achieve in practical terms. How can a planetarity perspective and translation help reconciliation efforts? A bridge between cultures and nations, can translation foster compelling reconciliation dialogue and help make space for previously subalterned communities' narratives? This presentation is a brief exploration of how planetarity, translation, and reconciliation relate to each other and can support a improved reconciliation process.

PANEL 5: Re-imagining Mars, Interplanetary Imaginaries

Moderator: Ashley-Marie Maxwell - Room C-1017-11

Astronaut Heroes, Interplanetary Geography, Terraforming, and the Asymmetrical Twins of Earth and Mars - Loraine Haywood & Simon Springer

In the twenty-first century, Earth and Mars are imaginary asymmetrical twins in planetary drifts. The idea of Earth as home is being displaced. Mars is represented in the speculative imagination and simulations as a planet that can become another Earth through technology that would transform its desert landscape or create Eden-like domes.

Elon Musk and various space agencies want to create an interplanetary geography (Haywood 2021) with the ambition to colonise the planet Mars. Mars would become earth's new geography, a biblical iteration of John of Patmos' "new earth" (Rev. 21:1). Musk's Mars narrative involves conquering the red planet, the sacrifice of heroes, terraforming, and a new civilisation. This replicates the visions of John of Patmos in his "geographical imagination" (Cosgrove 1994, Pile 1997, Dunnett 2021) in *The Book of Revelation: the conquering of Hades, the return of the Messiah as sacrificed lamb, a "new earth" terraformed to Edenic wholeness, and a new Christian civilisation* (New Jerusalem).

The planetary drift between Earth and Mars thus becomes a matter of exchange. As astronaut heroes journey to Mars and face the "Disappearing earth phenomenon" (Kanas & Manzey 2008; Kanas 2020), this term becomes a metaphor or worse, a loop, a key, that opens the abyss of the Real (Zizek 1991, 2007) that is the terraforming or disappearing of life on Earth. As the Earth becomes less inhabitable, distant, unrecognisable, and full of Hyperobjects (Morton 2013, 2016), Mars becomes the ultimate Hyperobject, or Hell, as a destination. Timothy Morton explains of Hyperobjects that they make "fragility conspicuous... changing art and experience... [in what he calls] the Age of Asymmetry" (2016, 2).

PANEL 6: Messy Histories and Para-disciplinary Collaborations

Moderator: TBA - Room C-3061

Reflecting on the Material History of Our Drifting Planet – Stephen Dougherty

The matter I wish to explore for this conference is something implicit in the cfp: that “*planet-centered thinking*” (Chakrabarty) of any kind has always entailed “*planetary entanglements*” (Mbembe), of the sort that go back to beginning of modern science; that, in fact, constitute the origin of modern science. I am thinking of the reorientation of the Earth as a planet among planets in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This profoundly important innovation—planet Earth!—was spurred by Copernicus’s heliocentrism, but it further required the displacement of the predominant, medieval two-spheres theory of the world: that the world is constituted by spheres of earth and water with separate geometrical centers. Getting to the new hegemony of a one-sphere, global concept of Earth required voyages of discovery and the rise of the printing press. It entailed a general mood of growing doubt and suspicion about the authority of the ancients, as born out in religious wars and myriad related socio-cultural upheavals. The emergence of planet Earth occurred on the ground of a European continent tearing itself apart.

For my conference paper I wish to rehearse some of this fascinating history. Then I want to consider lessons that it might hold for us today, as we tear each other apart. I think it would do us good to recognize that our *planet* Earth was born of awesome politico-techno-scientific metamorphoses, and that our current planetary entanglements, having to do with the inextricable relatedness between our cosmic and political ideological investments, are designed to ensnare us, to spur our capacities for new styles of ecological thought, and to offer us solace too.

The Influence of some Raging Planet: Margaret Cavendish’s Planetary Thought

The seventeenth-century author, philosopher, scientist, and medical thinker Margaret Cavendish (1623-73), even as she absorbed and kept abreast of the most current debates of her time, challenged and re-imagined them in ways that presage contemporary approaches to the planetary. Her philosophical and fictional works reveal her knowledge of Robert Boyle’s experiments with air pumps, Robert Hooke’s microscopic innovations, and William Harvey’s discovery of the circulation of blood. She refers to Ancient philosophers Pythagorus, Plato, Epicurus, and Aristotle, as well as modern ones such as René Descartes and Thomas Hobbes. While she admires the views of these illustrious men, she describes them as variously puzzling, troubling, blinding, dizzying, and headache-inducing. She offers, as Aaron Hanlon argues, a challenge to anthropocentric orthodoxies, and, as Sara H. Mendelson and others have noted, a vitalist materialist philosophy, one in which the natural world and all of its components are at once material, active, and not wholly knowable. As she unsettles reason, decenters the human, refigures the dominance of the male subject, and imagines new worlds, her thinking might also be understood in the context of the planetary. For her, medical, scientific, and social phenomena are not explicable through empirical, experimental, or rational means, but rather through the consideration of elusive forces such as “the Influence of some Raging Planet.” Her descriptions are eccentric and often disorganized, but they capture the complex connections between the animal, human, and natural worlds, and thus embrace an epistemology of creative uncertainty – one in which, as she writes, “Nature’s works are so various and wonderful, that no particular creature is able to trace her ways.”

PANEL 7: Queer Planetary, Feminist Perspectives, Gendered Bodies

Moderators: Dominico Beneventi and William Brubacher – Room C-1017-13

The Quantum Poetic Entanglement of Clouds - Lucien Darjeun Meadows

Every body becomes increasingly porous when we try to trace them back to a discrete source. For, if we tried to say where this stratus cloud begins, or where their borders are, we fall into a nonlinear queer tangle. Perhaps this cloud formed when this air slowly makes contact with that body of cooler air, and as this air gently folds over that air, the smooth low body of this stratus becomes visible. But becoming visible is not necessarily synonymous with beginning. We are all porous mesh. In quantum physics, bodies—and poetry—become a porous ecological mesh through which body and body, or body and language, entangle. Queer ecology and quantum physics, alike, show how phenomena like clouds are always in relationship and always in embodied entanglements. Clouds—and poetry of clouds—make this phenomenon visible. To discuss this quantum poetic entanglement, I will discuss short lyric cloud poems from the nineteenth century and draw upon scholarship in queer ecology, material ecocriticism, and quantum physics. Invoking clouds in poetry gave nineteenth-century writers a means to language the entanglement of human-environmental life and relationships. The necessity of witnessing the brilliance of our entangled relations increases now, with each extinction and environmental catastrophe. In this presentation, I acknowledge our porous identity, our connection with—and to, and as—each other, and all our planetary relatives with whom we are deeply, queerly, always entangled.

(Inter)planetary Response-ability and Care: The Future of Aesthetic Designs through Ecological and Feminist Thinking - Georgia Perkins

Planetary drifts entail a shift in the specific terrestrial grounds of multispecies enquiries as it traces its movement from this planet to the next. Designing interplanetary and terraforming vehicles that are carried within and beyond the currents of late capitalism, has produced a space for speculative thinking in imagining the world otherwise, but also unearthed the imposing threat of space colonization. In the recent surge of ‘globalisers’ such as Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk employing large monetary value into the field of space exploration, this comes at the expense of earthly existence, which is at the brink of environmental disaster (Bruno Latour). This paper investigates how contemporary art practices might offer radical alternatives to current and future designs of (inter)planetary spacecrafts and systems by attending to matters of ‘response-ability,’ care and justice in earthly matters as well as the cosmos through ecological thinking and queer and feminist theory. In the collective proposal for an ‘Interplanetary Species Society Assembly’ (2019) and artist Suzanne Treister’s work *SURVIVOR (F)/ Interplanetary Sex Station* (2016-18), both examples offer critical readings of the space in-between planets of the cosmos which include infrastructures informed by multispecies and extra-terrestrial cooperation and alliance, as well as illustrating alternative spacecrafts to satellite control. This paper examines the aesthetic designs on planetary drifts into the cosmos.

Analyse intersectionnelle des luttes féministes en Acadie – Audrey Gagnon

La théorie féministe post-humaine de Rosi Braidotti représente un modèle méthodologique idéal pour concilier les enjeux globaux et locaux des mouvements sociaux présents en Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick. Cette province coloniale, loyaliste (Denault), hypercapitaliste, est corrompue par le règne oligarchique de la famille Irving, dont l'emprise y est source de crise environnementale et médiatique. Malgré de grands mouvements progressistes, l'Acadie reste une société patriarcale. La montée de l'extrême droite dans la province (Trofimuk et al) rend difficile la reconnaissance de l'oppression des femmes, des minorités de genres et des premières nations, ainsi que celle de la violence courante à laquelle elles sont subjuguées (Conseil des femmes du Nouveau-Brunswick). L'énorme potentiel interdisciplinaire et créatif de la théorie féministe post-humaine connecterait et visibiliserait les luttes féministes qui ne reçoivent pas l'attention et la crédibilité qu'elles méritent sur la place publique. Considérant que l'avancement de la société acadienne dépend d'une valorisation du travail des femmes sur la scène politique, économique et universitaire et d'une accélération de la production des savoirs féministes, j'explorerai comment l'application des théories posthumaines de Braidotti, particulièrement à l'intersection de la production/critique académique/littéraire et des mouvements sociaux, optimiserait l'avancement du mouvement féministe au Nouveau-Brunswick. Cette approche permettra de reconceptualiser l'existence acadienne en milieu minoritaire de manière intersectionnelle (Bradshaw) et positive.