

Conference CFP

**We particularly encourage and welcome applications by BAME people and other groups that are underrepresented in academia, especially Black women scholars.**

## **CFP | Rethinking the Ecological Imaginary: Decolonial Ecologies and Black Feminism**

**IASH, The University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK**

**30-31 May, 2024**

**Deadline: February 14, 2024**

Building upon Sylvia Wynter's work, in her pathbreaking study of Black feminist geographies, *Demonic Grounds* (2006), Katherine McKittrick has traced how "Black women's geographies (such as their knowledges, negotiations, and experiences)" interact with "geographies of domination (such as transatlantic slavery and racial-sexual displacement)." (x) Emphasizing the "alterability of space and place" and critically interrogating the ways in which geographies are socially produced, she notes how even the slave ship is "not stable and unchanging." (xii) While "ideologically enclosing Black subjects," at the same time the ship generates "an oppositional geography: the ship as a location of Black subjectivity and human terror, Black resistance, and [...] Black possession." (xi-xiii) If, as McKittrick contends, "more humanly workable geographies can be and are imagined," (xiii) how can we engage with Black women's insurgent space-making praxes to envision "more humanly workable" modes of being and inhabiting those geographies?

Creatively meditating on Wynter's work, 'Black feminist love evangelist' Alexis Pauline Gumbs in her ground-breaking poetry collection, *Dub: Finding Ceremony* (2020), engages in an insurgent praxis of place making that unsettles dominant modes of relation to the (human and non-human) environment. Camille T. Dungy in her memoir *Soil* (2023) performs a maternal writing-cum-gardening that rewrites both the land and the self through a relational and communal praxis of being and being in space. In conversation with the ground-breaking works of Black feminist and decolonial scholars such as Alexis Pauline Gumbs, Camille T. Dungy, Katherine McKittrick, and Sylvia Wynter, among others, this interdisciplinary conference intends to probe epistemological questions around the insurgent decolonial spatial praxes theorized and performed by Black feminist writings. What sort of 'imaginary leaps' can these make possible? How can their creative works inform current discussions around climate

crisis and environmental justice? What would it mean to reimagine more sustainable and equitable futures through Black women's writing? In other words, how can we think and write *with* these Black feminist writers rather than about them?

With this in mind, we welcome academic and/or creative contributions on topics related but not limited to:

- interdisciplinary, innovative, and decolonial approaches to nature writing;
- Black feminist insurgent praxes of subject and terra-forming;
- Black feminist cartographies and their rewritings of space and being;
- Black feminism and its theorization of Black ecologies;
- Black feminist rewritings of the ecological archive;
- the role of Black diasporic literatures in rethinking dominant ecological imaginaries;
- modes of resistance to colonialist ecologies;
- the ways in which racial, gender, and environmental violence remain entwined;
- the relation between the human and non-human environments in Black writing;
- how to build more sustainable and equitable futures via an engagement with Black and decolonial studies;
- how Black and decolonial studies can inform approaches to environmental issues.

Scholars at all levels as well as creative practitioners and activists are welcome. Refreshments, coffee/tea, and lunch will be provided. There will be no registration fee.

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If you are interested in contributing, please send an email to [v1mcesch@exseed.ed.ac.uk](mailto:v1mcesch@exseed.ed.ac.uk) by February 14, 2024, including:

- a 300-word abstract for your paper/presentation/performance/creative contribution;
- a 150-word biography;
- contact information;
- whether you wish to participate in person or online.

Supported by the Susan Manning Workshop Fund from the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the University of Edinburgh.

**References:**

- Dungy, Camille T. *Soil. The Story of A Black Mother's Garden*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2023.
- Gumbs, Alexis Pauline. *Dub: Finding Ceremony*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020.
- McKittrick, Katherine. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- Wynter, Sylvia. "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, after Man, Its Overrepresentation—an Argument." *CR (East Lansing, Mich.)* 3.3 (2003): 257-337.