

Imaginarities of the Future City: Envisioning Climate Change through Contemporary Narratives

Call for proposals – International workshop 25-26 June 2020 in Utrecht, The Netherlands and a subsequent special issue on *Narratives & Climate Change*

Narratives & Climate Change

Within the current debate on the societal consequences of climate change, environmental scientists, cultural scholars and artists from different scientific disciplines stress the importance of producing compelling narratives and scenarios to envision the safe city of the future. Especially *speculative fiction* – the genre that explores possible futures – is considered a powerful tool that plays an important, integrating role in imagining and engaging with the implications of climate change.

Not only do narratives offer a great opportunity to engage readers on a personal level with the complexities of climate change, they also play a productive role in policy making practices as well as in mediating calculated, data-driven climate scenarios.

Connected by the productive power of speculative fiction and narratives, this workshop brings together some 20-25 scholars from different fields of study, such as environmental sciences, psychology and literary studies in order to foster a better and more *integrated* analytical discussion on the role of narratives in envisioning the societal, psychological and cultural consequences of climate change.

We invite researchers from environmental sciences, psychology and literary studies working in multidisciplinary teams to present a draft paper in June and discuss theoretical, methodological or empirical standpoints on the specific nature, functioning or effect of climate change narratives. Both existing multi-disciplinary teams are invited to participate, as well as individual scientists who are open to work in such a team. Based on research field and expertise, and research ideas, the aim of the organizing committee is to bring together individual participants in order to enhance multi-disciplinary research teams. The aim of the workshop in June is to publish the draft papers, subject to normal review procedure, as a special issue in a highly ranked scientific journal or edited book on ‘Narratives & Climate Change’.

Topical Themes

The workshop is open to a broad variety of interpretations of the relationship between narratives and climate change, but we strongly encourage submissions on the following themes:

- How to conceptualize of and empirically understand the role that narratives play in bringing the global scale of the climate crisis into the realm of the personal, and what narrative techniques (e.g., the use of metaphors, allusion or extrapolation) are used to grasp the complexity of the climate debate? How do these narrative techniques function within lived experiences of climate change? How do they influence daily routines and practices (for instance individual, household, company, community but also government decision making)? How do narratives co-produce reality and contribute to the public debate, to governance or vice versa to (environmental) science?
- Which narrative techniques can be discerned and which ones are used to grasp the complexity of the climate debate? How and why do either utopian or dystopian future scenarios manifest themselves within approaches from the different fields of study? How do both utopian and dystopian schemes relate to ‘eco-anxiety’ and the wish to go beyond eco-paralysis?

- Are narratives to be understood as means ('productive fictions') to encourage awareness and even foster behavioral change ('risk related affect', learning), and if so how can this be understood and what is empirically known about the way this affect is accomplished? Concomitantly, how do narratives co-produce reality and contribute to the public debate? What is the relation between fictional elements and non-fictional or realistic data in future scenario's?

Practicalities and submission deadlines

Interested participants (individually or already teamed up) are encouraged to submit 500 word proposals plus bibliography, accompanied by a short biography (max. 200 words) by January 31, 2020. Please send your proposal to FutureCities[a]ou.nl.

Participants will be notified of acceptance/rejection by February 28, 2020.

Those selected to contribute are expected to submit a *draft paper* by June 1, 2020 as these will be distributed to all workshop participants beforehand.

The *draft papers* will be intensively debated at the workshop and full papers should tentatively be submitted by November 2020.

Authors with questions are encouraged to contact FutureCities[a]ou.nl.

Organisation

Prof. Dr. Brigitte Adriaensen, Dr. ir. Raoul Beunen, Prof. Dr. Stefan Dekker, Dr. Marjolein van Herten (coordination), Dr. Andries Hof, Prof. Dr. Dave Huitema, Jilt Jorritsma MA, Prof. Dr. Lilian Lechner, Evelien van Nieuwenhoven MA (coordination), Prof. Dr. Paquita Perez Salgado, Dr. Marieke Winkler (coordination).

Website <https://www.ou.nl/the-safe-city-imaginaries-of-the-future-city>
