

Afterlives

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Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

April 24, 2020

Location:

New York, United States

Subject Fields:

Art, Art History & Visual Studies, Film and Film History, Humanities, Literature, Philosophy

**The Graduate Center at the City University of New York
Comparative Literature Conference
24 April 2020**

A F T E R L I V E S

Long after an era, movement, or idea is declared over, its paradigms, resonances, influences and values live on in our social fabric. Whether we continue to let them act on us or we react against them, their afterlives extend into the future, echoing across our theoretical markers for their endings. Strict periodization is fraught and the ways in which we read and reread histories often result in puzzling networks of relations between historical legacies and our own position as readers. The afterlives of histories and cultures are always, then, practices of reading *après-coup*.

Afterlives is an alternative to thinking in explicitly marked eras. Instead of rushing to add “post-” to theory, modernity, national identity, slavery, the Cold War, capitalism, and colonialism, we might see these in their afterlives as spectres continuing to haunt our discourse. Some of these are treated as if clinically dead, others not quite past/post-, but none of them fail to influence our imaginings of the future. How have these informed alternative futures, such as queer utopia or afrofuturism? How do we renegotiate or reactivate the afterlives of ideas in the material world? What, for instance, do we do with fascist architecture or confederate monuments? How do we reactivate long-forgotten films, books, photographs, notes, marginalia, so alive in their contemporary moment? And to what end? What happens to afterlives in an era of climate change and extinction, when the very promise of future resonance is irrevocably threatened if not doomed?

We are interested in how philosophers, theologians, writers, architects, artists, filmmakers, scientists and activists theorize in the wake of major social, political, historical, and climate events. Moreover, we want to explore how the aftermath of these events spark movements, discoveries, and creative struggles at the site of expression. It is our hope that considering afterlives will open up a discussion of the multiplicity of narratives, histories, and the crosscurrents of ideas that make up contemporary conversations in the field of comparative literature and adjacent disciplines. Thus, we are open to submissions across a wide variety

of academic fields.

Possible topics for papers and seminars include but are certainly not limited to:

- Works that negotiate the aftermath of historical and political crisis, and environmental catastrophe
- Critical race studies, diaspora studies, literatures of migration, postcolonial studies
- Memory studies, trauma studies, theories of mourning, loss and grief
- Monuments, museums, memorialization, archives, architecture
- Ecocriticism, ecomelancholia, the Anthropocene, climate change
- The afterlife of slavery and the postplantation
- The afterlives of social orders (feudalism, industrialization, real existing socialism)
- Textiles, print and material culture, ephemera, cultural artifacts, popular culture
- Translation studies and the circulation of world literary texts
- Alternative/speculative futures: queer futurities, afrofuturism, posthumanism, apocalypses
- Hauntology, ghosts, specters, genre studies, sci-fi, fantasy
- Film and screen studies and visual culture

Please send a **300 word abstract** for a 15 minute presentation to afterlives2020@gmail.com along with a **50 word biography**, including your current affiliation, by **November 30, 2019**. The title of the paper, the presenter's name, affiliation, e-mail address, and a brief bio should appear on a cover sheet, as well as any requests for technical support. Accepted speakers will be notified by January 31st 2020

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