ভারতীয় প্রযুক্তিবিদ্যা প্রতিষ্ঠান খড়্গপুর
भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान खड़गपुर
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY KHARAGPUR

EBERHARD KARLS
UNIVERSITÄT
TÜBINGEN

Celebrating Platinum Jubilee

International Conference

on

Unlearning Modernity: Intercultural Ecologies and Decolonial Routes to Habitable Futures

Department of Humanities & Social Sciences

Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, India

in collaboration with

University of Tubingen, Germany

Feb 22-24, 2027 | Hybrid Mode

Concept Note

Climate crisis isn't only a major challenge for the humanity in the 21st century. Rather it marks the beginning of a grim new chapter for the life on Earth, a chapter that mirrors the extreme insufficiency of the global efforts to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions. Such an inefficiency arises out of modernity's capitalization of nature. For instance, modernity perceives nature as a totality of interdependent conditions not only because it embodies the deductive teleology of empirical sciences, but because it aims to enable the commodification of nature. Further, modernity privileges human intentionality or agency, his capacity to delink from nature's general economy and exist as an individuated molarity, only to ethically validate his utilization & exploitation of nature. Even the postmodern radical restructuring of reason reinforces modernity's defense of capitalism. Ware's theorization of nature in his Beginning Again at the End: a dialectics of Extinction captures this restructuring well. For Ware "the subject that emerges from nature, and which separates itself off from nature in order to achieve a kind of self-relating independence is an effect of the non-identity at the heart of nature, the failure of nature to be fully natural". Ironically, Ware's exposition of nature's unknowability or imperceptibility may be used by many to remain unsure & indifferent about its exploitation by capitalism. Similarly, Adrian Johnston projection of nature as 'internally disturbed' or 'unsure about its desires' keeps it open to exploitation. What could then be an alternative to modernist pattern of reasoning reluctant to imagine a clearing beyond capitalism? Even "the de-modernizing drive" of "new humanities" produce variations of this reasoning. In the guise of producing anti-modern affects they produce assemblages which yield the scope to ethically bind modern capitalist logics to the immanence of nature. Covertly stressing the redundancy of imagining a pure outside against the interiority of the capital, these assemblages go on to stress the inherent technicity or machinism of nature. For instance, we may use Deleuze & Guattari's critical grammar to view nature as a grand 'desiring machine' or Latour's to view it as 'infinity of networks' or Haraway's to view it as a cyborg or 'a machinic assemblage'. Likewise, inherent plasticity of Chakraborty's and Bennett's theorization of materiality may be turned towards meeting the demands of capitalism.

So, how do we effect a new rationality or aesthesis de-linked from that of modern phenomenology? Scholars such as Niklas Wagner & Anna-Katharina Hornidge suggest ways of "unlearning modernity". But in their critical examination of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) they indicate "how this panel creates 'a tension field' while initiating a process of unlearning modernity. They show how IPCC remains constrained by path-dependencies of Eurocentric modernity, manifested in the linear model of knowledge transfer & the differentiated systems logic of science and policy spheres, and how IPCC grapples with broadening disciplinary diversity, incorporating alternative epistemologies like Indigenous and Local Knowledge, and fostering co-productive collaborations between scientists and policymakers". But at the same time, they claim that these nascent "unlearning" efforts signal cracks in modernity's edifice. So, the need of the hour is to extend these efforts by multiplying decolonial approaches to nature. Despite Chakraborty's disclosure of indigeneity's colonial leanings decolonial thinkers consider precolonial ways of understanding & relating to nature as an antidote to predicaments of colonial modernity. However, precolonial indigeneity doesn't exist as a unified whole, but as a shifting multiplicity with interconnected cultural nuances demanding what Yuk hui calls a 'cosmotechnical diversity' instead of overarching cybernetics. Moreover, such interconnectedness demand that we show how the interplay between diverse cultural nuances, suppressed and forgotten for a long time due to colonial power relations, auto-effect decolonial assemblages against colonial modernity's understanding of nature. Such nuances, in particular, include even the experiences of nature in East Asia, which are occasionally given little consideration in the postcolonial and the decolonial discourses that are singularly inclined to represent South Asian issues. However, we don't wish to merely show how analysis of diverse indigenous experiences of nature auto-effect a geo-centered subjectivity, but how on the basis of such understandings we can shape adaptation or habitability strategies for the human in the era of climate crisis. Such strategies are ethical, for they aim to decolonize the Earth, the only planet that generates life, rather than partake of attempts at actualizing post-human fantasies such as dwelling in an era dominated by the non-humans or joining the trillionaire technofascists like Elon Musk to colonize Mars.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

1. Green capitalism, climate change and the technological fix
2. The alienation & commodification of nature
3. Cartesian dualisms & the cyber-Gaia
4. Modern unlearning & the climate policy making
5. From psychoanalyzing natures to schizo-analytics of nature
6. New humanities, post-humanism & indigeneity
7. Planetary & decoloniality
8. Geo-centricity, Geophilosophy & habitability
9. Decolonial sustainability & planetary futures
10. Stories from East Asian & intercultural Ecologies
11. Decolonial & nonmodern eco-aesthesis Vs neoliberal planetarity & cosmopolitics
12. New eco-alliances, Solidarities & techno-fascism

Guidelines for submission of paper presentation & abstracts:

Paper presentations will be allowed 15-20 minutes, plus 10 minutes for questions and discussion.

Paper proposals should be 300 words maximum, and include title, email address and affiliation, along with a bio note under 100 words.

Key Dates

Abstract Submission Deadline: **January 31, 2027**

Notification of acceptance: **February 10, 2027**

Last date for Registration: **February 15, 2027**

Registration Fees:

CATEGORY	MODE	INDIA (INR)		INTERNATIONAL (USD)	
		EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION	LATE REGISTRATION	EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION	LATE REGISTRATION
INDUSTRY DELEGATES	ONLINE / OFFLINE	4000	5000	100	150
ACADEMIA	ONLINE / OFFLINE	2000	2500	75	100
RESEARCH SCHOLARS	ONLINE / OFFLINE	1500	2000	50	75
ONLY PARTICIPANTS	ONLINE / OFFLINE	500	750	30	40

Registration & Publication Guidelines

1. Details regarding the registration fee and payment procedure will be communicated after the selection of papers for presentation.
2. A separate Google Form only for conference participants (excluding paper presenters) will be shared shortly.
3. A maximum of 30 papers will be selected for presentation at the conference.
4. Selected papers, following their presentation and successful peer review, will be considered for publication in an edited volume by a reputed international publisher.

Accommodation

1. Conference participants and paper presenters are required to arrange their own accommodation.
2. Details of nearby hotels and guesthouses will be shared shortly to facilitate accommodation arrangements.

Contact for Queries & Further Information

Dr. Saswat S. Das
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Email: icum.iitkgp@gmail.com
Phone: 9434019044 (for messaging purposes only)

For conference-related queries and assistance, please contact the Conference Coordinator using the details above.