

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ Tokyo)

Environmental Humanities in East Asia

May 25 (Wed), 2022, 10:30h JST

Cultural Specificity & Planetary Thinking: Reading Ishimure Michiko's Final Work

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Ishimure Michiko is best known for her writing on mercury poisoning of the Shiranui Sea in and around Minamata, Japan. Yet, in her later years she became increasingly invested in the concept of the planetary. In this talk, we will examine this shift in her writing and the complicated role that cultural forms play in writing that is especially invested in planetary health. Marran will introduce the concept of the "biotope" as a useful tool for analyzing Ishimure's attention to cultural and material elements in this discussion of Ishimure's final work "Hana no okudo e" (2014) in which culturally specific elements are ultimately subsumed by a planetary philosophy. We will conclude our discussion by addressing the ways that area studies may or may not be compatible with particular forms of ecocriticism.

Christine L. Marran is Professor of Japanese Cultural Studies at the University of Minnesota where she is also Co-Convener of the Environmental Humanities Initiative. Selected works regarding ecocriticism include *Ecology Without Culture: Aesthetics for a Toxic Age* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017), "Planetary," *boundary 2* (2019); "Literature Without Us," in *Ishimure Michiko's Writing in Ecocritical Perspective: Between Sea and Sky* (Lexington Books, 2015); "The Domestic Turn in Ecocritical Writing: Ariyoshi Sawako's Cumulative Pollution," *Poetica* (2013); "Animal Stranger in a Tokyo Canal" in *Japan at Nature's Edge: The Environmental Context of a Global Power* (2013); "The Nature of Contamination: From Minamata to Fukushima," *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* (2011).

About:

The DIJ Environmental Humanities Lecture Series is organized by Barbara Geilhorn. All are welcome to attend.

Registration:

Registration for this online event is required via email to geilhorn@dijtokyo.org until 24 May 2022 (JST). Log in data will be provided after registration.