

Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture
Centre for Sensory Studies

Imaging the Air We Breathe: Developing Sociological and Ecological Imaginations

Kari Marie Norgaard

What if you were surrounded by an invisible force that structured everything about how you understand yourself and your world, shaped not only what you are able to see and understand, but dictated what you don't see and don't understand? What if the society in which you lived faced profound crises to its survival, but still nobody talked about this force? As a sociologist I generally find myself trying to bring attention to dimensions and factors of the climate crisis that few people (especially few Americans) acknowledge to exist. In order to imagine or talk about atmospheres and our relationships to them we need to be able to "see the air we breathe." Just as with air itself, our relationships to one another are invisible. Yet to move beyond our present situation we must acknowledge the social systems within which energy and climate gases are produced and the power structure that this energy fuels -- most of which are highly destructive to human and ecological communities. We need to employ what sociologist CW Mills calls a sociological imagination (Mills 1959) in order to be able to see the relationships within society that make up this environmentally damaging social structure and imagine beyond them.



Hillary Kaell, McGill University

**Thursday, October 29
at 13h00**

**Please write to cissc@concordia.ca
(with "ATMOSPHERES" in the subject
line) to register and you will be sent a
Zoom link.**

Kari Marie Norgaard is Professor of Sociology and Environmental Studies who lives and thinks in Kalapuya lands at University of Oregon. She has published and taught in the areas of environmental sociology, Indigenous environmental justice, gender and environment, race, and sociology of emotions. She is the author of *Living in Denial: Climate Change, Emotions and Everyday Life* (2011) and *Salmon and Acorns Feed Our People: Nature, Colonialism and Social Action* (2019), which was a 2020 finalist for the C.W. Mills Award of the Society for the Study of Social Problems.

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