

The Climate of Philosophy: The Ecological Crises as a Challenge for Philosophy and the History of Ideas

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What are the repercussions of today's multiple ecological crises for the humanities, especially for philosophy and intellectual history? For instance: When we consider the fact that the burning of fossil fuels is now pushing the planet to the brink of habitability, how might the history of the Enlightenment need to be retold, given that the age of reason not only installed human rights but also laid the foundations for the age of fossil fuels? How was it possible that modern philosophy forged ideas such as "progress" and "freedom" completely independent of the material conditions in which these ideas were intended to take effect?

Dipesh Chakrabarty has shown that the hermeneutic foundations of the humanities are affected when we cut off our own horizons of futurity. Pierre Charbonnier argues that an ecologically sensitive retelling of the history of ideas is necessary, and that doing such reveals the extent to which the liberal notion of "freedom" is emmeshed with an idea of "abundance," which is only realizable through the extraction and burning of fossil fuels. Isabelle Stengers speaks of the "intrusion of Gaia," which is fundamentally shifting the political and philosophical horizons of modernity. And, according to Bruno Latour, a new cosmology is needed in order to reorient ourselves on an earth characterized by a new climate regime.

In light of these questions and positions, the conference investigates the systematic and methodological stakes of readjusting philosophy and intellectual history in view of the current planetary crisis. The aim of the conference is to offer a historically saturated reflection of our own philosophical and intellectual practice and to explore possible tasks and contours for the humanities in the Anthropocene. What, for instance, are the implicit presuppositions regarding the material and environmental conditions of human life that have shaped the thinking of modernity? Which role did philosophical ideas such as "nature," "society" or "progress" play in the emergence of the current crisis? And which prerequisites and implicit assumptions have remained effective in our own methods to this day? In other words: What is the climate of philosophy?

In addition to contributions by invited guests (Dipesh Chakrabarty, Pierre Charbonnier, Eva Horn, Erich Hörl, Bernd Scherer, Isabelle Stengers and others), some lectures will be assigned via this call. Young researchers in particular (but not exclusively) will be given the opportunity to present their work at the conference. The conference, which is funded by the DFG and others, will be held bilingually in German and English. An abstract (approx. 6000 characters, in German or English) and an academic CV must be submitted by 30 August to msehgal@uni-wuppertal.de.

Information is also available at msehg@uni-wuppertal.de. Travel and accommodation costs will be covered.