

PLANETARY CONRAD

For the MLA Conference in January 2021, Mark Deggan organised a panel on ‘Planetary Conrad’ with Peter Mallios. In his introductory notes for the panel, he provided the following account of its background:

It is clear that the planetary has become a promiscuous term covering a host of disciplinary approaches to our era of crisis, and which properly includes not just a new notion of what is worthy of study within a globalized academy, or new metrics concerning the spatial and temporal organization of post-national cultural reflection, but an awareness of rhythms, currents, and perspectives beyond our usual human patternings.

Alongside global warming, economic networks, ecological degradation, our ongoing migrant crisis, or the current pandemic, the planetary points to a new ecology, and a new scale to what is conceivable in discourse. The planetary, then, suggests that what Hannah Arendt called the “human artifice” of the world has ceased, before the totalizing aspirations of globalization, to uphold a sustainable environmental or moral reality. Moreover, as Amy Elias and Christian Moraru write, the planetary is as ethical as it is *relational* – to quote:

while unfolding within the same historical moment as globalization, planetarity is configured [...] from a different angle... It represents a transcultural phenomenon whose economical & political underpinnings cannot be ignored but whose preeminent thrust is ethical

Here is where Conrad’s pre-eminently *transcultural* confrontations with imperial modernity come in. A mariner-writer with an overriding consciousness of the moral challenges of being “at sea,” of being multiple or *other*, he teaches us to navigate (and so to ride out) the natural – and human – flows of an entire planet.

We are looking for essays which fit with this brief for the next issue of *The Conradian*. Please send proposals for essays in advance to:

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Submission deadline will be September 2021.