

**Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE-UKI)**

31<sup>st</sup> August – 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2016



Image 'Habitus' (2013) used with kind permission from the artist Robyn Woolston.  
[www.robynwoolston.com](http://www.robynwoolston.com)

## **A Change of (S)cene: Reviewing our Place in a New Geological Epoch**

A Three-Day Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Conference

University of Lincoln  
Brayford Pool  
Lincoln  
LN6 7TS

## ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

### Keynote Address

#### Keynote 1:

Adeline Johns-Putra (University of Surrey)

#### **'Framing the Future: The Climate Change Novel and the Problem of Posterity'**

From Brundtland's *Our Common Future* to the climate change novels of today, the idea that we have an obligation to the generations of the future dominates the Anthropocene imaginary. This idea - what I call the problem of posterity - comprises a host of ethical dilemmas, from the delicate balance of present nonhuman needs against future human obligations to the dangers of taking environmentalist ethics of care for granted, when care dynamics often conceal power dynamics). Most notably, I argue, the figure of the child has come to signal this set of problems even as it allows us to gloss over them. I discuss the prominence of the child in climate change fiction and the uses and abuses to which this compelling and charismatic symbol is put.

#### **Biographical Note:**

Dr Adeline Johns-Putra is Reader in English Literature and English Subject Leader at the University of Surrey. Her research interests are in ecocriticism and Romanticism and she was president of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, UK and Ireland, from 2011 to 2015.

## Keynote 2:

Kate Rigby (Bath Spa University/Monash University)

### **“Piping in their honey dreams”: Bee-speak, Kin-making and Eco-poetics in the Plantationocene’**

This lecture takes its title from John Clare’s poem “Wild Bees”. Disclosing biosemiotic continuities between human language and *poiesis*, or making, especially those things we artfully make out of words, and the communicative and artisanal activities of other creatures, this work of late Romantic neo-pastoral acquires a new poignancy in the current context of the dramatic decline in many bee populations around the world. While the exact causes of this decline are still being debated, it appears that bees are falling victim to that dimension of modernity which Donna Haraway refers to as the “Plantationocene”. Inaugurated by the “transformation of diverse kinds of human-tended farms, pastures, and forests into extractive and enclosed plantations, relying on slave labor and other forms of exploited, alienated, and usually spatially transported labor,” the Plantationocene “continues with ever-greater ferocity in globalized factory meat production, monocrop agribusiness, and immense substitutions of crops like oil palm for multispecies forests and their products that sustain human and nonhuman critters alike” (“Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin”, *Environmental Humanities* 6, 2015, pp. 159-165; here 162). What might it mean, then, to reread Clare’s Romantic “Wild Bees” at this calamitous juncture of the Plantationocene, and in relation to contemporary theorisations and practices of eco-poetics?

#### **Biographical Note:**

Professor Kate Rigby held a Professorship of Environmental Humanities at Monash University Australia, with particular expertise in ecocriticism, ecophilosophy, and ecotheology and has recently taken the same post at Bath Spa University. Her recent research in the Environmental Humanities is informed by a strong interest in ecocriticism, ecophilosophy and ecotheology. She is senior co-editor, with Freya Mathews, of the ecological humanities journal, PAN (Philosophy Activism Nature) and was the founding President of the Association for the Study of Literature, Environment and Culture-Australia-New Zealand between 2004 and 2008. Her book, *Dancing with Disaster: Environmental Histories, Narratives, and Ethics for Perilous Times* was published in January 2015 by the University of Virginia Press.

### **Keynote 3:**

Duncan French (University of Lincoln)

**'Common Concern & the Paradox of Localism in International Environmental Law: "The cloud-capp'd tow'rs, the gorgeous palaces // The solemn temples, the great globe itself" (The Tempest)'**

The presentation will consider the role of international law in our ability to respond to the challenges presented by the anthropocene. Do nation States possess the tools and systems to tackle one of the biggest challenges of our time? Putting to one side for one moment – though never far from the surface – the existence, or lack of, necessary political will to respond to such challenges, is the international system equipped to be able to tackle what are increasingly likely to become existential crises? It will then consider one of the many tensions within this particular field of law. Namely, how far international law has a global perspective. This might seem counter-intuitive. Surely, international law by its very definition is global in nature and outlook. This is true...up to a point. But only up to a point. As I refer to in the title of this paper there is a paradox of localism in international (environmental) law; how far is international law used for the common good and how far is it seen as an instrument for advancing local interests. To be sure, such local agendas are neither invariably bad nor destructive of the global endeavour, but the risk is that they may be. But in the era of anthropocene, can we afford such parochialism; is it time we moved beyond international law between sovereign states towards something akin to a more aspirational form of global governance? I conclude – perhaps rather sceptically – that a move towards global government may be attractive on the surface but from a political perspective, it is much more problematic.

#### **Biographical Note:**

Professor Duncan French, Head of the Lincoln Law School, is a leading academic on international environmental law and the international legal implications of sustainable development. He has written extensively in these areas, as well as writing generally on both broader questions of public international law (eg. treaty interpretation), international economic and investment law and the interaction between international law and European Union law. He has secondary research interests in international law of the sea and Antarctica.

## **Panel 1a:**

### **Haunted Pasts, Dystopian Futures**

Katy Ewing (University of Glasgow)

#### **'The Haunting of Landscape'**

Half-buried waste, re-surfacing stories, and plastic everywhere: our experience of the life-world in the Anthropocene is necessarily suffused with meanings both acknowledged and unacknowledged attached to what we uncover; what remains.

From found fossil footprints: 'distinct as the track of the passing animal upon the recent snow; as if to show that thousands of years are but as nothing amidst Eternity and, as it were, in mockery of the fleeting perishable course of the mightiest potentates among mankind' (Buckland, 1836) to the discarded material goods we now continually encounter, our relationship with the material world varies between that of reader of a found (deeply palimpsestic) text and writer of that text.

In this sense, our understanding of any possible future must surely begin from an attempt to see the present world and our place in it as a text we read 'at several scales at once [...], enriching, singularizing and yet also creatively deranging the text through embedding it in multiple and even contradictory frames at the same time' (Clark, 2012).

The concept of 'haunting', which has the possibility of multiple realities embedded within it might allow a multi-layered perspective which frees us from our own rigid thinking, either to allow deliberate and necessary change in our behaviour or to cope with change which will be imposed by circumstances – or both.

From Tim Ingold's 'dwelling perspective' (1993), according to which landscape is considered as a culmination of all past and present happenings and actions; constantly becoming, never static, to Robert Macfarlane's 'landscape – as constituted by uncanny forces, part-buried sufferings and contested ownerships' (2015), the 'ghosts' of human and non-human actors seem always just below the surface in our relationship with the material world. As a writer, the places I try to capture have usually haunted me, just as they are already thoroughly haunted.

This paper explores the ways in which the landscapes we live with are profoundly haunted by lives past, present and future, continually shaping (and being shaped by) place – both intentionally and unintentionally.

#### **Biographical Note:**

Katy Ewing is a writer and artist living in rural Southwest Scotland. She graduated from the University of Glasgow in 2013 with an undergraduate degree in Liberal Arts (humanities). She now studies Environment, Culture and Communication (MLitt) at the University of Glasgow's School of Interdisciplinary Studies.

Hollie Johnson (University of Nottingham)

**'Back to the Future': Predatory Capitalism and the Dystopian Cycle of Progress'**

As speculative visions of dystopian futures, Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl* (2009) and Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* (2007) confront the geopolitics of what Frederick Buell characterises as a 'gothic predatory capitalism' and its role in the interwoven social, cultural, economic, and ecological networks at play within the current environmental crisis. In their novels, both Winterson and Bacigalupi question humanity's responsibility for and response to global climate change, exploring the key conflicts that have arisen between environmental discourse and capitalist goals. Significantly, in their depictions of future planets subjugated to ongoing exploitation and pollution, these two authors develop sophisticated ecodystopian visions that attempt to move away from the overly apocalyptic tone which dominates much of the genre, instead exploring the possibility of post-human futures that embrace change.

Taking Bacigalupi and Winterson's critique of global neo-liberal economics as my starting point, my paper presents how *The Windup Girl* and *The Stone Gods* challenge the values that lie at the core of the Anthropocene. I explore how both novelists draw links between historical colonisation and contemporary economic exploitation to present the capitalist system as merely an ongoing manifestation of the imperialist mission, with both social and environmental consequences. As well as critiquing the exploitative nature of the capitalist system, I argue that Winterson and Bacigalupi also address the ideal of technological innovation that it supports, questioning the role of technology within humanity's response to environmental questions. In particular, I argue that both authors reject the idea that such innovation equals progress or that it has the ability to address environmental concerns. Indeed, I conclude my paper by discussing how both authors use themes of repetition and resurrection to reject these ideals, instead emphasising how anthropogenic ideas of progress have preserved the status-quo and hindered humanity's ability to adapt to changing environmental circumstances.

**References**

Frederick Buell, 'Global Warming at Literary Narrative', *Philological Quarterly*, 93.3 (2014), 261-294, (p.279)

**Biographical Note:**

I am a Midlands3Cities, AHRC-funded student, based in the School of English at the University of Nottingham. Drawing from an interdisciplinary background, my research focuses on the development of ecodystopian fiction, exploring the dialogic relationships between humanity and non-human nature as presented within contexts of extinction, climate change, and environmental exploitation.

Meghann Hillier-Broadley (University of Northampton)

**“The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house’: Surviving the Anthropocene in Philip Reeves *Predator Cities* Quartet’**

In 2000 Paul J. Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer proposed that the present era should be re-named the ‘Anthropocene’ due to the profound effects human activities have inflicted on the earth’s natural processes. In an article entitled ‘Living in the Anthropocene: Toward a New Global Ethos’ from January 2011, Crutzen recommends several approaches humanity must consider in order to survive in the present epoch; ominously, these propositions put mankind’s interests and abilities firmly at the centre. Crutzen suggests creating “new plant varieties” (2) and making “Global agriculture ... high-tech” (2). In light of these suggestions, this paper will examine ‘living in the Anthropocene’ through the *Predator Cities* quartet by Philip Reeve. Set a thousand years in the future the planet has become a hunting ground as a result of humanities reliance on technology and interference with nature; where once the North Sea stood there is now a “dried-out bed” (3), great cities like London have been mounted on caterpillar tracks so they can hunt smaller towns and gobble them up in a process known as Municipal Darwinism in order to capture their resources. This plausible future awaiting mankind will emphasise a need to detach anthropocentric interests from the heart of attempts to recover the earth’s natural processes, as it is humanities interference and own self-interest which has initiated this epoch. Instead we need to return to the sentiments of deep ecology, acknowledging that the “value of non-human life ... is independent of the usefulness ... for human purposes” (Naess 111) and only then can we begin to survive and thrive within the Anthropocene, as mankind must acknowledge it is not master of nature, but a mere custodian for the future.

**Works cited –**

Crutzen, Paul J. and Schwagerl, Christian. “Living in the Anthropocene: Toward a New Global Ethos”. *Yale Environment 360*. January 2011. Web Accessed: 22/3/16.

Drengson, Alan and Devall, Bill. Eds. *The Ecology of Wisdom: Writings by Arne Naess*. Berkley: Counterpoint. 2008. Print.

Reeve, Philip. *Mortal Engines*. London: Scholastic Children’s Books. 2001. Print.

**Biographical Note:**

I am a part-time PhD candidate at the University of Northampton researching ecocriticism and children’s fantasy literature. I am an Associate Lecturer within the English department leading the module Reading Literary Genres and lecture on American Literature and Shakespeare modules.

## Panel 1b:

### Think Local: Human Interference, Anthropogenic Contamination and Awareness

Kübra Baysal (Hacettepe University)

#### 'A Boomerang Effect: Poisoning the Water and Marine Ecosystem in the Anthropocene Nature'

Comprising 71 % of Earth surface, water is the source of life both for humans and other myriad forms of life. Human body along with nonhuman flora and fauna need water to persist their existence. However, it is also a natural element and intermediary force for human/nonhuman trans-corporeality highly pronounced in the Anthropocene world. Fresh water sources and underground waters are contaminated by human interference through food industry and agriculture. To illustrate, Yeşilırmak (Green River) Basin of the Black Sea Region in Turkey flowing through two regions and four cities has been specified to be highly polluted in recent years due to a great amount of waste produced by food industry, especially the sugar industry. Then again pesticides, herbicides and rodenticides are applied to the soil in agriculture eventually contacting with surface and underground waters in the area covering the river branches and a part of the Black Sea and affecting the fish in their constant intra-action with those human-induced changes in nature. When consumed by humans for a long period of time, the poisoned fish and water trigger biological transformations and diseases in humans, which display the inseparability of human and the nonhuman in their vulnerability in the face of changing water systems and habitats. Thus, humans are to realise whatever they perpetrate in nature, they shall eat up the outcomes in their struggle of existence which must obviously be more eco-conscious and focused on sustainability.

#### Biographical Note:

Having graduated from Hacettepe University English Language and Literature Department in 2008, I had my MA degree at Atatürk University English Language and Literature Department in May, 2013 and my thesis was on Doris Lessing's novel, *The Cleft*, from an ecofeminist perspective. I am still a Phd student at Hacettepe University English Language and Literature Department in Ankara, Turkey. I work at Kastamonu University, School of Foreign Languages as a lecturer of English.

**Unfortunately, Kübra was unable to attend the conference due to the recent military coup in Turkey, and the subsequent suspension of travel rights for civil servants and public employers. We have decided to deliver Kübra's paper via voice recording to highlight the impact of recent geo-political events on scholarly activities.** Kübra has invited delegates to message her for further discussion. You can contact her via email on: kbaysal@kastamonu.edu.tr



Sreejith Varma R. (Indian Institute of Technology Madras)

**'Living with Toxins: Ambikasuthan Mangad's *Enmakaje* and Kerala's Endosulfan Tragedy'**

Ambikasuthan Mangad's *Enmakaje* (2009) is a powerful toxic fiction written in Malayalam, a language spoken in the Kerala state and Lakshadweep islands of India, that dramatises the true story of the endosulfan pesticide disaster in the eponymous, predominantly tribal village in Kasaragod (Kerala). The novel offers mind-haunting images of deathscapes as the three-decade long aerial spraying of the organochlorine pesticide endosulfan using helicopters in the cashew nut plantations run by the state government-owned Plantation Corporation of Kerala (PCK) left the village a breeding ground for cancer, mental illness and other mysterious diseases. Employing a parable-esque narrative pattern, Mangad's novel relates how the socially-withdrawn lives led by the monkish protagonists Neelakantan and Devayani atop a wooded hill veer into socio-environmental justice activism as they trace the cause of their seven-year-old (although he looked like a year-old baby!) foster son's death to toxic exposure. The novel generously draws on real-life characters and episodes from the mass anti-toxic movement that successfully elicited a state-wide ban of the use of endosulfan in 2001. *Enmakaje* evocatively depicts "the sense of entrapment" (Buell, 648) felt by the denizens of the backward villages of Kasaragod and attributes the state-engineered ecoimperialism and environmental racism for precipitating this ecocatastrophe. The environmentalism of *Enmakaje* resonates with Stacy Alaimo's concept of 'trans-corporeality' that recognises bodies and places as continuous and interactionist and where chemical toxins transit easily and incessantly through the human body onto the more-than-human world and vice versa (Alaimo, 11-14). The paper will also argue that *Enmakaje* is an 'ecosickness' narrative that deploys the tropes of 'affect' and 'sickness' to elicit ethical responses to toxic endangerment (Houser 3-4).

**References:**

- Alaimo, Stacy. *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2010. Print.
- Buell, Lawrence. "Toxic Discourse." *Critical Inquiry*, 24.3 (1998): 639-665. . JSTOR. Web. 29 Jan. 2016.
- Houser, Heather. *Ecosickness in Contemporary U.S. Fiction: Environment and Affect*. New York: Columbia UP, 2014. Print.

**Biographical note:**

Sreejith Varma R. is a Ph.D student at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Chennai, India, working on Green Subaltern Writing in Malayalam. He is a joint winner of 2015 ASLE Translation Grant which supports their translation of *Mayilamma: Oru Jeevitham*. His translation of two Malayalam short stories by Narayan has appeared in the journals eDhvani and Muse India. His other publications include "Writing Back: Narayan's Kocharethi as the First Adivasi Novel in Malayalam" in the journal *Luminaire* (2015) and the book chapters titled, "The Possibilities of a River and a Dance: An Ecoethnographic Analysis of Kuttan Vayali's Bhagavathy aattu." (co-authored with Swarnalatha Rangarajan) for *Ecodocumentaries: Critical Essays*, edited by Rayson K. Alex and Susan Deborah (forthcoming) and "The Politics of Land, Water and Toxins: Reading the Life-narratives of Three Women Oikos-carers from Kerala" (co-authored with Swarnalatha Rangarajan) for *Women and Nature?: Beyond Dualism in Gender, Body, and Environment*, edited by Douglas Vakoch and Sam Mickey (forthcoming).

Wasinrat Nualsiri (University of Southampton)

### **‘Intercultural Citizenship’ in Teaching Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide* in Thai Higher Education’**

This study examines teacher and students’ responses to the representation of socio-political and ecological issues in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide* (2004) in the *Environmental Literature and Criticism* module taught at a public university in Thailand. I will use Michael Byram’s ‘intercultural citizenship’ (2008, 2012) in his concept of teaching foreign culture as my theoretical framework. Byram defines education in ‘intercultural citizenship’ as a response to socio-political aspects in different contexts and cultures. The concept comprises of six teaching characteristics which are ‘comparative orientation’, ‘multiple identities’, ‘variety in beliefs’, ‘social collaboration’, ‘shared attitude and knowledge’ and ‘commitment to values’ (Byram 2008). I point out that these features are implicit in the teaching of *The Hungry Tide* and in the students’ responses.

My analysis will demonstrate how the teacher’s presentation of *The Hungry Tide* reflects her attempt to make the issues in the text relevant to Thai students. In other words, her teaching approach suggests an application of the scenes in the text to the context of Thailand. The teacher makes a comparison between similar socio-political and environmental problems in postcolonial India and in Thailand. The lesson highlights problems of nature conservation projects and conflicting views of nature as root causes of displacement and terrorism in both countries. Moreover, the teacher points out how the novel presents a ‘model of postcoloniality’ which concerns mutual respect and co-operation between different groups of people. Her explanation proposes that she is aware of the necessity to address social and environmental justice to her students who are part of a privileged urban Thai society. The students’ responses suggest that the teacher’s explanation and the text make them aware of socio-political and ecological issues in India while understanding their own country. This paper contributes to a better understanding of postcolonial ecocriticism in Thai literature classroom.

#### **Biographical Note:**

Wasinrat Nualsiri is a PhD candidate in Modern Languages at the University of Southampton. Her thesis deals with intercultural dimensions of teaching ecocritical literature in Thai higher education. She has a BA and MA in English from Chiang Mai University and Chulalongkorn University, respectively. She has taught English at Naresuan University Thailand.

## Panel 2a:

### (Re)Aligning the Nature/Culture Dichotomy

Melanie Hacke (University of Exeter)

**“The Hidden Force: An Ecocritical Reading of George Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss* and Thomas Hardy’s *The Woodlanders*”**

Though the social and the cultural are traditionally perceived as the main ingredients of the Bildungsroman, this paper proposes to read the genre with regard to an ecocritical understanding of nature, in order to demonstrate that *Bildungshelden* are to a large extent influenced by the ecosystem they inhabit. The majority of studies on the Bildungsroman revolve around cultural and socio-political factors, yet an ecocritical reading of the Bildungsroman, both in social-historical and formal-aesthetic terms, can attest to the complex ecological intertwining of culture and nature. Such an approach is especially productive when applied to Victorian novels, which are commonly read as scripts of industrial capitalism and bourgeois culture, thereby emphasising mankind’s agency as a major geological and ecological force in the Anthropocene age. Helena Feder, the only critic who has hitherto studied the Bildungsroman from an ecocritical point of view, reads the genre as “culture’s own origin story, the humanist myth of its separation from and opposition to nature” (18). However, I would like to argue that the Bildungsroman can equally be read as nature’s own origin story, or ‘natural history’: the genre formulates its own version of human history as well as of nature’s history, which is shaped into the anthropocentric cultural construction that is “nature”. A close and contextual reading of *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) and *The Woodlanders* (1887) can function as a springboard for this research hypothesis, since both novels offer a historical evaluation of humanity’s relation to nature, and demonstrate how the *Bildungshelden* are rooted in or alienated from their natural environment.

#### **Biographical Note:**

Melanie Hacke graduated as Master of Western Literature (English and Latin) at the University of Leuven in 2015. She is currently completing a second master in Victorian Studies at the University of Exeter.

Francesco Carpanini (University of Tartu)

**'On the problematization of the nature-culture dichotomy in environmental thinking: naturalism, post-naturalism, multi-naturalism'**

This conference paper explores the possibility of approaching environmental philosophy across cultures starting from the problematization of the distinction between nature and culture. Its main objective is to rethink environmental philosophy by considering nature from different perspectives, which can be framed as naturalism, post-naturalism, and multi-naturalism. This paper presentation is primarily informed and inspired by two publications that question extensively the nature-culture dichotomy, namely Bruno Latour's *We have never been modern* and Philippe Descola's *Beyond nature and culture*. In particular, Latour's claim for symmetry in comparative anthropology and Descola's four ontologies represent two important attempts to broaden our horizon with respect to the topic of this paper. Taking their reflections as fundamental points of reference to encourage cross-cultural thinking about the ecological crisis means, first of all, being able to suspend the validity of any supposed universal and neutral concept of nature at the very bottom of cultures. The basic issue turns out to regard the superimposition of a contingent meaning of nature onto other cultures when moving across traditions of thought. In my view, the problematization of the nature-culture dichotomy can lead to an environmental philosophy that is able to fruitfully cross diverse naturalisms, by deepening our understanding of their ecological richness. Reducing the ubiquity of the nature-culture divide means moving beyond the task of looking at other naturalisms as different ways of sacralizing a given concept of nature that is considered as a cross-cultural constant. As a result, my reflection aims at delving into and fostering an environmental thinking that constructively engages with diverse "natures-cultures" in order to challenge one's taken-for-granted assumptions about nature and broaden the horizon of problem solving related to environmental concerns.

**Biographical Note:**

I am developing a PhD project about human-environment interactions across cultures at the Institute of Philosophy and Semiotics, University of Tartu (Estonia). I graduated in Communication (MSc) from the University of Gothenburg and in Philosophy (BA and MA) from the University of Bologna.

Camille Roulière (University of Adelaide/University of Caen Normandie)

**'Love Thy River: Eco-poetic Place-Making in Murray River Country (Murray-Darling Basin, Australia)'**

Unsustainable water management practices combined with climate-change-induced droughts have placed Murray River Country under unprecedented environmental threat. Marginal cultural responses to this threat include Patrick Jones' *Permapoesis*; *Ringbalin* (River Ceremony); Nici Cumpston's photographs; Ian Abdulla's paintings and Ngarrindjeri weaving. This paper investigates these alternative responses and argues that they epitomise an innovative approach to achieving global environmental sustainability.

Using visual supports (film extracts, photographs, maps), this presentation analyses these creative responses' commonalities:

- performativity and theatricality;
- mimicry of environmental cyclicity and resilience;
- un-anthropogenic propensities;
- local technical knowledges;
- ephemerality;
- multilingualism;

to demonstrate that their imaginings of nature-culture relationships highlight the paradoxes of future-oriented, compartmentalising and geographically disembodied governmental attempts to scientifically and economically deal with environmental threat and degradation on a global scale. Relying on alternative stories of Australian environmental design burgeoning in the margin of dominant myths, these grassroots responses focus on the present, local and cultural, thus promoting a genuinely holistic and ethical approach to place-making. They assimilate environmental management to creativity; sustainability to place-making. Environmental changes become both a challenge and an opportunity: a site of (cultural and ecological) crisis and creation. Continuity and permanence are not achieved through fixing nor restoring (*i.e.* forever controlling), but through transformative resilience as part of an eco-poetic creative process. These responses are not about caring, but loving. They are about connecting on a personal, intimate level with places in their unity-diversity while paradoxically being strengthened by global connections and networks. They are about advocating for local over global ecologies and impacts. As such, they position the Anthropocene not simply as a geological epoch, but also as a creative era marked by renewed and hyper-localised eco-poetic forms of place-making.

**Biographical Note:**

Camille is a cotutelle PhD candidate at the J. M. Coetzee Centre for Creative Practice (University of Adelaide, Australia) and ERIBIA (University of Caen Normandie, France). Her research maps and investigates the links between place and art, and particularly music, in Lower Murray Country (South Australia).

## Panel 2b:

### EcoGothic

Michelle Poland (University of Lincoln)

#### **'Towards a Gothic Ecology: A Chaotic Rereading of Pan in Algernon Blackwood's 'The Man Whom the Trees Loved''**

The Anthropocene, most essentially, is an ecosocially interwoven narrative of change, chaos, and interconnectedness. Up until well into the twentieth century, ecological theories favoured a portrait of nature that was fundamentally temperate and balanced; its changes gradual and purposeful. However, as many contemporary scientific theorists are learning, classical views of an Edenic, balanced natural world that have dominated scientific perceptions since at least the Enlightenment are no longer conducive to understanding the earth's increasingly unpredictable climate. 'An accurate narrative vision of the coming centuries and climate,' Heidi C. M. Scott asserts, 'requires our acceptance of chaos as a player in future scenarios.'<sup>1</sup> Just as Scott's thesis, *Chaos and Cosmos* (2014), persuasively demonstrates that a postmodern view of chaotic nature is shown to have lurking Romantic and Victorian literary foundations, this paper will further suggest that chaos ecology also has its roots in the Gothic. Drawing on Algernon Blackwood's tale, 'The Man whom the Trees Loved' from *Pans Garden: a Volume of Nature Stories* (1912), this inquiry will begin to unearth some of the ways in which the Pan trope could be conducive to, or even anticipatory of, the exploration of ecological concepts recognised today. By rereading transcendental Pan in the context of a Gothic ecology<sup>2</sup>, it will explore how Blackwood transforms perceptions of the forest from a quantifiable mass of wood, into a supernaturally powerful, communicative, dynamic, unpredictable, agentic, nurturing, unbounded and chaotic character. In doing so, it soon becomes clear that Blackwood expresses uneasiness toward the costs of anthropogenic disturbance in an already unstable nature and implicitly suggests that the repercussions of environmental degradation may have far greater consequences for humanity than of nature itself.

#### **Biographical Note:**

Michelle Poland is a full-time doctoral student researching a thesis on the 'EcoGothic Imagination' at the University of Lincoln. She is the Membership Secretary to The Tennyson Society and a Postgraduate Representative for the Executive Committee of The Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment, UK and Ireland.

---

<sup>1</sup> Heidi C. M. Scott, *Chaos and Cosmos: Literary Roots of Modern Ecology in British Nineteenth Century* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014), 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> See Lisa Kröger, 'Panic, paranoia, and pathos: ecocriticism in the eighteenth-century Gothic novel', in *EcoGothic*, 15-27.

Christopher Scott (University of Sheffield)

**'EcoGothic Exegesis: Interpreting the Postlapsarian Landscape in Algernon Blackwood's "The Lost Valley" and "The Heath Fire"'**

Challenger Deep, an underwater canyon in the Pacific Ocean approximately 35,800 feet below the surface, constitutes the deepest and most enigmatic frontier on Earth. After the first submariners momentarily reached this region in 1960, James Cameron, film director and deep-sea enthusiast, successfully navigated the trench on 26 March 2012, surpassing the previous record.<sup>3</sup> Notwithstanding this milestone in human achievement, Cameron's expedition highlights how modernization facilitates human penetration into the earth's remaining virgin environments. With the recent movement to (re)classify this geological age, the nomenclature associated with the term "Anthropocene" highlights human intervention in the natural world.<sup>4</sup> Retrospectively viewing cultural artifacts, namely literature, in the light of this pending geological classification would help uncover how cultural history has engaged with anthropogenic maltreatment of the natural environment.

Since the publication of Mary Shelley's canonical Gothic novel *Frankenstein* (1818; revised 1831), the literary Gothic mode has portrayed narratives that engage with the human/nature dichotomy. Such critics as Lisa Kröger, Catherine Lanone, and Tom J. Hillard have contributed recent literary investigations that evince environmental catastrophe and terrific constructions of wilderness in Gothic literature.<sup>5</sup> Though they reveal an environmental discourse within Gothic fiction, their readings limit themselves to texts from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Edwardian period in Britain (1901-14), showcasing such technological advances as mechanized flight and automobile transportation, exhibited a unique representation of modern society's ambivalent relationship with the natural world, and hitherto overlooked Gothic texts during this period offer a glimpse of this cultural anxiety. One writer in particular, Algernon Blackwood (1869-1951), substantiates this mentality in two of his short stories: "The Lost Valley" (1910) and "The Heath Fire" (1912). By closely analyzing these two narratives through an ecoGothic lens, my presentation will contend that Blackwood's texts demonstrate an Occidental anxiety concerning the wilderness because of Original Sin and society's response to a fallen world. These texts demonstrate this interpretation by utilizing biblical iconography to identify humanity's mortal condition as a consequence of Adam's fall, and Blackwood's protagonists attempt to subdue their limiting physical boundaries to discover an alternative escape from their perceptible mortal worlds. Dr. Stephen Winters in "The Lost Valley," for example, experiences an Adamic fall and simultaneously discovers the vestiges of Eden in a fallen wilderness. Jim O'Hara in "The Heath Fire" explores the moorlands to investigate the mysteriously malignant landscape and consequently encounters humanity's existential origins. Extending what Hillard refers to as "Gothic nature," this investigation examines the perilous environments in Blackwood's texts to help externalize a concealed root of

---

<sup>3</sup> *DEEPSEA CHALLENGE*. National Geographic. n. d. Web. 28 Mar. 2016.

<sup>4</sup> See P. J. Crutzen and E. F. Stoermer, "The 'Anthropocene.'" *Global Change Newsletter* (2000) 41: 17-18.

<sup>5</sup> See Kröger's "Panic, Paranoia, and Pathos: Ecocriticism in the Eighteenth-Century Gothic Novel"; Lanone's "Monsters on the Ice and Global Warming: from Mary Shelley and Sir John Franklin to Margaret Atwood and Dan Simmons"; and Hillard's "From Salem Witch to Blair Witch: The Puritan Influence on American Gothic Nature" in Andrew Smith and William Hughes, eds. *Ecogothic*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013.

anthropocentrism in society.<sup>6</sup> In so doing, this presentation altogether illuminates humanity's ambivalent relationship with the biosphere to help scholars further comprehend why modern Occidental societies wish to dominate the postlapsarian landscape.

**Biographical Note:** Christopher Scott was recently awarded a Master of Letters (with distinction) in The Gothic Imagination from University of Stirling with an emphasis on Gothic literature and film. He is currently a PhD candidate at University of Sheffield, and his most recent publication was an academic blogpost (March 2016) for the International Gothic Association titled "Gothic Fauna: Bestial Omens of Human Mortality in Hayao Miyazaki's *Princess Mononoke*." Christopher's research interests lie in the Gothic aesthetic and representations of the natural environment in literature and film.

---

<sup>6</sup> See Tom J. Hillard, "Deep into that Darkness Peering: An Essay on Gothic Nature." *ISLE* 16.4 (2009): 685–95.



### Panel 3a:

#### **Wilderness, Ethics and Non-Human Animal Encounters in Radical Landscape Poetry**

Veronica Fibisan (University of Sheffield)

#### **'Coastal Radical Landscape Poetry in the Anthropocene: Witnessing Wildness in Harriet Tarlo and Wendy Mulford's Creative Work'**

Coastal radical landscape poetry as a branch of nature writing is largely the result of fieldwork and writing in response of the shoreline. Harriet Tarlo and Wendy Mulford are two writers whose creative work fits into these categories. The challenges that they were faced with derive mainly from the context of the anthropocene and allow for a literary rewinding of the landscape through the integration of the human and the non-human spheres. This emphasizes the importance of the coastal landscape in the anthropocene and its predominant link between land and water. There are many different types of coastline surrounding the United Kingdom, however, they all play a crucial role in the environment, hosting endangered ecosystems, and faced with destruction as more and more development takes place, and more tons of litter washes up on them every year. Coastal radical landscape poetry allows for a reshaping in the way in which the wild is perceived in the anthropocene and the effect of the landscape upon the human and non-human worlds. The coastal creative corpus of both Tarlo and Mulford is also anchored by a substrate of ecofeminism and this allows for a unique bond to be established between women and nature. I shall be looking into how the wild is 'captured' in these unsettled lands and how the coastal ecosystem reveals itself gradually and grows upon the human element as unperceivably as the incoming tide.

#### **Biographical Note:**

Veronica Fibisan, is a PhD student in English Literature at the University of Sheffield whose areas of interest include ecocriticism and landscape poetry. She has published creative work notably in *CAST* and *The Sheffield Anthology*. She has a hands-on approach to writing and spends notable time roaming the British coastline.

Joanna Dobson (Sheffield Hallam University)

**'A Menace to England': the egg collector as arch-villain in two bird narratives of the 1940s**

Two bird narratives published in 1949 – *The Awl Birds* by JK Stanford and *Adventure Lit Their Star* by Kenneth Allsop – are lightly fictionalised accounts of actual events that caused a stir not just in the world of ornithology but also in the nation as a whole. *The Awl Birds* tells the story of the return of breeding avocets to the Suffolk coast after an absence of nearly 100 years, while *Adventure Lit Their Star* focuses on little ringed plovers, which nested in England for the first time alongside gravel pits opened up by postwar reconstruction works.

Both books feature an arch-villain in the form of an egg collector. *The Awl Birds* in particular describes the egg collector in extreme terms, even as a direct enemy of King and country. In this presentation, I will ask why there was such strong condemnation of a pastime that had only recently been considered respectable, and what the books might reveal about the factors that can shift ethical attitudes towards nonhuman animals.

**Biographical Note:**

I am studying for an MA English by Research at Sheffield Hallam University. My research focuses on human-bird relationships in postwar British literature.

Andrew Jeffrey (Sheffield Hallam University)

**'Moss Valley Fieldwork: towards a poetics for non-human animal encounter'**

For the past year I have been visiting The Moss Valley in Sheffield on a weekly basis to write on site, concentrating on writing about the non-human animals I have encountered. Moss Valley is part of Sheffield's green belt, containing Ancient Woodland classed as a Site of Special Scientific Interest; it is also used as a site for agriculture, permaculture and animal husbandry and is part of the area designated as suitable for fracking. As such it is a site characterised by a number of competing discourses: environmental, scientific, economic, managerial and political.

I will present some writing which uses open form poetry, found text, poetics, journal entries and literary criticism; it works with spatial layout to ensure that each genre of writing is visibly entangled by encounters with other discourses and genre. The layout enables the writing to explore The Moss Valley as a site of processual encounter as well as allowing contestation of the various discourses which aim to delimit and control the site. It also aims to encourage the reader to be involved in the generation of meaning by connecting with the text in different ways, giving a sense of the writing's involvement in wider cultural meanings.

The poetry consists of writing relating to particular animal encounters that also draw upon found text. Literary criticism considers the work of Colin Simms, Maggie O Sullivan and Helen MacDonald. Poetics considers the writing's relationship to ecocriticism, projective verse, discourses concerning the site and Animal Studies. The entanglement of these strands generate the tension which results in the creation of further new work, I aim to disclose this process and involve the reader in it.

**Biographical Note:**

I am a practice based Creative Writing PhD candidate at Sheffield Hallam University writing about encounters with non-human animals in particular landscapes. My poems have appeared in 'Matter', 'Route 57' and 'Plumwood Mountain Review: An Australian Journal of Eco-poetics'.

## Panel 3b:

### Sea Change

Alexandra Campbell (University of Glasgow)

#### **'On A Razed Beach: Island Eco-poetics in Scotland and the Caribbean'**

Employing a novel archipelagic framework this paper will present a new eco-material study of one of Hugh MacDiarmid's most-lauded poems, 'On a Raised Beach' taken from his collection *Stony Limits* (1934). For many, MacDiarmid's bleak and stony poetry is evidence of a disenchanted world, a world reduced to the blank and lifeless materiality of stone and rock. I argue that the continued attention to the geological forms of 'bare' islands and their harsh 'barrenness' actively resists the 'Romantic Cult of islands' (Grove: 1995) embodied by 'trippers' narratives, and presents an early eco-materialist perspective which recognises how the 'image of dead or thoroughly instrumentalized matter feeds human hubris and our earth-destroying fantasies of conquest and consumption' (Bennett: 2010). I argue that the rock and ritual of MacDiarmid's poem does not divest the earth and world around him of vitality, but rather directs our focus to new modes of eco-poetic interaction and crafts a new 'intimacy with the physical environment' (Brannigan: 2015). MacDiarmid's factual, scientific, and stony ruminations work to provide an alternative vision of Scotland's islands, one that is no longer shrouded in the 'uncontrolled purples and golds' of Romantic enchantment, but is astutely grounded in a material reality. Viewing the work in relation to contemporary postcolonial ecocritical perspectives, the paper closes with a consideration of the beach space as a contested image in contemporary island eco-poetics. The essays 'Isla Incognita' (Walcott: 2005) and 'The Burning Beach' (Glissant: 2006) will be used to advance an eco-materialist reading of MacDiarmid's poem, placing it within an archipelagic framing with other island narratives. Delving 'beneath the conventional image' and the 'luxuriously fatal imagine' (Glissant: 2005) of the tripper's perspective, these writers reject the postcard poetics of the island imaginary, and importantly consider the island as a physical reality that is under environmental threat.

#### **Biographical Note:**

Alexandra is a third year PhD student from the University of Glasgow. Her thesis is titled 'Archipelagic Poetics: Island Ecologies in Atlantic and Pacific worlds' and presents a relational study of island eco-poetry from the Caribbean to Oceania. She is currently the General Editor of [EnviroHum.com](http://EnviroHum.com), a new interdisciplinary and experimental project for artists and academics working in the environmental Humanities.

Hazel Lesley Harrison (Hull University)

**'Mapping the edge: poetries of place of the North Sea coast'**

In the broad schools of ecopoetry and literary geography, the coastline itself is often overlooked, being either a handy metaphorical vantage point from which to gaze at the ocean, or the final boundary of an inland territory. There is a sense of the infinite, of possibility; we anticipate a sudden sense of open space, of phenomenological decompression, as it were. Our instinctive understanding is complicated by our now-ingrained ethical response to the natural world.

However, beneath this, through close reading of poetry which deliberately and self-consciously addresses the shoreline, it is possible to elucidate distinct themes which show our ongoing self-location and re-orientation inside this landscape. The coast is a place of dim ancestral memory, an end-in-itself, a boundary between order and chaos, a place of authentic existence: these understandings are not mutually exclusive, but co-exist and surface in turn.

These themes will be the focus of my presentation. As well as briefly discussing the work of some contemporary poets whose work uses the coastline as context and/or metaphor, I will also question the possibility of **not** locating the self in landscape, as both a poetic and an ethical stance. I will then describe my own practice-led research round the North Sea rim, and read extracts from the body of creative work that it is growing from it.

**Biographical Note:**

Lesley Harrison's publications include *Ecstatics* (Brae Editions), a study of birds in the Orkney landscape, and *Beyond the Map* (Mariscat), a sequence following the route of the Arctic whalers. She lives on the Angus coast, and is a PhD candidate at Hull University.

Rebecca Ford (University of the Highlands and Islands)

**'Stories from the Sea: why maggots, marine plastics, and marine renewable energy matter!'**

This paper reflects on-going fieldwork in Orkney as part of my PhD project. It is concerned with the way stories can show us the deep connections and contradictions in our relationships with each other and our environment. From beachcombing and learning that every piece of apparently anonymous rubbish has a history, to seeing the connection between maggots and bird migration, I explore my growing understanding of our inherent interconnectedness with our environment. This sense of interconnection is also reflected in my approach to communication and language as dialogical - with meaning emerging through embodied interaction. My fieldwork experiences suggest the important role of narratives as part of this meaning making process and by exploring the links between the apparently unrelated worlds of maggots, marine plastics and marine renewable energy I hope to show why the stories we tell matter for our future in the Anthropocene.

**Biographical Note:**

Rebecca Ford is a PhD student at University of the Highlands and Islands, Centre for Nordic Studies, based in Orkney. Her research project 'Words and Waves: a dialogical approach to discourse, community, and marine renewables in Orkney', is looking at the role of narrative within discourse communities. She was elected as one of the Postgraduate Representatives on the ASLE-UKI executive committee in 2015.

## Panel 4a:

### New Modes/Forms of Engagement

Jacob Henry Leveton

#### 'New Atmosphere(s) for Action: Contemporary Art & Climate Change after Paris'

The contemporary German installation artist Julius Popp's 2015 work *bit.fall*, was recently produced and shown on the Pont de la Rue de l'Aqueduc near the transportation hub of Gare du Nord in Paris as part of the « Atmosphères » Nuit Blanche all-night art festival ahead of the vital twenty-first United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP21) global climate summit. The artwork both responds to—and is part of—a trajectory of artistic production catalyzed in the romantic period and continuing through the present. It was in 1777 that the English engineer James Watt, along with his commercial partner Matthew Boulton, patented the Boulton & Watt Steam engine, which built upon, and made more efficient, the earlier Newcomen model (invented in 1712), principally through the introduction of new capabilities of creating steam power through ever-more optimized means of burning coal. The result was that the burning of the fossil fuel accelerated, anthropogenic carbon emissions began accruing in the atmosphere at increasingly high rates, the pollution came to pervade the air, and the end of the eighteenth century became the threshold condition through which human-economic activity began to enter onto the stage of history as the principal driver of the world's climate. Because a small number of romantic-period artists and writers represented the artistic first responders to conditions associated with modern climate change—like William Blake, who spoke out against pollution related to the introduction of carbonintensive fossil fuels, declaring in the oft-quoted 'Introduction' to his *Songs of Innocence* a wish to 'stain the water clear' with his writing—and artists of the present day, such as Popp, continue to operate within this trajectory of artistic production, I ask what the implications of romanticism are for a critical ecological art of the present. In this paper, I aim to move beyond mere reception-based approaches, marshaling my own curatorial field work developed over the 2015-2016 year before, during, and after the COP21 Conference in Paris, to illuminate shared problems, possibilities, and solutions envisioned across the field of contemporary French visual culture for confronting conditions at the core of anthropogenic climate change. Ultimately, I argue that the most effective art grappling with climate change—sharing a vector that includes romantic artistic production—is non-representational, and intersects with Theodor Adorno's aesthetic theory of "autonomous art," art geared to negate the empirical reality behind greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

#### Biographical Note:

Jacob Henry Leveton is Ph.D. candidate in Modern and Contemporary Art History at Northwestern. In 2015-2016, Leveton was a visiting fellow at the Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris through Northwestern's Paris Program in Critical Theory. He serves as co-chair of the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism Graduate Student Caucus.

Rut Blomqvist (University of Gothenburg)

**'The Paradox of the Anthropocene: A Songwriter-Critic-Activist Perspective'**

While the concept of the Anthropocene suggests that humanity has become the central force of a geological epoch, the result of human dominance on earth can be human extinction. How can we begin to understand what could be termed the paradox of the Anthropocene: that human beings achieve centrality only to risk extinction?

In approaching this question, we must cross boundaries. On the basis of my experiences as a songwriter and performer, literary critic, and political activist, I will illustrate why I believe environmental issues demand that we even transcend the boundaries between art, research, and politics. This is a common notion among indigenous scholars and activists, as can be seen in the work of among others Vine Deloria Jr. and Kim TallBear. The need to cross boundaries is stressed by other researchers in many different fields but then tends to be restricted to the crossing of disciplinary boundaries within academia; ecocritical theory and projects like the UN sustainability network SDSN are examples of this. In politics, environmental issues question silo thinking on the national level, demanding that different departments coordinate their work, and—more importantly—they question the very borders between groups of human beings, because climate change is global and because global power relations and unfair resource distribution are the sources of the issues at hand.

This presentation thus explores the Anthropocene through a songwriter-critic-activist perspective, combining artistic performance and reading with an analysis of the role of the arts in the environmental movement—exemplified by the climate fiction of Kim Stanley Robinson—and a discussion of the experience of developing a green political platform. Art, criticism, and politics together can help us not only understand the paradox of the Anthropocene but hopefully also deal with it.

**Biographical Note:**

Rut Blomqvist is a songwriter, PhD student, and activist. She writes eerie pop songs that connect psychology and politics, studies the climate fiction genre in relation to the sustainability discourse, and is part of a group developing a political platform for the student organisation of the Swedish Green party.



Peter Adkins (University of Kent)

### **'The Ineluctable Thereness of the Anthropocene: Joyce, Modernism and Ecology'**

How do we approach Stephen Dedalus's famous pronouncement of the 'ineluctable modality of the visible' in the age of the Anthropocene, an epoch characterised by an unsettling of the conventional scales of subjective perception? As Stephen walks amongst the oceanic detritus of Sandymount Stand on the morning of 16<sup>th</sup> June 1904, ruminating on the protean fluxes of all material reality and his own self, the slippage between external reality and inner subjectivity reflected in the text's movement between free indirect discourse and interior monologue, Joyce teases at a cognitive dissonance between individual sight and planetary perception. Indeed, whilst *Ulysses* (1922) has not typically been read as an ecological-novel, Joyce's deployment of contrastingly stylised episodes, all of which break with conventional novelistic units of space and time in their representation of materiality, and his ambition to 'depict the earth which is prehuman and presumably posthuman' (*Letters* 180), both speak very clearly to current concerns about how we reconceptualise the human as an agent and the planet as an environment. Whilst Timothy Clark has recently suggested that 'the institution of the novel forms a limit both to the possible impact of climate change fiction and to the hope of ecocriticism' since climate change asserts 'counter-intuitive demands on representation' (189-91), this paper will suggest that modernist interrogation of literary aesthetics, such as that which we find in *Ulysses*, can be seen to productively *perform* the problems of scale, agency and cognition that the Anthropocene poses. Using Joyce's *Ulysses* as a case study in modernist modes of representation and placing his novel in dialogue with both contemporaneous writing on the nature of reality and contemporary ecocritical theory engaged with the Anthropocene, this paper will explore what it means to read modernism in the time of the climate change.

#### **Works Cited**

Clark, Timothy. *Ecocriticism On The Edge: The Anthropocene As A Threshold Concept*. London: Bloomsbury, 2015.

Joyce, James. *Ulysses: The Corrected Text*. London: Penguin Books, 1986.

Joyce, James. *Letters of James Joyce*. Ed. Stuart Gilbert. London: Faber, 1957.

#### **Biographical Note:**

Peter Adkins is a PhD candidate at the University of Kent in Canterbury. His doctoral thesis is provisionally entitled 'Modernism in the Time of the Anthropocene: Ecology, Aesthetics and the Novel'. He is a member of ASLE-UKI and BAMS.

## Panel 4b:

### Internal and External Crisis: Landscape, Cityscape and Identity

Danielle Howarth (University of Edinburgh)

#### “Y-clongen also a tre”: Trees and Gender Identities in the Middle English *Sir Orfeo*

*Sir Orfeo* is an early fourteenth-century Middle English adaptation of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth. It exists within a corpus of medieval romance literature that relied on the settings of the forest, wilderness, and garden, and is therefore inherently preoccupied with the boundaries between the human and the non-human. In this text, these boundaries become blurred as Orfeo, lamenting the abduction of his wife by a fairy king, forsakes his kingdom and retreats to the wilderness. Not only does this abduction occur beneath a symbolically multivalent grafted tree, but Orfeo also interacts with a hollow tree during his exile, and is eventually described in terms of tree imagery. In this paper, I will argue that trees underline the fluidity of Orfeo's gender identity throughout this poem; the natural world is consistently associated with the feminine, and Orfeo becomes part of nature as he forsakes the markers of his cultured, masculine identity. Investigating this metaphorical exploitation of trees illuminates medieval attitudes towards nature, which were influenced by the dominant patriarchal discourses that subjugated both women and nature throughout the Middle Ages and beyond. As liminal as the central symbol of the grafted tree, Orfeo traverses these attitudes. Therefore, though medieval understandings of nature/culture, human/non-human, and masculine/feminine binaries were ostensibly straightforward, reading texts such as *Sir Orfeo* through the lens of trees can reveal more nuanced perspectives that still resonate today.

#### Biography

I completed my undergraduate degree at the University of Sydney, and moved to the University of Edinburgh in 2014 to undertake an MSc in Medieval Literatures and Cultures. I am now a first-year PhD candidate focussing on trees and gender in Middle English romance.

Holly Parker (University of Lincoln)

**'Shattering the glass of the 'Mirrored Room': Presenting a shift away from artificial aesthetics in postmillennial city in Jennifer Egan's *Look at Me*'**

Gaia Vince argues 'The Anthropocene is the urban age' and with approximately 74% of the developed world living in urban landscapes, it isn't difficult to see his logic. How, then, is the age of the Anthropocene reflected and challenged in the literature of city space? Jennifer Egan's novel, *Look at Me*, focuses on the relationship between spectacle and the self, rooted within New York's cityscape. Charlotte's accident and subsequent movement towards an ethical engagement with the self, which I shall argue within this paper, interrogates the movement in America towards media culture and a privileging of artificial, man-made society. Using Kristeva's work on the 'Society of the Spectacle', and Baudrillard's notion of the 'cult of the body', this paper shall outline how *Look at Me* privileges the 'natural' body above the 'naturalised', and exhibits a shift away from artificial aesthetics in the age of Anthropocene.

**Biographical Note:**

Holly Parker, MA student at University of Lincoln. Research interests include: contemporary literature; popular culture; city space; virtual space; New Sincerity; women's writing; the body. She is currently writing on the representation of the contemporary city.

Joanne Coates

### **'Fictional Histories of the Landscape'**

This twenty---minute presentation with accompanying visual material will weave together a new form of performative art writing that aims to reflect on how our place within the world is shaped by human activity. It will look at how we can recast human relationships with natural landscapes and the forgotten histories inherent within landscapes. How can Visual Art aim at exploring this?

By demonstrating how fictional histories of the landscape can throw our current relationship with the landscape into crisis. Furthermore, I will investigate through visual art the current meanings, distribution, and impact of our visual relationship with the landscape. I will Examine ways in which photography influences memory, individual and collective identities in order to develop and understand ways of expanding the emotional connection between individuals and the natural world.

*"Re-visions. One could re---turn, go back and have another look. One could turn the clock back-wards. With eyes wide open and crystal clear, one could re-view, look again. One could make a re-visit; en route revisions could be made. Then one could tell the correct version, the authentic story. One could tell how it really happened."*

*Re visions, Writing the Image. Yve Lomax.*

My work in the field of visual art performs in a both a practical and poetic manner a human relationship with the landscape in which new avenues can be explored creating an interdisciplinary dialogue between writers, other artists and academics within the field.

#### **Biographical Note:**

Joanne Coates image-making is both poetic and practical. Coates uses the medium of photography to translate visual stories that lie somewhere between myth, reality and the everyday. Her work addresses our relation to place. Based in Yorkshire.

## **Panel 5a:**

### **Valuing Nature: Environmental Law and Action**

Jamie Kunz (University of Lincoln)

#### **'Considering Environmental Ethics in the Formulation of Legal Responses to International Environmental Issues'**

An unprecedented rise in global ecological awareness during the second half of the twentieth century fostered greater interest in the way that human beings interact with nature. The growth of ecocentric perspectives, which promote the inherent worth of the natural world as opposed to their instrumental value as resources for the benefit of humanity, developed as a response to the traditional anthropocentric worldview based in Western philosophical traditions. The deep ecology movement proposed by Arne Næss embodies many of these concerns.

International environmental law has sought to enable coordinated transboundary responses to environmental problems. Undue focus has been placed on anthropocentric imperatives when constructing legal mechanisms to address environmental issues. This trait has been prevalent throughout the modern development of international environmental law beginning with the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. It is now encapsulated under the concept of sustainable development, which has been placed at the centre of international environmental governance since the 1992 Rio Conference on Environment and Development.

My paper will focus on the application of environmental ethics when formulating legal responses to international environmental problems. Given that environmental law governs the relationship between humans and nature, it is imperative that lawyers engage with ethical considerations when developing the law. The recognition of the Anthropocene as a new geological epoch may encourage greater focus on these ethical considerations and discussion regarding the reasons, whether strictly anthropocentric or otherwise, for creating legal instruments to address environmental concerns. My paper will discuss legal reflections of ecocentric perspectives, such as the wild law movement, and consider examples where ecological perspectives have already been incorporated into international law. It will then use the international climate change regime as a case study to consider the potential roles of legislative and judicial bodies.

#### **Biographical Note:**

Jamie is a PhD Candidate and Hourly Paid Lecturer at the University of Lincoln. His research considers whether environmental objectives would be better served if international courts and tribunals moved further towards an ecocentric perspective in their jurisprudence and procedures.

Jack Lampkin (University of Lincoln)

## **'Eco-Philosophy and Environmental Harm: The Case of Fracking in the New Geological Epoch'**

Hydraulically fracturing onshore shale and coal formations is a process that has expanded in unprecedented fashion in the United States since the turn of the Twenty-First Century. The UK government passed the Infrastructure Act in February 2015, a move to expand the hydraulic fracturing industry following from the economic success provided by shale gas and oil in the US. The UK government believes that fracking will provide a bridge to a low-carbon future as activities in the North Sea continue to decline and exploring the UK's onshore natural gas resources becomes ever-more appealing. However, resistance to the industry is increasing in the UK in light of severe cases of environmental contamination caused by fracking documented in the US, and by the seismic activity that occurred at the Preese Hall-1 wellsite in Lancashire, UK in 2011.

This paper will seek to explain why the UK government is pursuing hydraulic fracturing instead of cleaner, renewable sources of energy technology. In order to do this the paper will be split into two sections. Firstly, an explanation of the hydraulic fracturing industry will be presented, alongside the documented evidence of environmental and social consequences of the industry. The second section will use theories embedded within green criminology to explain the relationship between environmental harm and the promotion of a harmful fossil fuel industry. This will be done by focusing on eco-philosophy and specifically the work of Mark Halsey and Rob White. Halsey and White apply three distinct principles of eco-philosophy to the understanding of human-induced environmental harm including anthropocentrism, ecocentrism and biocentrism. These eco-philosophies are re-applied to the process of hydraulic fracturing to better understand ways in which we as humans can view our economic relationship with the environment.

### **Biographical Note:**

Jack Lampkin is a first-year PhD researcher in the School of Law at the University of Lincoln. His PhD focuses on the impact of environmental harm on victims concentrating on the hydraulic fracturing (or 'fracking') industry in the UK.

Emma Must (Queen's University)

**'The Ballad of Yellow Wednesday: eco-activism; eco-poetry?'**

At dawn on 9 December 1992, the bulldozers of the Department of Transport, accompanied by dozens of security guards wearing yellow fluorescent jackets, moved on to Twyford Down in Hampshire – a mile-long sweep of rolling chalk in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. With its two Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Scheduled Ancient Monuments from the Bronze and Iron Ages, Twyford Down was theoretically as protected from development as any place in Britain could possibly be. Unfortunately, however, it stood in the path of the proposed 'missing link' of the M3 motorway, designed to cut seven minutes off the journey time between Southampton and London. This was just one of over 600 new road schemes announced in 1989 by Margaret Thatcher's government, described at the time as 'the biggest road-building programme since the Romans'. Having grown up a few miles away, I became heavily involved in the protests to stop this road, including a period of incarceration in Holloway Prison as one of the 'Twyford Seven'. I subsequently helped to create a network of local groups across Britain which played a significant role in stopping more than 500 British road schemes by the end of the 1990s, for which I was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize for Europe.

I will present a brief factual account of the campaign, including photographs, and read a number of poems from my forthcoming poetry collection, *The Ballad of Yellow Wednesday*.

**Biographical Note:**

Formerly an environmental campaigner, Emma Must is currently a PhD student in the Seamus Heaney Centre at Queen's University, Belfast. Her debut poetry pamphlet, *Notes on the Use of the Austrian Scythe*, was published by Templar in 2015. In 2016 she was named as one of the 'Rising Generation' of Irish poets by *Poetry Ireland Review*.

## Panel 5b:

### Poetic Departures: Ethics, Aesthetics and Poetics

Alice Tarbuck (University of Dundee)

#### 'Towards an 'avant-pastoral': Thomas A. Clark's recuperative aesthetics'

Thomas A. Clark (1944-) is a poet and visual artist born in Greenock, Scotland. Influenced by the 1960s Concrete movement, Zen Buddhism and minimalism, Clark's work spans installations, book-objects, ringtones and sound works, and has a focus on the natural world.

Robert Macfarlane has declared Clark's work 'a magnificent, quiet defence of the pastoral'. Clark's work does not so much defend the pastoral, however, as refigure it. Through formal innovation and a focus on the materiality of the text, Clark creates artist's books and poem-objects that transform the relationship between text, image, and poem.

Through this program of innovation, Clark is able to reanimate the pastoral, moving it away from what Joshua Corey calls 'a nostalgic stance of yearning for a past as vivid as it is imaginary' and toward a poetics of personal and environmental recuperation.<sup>7</sup>

This paper seeks to understand trace the techniques by which Clark's formally innovative poetry dismantles and rebuilds our understanding of the pastoral. Of particular interest are his engagement with open field poetics; his attention to the space of the page; his interest in exploring and delineating new forms, and his meticulous adoption and refiguring of received poetic forms. It will engage particularly with the idea of poem-as-object and they way it can alter the spaces into which it is placed. In this way, we can come to understand new ways of engaging with pastoral literature and its tropes eschews mimeticism, sentimentalism, and the occlusion of social and ecological realities.

#### Biographical Note:

Alice Tarbuck is a PhD candidate at the University of Dundee, where she is undertaking a collaborative doctoral degree, funded by the AHRC, and in partnership with the Scottish Poetry Library. Her research is on the poetry and practice of Scottish poet and artist Thomas A. Clark.

---

<sup>7</sup> Corey, Joshua, "'Tansy City": Charles Olson and the Prospects for Avant-Pastoral', in *Comparative American Studies*, Vol. 7 No. 2, June, 2009, 111–127, pp 111.



Rachel Nisbet

### **'Alice Oswald's Listening Ethic, as We Jog on through the Anthropocene'**

The Anthropocene names our species' geosphere-sized footprint: we are "a significant geological and morphological force", capable of producing the Earth's 6<sup>th</sup> "Mass Extinction" event (Crutzen and Stoermer, 2000 17-18; Brenchley and Harper, 1998, 392). With the Great Acceleration, factors including increasing human population, water and fertiliser use; deforestation; and the flooding of the marine environment with plastics, are changing terrestrial and marine ecosystems (Syvitski, 2012 13). In the marine realm, anthropogenic environmental change has the potential to stress 600 families of Modern marine fauna, and 100 families of Palaeozoic marine fauna (Sepkoski, 1990, quoted in Brenchley, 313). Alice Oswald's poetry is aware of our species' contemporary ecological footprint: for instance, "Greyhound" assumes the ethical responsibility of "taking the steep taps out of [grey folk's] tips and heels", to bring the aliveness of other species to the fore, species pulsing to rhythms other than our bipedal footfall ("Greyhound", 14). "Listen, listen, listen, listen" the trochees of "Greyhound" prod; inviting the reader to assume what Gifford calls a "dialogic listening mode" ("Greyhound", 11; Gifford, 2016, 16-17). In this paper, I will explore how Oswald's poetry destabilises what she calls the bipedal, "jog-along pentameter" of much Renaissance and Romantic poetry, sensitising us to "a trickling stumbling way of moving" (2013, 23). I will argue her trickling, stumbling, experiential poetry dramatizes the precarity of individual lives, and emphasises the importance of community networks to foster the (bio)diversity that gives rise to stable ecosystems.

#### **Bibliography**

Brenchley Patrick J. and David A. T Harper (1998) *Palaeoecology: Ecosystems, environments and evolution*. London: Chapman and Hall.

Crutzen Paul, and Eugene Stoermer (2000) *Global Change Newsletter* 41, pp. 17-18.

Gifford, Terry (2016) "Five modes of 'listening deeply' to pastoral sounds", *Green Letters*, 20:1, pp. 8- 19.

Syvitski, James (2012) "Anthropocene: An Epoch of Our Making" *Global Change*, 78, pp. 12-15.

Oswald, Alice (2007) *The Thing in the Gap-Stone Stile*. London: Faber and Faber.

Oswald, Alice and Deryn Rees-Jones (2013) "Face to Face" in *The Poetry Review* 103:4, pp. 23-33.

#### **Biographical Note:**

My current PhD investigates the period when rivers became regulated by hydrological science (1798 – Present). Since Wordsworth's *The Prelude* was drafted in 1798, 48,000 large dams were built, and half the world's wetlands drained. My readings of *The Prelude*, *Daniel Deronda*, *Finnegans Wake*, *Dart*, contrast the 'environmental ethics' offered by these river narratives.