



Anticipatory Environmental (Hi)Stories: Narratives of Coming Nature(s) from Antiquity to the Anthropocene

organized by Christopher Schliephake and Evi Zemanek

This workshop examines the interplay of environmental perception and the way different societies throughout history have thought about the future state of 'nature', looking at how they have narrated and mediated this form of 'environmental imagination'. It has become a common strategy to conflate different time scales in environmental discourse. As Rob Nixon has recently argued, environmental activists, advocates, and artists use a form of "anticipatory memory" when warning about the effects of the ecological crisis, especially of climate change. Rather than merely projecting how things will turn out unless we change our environmental behavior, they often revert the perspective and look back on the present from an imagined point in the future. At this imagined juncture in time, the damage has already been done, resources have been depleted, biodiversity has dwindled, and wild spaces have turned into but dim memories. While these speculative environmental (hi)stories of the future have served as powerful narrative tools since at least the beginning of the environmental movement, it is less clear what kind of evidence or generic structure they are based on. Are environmental scenarios mere variations of "apocalyptic discourse" (L. Buell) or utopian fantasies, or are they scientifically informed? What role does environmental perception in the present play in imagining future nature(s)? In which way does environmental memory shape these imaginings? What are the historical precursors to this specific mode of environmental thinking? What kinds of knowledge systems were/are involved in outlining the future state of the world? Who were/are the main actors implicated in these projections, and what was/is their role in society? What kind of texts and narrative patterns were/are used to describe future environments? All these questions will be discussed in this workshop.

24 February 2022

10:30-10:50 Welcome

Panel 1: Ancient Imaginaries

- 10:50-11:10 A. Möller: Experience and Expectation: Hesiod on Labour, Justice, and Environment
- 11:10-11:30 R. Hutchins: The World Without Us: De Rerum Natura 2.1144-74
- 11:30-11:50 D. Janzen: Solastalgia, Future Memory, and Polluted Landscapes at Lucan's Pharsalus (De Bello Civili 7)
- 11:50-12:10 C. Petit: Ancient Geographies of Health: from Environmental Awareness to Imagining the Landscapes of Future Therapy
- 12:10-12:30 Wrap-Up
- 12:30-14:00 *Lunch Break*

Panel 2: Dialogues between Times and Places

- 14:20-14:40 J. Hettinger: The past is a foreign environment: ancient landscapes and modernist thinking
- 14:40-15:00 C. Pigott: Retrospective Prophecy in Contemporary Maya Literature
- 15:00-15:20 J. Bracker: Environmental futures in the UNESCO World Heritage Convention between dystopia and hope
- 15:20-15:30 Wrap-Up

Panel 3: Urbanity

- 16:00-16:20 H. Braunbeck: Utopia's User Interface and its Discontents: Geoengineering, Smart Cities, and Glass Life in Niklas Maak's Novel Technophilia
- 16:20-16:40 S. Middendorf: The Arcologies of Paolo Soleri – Unbuilt futures from the past
- 16:40-17:00 Wrap-Up

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Panel 4: Conservation and Economies

- 10:00-10:20 D. Barnes: Future Imperfect in Edmund Spenser's The Shepheardes Calender (1579)
- 10:20-10:40 S. Broomhall: Temporality, measurability and sustainability: Gendered participation in early modern French natural resource management
- 10:40-11:00 G. Dehler: William Temple Hornaday's Haunting Vision of a Wildlife Apocalypse
- 11:00-11:20 R. Woods: Anticipating Extinction: Mammoth Ivory and the Imagination in Late-Nineteenth-Century Britain
- 11:20-11:35 Wrap-Up
- 11:35-12:00 *Break*

Panel 5: Activism

- 12:00-12:20 J. Dunk: Ecological Knowledge and Double Death in the Coming Nuclear Winter
- 12:20-12:40 M. Egan: Covenant with the future: modern arks in catastrophic history
- 12:40-12:50 Wrap-Up
- 12:50-14:00 *Lunch Break*

Panel 6: The Climate(s) of Anticipated History

- 14:00-14:20 F. Schnicke: Nature in Order or Human Agency? Future Visions in Nineteenth Century European Climate Change Discourse
- 14:20-14:40 C. Wetjen: Debating Climate in the Anthropocene. The Mediazation of Climate Change-Knowledge at the End of the Nineteenth-Century
- 14:40-15:00 L. Della Fontana: Writing the end in the Anthropocene: Italian Climate-Fiction
- 15:00-15:20 Wrap-Up
- 15:20-15:50 *Coffee Break*

Panel 7: Narratives and Performance

- 15:50-16:10 L. Pfeifer: Life Beyond the Human: Imagining (Hi)Stories of Human Extinction
- 16:10-16:30 P. Sipahi: "The Universe is a Memory of Our Mistakes" – The Cyclicity of (Future) Histories in Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods*
- 16:30-16:50 M. Riedelsheimer/L. Vaziri: Ecology in a Loop – Cyclical History in Ella Hickson's *Oil*
- 16:50-17:00 Wrap-Up & END of Conference