

Call for Papers: *Speculative Ecologies*, RGS-IBG 2025, Birmingham, UK

Session Type: Paper Session

Convenors: Sage Brice (Durham University) and Silvia Hassouna (Durham University)

In this session we seek to explore the politics and potential of speculative methods for critical geographies of climate change and environmental crisis, at a time of accelerating climatic, ecological and social destruction across multiple geographies. Global 'climate crisis' frameworks obscure both the local specificities of uneven environmental harms and the longer histories of displacement and environmental destruction through which Indigenous, Colonised, dispossessed and minoritised peoples have experienced global change (Noxolo, 2024; Sultana, 2022; Yusoff, 2018). Similarly, popular apocalyptic and dystopian representations of global destruction in the visual arts, media, literature and film often privilege specific groups while excluding, instrumentalising, or erasing Indigenous, Black, disabled, queer and trans voices from these climate futures (Clare, 2017).

The speculative elements within mainstream cultural production both reflect the urgency of contemporary anxieties about the future and present a move towards alternative futures and different climate imaginaries. However, dominant science fiction narratives tend to erase colonial, racial as well as other forms of violence from their (post-)apocalyptic worlds. In contrast, Indigenous, Afro-, queer/trans and disabled futurisms have centered these histories as fundamental to the speculative work of imagining alternate possible futures (Hartman, 2021; Hassouna, 2023). Similarly, recent geographical scholarship re-centres ecological dimensions of racialised and 'othered' lives under conditions of persistent erasure and injustice (Brice and McNulty, 2024). If the very possibility of speculating, thinking and imagining differently within the science fiction of climate futures risks becoming another terrain of white colonial appropriation, this session asks: what are the potentialities and limits of the speculative in relation to the production of climate imaginaries and climate justice? We welcome papers and creative interventions that engage with:

- Histories of the speculative within the geohumanities
- Methodological reflections on the uses or abuses of speculative and fabulatory methods
- Speculative elements within critical scholarship on the ecologies of difference
- Participatory uses of speculative methods
- Geographical engagements with science fiction in visual art, literature, and film
- Mainstream and counter-foundational climate imaginaries
- Non-normative temporal perspectives on climatic and environmental crisis

Abstracts of up to 250 words should be submitted to Silvia Hassouna (silvia.hassouna@durham.ac.uk) and Sage Brice (sage.brice@durham.ac.uk) by Friday the 21st of February 2025. With your abstract, please include your full name, institutional affiliation(s) and email address. Please also note in your submission if you would be attending the conference online or in-person - we anticipate an in-person session but are open to exploring alternative formats. If you have any questions about the session, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Works cited:

Brice, S. and McNulty, F. (2024) 'Viral ecologies: Resurgent nature, COVID-19 and the discourse of transgender contagion', *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, vol. 7, no. 6, pp. 2343–2364 [Online]. DOI: 10.1177/25148486241284176.

Clare, E. (2017) *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling with Cure*, Durham, Duke University Press Books.

Hartman, S. (2021) *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women and Queer Radicals*, London, Serpent's Tail.

Hassouna, S. (2024). Cultivating biodiverse futures at the (postcolonial) botanical garden. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 49(2), e12639.

Noxolo, P. (n.d.) 'Quantum Black creative geographies: embodiment, coherence and transcendence in a time of climate crisis†', *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*. DOI: 10.1111/sjtg.12531.

Sultana, F. (2022) 'Critical climate justice', *The Geographical Journal*, vol. 188, no. 1, pp. 118–124.

Yusoff, K. (2018) *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, University of Minnesota.