

CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture
CFP Special Issue

Periodizing the Present: The 2020s, the *Longue Durée*, & Contemporary Culture

The current moment is one of renewed calls for social justice in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement, the uneven impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, a global inability to combat climate change, increasingly repressive border regimes, the risk of authoritarianism and far-right populism, alongside the deepening of higher education debt, and the diminishment of reproductive capacity (affordable housing and education, access to healthcare, and the environment) for future generations. However, analyses that focus on the immediacy or specificity of these crises often omit their structural and historical preconditions in the capitalist world-system, and the wider context of seemingly unending accumulation and its intensification of inequality, resource exhaustion, and ecological toxification.

This special issue takes as a starting point the idea that the 2020s are a useful position from which to theorize current global socio-political turmoil, environmental crises, and epidemiological fissures through an analysis of (in Raymond Williams' lexicon), emerging, dominant, and residual cultural forms. A transnational and comparative approach testifies to renewed political energy at multiple sites of struggle. These include anti-authoritarian protests in Hong Kong; resistance to police repression in France, Nigeria, and the United States; the transnational movement for Black lives and creative responses by the Black diaspora in North America, the Caribbean, Europe, and Africa; decolonising the university protests in South Africa and the UK; the battle for reproductive rights in India, Europe, and Argentina; for queer and trans rights globally; violence against environmental activists and indigenous protestors in Central America, South East Asia, and Canada; and planetary climate justice protests.

Recent research in materialist cultural studies deploy comparative and transnational approaches, paired with conceptual *longue durée* analyses of how the problems of the present are bound up with intersecting economic crises. In this spirit, the

proposed issue will highlight Marxist perspectives, queer and feminist materialisms, social reproduction theory, and eco-materialist, world-ecological and/or world-systemic perspectives (see Lazarus 2011; Beckman 2012; Brouillette, Nilges and Sauri eds 2017; Deckard and Shapiro 2019). In particular such work emphasises the productive tension between periodic and/or periodizing frameworks. While it is important to capture emerging cultural forms, apparent novelty must nonetheless be situated within older trends e.g. recurring capitalist crises of overaccumulation, the colonial and recent exhaustion of commodity frontiers, and the historical adaptation of coercive technologies of surveillance and labour reorganisation.

This special issue builds on this work in seeking to theorise the current moment via analyses of new and/or reactivated genres and cultural forms such as black horror, Afrofuturism, speculative realism, instagram or short poetry, speculative short stories, climate change fiction, crossover Young Adult fictions, graphic novels, apocalyptic fiction and film, pandemic narratives, political cinema, essay films, immersive performance, digital photography, and new media; and in work that seeks to foreground marginalised subjectivities and experiences via resistive expressions of sexuality, gender, race, and/or class. Of interest is how these cultural forms deploy transhistorical and structural imaginaries, alongside culture's imaginative capacity to limn more socially just, emancipatory, and/ or utopian futures and alternatives to capitalism.

We invite original contributions in response to this theme with abstracts of 250 words, a 100 word bionote, and 5 keywords due by February 28th; and full articles of 5000-6000 words, or critical reviews of 3000 words, due by September 1st 2021.

Contributors are invited to address older cultural forms or readings that are newly relevant, or to focus on emerging artistic forms, including any cultural forms or discourses, such as novels, poetry, prose, film, and performance or visual art. Transnational and transhistorical approaches are strongly encouraged.

Please contact special issue editors Dr Treasa De Loughry [treasa.deloughry@ucd.ie] and Dr Brittany Murray [bmurral3@utk.edu] with abstracts and/ or questions.