



Moving the Centre: Toward Radical Futures
Cross-Disciplinary Postgraduate Research Conference on Post/Decolonial
and Global Studies
4th – 6th August 2021
University of Glasgow – Online
Call for Proposals

IMPORTANT DATES

Deadline for submissions: 5th April 2021

Notification of acceptance: by 14th May 2021

Conference dates: 4th, 5th and 6th August 2021

The climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have only exacerbated the already stark inequalities and inequities that are pervasive around the globe, which run along class, gender, and race lines; a state of injustice that was decried on a global scale in 2020 by a multitude of social justice movements, such as Black Lives Matter, in transnational solidarity. The members of this conference organising committee, a group of PhD students from the College of Arts and the College of Social Sciences at the University of Glasgow, assembled with a view to planning a cross-disciplinary event that would try to grapple with these issues, as well as with decolonising movements more broadly.

‘Radical futures’, for us, are those in which these disadvantages and privileges are considerably reduced and, one day, eliminated completely. Futures in which every human being has guaranteed access to basic human rights; in which every nation and community is free to safely experience the world from their own perspective, according to their own values; in which there are no hierarchical relationships between these cultures, and in which we benefit from the richness of diversity. This is why we have included part of the title of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s 1993 book, *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms*, in our own conference title.

Building on Priyamvada Gopal’s ideas (*Insurgent Empire: A Discussion with Priyamvada Gopal* 2020), we interpret decolonisation as a constant process of reparation, compensation, restitution, and re-education, instead of a fixed state to be achieved exclusively as a final result. In other words, we see decolonisation as both the means and the end, as the continued struggle toward a more just and inclusive world. Our radical futures are thus both decolonisation (the process) and decolonised (the state). It is within this framework that we see this conference as a platform for dialogue and collaboration. Rather than to provide definite answers, the main aim

of this event is to foster reflection on and enable conversation about not only decolonial futures as a goal, but also the concrete steps that would need to be taken when working toward these futures, as well as to address the past and present of empire, (neo)colonialism, and anticolonial struggles. We see this conference as an exercise in awareness raising, a space to promote a better understanding of the current state of affairs and wider participation in the process of decolonisation.

With this in mind, we want to invite postgraduate research students in all academic disciplines to think about how their own research or subject area stands in respect to these issues. We also welcome submissions by early-career researchers who have finished their PhD in the past three years. Our aim is to be as inclusive as possible; we want to encourage collaboration and interdisciplinary exchange between the arts and humanities, social and life sciences, and STEM subjects. We believe these explorations and dialogues to be a key initial step in the direction of a decentred world that someday will become ‘a universal garden of many-coloured flowers’ (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o 1993).

Proposal topics might include (but are not limited to):

- Envisioning intersectional radical futures within the arts and humanities, social sciences, life sciences, and/or STEM subject areas;
- Marginality and periphery; consequences of a fixed centre and limiting viewpoints in the different disciplines; hegemony and power structures in the current state of affairs;
- Decolonisation in academia: gatekeeping and the burden of change; decolonisation in education and curriculum at all levels;
- Decolonisation of knowledge production and exchange: cartography, space and place, memorialisation and trauma, museums, among others; post/decolonial modernities;
- Decolonisation in medicine: intersections between physical and mental health; (dis)abilities;
- Decolonisation in language and linguistics; postcolonial translation;
- Obstacles/Barriers to decolonisation: the instability of political and economic systems;
- Difference, identity and representation; Black, Brown and all People of Colour in the UK: histories and (dis)connections; boundaries within the UK; Brexit;
- Mobility, migration, refugees, and diaspora;
- Indigenous empowerment and re-valuation in settler-colonial nations;
- Pasts, presents and futures of empire, and transgenerational imperialism and racism, including their ecological dimensions;
- Forgotten/ignored heroes, scientists, contributors and activists, especially female ones;
- (Post/Neo)colonial tourism; environmental racism and climate justice; the Anthropocene; (post/neo)colonial ecologies;
- Postcolonial urban studies and urban ecologies;
- The unequal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic around the world: economic, political, social, cultural, and health consequences;
- Food safety and security; food production.

WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

- a) A 20-minute paper
- b) A poster/short presentation
- c) An alternative session/workshop

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submit an abstract for a 20-minute paper: these submissions will be sorted thematically into three-paper panels after acceptance.

Submit an abstract for a short presentation: to encourage participation from early postgraduate research students, we would like to offer room for short (5-to-10-minute) presentations where you might give an overview of your research, present a poster, carry out a short analysis of a text or artwork, or explain a concept of importance or new approach to your work. This is an opportunity to gain conference experience in the early stages of your research. Please note that early-stage postgraduate research students are not limited to this option and are welcome to propose a paper or alternative session/workshop.

Submit a proposal for an alternative session or workshop: we would like to encourage proposals for alternative sessions. This may include, for example, practice-based research showcases consisting of a short performance or audio/visual presentation, or workshops addressing specific issues and/or texts (in the broadest sense of the word). Please include as much detail as possible in your application, explaining your time and technology requirements. When proposing your alternative session or workshop, please keep in mind that we plan to host this conference on Zoom. If other technology/software is required, this should be accessible and fairly user-friendly. If you have any ideas for proposals and you are not sure if they fit within these technical restrictions, please get in touch.

If interested in participating, please email: arts-movingthecentre2021@glasgow.ac.uk with a **short bio (around 100 words)**, including institutional affiliation, and a proposal of **300 words** maximum. Please specify in your application which style of presentation you intend to give and submit your proposal as either a Word or PDF document. General enquiries can also be sent to this email address.

WEBSITE: <https://movingcentre2021.wordpress.com>