

Metamorphoses: Mementos and Futurities

Endnotes 2018

The University of British Columbia - English Graduate Conference

University of British Columbia

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*Of bodies changed to other forms I tell;
You Gods, who have yourselves wrought every change,
Inspire my enterprise and lead my lay
In one continuous song from nature's first
Remote beginnings to our modern times.*

- Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book I

To recognize in paranoia a distinctively rigid relation to temporality, at once anticipatory and retroactive, averse above all to surprise, is also to glimpse the lineaments of other possibilities.

- Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*

In this time of intense political, ecological, and cultural change — a crisis of crises — we must investigate not only the process of metamorphosis, but also its after-effects. When a transition between two states is complete, traces of the original linger: as memories, echoes, aftershocks; as rubble, capsules, scars. These traces, upon recollection, may promise gregarious futures. Upon dismissal, they memorialize the ominous subtleties of unfinished business.

Literal or figurative, then, the post-metamorphic trace persists in ambivalent hybridity, signifying transformative achievement while troubling idea(l)s of total change. Questions of extent, assessment, and direction arise: How does this trace influence the after-effects of change? What constitutes full conversion, and who assesses whether transformation has occurred? How does metamorphosis promise or foreclose certain futures, and what might models of change look like when disconnected from the paranoia or opportunism of mainstream Western imaginaries? When and why have certain groups—communities, societies, publics, echelons—revised their empirical or affective conceptualizations of change?

Scholars, authors, and artists have been creatively engaging transformations for centuries. New approaches to progressions of change can illuminate the mechanisms and catalysts that continually reshape social, political, and physical bodies.

Particular topics of interest may include:

- Magical and alchemical processes of change; hybridity and substitutions.
- Performance studies and theatrical transformations.

- Narratives of religious conversion; the legal and spiritual status of converts post-conversion; lapsed converts.
- Climate change, topographical reconfigurations, and the Anthropocene.
- Political restructurings and their social and cultural consequences; narratives of political/economic upheaval; estimations of political change.
- Rhetorics of apocalypse; reparative apocalypticism.
- Migration, immigration, and transnationalism; diaspora; refugee narratives.
- Translation and adaptation.
- Book history, manuscript studies, and shifts in print culture.
- Periodization, time travel, and memory.
- Gender transition, narratives of transness, and queer and trans theory.
- Politics of refusal, Afro-pessimism, and transformation as/against perpetuation.
- Anti-colonial theory and decolonial praxis; the university and settler colonialism; Leanne Simpson's call for "radical transformation."
- The ruins of capitalism and Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's concept of the "third nature."
- Tensions between transformative "trace" and ontological "essence."

We invite proposals for both academic papers and creative presentations engaging the theme of metamorphosis and its outcomes for the 2018 Endnotes conference. We welcome submissions from scholars and artists from across the disciplines and in any career phase, but we particularly emphasize graduate-level work. Please send abstracts of 250-300 words to endnotesconference@gmail.com by Thursday, February 15, 2018.

We look forward to reading your submissions.

ENDNOTES 2018 Committee