

Panel 12: Thinking through the Ocean: Water, Islands, and Arctic Politics

Zoom/Room C-3061

Christopher McAteer

The liminal ocean: how melting sea ice affects the politics of time and space in the Arctic

Recent climate studies have confirmed that the northern-most region of the planet is warming at three times the global average. The IPCC believes the Arctic Ocean will experience ice-free summers by 2050. More blue space (open water) and less white (solid ice) means weaker solar reflection and an escalating feedback loop of global heating. Meanwhile, the past decades have seen a growth in state tensions and militarisation over sovereignty, security, and transport in the region. At the same time, Indigenous peoples of the North have been increasing their representation through international institutions and demanding greater sovereignty to adapt to climate change with Indigenous solutions.

Jeffner Allen

If words could be reef, Diving Planetarity

Seeping into, filtering, imagination and reflection, the skillful and imperfect navigations of unwieldy flows by the coral reefs and their inhabitants of land and sea sustain contemporary worlds. Were we to take the risk of diving the reefs' sensual, conceptual contours, might territorial frames of understanding give way, deserts become archipelagos of islands swept by oceans?

The practice of thinking water from water while suspended in the churning, disruptions, and stillness of the currents of eastern Sulawesi, amid the most voluminous through flow of water on the planet, occasions a perturbation of the mindscapes that conjoin human and marine dimensions. Amazingly, the currents' circumnavigation of the islands, and underwater trenches, channels, and ridges, which form Indonesia consumes so much energy that it slows the spinning of the globe.

An entangled net of proverbs will guide us in a planetary diving of earth, sky, and the oceans, inseparable from the myriad relations that inhabit the reefs. Such diving refigures bodies and organs of perception, yielding to a porous imagination, more receptive, permeable, breathing, incessantly filtering inflows of events affecting land and sea. Worn by the currents that prompt these songful reflections, conversations reverberate or become silent in a reef of tongues.

Emanuela Ferragamo

Land and Sea and Garden. Rethinking Carl Schmitt's symbolic geography in the Anthropocene

In 1942, Carl Schmitt wrote *World Historical Meditation "Land and Sea" (Land und Meer)*. As the title suggests, the aim was to explain the European past through its symbolic

relation to maritime and land geography. The work hybridises political, anthropogeographical and eschatological thoughts and anticipates the contemporary *planetary revolution of space*, when mankind is lured into exploring universe, as it once was to leave on open seas.

As the philosopher Caffo said, such a drift resulted in a “speciation in progress” that provided the post-human with both adequate competences for their relation to the *umwelt* and a new definition of habitat (2017:60). Post-human inhabits spaces which otherwise would be unattended: urban outskirts, post-nuclear zones, “third landscapes” (2017:73). Instead of thinking in Schmitt’s geographical terms, Caffo encourages an aesthetics of peripheries, a reservoir for semiotic changes and unpredictability (Lotman 2002:123).

In the context of the studies on landscape and of the postmodern philosophy of nature (D’Angelo 2000, Seel 1991), the paper aims to reflect upon Schmitt’s work through the debate on the philosophical meaning of gardening for post-human. Once a metaphor for the theological foundation of the Law (Agamben, *Il regno e il giardino*, 2019), the garden offers after Clément’s “planetary garden” the place for a post-human anthropogeography.

Panel 13: Planetary Affects: Narratives of Loss and Concern

Zoom/Room C-1017-11

Eftihia Mihelakis

The Medical Desert as a Space for Research-Creation

Cette communication s’inspire des travaux de d’Ann Cvetkovich (2012) sur la dépression comme espace émotif public à partir duquel l’on peut tenter de comprendre les dynamiques émotionnelles de la vie contemporaine au sein des structures politiques et de pouvoir dont elles émergent. Ce projet cherche à explorer les formes autant théoriques que créatives de ces dynamiques émotives dans le contexte géographique spécifique des prairies canadiennes où je vis depuis les six dernières années et dont le vaste territoire qui dépasse trois provinces est considéré comme un désert médical. Dans ce contexte quels genres de récits intellectuels, émotifs, sociaux, géographiques peuvent prendre forme surtout si le désert appelle “l’indescriptible” (N. Brossard, 1987) tout en ouvrant sur l’étendue d’une possible “responsabilité [qui] croît” (T. Samoyault, 2013)? C’est à ces questions et dans une optique ouvertement auto-théorique que je voudrais explorer des manières d’écrire sur la dépression qui s’éloignent des conceptualisations médicales vers un modèle de dépression en tant que phénomène culturel et politique du désert, un mode de désillusion et de mécontentement qui reflète, et est produit par, la forme et les textures de la vie rurale pour une personne de deuxième génération qui vit en français et en situation minoritaire.

Sudebi Giri

Planetary Drift, Home and Mourning in Concern Narratives of Multispecies Entanglements

Building on theoretical churnings around methodologies of ‘posthuman mourning’, ‘eco-translation’, ‘new anthropomorphism’, ‘geoontological agency’ and ‘transgeographic’ articulations of home from extinction and displacement discourses, this paper explores the aesthetic dissemination of concern narratives to convey planetary drifts and

biographies of loss. It suggests how subjects of absence, alienation, disappearance, bio-compositional alteration and extractive vandalism help document planetary drift in creative modes of voicing and imagining the death and dying of multispecies lives from the home terrains of ocean, island, forest, city and village. Concern narratives communicate the mourning of death in/of homes by re-memorizing episodes from natural history, in keeping receding biophonic and geophonic sources as witnesses of deathly erasures, and, in evoking the shrinking morphology of lives and spaces through the stress language of nurturance, lounging, and severance of familial/ interspecies bonds. To demonstrate this, the paper studies songs, poems and creative non-fiction from the burgeoning archive of concern narratives — J' Ralph & Anthoni's "Manta Ray", Aditi Veena's "Eulogy for a Sparrow", Jayanta Mahapatra's "I am Today", Nityananda Swain's "Calvaria Crying" and Shankarshana Parida's "Dhenki Song"— that displace the confines of the global (U.S), national (India) and local (Odisha) and queer prevalent thanatological constraints on subjects/objects of mourning by signifying nonhuman lives and life hosting entities as direct, eligible and timely protagonists for literalizing loss in multispecies and planetary terms. As exemplars experimenting with ideas of planetary drift by tracing adverse changes to lives and homes, the paper argues that these concern narratives evoke rifts in planetary census and health by making entanglement as key to mourning work. This is made evident (i) where weaving stories preoccupying the death of one species generates a transposed narrative to speak on the death of close and distantly related species; (ii) and where modulating of mourning, grief and guilt happens through exhibiting complexes in comprehending losses. Represented in deliberate aesthetic choices, entanglement relays variously: (a) in the overt referencing of friction and knottiness in genre conceptions like the psycho-creative lapses in fleshing out a poem for loss articulation of different biomic commons, (b) in working with endangered genres of expressions such as rice-threshing folk songs and bird songs to lament the pacing shift in village and city ecologies under industrial displacements, (c) and, in using translation as a meta-generic-meta-disciplinary format of sticky relationality encompassing multi-referential sources and reflexive residues for invoking planetary rememory, as dealt in works that recall extinct species like the dodo and the kua'i'ō'ō to communicate the unquantifiable loss of deep ocean and island ecology. The paper concludes that the three critically interlinked parameters of lives, homes and entanglement as registered through different aesthetic prisms, and more particularly in concern narratives of mourning, offer a sensible way to understand the nature of planetary drift and multispecies entanglements.

Laura Ilea

ORLAN - Hybridization and the Abolition of Death

Ce que les artistes nous enseignent, c'est qu'il faut prendre leurs mots au sérieux. Dans son exposition, déroulée à Cluj-Napoca entre le 7 octobre et le 17 novembre 2021, intitulée *Les films de Sainte-ORLAN*, au centre d'art contemporain *Centrul de Interes*, l'artiste française ORLAN a exposé des affiches, des bandes sonores et des personnages de la réalité augmentée – tout cela pour des films qui n'existent pas. L'artiste est devenue célèbre dans les années '90 pour ses chirurgies esthétiques transmises en direct dans plusieurs galeries d'art partout dans le monde, pendant lesquelles elle lisait, sous anesthésie, des textes écrits

par Artaud, Kristeva et Bataille. Elle a également créé des hybridations avec des figures amérindiennes de guerriers, de sorciers, ainsi que des hybridations euro-africaines, dans lesquelles elle renégocie les axiomes de la beauté ; elle questionne également les deux réalités non questionnables, la souffrance et la mort (une de ses vidéos s'appelle « Pétition contre la mort »). Par ses hybridations, au-delà de remettre en question uniquement notre condition biologique et ses limites, ainsi que ses idéaux esthétiques, elle questionne également les données inhérentes à celle-ci : vie-mort, souffrance et optionalité de la souffrance. Anesthésie et hybridation semblent être les mots-clés pour un corps planétaire transfiguré qui échappe à la pesanteur de la condition humaine (Kristeva, Bataille, Artaud), telle que nous la connaissons maintenant. Quel est l'avenir du corps ? Un accouchement de soi-même, un cadavre autopsié, qui refait le mythe religieux de la résurrection des corps dans une hagiographie profane.

Panel 14: Inhabiting the Planet: (Im)Mobility, Borders, and Displacement

Zoom/Room C-1017-13

Namra Sultan

Planetary Transformations, Storytelling, and the Representation of Refugees in Joe Sacco's *Palestine*

Amidst the multiple ways in which the planet can be conceptualised and planetary transformation understood, I engage with the creation of refugees and the representation of refugees in literature to decipher planetary transformation.

We live in “the postmodern age of the image” (Sontag) and I argue that the visual mode of representation opens possibilities for creative expression unique to our current historical moment. Graphic narratives, which are a global phenomenon, can then be read as new regimes of representation that embody this planetary shift and can also be used as tools to engage with this phenomenon. I will read Joe Sacco's *Palestine* as a text that, in its unique form of storytelling, embodies the formal urges of our times. Sacco uses the visual mode of representation to depict a prevalent social reality of our time-the refugee crisis. Zygmunt Bauman calls refugees the “by-products of globalisation” (*Wasted Lives*) but refugees, in turn, also affect planetary transformations. *Palestine* depicts the refugee crisis as it has reconfigured ways in which the earth is inhabited and this shared habitability is configured at the realm of visual representation, at a planetary scale, transcending boundaries of socio-political realities. In talking at the planetary scale, how do we measure/assess habitability? Is this habitability shared equally at a planetary level or do global geopolitics intervene? How far does *Palestine*, as a mode of representation of planetary transformations, go in unearthing the politics of this phenomenon?

Asma Mestiri

Smuggled Subjectivities, Spaces of Commonality and Planetary Constellations in *Boat People* and *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*

Planetary “drifts” have affected the conception of agency, vulnerability and their respective modes of representation in manifold ways. As an ethical project, planetary studies are based on “an ethic of nonviolence” against living ecosystems including humans (Butler). In this context, planetary studies emerge as “a new structure of awareness” (Amy J. Elias and Christian Moraru), a performance of “alterity” and “relationality” (Spivak), and/ or a turn from “humanocentric” agential constructions to a more complex form of belonging to a single planet (Chakrabarty). In this paper, I will propose the human smuggling journey as a Bakhtinian chronotype that informs and is informed by planetary modes of “being”. In this sense, smuggling narratives will be studied through models of planetary subjectivity, environmental futurity, resilience/ resistance policies, and metamorphosed politics of care. To this effect, I will scrutinize *Boat People: Personal Stories from the Vietnamese Exodus (1975-1996)* by Carina Hoang and *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* by Christy Lefteri. In these methodologically different narratives, smuggled subjects are depicted as planetary “accidents” that are caught in an in-between space, where they struggle to survive the environmental and geopolitical risks of a despicable journey. As they drift away from their home countries, they instigate alien forms of identity politics— constellations that decentralize humanity and the planet all at once.

Safa Kouki

“The Camp Owns the Archive, not God”: Refugee Camp Literature as an Alternative Planetary Archive.

In *Writing the Camp* (2021), Yousif M. Qasmiyeh follows the refugee camp dwellers in their dizzying attempts to collectively assembling an alternative literary archive that accounts for their out of sync temporalities and uncoordinated spatial references. This timely poem collection traces the refugee camp dwellers transformation from the political process of becoming-refugee (Nyers, 2006) to the chronophageous stage of becoming-dead (Tazzioli and Stierl, 2021). Starting from the presupposition that refugees are “dialectical beings,” Qasmiyeh sets out to question core notions such as “time,” “space” and how they may collapse into each other leaving us with a cosmic debris that only the camp can make sense of.

Panel 15: Graduate Student Panel

Zoom/Room C-3061

Sonakshi Srivastava

Arbo(Real) Entanglements, and Mutations in *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*

“even when they are nonliving, or rather inorganic, things have a lived experience because they are perceptions and affections” (Deleuze and Guattari).

In Kiran Desai’s *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, a young Sampath seeks solace from the clamour of incomprehensible existence in a guava orchard – a rather incidental incident after failing to make a mark in the commercial and

familial world. Pre-destined to be ‘different’ (his mother Kulfi has rather uncommon cravings during pregnancy – almost bordering on the absurd), his retreat into the guava orchard – his arboreal kingdom inaugurates a series of adventurous events for the entire town of Shahkot.

This hinging on the arboreal imagery seems to convey a sense of assurance to his being, his existence - and this idea forms the crux of this paper.

Through a close reading of the text, I will attempt to unravel how the arboreal imaginations at work in and within the text function as the exponents of existential and personal navigation for the protagonist.

His metamorphosis into a guava affords one to speculate on the various taxonomies of affect in the text, and the aim of the paper is to offer a reconciliatory reading of the text with the arboreal imagination, thereby delineating and bringing to the fore the politics of existence, the politics of existing, the ecology of bio-healing, and the solidarity between (subalterned) humans and trees, the nature-culture division in the wake of the Anthropocene, and metamorphosis as a (possible) posthuman imagination.

Sebastian Egholm Lund

‘Every man can choose his own climate’: The Mechanics of Geoengineering in Jules Verne and Didier de Chousy

Questions of geoengineering have been widely discussed in recent years with scientists such as Erle Ellis claiming that technofixes will lead the way to a ‘Good Anthropocene’ while scholars such as Clive Hamilton highlight the catastrophic potential that climate engineering entail. However, there exists a lack of historical understanding of how symbolic forms in the past have imagined deliberate, anthropogenic alterations to the planet. My paper addresses this question by delving into two pieces of French science fiction: Didier de Chousy’s *Ignis* (1883) and Jules Verne’s *Sans dessus dessous* (1889). Specifically, I compare Chousy’s satire of The Central Fire Company’s desire to equalize the seasons with Verne’s critique of The Baltimore Gun Club’s attempt to melt the North Pole to show how both novels display climate engineering as the result of a mechanical worldview that sees planetary processes as reversible. I argue that both authors exhibit a scalar awareness in stressing the Earth not as a singular ahistorical object but as a multitemporal and multiform system. In conclusion, this paper, by examining the science fiction of Verne and Chousy, sheds light on the neglected issue of how recent discussions of climate engineering are based on past cultural and literary representations.

Rachel Hill

“With Terrifying, Surreal Speed:” Martian Dust in Science and Fiction.

The planet enshrouds itself in a global contemplation of dust. Far finer than Earth, this whirling regolith distracts its sole citizens: robotic rovers. Amidst the swarming surface these rovers freeze, hostages to infinitesimal titans demanding pause as their tribute. Above this costliness of robotic attention, the vision of satellites blur, temporarily spent.

Across science fiction, Martian dust is paradoxically configured as the foundation of world, and the force which crumbles worlds. The conversational epigraph to Philip K. Dick's Mars-based novel *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* begins "I mean, after all; you have to consider we're only made out of dust." Here dust is not only positioned as the elemental ingredient of "we," but we are also directed to ruminate upon dust: an attentiveness to the quotidian which is also a distraction from the everyday. Dust also saturates Kim Stanley Robinson's *Red Mars*. With strange and estranging vicissitudes, "dust flew by them with terrifying, surreal speed [...] so fast it was disorientating." Not only without but also a swirling admixture within, one character "could feel the dust flying wild in her blood." Various described as "corrosive," "explosive," and "masking," dust in *Red Mars* is an interface and distraction between subject, their world and the planet. Meanwhile, robotic rovers currently trundle through lurking Martian dunes, working until the suspensions of the next global dust-storm. Mars, as its endlessly drifting dusts problematise where ground, surface and self can be found, necessitates that we interrogate and challenge the norms delineating planetary boundaries. Robotic and speculative attempts to traverse this disorientation of dust pose a novel question: what would a Martian planetarity (building on Spivak's work) look like? How would this extraterrestrial mode of planetarity impact and modulate Earthly forms of planetarity? Yoking together material from science fiction and astronomical missions, this paper will interrogate the meditative distractions and enforced pauses of restless Martian dust.

Alisha Dukelow

***The Weather*'s Mixed Mood: A Critical Ecological Psychological View of Lisa Robertson's Affectively Hybrid Meteorological Poetics**

In an essay about *The Weather*, her 2001 collection of poems, Lisa Robertson explains that she was interested in détourning traditional English meteorological description: a purportedly "pure" "rhetoric of sincerity, falling in a soothing, familiar vernacular" ("A Report on Sincerity" 28-30). Inevitably, the textual canon of researched, reported, forecasted, and literary weather has — in its rhetorically soothing 'sincerity' — bled with the naturalized imperial-colonial-capitalist lexicon of ecological and emotional control, perpetuating what Christina Sharpe calls the "total climate" of White supremacy and environmental destruction (*In the Wake* 104). From a new materialist and queer standpoint, my paper will read the affective quality of Robertson's collection through the lens of mad studies and James J. Gibson's pathbreaking but under-appreciated ecological psychology. First, I will adapt Gibson's theory that a given environment offers perceivable and actionable "affordances" in order to elucidate how *The Weather*'s meteorological images scaffold its emotional details, thereby de-centring the human speaker and subject. Against pathetically fallacizing literary (and literary interpretive) methods, I will show that *The Weather*'s mental-meteorological relationality is not merely metaphorical, but is characteristically transsubjective, bidirectionally dynamic, and ontologically entangled. Secondly, taking inspiration from mad studies' mode of reclaiming (psycho)pathologized language, I will avow that Robertson's text has a 'mixed mood,' with 'positive' and/or reparative emotions held in unfolding tensions with 'negative' and/or critical ones. Ultimately, I will argue that *The Weather* upends

‘purifying’ binarizations of human and earth, optimistic and pessimistic affect, and past and future, urging what José Esteban Muñoz terms a “commons of the incommensurable” (*Race, Sex, and the Incommensurate*” 163) wherein we can sense the plurally material and emotional state of the earth’s continual drifts.

Keynote Panel II: Postcolonial Studies Plenary Zoom/Room C-3061

Elizabeth DeLoughrey

“Outer Spaces: Reimagining the ends of the Earth”

This paper examines the ways in which Antarctica is imagined as a signifier of climate change and an apocalyptic space representing a geographic but also temporal “end of the Earth.” It engages the currency of “outer spaces” such as the poles and their melting ice as vital to our visual understanding of climate change and as a cautionary tale and allegory for the Earth as a whole. It traces out a long history of representing Antarctica in terms of the sublime, the uncanny, and as wilderness, particularly in Aotearoa New Zealand arts and literature. It then places these narratives in relationship to Witi Ihimaera’s science fiction novella, *The Purity of Ice*, which images a post-apocalyptic future where the commodification of glaciers as a water source would seem to position them as “islands on sale.” This narrative of commodification is complicated however by the animacy of water which contests the capitalist boundaries between life and non-life.

Pallavi Rastogi

Flattening the Curse: Cooling down with Zadie Smith’s *Intimations*

Zadie Smith’s latest collection of non-fiction work, *Intimations*, walks her readers through the burning blaze of the pandemic with what I call “cooling down”. Both aesthetic and effect, cooling down is not new to Smith’s oeuvre. Indeed, its signature characteristics include a calm authorial voice, controlled pace of prose, a self-aware narrator, and an insistence on reflection appearing in all of Smith’s work, including novels such as *White Teeth* (2000) and *Swing Time* (2017) and non-fiction, such as *Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays* (2010) and *Feel Free* (2019). This essay examines narrative structure, affective appeal, and political commentary as the three cooling-down registers deployed in *Intimations*. Reading against the organizational grain of the collection, I cluster the essays out of sequence to emphasize an alternate juxtaposition that renders Smith’s intervention through form, affect, and/or politics most legible.