



Trans Ecologies Symposium 2023

Call for Submissions

Online Only

22-23 November 2023

Keynote Speaker: Cleo Wölfle Hazard

Organisers: Sage Brice (Durham University), Felix McNulty (Durham University)

Deadline: Paper, workshop, and 'expression of interest' submissions: Tuesday 29 August 2023

Trans-corporeality refers to the idea that our bodies are porous and perennially intermeshed with the nonhuman, meaning that we are never 'separate' from the environment in which we live and are always more-than-human.

(Parker, 2020)

Introducing Trans Ecologies

From Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) to Catriona Sandilands (2021), queer ecological thought has played a crucial if under-celebrated role in pushing critical researchers across the social sciences and humanities to examine the construction of particular bodies, orientations, and identities as 'natural' or 'unnatural', and to question the construction of 'nature' along the lines of normative hetero-reproductive logics and values (Byrd 2020). Building on the work of trans scholars such as Eva Hayward (2010), Myra Hird (2002), and Cleo Wölfle Hazard (2022), a trans-corporeal approach resists the subsumption of queer critiques of Nature into a logic of strict social constructionism, demanding a sustained commitment to working the discursive and the material together in all analyses and practices of power and meaning-making. What this observation marks is not a conceptual or political departure from the *queer* but a reminder that queer theory has always also been *trans*, and of what is at stake on the trans front lines of current anti-queer offensives.

This virtual symposium brings together scholars working under the broad umbrella of Trans Ecologies over two half-days, to give form and direction to this increasingly significant area of practice. The event aims not only to showcase current research at the forefront of this emerging field, but to hold space for collective critical reflection and forward thinking about the stakes and implications of trans ecologies for critical research across disciplines. We welcome submissions for papers, workshops, performances, and other interventions that can be delivered or facilitated online, from scholars working in geography, the social and environmental sciences, environmental humanities, and other relevant fields.

Beyond Trans as 'Proper Object'

In recent years, trans and queer scholarship has not been content to limit itself to investigating and documenting LGBTQ+ subjects and communities. Instead, this scholarship has challenged scholars in a range of disciplines to think critically about what queer and trans sensibilities and perspectives – along with a study of the social mechanisms that regulate and produce sex, gender, and sexuality – can teach us about broader societal questions regarding the nature of subjectivity and social structuration. In their dissolution of taxonomic and normative boundaries, trans ecologies provoke us to think the social as operating and moving through and across seemingly bounded bodies, identities, and categories. Recognising this permeability of individual lives requires what Braidotti (2019) has called an 'enlarged, distributed, and transversal concept of what a subject is and of how it deploys its relational capacities.'

Thus, while trans and queer ecologies include the study of trans and/or queer bodies in 'green' spaces (e.g. Gandy 2012; Ensor 2017), they also issue a broader call to consider ecology, identity, and corporeality always in close association. Indeed, critical biological and environmental scientists are increasingly engaging with trans and queer approaches to address questions of cross-boundary and other-than-human kinship and interdependence as well as to disrupt settler-colonial practices in environmental governance by centring values of justice, sovereignty, and dynamism (Liboiron 2021; Hazard 2022). This impetus arises out of a desire to build relationships across movements for social and ecological justice, including Indigenous, racialised, disabled, and abolitionist ecologies (Heynen 2018; Clare 2017). Trans ecologies are therefore focused on grounded considerations of method, fieldwork, and empirics.

This symposium seeks to bring together scholars working in a trans ecological mode in an expansive, facilitated conversation with the aim of cultivating, developing and refining a shared sense of priorities, possibilities, hopes, desires, and future directions.

Addendum: "Am I Trans Enough?"

While we have chosen to foreground the *trans* in articulating this call, 'trans' is here construed in the widest possible terms. We include nonbinary, gender non-conforming, questioning and queer perspectives that put ecology and identity into conversation, particularly where this bears on matters of gender. A queer project with a significant trans component (whether among research participants or in the conceptual framework deployed) or a queer project with a focus on gender is likely to find itself at home at this symposium. In short, if you feel you have reason to want to be involved in the conversation, you probably do! Feel free to get in touch if you are unsure.

Topics and themes welcomed in response to this call include, but are not limited to:

- Trans ecologies as method in sciences, social sciences, and humanities
- On-the-ground engagements with land/Land (Liboiron, 2021) and species
- Abolition ecologies
- Black, Indigenous and PoC perspectives on gender and nature/culture
- Posthumanist theories of subjectivity and subject-formation
- Trans ecological temporalities and landscape as archive
- Trans-gressions, trans-formations and trans-corporealities
- Critical ontologies and epistemologies of 'nature'
- Trans interventions in dominant environmental and life sciences
- Kinship, reciprocity, consent, and collective action
- More-than-human intimacies
- Normativity in ecological politics
- Trans strategies for imagining and cultivating freedom in the face of climate and environmental crises

Timeline:

Abstracts and EOIs:	29 August 2023
Confirmation of acceptance:	4 September 2023
Programme release:	20 October 2023
Registration:	15 November 2023
Symposium:	22-23 November 2023

Submission of abstracts and proposals

Abstracts, workshop proposals, and expressions of interest should be submitted by the **29th of August 2023** via email to Sage Brice (sage.brice@durham.ac.uk) and Felix McNulty (felix.f.mcNulty@durham.ac.uk), using 'Trans Ecologies Symposium 2023 Submission' in the subject line.

All abstracts should be 500 words maximum. Please provide the following information:

- **Expressions of interest:** We are interested to hear from scholars whose work we don't yet know. If you would like to contribute to a panel or open-format session please provide us with your name and a short bio, contact details, your research focus and interests, and the aspect of your work that you would be interested in sharing at the symposium. When reviewing expressions of interest, we will organise the programme around areas of shared interest and consequence to the broader theme of trans ecologies.
- **Conference papers:** Please provide the title and an abstract outlining the theoretical position, methodology, and data set (if relevant), and focus of the paper. Provide contact information and a short bio for the presenter(s).
- **Workshop proposals:** Please provide the title, contact information, and a short bio for the facilitator(s), and a description of the proposed workshop/activity, including duration and details of how it will be delivered in an online format, and with an overview of any resources and/or support that would be needed for delivery.
- **Performances and other interventions:** Please provide the title, contact information, and a short bio for the person(s) delivering the performance or intervention, and a description of the proposed performance or intervention, including duration and details of how it will be delivered in an online format and with an overview of any resources and/or support that would be needed for delivery.

This Symposium will be hosted online by the Department of Geography at Durham University.

Works cited:

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- Hazard, C. W. (2022) *Underflows: Queer Trans Ecologies and River Justice*, Seattle, University of Washington Press.
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- Liboiron, M. (2021) *Pollution is Colonialism*, Durham, Duke University Press.
- Parker, E. (2020) 'The bog is in me', in Vakoch, D. A. (ed), *Transecology: Transgender Perspectives on Environment and Nature*, Routledge, pp. 17–30.
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- Sandilands, C. (2021) 'Plant/s Matter', *Women's Studies*, vol. 50, no. 8, pp. 776–783. <https://10.1080/00497878.2021.1983433>.