



Conference

New Earth Histories Conference Sydney, 6-8 December, 2019

Convenors: Alison Bashford, Adam Bobbette, Emily Kern

This conference aims to produce a fresh and cosmopolitan history of environmental and Earth sciences, analysing the significance of geological time and multiple cosmologies for global modernity. One of the most fascinating elements in a conventional history of geology is its intricate connection to theology; to complex eighteenth and nineteenth-century doctrinal debate on the age of the Earth, its relation to the universal deluge and to Biblical time. Yet the world was never just Christian. New Earth Histories proceeds from that plain fact. The conference proposes to analyse an extensive suite of other ways of knowing modern Earth history: Chinese, South and Southeast Asian, Pacific, Islamic and Indigenous conceptions of the globe, and of Earth's origins, transformations and make up. We seek papers that analyse the encounters between these traditions, bringing the history of geosciences and the history of world cosmologies together.

Abstracts are invited on the following themes and questions:

- **Globes:** How did radically different concepts of the Earth's shape and universal placement converge into a common representational system of the globe in the modern period? How has a 'whole Earth' been conceptualised in the past? What stories have been told and sciences developed that have avoided the appeal to wholeness and totality and advanced other figures and geometries?
- **Time:** How has time, age, and change been understood differently in relation to Earth history? How did concepts of geological time develop in relation to other cosmologies? How was time sensible in the material world and landscapes?
- **Origins:** What effect have disparate cosmogonies – had in conceptualising Earth histories, for example in evolutionary, Indigenous, and Christian traditions? In what ways have geo-origin stories been enlisted for different political, national, and ethnic projects?
- **Elements:** How did the antique elemental series – air, water, fire, earth in the European tradition, and wood, fire, earth, metal, water in the Chinese tradition, for example – shaped modern Earth sciences? Can a history of elements conceptually assist in developing a more cosmopolitan history of geosciences? Can a more pluralist understanding of elemental practices help reconceptualise our understanding of the direction, transactions, and networks of global knowledge?
- **Life:** How has 'life' on earth been understood differently in the modern period, including the origin stories of the human species and its multiplication? When, where and in what ways have inorganic structures been conceptualised as living? How have animist traditions conceptualised Earth's geostory?

Abstracts are invited from historians, geographers and scholars across the social sciences, to historicise the intellectual space between modern geosciences, theology, cosmology and cosmogony from a cosmopolitan view point.

Abstracts due 10 December 2018

Please send 500-700 word abstract + one page CV to: newearthhistories@unsw.edu.au

For more information, please visit <https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/research/new-earth-histories-research-program/conference>