

## First call for papers

# *Naturing Cultures/ Culturing Natures: Humans and the Environment in Cultural Practices*

Department of Anglophone Literature, Culture and Comparative Studies

Institute of Literary Studies, Nicolaus Copernicus University

22-23 September 2022

(Toruń/online)

*The word is made flesh in mortal naturecultures*  
(Donna Haraway, 2003)

*The climate crisis is also a crisis of culture, and thus of the imagination*  
(Amitav Ghosh, 2016)

The conference is dedicated to an investigation of the relations between humans and the environment and their representation in cultural texts and practices. Its title – *Naturing Cultures/ Culturing Natures* – refers to the concept of natureculture, developed by Donna Haraway, which stresses the inseparability of nature and culture and points to the various ways in which “[f]lesh and signifier, bodies and words, stories and worlds” are joined. The degree of dependence and connectedness between natures and cultures has been exposed recently in a series of crises with which the 21st century began, with the climate crisis being the most significant one. Responding to Amitav Ghosh’s claim that “the climate crisis is also a crisis of culture, and thus of the imagination” (2016: 9), this conference aims at exploring the various ways in which the awareness of this crisis has influenced contemporary cultural texts, starting from post-apocalyptic dystopias and ending with solarpunk utopias. We are interested in discussing experiments in art, media, and literature that offer new ways of looking at and thinking about the relationship between humans and the environment, both animate and inanimate; evolution of literary genres and development of new forms and modes of writing influenced by ecocriticism; and the role of new media in ecological discourses and practices. We want to focus on new ways of thinking and creating that move beyond the anthropocentric perspective, such as posthumanism, new materialism, material feminism, or object-oriented ontology. We would also like to consider complex affective responses to environmental crises, such as eco-anxiety, trauma and grief, solastalgia and eritalgia, and their representations in recent literature, film and art. In addition to these questions, we wish to reflect on how the coronavirus pandemic has impacted environmental awareness and climate anxiety and what new visions and scenarios emerged from this experience. The main aim of the conference is to create space for scholars coming from various disciplines to discuss contemporary cultural practices and critical and philosophical responses to the threats posed by human activity in the Anthropocene.

**Suggested themes** include but are not limited to:

- Climate fiction: genres, criticism;
- Anthropocene fictions;
- From post-apocalyptic dystopias to solarpunk utopias;
- New materialisms; object-oriented ontology;
- Posthumanism; the human and the non-human;
- Semiotic materiality; narrativity, creativity, and matter; counter-narrations
- Ecofeminism, feminist materialism;
- Deep ecology;
- Zoocriticism/animal studies;
- Environmental ethics: ecocentric and partnership ethics, post-anthropocentric ethics;
- Climate change and the environment in visual arts;
- The Urbanocene, urban ecology, guerilla gardening, eco-hooligans;
- Land art, site-specific art, eco-specific art, environmental art;
- Soundscape/acoustic ecology;
- Loss, mourning and ecological grief; eco-anxiety, solastalgia, eritalgia;
- Sustainability; eco-ability;
- Postcolonial ecocriticism; ecocriticism and indigenous studies;
- Critique of Enlightenment narratives of progress and science; degrowth;
- The COVID-19 pandemic and the environmental crisis.

Our keynote speakers:

**Prof. dr hab. Ewa Bińczyk** (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń)

**Prof. Stef Craps** (Ghent University)

Decisions concerning the format of the conference (online or hybrid) will be made closer to the conference date, depending on the current epidemiological situation.

**Abstracts of 150-200 words**, containing the title of the presentation and the author's name and affiliation, accompanied by a short biographical note, should be sent to the following address: [naturingcultures@gmail.com](mailto:naturingcultures@gmail.com).

Abstracts submission deadline: 15 June 2022

Notification of acceptance: 1 July 2022

Conference fee: 100 EUR (onsite); 50 EUR (online)

For more information, see the conference website:

<https://naturingculturesconference.wordpress.com/>

### **Organising committee**

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