Working Environments, Unruly Natures

Sixth Annual Conference of the World-Ecology Research Network, Bonn, July 28-30, 2020

In the unfolding climate crisis, two questions loom large in the search for planetary justice: What is a radical politics of work in an era of climate crisis? What is a radical politics of nature in an era of disposable workers and precarious work?

Through Working Environments, Unruly Natures, the 2020 meeting of the World-Ecology Research Network speaks to the work/life nexus of planetary justice. Highlighted by recent calls for a Green New Deal and Degrowth, we will explore the intimately connected – and profoundly global – dimensions of work, workers, and life across the long history of the capitalist world-ecology. Recognizing the dialectic of productive and reproductive work as the pivot of modern environment-making and class formation, we invite paper and session proposals that unpack the connective relations between work, working bodies, and working environments – past, present, and future. We especially welcome proposals that situate capitalism’s mobilization of paid and unpaid work in their racialized, gendered, colonial, and multi-species moments. This includes the deep history of labor politics, working class protest, and social revolution in their connections with world-ecological crises and capitalist restructuring. Identifying the strategic relations between neoliberal dispossession, proliferating climate disasters, and widening inequality, Working Environments, Unruly Natures pursues new syntheses, narratives, and conceptualizations of twenty-first century crisis that can inform the emergent politics of planetary justice.

We welcome paper and session proposals that engage a broadly-conceived world-ecology conversation on the conference theme. We will also consider papers that explore other dimensions of the capitalist world-ecology in which work, work/energy, and labor are not central analytics.

Key themes might include, but are not limited to:

- Crises of care and social reproduction
- Borders, migration, and climate change
- Racialized labor and capitalist agriculture
- Labor unrest and the rise of China
- Planetary urbanization and remaking of work environments
• Work, workers, and the biotariat
• Surplus humanity and 'disposable workers'
• Ecologies of platform capitalism and digital work
• Working the global farm: food justice, food sovereignty, and the climate crisis
• Production and reproduction in the environment-making state
• Green New Deals and labor politics
• Climates of dispossession: climate apartheid, climate patriarchy, and the climate class divide
• The factory and home as environmental history
• Ecological imperialism and making of global farm and factory
• Cli-fi and the climate-capital imaginary
• Sustainability and the problem of work
• Environment-making geocultures, from above and below
• Environmental histories of reserve armies of labor
• Working bodies, health, and the contradictions of capitalism
• Reproductive justice, worker justice, planetary justice

The World-Ecology Research Network is a global conversation of academics, activists, and artists committed to understanding human relations of power, production, and environment-making in the web of life. An evolving conversation rather than a theory, the world-ecology approach is unified by a critique of Nature-Society dualisms, a world-historical interpretation of today's planetary crisis, and an emphasis on the porous and constituting relations of race, class, and gender in capitalism's environmental history.

We are happy to work with artists and activists to develop creative ways to present their work in ways that may differ from conventional academic presentations. As always, some of our keynote speakers will be drawn from accepted abstracts.

If you have any questions, please email worldecologyconferences@gmail.com.
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or our conference website https://worldecologyconferencesblog.wordpress.com/
Please join us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/worldecology/.
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Important Dates
Abstracts Due November 30 Submission form here.
Registration March 1-April 30
Program available June 30
Conference July 28-30