**TDR Consortium Special Issue**

**Stanford University**

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**PERIPETEIA**

As it turned out, last fall, when we sent out the call for papers for the *TDR* special issue on “Peripeteia,” we were on the cusp of a global pandemic. Little did we know that, by the time of our initial deadline (June 1), the topic of our special issue would have taken on a whole new dimension of urgency we could hardly imagine. And here we are: in the middle of an event that is most definitively a turn of fortunes of extraordinary proportions, and that could be a turning point in the way in which we think about our global community, solidarity, climate, and most definitively, how we make and receive performance. Our topic now seems more relevant than ever. Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic has been a major disruption for artists and scholars, we have decided to extend our deadline to **September 1**. We hope that will give our potential contributors time to reflect on the major sea-change we are going through, and to return to their libraries and studios to develop and complete their submissions.

In classical dramatic theory, peripeteia designates a turning point from prosperity to downfall. This reversal of fortunes often marks a transformation of the entire outlook of the protagonist: from ignorance to knowledge, and from resignation to action. Peripeteia is the moment when opposing forces powerfully drag the world in opposite directions. This rending of the world as we know it may open new paths or close them forever. We are now at such a decisive point. The intensity of this current moment is clearly expressed in the rising temperature of the protagonist, the planet. The choice the world is facing is not only between dirty and clean technologies, but also between accumulation and sharing, exploitation and social justice, unabashed capitalism and radical democracy, Western exceptionalism and global awareness. And concerning this last point, this may be the last moment in which the categories of classical dramatic theory are still operative: we are experiencing a turning point in the very idea of crisis and its representation in live performance.

The current moment presents humanity with a unique and multiscalar set of challenges that will require an essential reorganization of society, economics, and politics to address.

As the 12-year timeline for action in the US Green New Deal makes clear, there’s a specific urgency, a deadline, that – in the West, at least – arguably differentiates this moment from other historical periods that have been identified as crisis-ridden. This moment is characterized by a particular mode of uncertainty regarding the future, exacerbated by the fact that many contributing factors to this “crisis” are pervasive yet intangible, omnipresent yet strangely distant, and ostensibly divorced from individual action and solutions, even if discussions of the crisis tend to revert to individual, moral stances. At the same time, we are mindful that different communities approach this situation from varying historical and epistemological standpoints. A strain of Indigenous climate-change studies, for instance, understands the Anthropocene not as a hitherto unanticipated occurrence but as an extension of a violent and unresolved historical past that renders the present moment already post-apocalyptic.

This ephemerality, spectrality, and magnitude pose special challenges to *representation* in its many senses: aesthetic, social, and political. The planet is under siege, and performance is not there to witness, issue warnings, calls for action, or drop dead like that proverbial canary. Like all other spheres of human activity, art forms, and academic fields it has to transform itself in order to stage a redress in this social drama of planetary proportions. We invite scholars, artists, and activists to submit papers that address issues that include, but are not limited to:

* Performance and the new planetary paradigm
* Social drama and “slow violence”
* Scale of crisis and representation
* Accumulation vs. expenditure
* First and second New Deal and performance
* Different global versions of the Green New Deal in performance
* Responses from Indigenous perspectives and/or from the vantage of the Global South
* Futurity and its representation
* The role of the collective
* Performance principle and the new economy
* Catastrophe without recognition

6,000-word submissions are due **September 1, 2020**. Please submit essays and direct any relevant queries to Rishika Mehrishi at [tdrstanford@gmail.com](mailto:tdrstanford@gmail.com)