Bath Spa University

Research Centre for Environmental Humanities

Inaugural Symposium
15-16 December 2016

Environmental Humanities:
Doing Interdisciplinarity with Depth

It is increasingly well-recognised that today's complex socio-environmental problems cannot be adequately understood, let alone redressed, from either side of the nature-culture divide that structured the modern constitution of knowledge, and that remains embedded in our educational and research institutions, as well as in dominant cultural imaginaries and social practices. Over the past few decades a growing number of scholars on both sides of the great divide have embraced the challenge of multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary research. In some cases, this has also entailed creative conversations between modern Western and other ways of knowing.

Bath Spa University's Research Centre for Environmental Humanities seeks to advance this multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary project across the University, in collaboration with artists, scholars, extra-academic organisations, and the wider community, locally, nationally and internationally. However, we also recognise that this is easier said than done. In our inaugural symposium, we therefore want to move beyond motherhood statements to explore the challenges involved in doing

interdisciplinarity well and ‘at depth’ across the Environmental Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and to consider the impediments and opportunities that might line our potential pathways to impact.

Among the key questions that we will be pursuing with a group of eminent scholars from diverse disciplines and inter-disciplines are the following:

- What is the place of in-depth specialist knowledge in the inter- and transdisciplinary space of the Environmental Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences?
- Might the distinct methodologies conventionally deployed by different disciplines express deeper onto-epistemological divides, and if so, how might these be exposed and negotiated?
- With increasing acknowledgement of the value of local and indigenous knowledges (e.g. in the 2014 IPCC Report on Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability), there is a risk that such traditional stores of knowledge might be mined for global policy agendas that disregard the particular interests, values and ontologies of generally marginalised and disempowered communities. How might this risk be averted?
- What diplomatic protocols might be called for in conducting cross- and inter-cultural, along with inter- and transdisciplinary research in the Environmental Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences?
- As policy-makers press for greater interdisciplinarity, notably in response to the ‘global challenges’ posed by the UN’s new Sustainable Development goals, do we need new models of evaluation to ensure scholarly rigour while fostering innovation?
- How might inter- and transdisciplinary research best be advanced within higher education? What challenges does this pose to current institutional structures, degree programmes, and pedagogies?
- What impediments and opportunities exist for researchers in the Environmental Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences to engage effectively with extra-academic communities, media, businesses, NGOs, and policy makers?
- What types of national and international association and vehicles of communication might provide the best avenues for advancing the Environmental Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, locally, nationally and internationally?

These questions will be addressed through a series of multi-disciplinary panels relating to particular topics and aspects of Arts, Humanities and Social Science research.

Schedule

15/12 (Newton Park, Commons Building)

3.30-5.15 Afternoon tea meet and greet (CM137)

5.15-7.00 Opening plenary (public event): Bridging the Great Divide (G23)

Opening: Chair, Richard Kerridge

Mike Hulme (Climate and Culture, King's College, London)
Poul Holm (History and Environmental Humanities, Trinity University, Dublin)
Wendy Wheeler (Culture, Ecology and Biosemiotics, London Metropolitan University and Goldsmiths College, London)
With Maggie Gee (Creative Writing, BSU)

7.00-8.00 Official launch (Vice-Provost John Strachan) with wine reception and introduction to Media Wall art display, "The Derwent Project," a collaboration between David Stephenson and Martin Walch, in foyer

Friday 16/12 (Corsham Court, Corsham, Barn Building)

9-10.30 Onto-epistemologies and ethics

10.30-10.50 Tea/coffee

10.50-12.20 Spatio-temporalities

12.20-1.20 Lunch (and campus walk, weather permitting)

1.20-2.50 Inter-species connectivities

2.50-4.20 NaturalCultural calamities

4.20-4.40 Tea/coffee

4.40-6.20 Eco-poetries and ecopoetics

6.20-7.00 Concluding discussion

7.15-9.00 Dinner at Biddestone Arms

Opening forum speakers:

Mike Hulme, Professor of climate and culture, King's College London, whose study of climate change has moved progressively from natural science to social science and to humanities, but all the time broadly within the scope of the discipline of geography.

Wendy Wheeler, Emeritus Professor of English Literature and Cultural Inquiry, who was thrilled to discover, 12 years ago, the inter-discipline of biosemiotics. Here humanities scholars in semiotics work alongside biological scientists to explore the communicative life of all organisms and the ecological natural-cultural systems of which they are a part.

Poul Holm, Professor of Environmental History at Trinity College, Dublin, whose research into the travails of North Atlantic fisheries c. 1400-1700, as well as contemporary oceanic ecologies, entails the interdisciplinary combination of marine science and history.

and Bath Spa's own **Maggie Gee**, an award-winning novelist and professor of creative writing, was influenced as a very young woman by a friendship with the founder of British ecology, CS Elton. Her novels from the 1980s onwards, from *Light Years* to *The Flood*, have also been informed by the science of climate change and by evolutionary biology.

Symposium speakers:

Onto-epistemologies and ethics: Chair, Paul Reid-Bowen

Dr Paul Reid-Bowen is a Senior Lecturer in Religions, Philosophies and Ethics at Bath Spa University. His teaching and research interests encompass ecological philosophy, existentialism, and new religions and religious movements (notably feminist and nature religions). He is the author of *Goddess as Nature: Towards a Philosophical Theology* (Ashgate, 2007) and is currently writing a manuscript on the dark ecological future and the crisis of civilization.

James Fairhead (Environmental Anthropology, University of Sussex)

Termites, mud daubers and their earths: a multispecies approach to fertility and power in West Africa

This paper is less about onto-epistemology than about the way some people live with the humble 'potter' wasps and termites of West Africa. The works of these insects are, however, are anything but humble. First, in a very real sense they enable human reproduction: these two insects transform earth into soils that many pregnant women (and others) on the continent crave and eat and which give them much pleasure. In the modern language of nutrition, these insects enrich some of the soil that they work in the minerals that are critical to human health and reproduction but which are critically deficient in diets of poverty gleaned from anciently weathered, mineral-poor

soils across much of Africa. Second, these insects appear to have coevolved with antibacterial and antifungal ecto-symbiont bacteria in their earth constructions and these protect their eggs and larvae from infection. This may explain the widespread but hardly researched medicinal use of these 'insect earths' by healers across the continent. The language of 'mineral enrichment' and of 'antimicrobial effects' is, however, not a grid within which these enriched earths, the insects that produce them, and their use by pregnant women and healers are discerned locally. This is where the discussion turns to 'onto-epistemology' when asking how the works of these insects understood by those who use them?

In much mythology across Africa these humble insects were rare witnesses to the creative endeavours of God, and most dramatically of God's creation of people. In a local 'chain of being', these insects occupy a place equivalent to angels and demons in the Christian world. It is by taking a 'multispecies' approach to examine the intertwined lives of people and these insects that one can begin to appreciate the ecological dimension to so-called 'religious' thought. My reading of onto-epistemological approaches is that they respect our more earthy encounters – embracing how 'objects' acquire their significance not merely as ideational concepts, but in their materiality. Onto-epistemology would require analysis to be grounded in the everyday experience of these insects and their earths. Pragmatist philosophy can help too, in its observations that, in social life, a 'search for security' and optimistic experimentalism usually takes priority over any quest for certainty. Indeed, I respect Brian Morris' who worries when anthropologists and philosophers forget this when in their own academic 'quest for certainties' they are led into an idealist extravagance "that undervalues the natural world and bypasses economic and political realities" (2006: 4). Morris is worried, for example, by accounts of medicinal practices in anthropology that, when discerning the significance of ritual and symbolism in therapy, downplay the significance of the experiential efficacy of medical therapy - its naturalistic and empirical component and the intrinsic powers of plants (Morris 2011). So, I want to help the audience understand the significance of 'onto-epistemology' though indigenous entomology – and how this might enable a paradigm shift in understanding aspects of West African religious thought.

James Fairhead is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sussex. As an environmental and medical anthropologist, he develops conversations between the West and Central African ecological and medical worlds and the wider sciences and institutions with which they are engaged.

Graham Harvey (Religious Studies, Open University)

All our relations and kin based ecologies: the new animisms

New approaches to animism have generated significant and vibrant debate in the last 20 years or so in both scholarly and popular venues and publications. Frequently citing the work of Irving Hallowell and what he learnt among Ojibwa / Anishinaabeg, this "new" (approach to) animism contrasts with that of Edward Tylor who used the term to define religion as "belief in spirits". When Tylor reinforced Protestant Christian theological emphases on believing, epistemology and transcendence or metaphysics, Hallowell learnt to mesh ontology with everyday relationality. The gulf

between them is that of imagining humans as separate from the world or as intimate members of the larger-than-human world / community. Dialogical ethnographies and reflexive research have enriched this approach, finding data in the inherent relationality of human bodies (in which a high percentage of cells are other-than-human), the performances of foodways and etiquette among primates and predator-prey interactions, and in the gift economies of many indigenous cultures. What this research offers to the rethinking of planetary belonging and interactivity, begins with a challenge to Cartesian and other dualisms and separatisms, and pursues some radical and pluralist approaches to deep and pervasive relationality. If, as Hallowell reports, Anishinaabeg recognise that "*some* stones are alive" we are invited to think more carefully about the practicalities of multi-species co-inhabitation and co-dependence in the formation, maintenance and dissolution of place-communities, ecologies or planetary living. There are significant implications for the practice of ecological humanities scholarship as a(nother) mode of moving through the world/community. In this presentation, I particularly want to imagine a scholarly practice that takes Indigenous kinship ecology as its starting point rather than as something other to be explained (away).

Graham Harvey is Professor of Religious Studies at The Open University. Author or *Food, Sex and Strangers: understanding religion as everyday life* (2013), *The Handbook of Contemporary Animism* (2013) and *Animism: Respecting the Living World*. Current research project: "Indigenous performance cultures and the increase of democracy", based in fieldwork at various Indigenous festivals (e.g. Riddu Riddu and Origins), funded by Norwegian Research Council as a contribution to REDO: Reassembling Democracy.

Mike Hannis and Sian Sullivan (Culture and Environment, BSU)

Ontology after Truth? Ethnography and Ethics in an Unravelling World

Over the last couple of years, we have been collaborating across the disciplines of environmental anthropology and environmental ethics to find points of intersection and departure in our approaches to understanding socioecological phenomena (see www.futurepasts.net). This endeavour may have seemed a simple one, concerned as we both are with considerations of sustainability and justice in the contemporary moment. In practice, however, we have encountered significant tensions at the meetings between the ethnographer's allegiance to the particular, and the philosopher's orientation towards more abstract universal ideals of human flourishing. In this conjoined presentation, we offer some reflections on our experiences of this cross-disciplinary tension. Is it possible for us to simultaneously celebrate the particular ontologies expressed through cultural differences *and* the emancipatory liberalism of universal conceptions of virtues, rights and personhood? Might finding a balance between these different approaches to 'truth' help us to keep our bearings in the seemingly unravelling world of 'post-truth' politics?

Part 1 Ethnography (Sian Sullivan, Professor of Environment and Culture, Bath Spa University)
For almost 100 years the practice of ethnography has encouraged anthropologists to unmoor themselves from their accepted cultural reference points. To make the exotic

familiar and the familiar strange, as urged in a recent textbook in social anthropology. In environmental anthropology and political ecology, a move towards ontological considerations has intensified as researchers have dug more deeply into divergences regarding the assumed nature of reality, as indicated by differences in how environmental phenomena are framed and thereby known culturally. A consolidated 'ontological turn' in the social sciences and humanities more broadly has emphasised diversity in how cultures globally may know the nature of the natures they utilise and with which they co-exist. In this presentation, I follow this move through long-term ethnographic research with Damara (≠Nūkhoen) of northwest Namibia, focussing on the perceived agencies of both ancestors and non-human animals as they act in the present to mediate socionatural outcomes. I emphasise that differences in environmental knowledges are linked with ontology: with discourses regarding how the world is constituted, which create variety in the nature of being and how this can be both known and encountered. Sensitivity to the ontological politics through which spaces and entities are defined and known may be key to recognising and understanding with more depth the radically different 'natures' being struggled over in conflicts over how natures should best be treated and engaged with. Such sensitivity also generates insights into the *particularity* of the apparent universalisms informing many current technocratic solutions to global environmental concerns.

Part 2 Ethics (Mike Hannis, Lecturer in Environmental Humanities – Ethics and Sustainability, Bath Spa University)
Turning to ethics, these ethnographic findings seem to support and illustrate the attractions of a grounded ecological eudaimonism, an ethical perspective recognising a close relationship between human flourishing and the flourishing of the non-human world, congruent with with the concept of 'virtues of acknowledged ecological dependence' (after Alasdair MacIntyre). Stories and practices from such contexts can moreover have considerable heuristic value in support of 'ecological virtue', in ways that transcend their cultural origins: the problem of 'absent *phronimoi* (moral exemplars)' in environmental virtue ethics may not be as stark as Elizabeth Hursthouse claims. But in the broader contemporary context an older problem for eudaimonism re-emerges with new urgency. How are universalising claims about human flourishing to be justified and defended, as battered liberal aspirations to global rights and recognition seem in danger of slipping beneath rising Anthropocene tides of fear, misinformation and self-interested particularism?

Sian Sullivan is Professor of Environment and Culture at Bath Spa University. She works at the interface between culture, nature and finance to consider the different natures known and fabricated through especially indigenous and neoliberal ontologies. Her latest book is *Law, Philosophy and Ecology: Imagining Re-embodiments* (Routledge), and she is currently the research lead for two cross-disciplinary AHRC-funded projects (www.futurepasts.net and dsrupdhist.hypotheses.org).

Mike Hannis is a Lecturer in Environmental Humanities at Bath Spa University, specialising in environmental ethics and political theory. He is a researcher on the AHRC-funded Future Pasts project, and recently published a monograph entitled *Freedom and Environment; autonomy, human flourishing and the political philosophy of sustainability* (Routledge).

Spatio-temporalities: Chair, Rebecca Schaaf

Rebecca Schaaf is Deputy Vice Provost for Learning and Teaching at Bath Spa University. Her background is in the subject of geography, specifically around issues of poverty, wellbeing and sustainability, and she has also been involved in research focusing on the teaching of geography, effective assessment and feedback strategies, and methods of supporting students while on placement. Her other research interests and publications centre around the role of development organisations and the creation and effectiveness of partnerships for international development. She is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers.

Axel Goodbody (German and European Culture, University of Bath)

German Studies is a broad field, embracing history, politics, film, art and other disciplines alongside language and literature. My training and research are in literary criticism, and I have gained immeasurably from working with colleagues in English departments. But my approach probably differs from theirs by being more focused on the socio-politico-cultural context, linguistic analysis and intercultural comparison. I will comment on the experience of editing the interdisciplinary volume The Culture of German Environmentalism, organising the AHRC Network The Cultural Framing of Environmental Discourse, but say more about my recent participation in two Energy Humanities Networks, Stories of Change: The Past, Present and Future of Energy, and Connecting with a Low Carbon Scotland. Time permitting, I will finish by mentioning some of the problems encountered by the South, West and Wales AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership in its attempts to promote interdisciplinary PhD projects and training, and discussing the extent to which I have managed to integrate environmental issues in my own teaching in Modern Languages. The final year undergraduate Unit Heimat and National Identity will serve as an example, since Heimat (‘homeland’) has 3 key dimensions: space, time and identity, and speaks to the theme of spatio-temporalities.

Axel Goodbody is Professor of German and European Culture at the University of Bath. He is co-editor of the journal Ecozon@ and the book series Nature, Culture & Literature (Brill). Recent publications include articles and book chapters on ‘Heimat’, sense of place, framing in literary energy narratives, the German novel in the Anthropocene, Kafka’s animal stories, and German ecopoetry. He is currently co-editing a special number of the journal Resilience, ‘Stories of Energy: Literary and Historical Perspectives’, and co-authoring a book,Cultures of ‘Denial’: An Ecocritical Analysis of Climate Scepticism in Germany, France, the UK and the USA (Bloomsbury Academic).

David Farrier (English and Environmental Humanities, Edinburgh University)

Three North Sea Reflections

My talk will be a series of associative reflections on sites around the North Sea - taking in bronze age rock art panels, whale strandings, marine plastic, half a trillion tonnes of concrete, the poet Basil bunting, and Svalbard Seed Bank. I'm interested in how deep time flows through materials, life ways, and art works, and in how we frame messages to the very deep future. This is a reflective rather than scholarly piece, searching for a way to communicate the insights and values of the Environmental Humanities beyond the academy.

Dr David Farrier is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Edinburgh, where he convenes the Edinburgh Environmental Humanities Network. He is writing a book about deep time, environmental crisis, and contemporary poetry.

Nicola Whyte (History and Environmental Arts and Humanities, Exeter University)

For my contribution to the panel, I shall reflect upon my research as a landscape and social historian in the field of environmental humanities, and my experience of producing inter-disciplinary work on projects including Stories of Change: the Past, Present and Future of Energy (AHRC), and the Past in its Place: Locating the History of Memory in English and Welsh Locales (ERC). I'm particularly concerned with what it means to write the past in a present that faces catastrophic climate and environmental change and how the work of historians has led, often unwittingly, to what some writers have described as a failure of imagination to think for the future. I take as a starting point Mark Levene's recent call for historians, and humanities scholars more generally, to seriously consider the ethics of writing the past and to give space to historical experiences that do not easily fit conventional narratives of historical change, modernity and progress. I'm particularly interested in the potential of the so-called 'spatial turn' in providing one way in which historians might enter a creative space for rethinking the past, and its purpose and functions now and for the future. It is a space, moreover, that requires if not demands us to think together and across conventional disciplinary boundaries.

Nicola Whyte is a landscape and early modern social historian with particular interests in the meanings of landscape, place and dwelling among pre-industrial rural communities in Britain. She has published on early modern landscape history, agriculture, resource management, energy systems, common rights, custom, oral memory, gender, everyday knowledges and practices of place. Recent works include 'Senses of Place, Senses of Time: Landscape History from a British Perspective' (Landscape Research); 'An Archaeology of Natural Places: Trees in the Early Modern Landscape' (HLQ) and 'Spatial History' (forthcoming in *New Directions in Social and Cultural History*).

Owain Jones (Geography, Culture and Environment, BSU)

Towards Hydrocitizenship, project overview and introduction.

This talk will introduction the large AHRC Connected Community Project research project “Towards Hydrocitizenship”. This multi-site multi-partner project is interdisciplinary and very much located in the environmental humanities ethos of critical-creative inquiry. The talk will set out the ‘bare facts’ of the project, its conceptual underpinnings, its methods and emerging outputs, and some of the challenges faced in doing this kind of work.

Owain Jones was appointed as the first Professor on the Environmental Humanities in the UK in 2014 at Bath Spa University. He has published over 70 scholarly articles and two books - Geography and Memory: Identity, Place and Becoming (2012) with Jo Garde-Hansen; and Tree Cultures: The Place of Trees, and Trees in their Place (2002) with Paul Cloke. He is currently leading a 1.5 million pound Arts and Humanities Research Council Connected Communities project which involves eight UK universities, community partners and artists in four case study areas across the UK.

Inter-species connectivities: Chair, Stephen Moss

Stephen Moss, Course Leader and Lecturer for Bath Spa University’s MA in Nature and Travel Writing, is one of Britain’s leading nature writers, broadcasters and wildlife television producers. A lifelong naturalist, he is passionate about communicating the wonders of the natural world to the widest possible audience. He has written more than 30 books on birds and wildlife, including *Birds Britannia* (HarperCollins, 2011) (accompanying the BBC4 series on the British and their love of birds), *Wild Hares and Hummingbirds: the natural history of an English village* (Vintage, 2012), a personal account of a year in the British countryside, at a time of great change, and *Wild Kingdom: Bringing Back Britain's Wildlife* (Square Peg, 2016) ,a journey around the United Kingdom, to discover how Britain's wildlife is coping with the modern world.

Michael Northcott (Ethics, Theology and Environmental Humanities, Edinburgh University)

How engagements with local nonhumans might help link British environmentalism with the new archaism and localism of post-Brexit British politics

Environmentalists are normally identified as cosmopolitans who favour government regulation of economic activities so as to protect biodiversity, the atmosphere, rivers and the oceans, ‘wild’ or sublime landscapes, and endangered species, locally and globally from degradation, destruction or pollution. Brexit and Trump voters on the whole resist environmental ‘terrapolitanism’ as another kind of top-down cosmopolitanism mediated by bureaucracies and laws emanating from meetings and

agencies in ‘global’ gatherings in cities like Brussels, Paris and Washington DC. If climate change endangers one third of currently living species, this is not perceived by nativists as being of concern to the regions they intend to protect from foreign agencies and cosmopolitan power. This situation calls for environmentalists in the UK to develop new localist, even nativist, conservation strategies in which native species in local, or regional, ecosystems are mapped onto particular British cultural imaginaries, performances, stories and texts.

Michael Northcott is Professor of Ethics in the School of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh. He has published 12 books and over 70 academic papers. He has been visiting professor at the Claremont School of Theology, Dartmouth College, Duke University, Flinders University, and the University of Malaya. His most recent books include:Place, *Ecology and the Sacred: The Moral Geography of Sustainable Communities* (Bloomsbury 2015), *Systematic Theology and Climate Change: Ecumenical Perspectives* (Routledge 2014) edited with Peter Scot, *A Political Theology of Climate Change* (SPCK 2014).

Merle Patchet (Cultural Geography, University of Bristol)

Avian-accessories as archives: or, what do animals teach us about research practices?

A black bird, a black wing and a black plume are stored within a box marked ‘FEATHERS’. On careful removal and close inspection, it becomes clear they are fashioned creatures that would have once adorned hats. Yet these ‘avian accessories’ also archive their prior existence as living creatures, prompting the question: are they animals or are they artefacts? However, in What Animals Teach us About Politics? Brian Massumi has cautioned that the logics of categorisation can only lead to conceptual dead-ends. Moreover, for the researcher interested in what these avian-accessories might teach us about transspecies histories, these logics also prevent their full inclusion into the research process. Although an increasing number of historians are taking great pains to bring ‘the animal’ into historical analysis, in doing so they have ended up subtly reinstituting certain forms of human privilege and animal alterity. By contrast Massumi’s posthumanist logic of ‘mutual inclusion’ does not observe ‘the sanctity of the separation of categories, nor respect the rigid segregation of arenas of activity’ (Massumi 2014: 6). And, as I will demonstrate, nor do these avian-archives. Furthermore, by placing them at the heart of enquiry they demand a reconsideration of our research practices and priorities.

Merle Patchett is a cultural-historical geographer by training. Her research broadly focuses on theories, histories, and geographies of practice. This focus has led her to engage empirically with a range of specialised skills (e.g. taxidermy), practitioners (e.g. artists and architects), and places of practice (e.g. museums, galleries and archives) and to develop practice-based methodologies. She has also curated a number of touring exhibitions that have focused on human-animal entanglements, including *Fashioning Feathers: Dead birds, Millinery Crafts and the Plumage Trade* (2011-13).

Isis Brook (Philosophy, Agroecology and Transdisciplinary Studies, Writtle College)

Meeting the other than human and the transdisciplinary mode

There are similarities in the questions that surround interspecies connectivity and transdisciplinarity. Using modes of exploration of the other than human that do not reduce beings to human constructed categories or fanciful anthropomorphisms requires a respectful openness and a humility about one's own system of understanding. Engaging in transdisciplinary research also requires flexibility and careful listening to other voices, including the usually marginalised. In both, asking the right questions of oneself and questioning prior conceptions help to ground a collaborative inquiry that is needed for both careful interspecies research and transdisciplinary research.

Isis Brook has taught philosophy at Lancaster University, the Open University and then University of Central Lancashire. She ran the distance course MA Values and Environment, based at Lancaster. Ever since her doctoral work Isis' research has centred on questions to do with the human being's relationship to nature and to the world. She has published in journals such as: The Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology, Ethics and the Environment, Landscape Research, and Ethics, Place, and Environment and has written extensively on cultural landscapes. She served for ten years as editor of the international journal Environmental Values. Now as Head of Faculty for Environment and Transdisciplinary Studies, at Crossfields Institute International she combines her enduring passions of exploring the human-plant relationship (now in the context of food production) through co leading the MA Philosophy of Social Innovation: researching Holistic Agroecology.

Richard Kerridge (Creative Writing, BSU)

As a nature writer and, in a slightly different way, as an ecocritic, I am concerned with the patchwork texts and strange combinations of knowledge and creativity that environmental problems demand. A central problem - central to literature and many other formations of subjectivity - is the difficulty of accommodating the spatial and temporal extent of environmental problems inside, or alongside, the frame provided by narrative subjectivity ('point of view', as it is called in Creative Writing classes). There is also the question of how narratives of personal experience can find room for scientific information, and of how non-scientists can evaluate and internalize that information. In much contemporary nature writing about non-human creatures, for example, there is an exuberant and sometimes uneasy combination of personal response, memoir, cultural history and ecological science. Such intersections are the territory of the Environmental Humanities.

Richard Kerridge is a nature writer and ecocritic. *Cold Blood: Adventures with Reptiles and Amphibians*, published by Chatto & Windus in 2014, is a mixture of memoir and nature writing and adapted for BBC national radio and broadcast as a Radio 4 Book of the Week in July 2014. Other nature writing by Richard has been broadcast on BBC Radio 4 and published in *BBC Wildlife*, *Poetry Review* and *Granta*. He was awarded the 2012 Roger Deakin Prize by the Society of Authors, and has twice received the *BBC Wildlife* Award for Nature Writing. At Bath Spa University, Richard

leads the MA in Creative Writing. A leading ecocritic, he has published essays on ecocritical topics ranging from Shakespeare and Thomas Hardy to present-day fiction, poetry, nature writing and film. *Writing the Environment* (Zed Books, 1998), co-edited by Richard, was the first collection of ecocritical essays to be published in Britain. Richard is also co-author of the first book-length study of the poetry of J.H. Prynne. He has been an elected member of the ASLE Executive Council, and was founding Chair of ASLE-UKI. Richard is co- editor of the Bloomsbury Academic series entitled 'Environmental Cultures' – the first series of monographs in the Environmental Humanities to be published in Britain.

Natural Cultural calamities: Chair, James Jeffers

Dr. James Jeffers is a Senior Lecturer in Human Geography at Bath Spa University, specialising in the human dimensions of global environmental change, natural hazards and urban environments. He joined the staff at BSU in 2013 having previously taught at the University of Strathclyde and Rutgers University. He holds a Ph.D and M.Phil in Geography from Rutgers University as well as B.A. (Geography & Legal Science), LL.B. and LL.M. (Public Law) degrees from the National University of Ireland, Galway. His research focuses on the social, cultural and political dimensions of flood hazards management and climate change adaptation in coastal cities.

Greg Bankoff (Modern History, University of Hull)

Living Under the Volcano: Mt Mayon and co-volcanic communities in the Philippines

Rich volcanic soils have long attracted human settlements which have traded the risk of eruption against the benefits of higher agricultural yields. Yet little research has been done on the manner in which societies have normalized the risks and adapted to living in close proximity to volcanoes, or how those modifications, in turn, might have influenced the effects of an eruption and the consequent hazards. That is how people have co-evolved with volcanoes, to create "co-volcanic societies". Mt. Mayon, in southern Luzon is among the most active of volcanoes in the Philippines, having erupted at least 49 times over the last four centuries. This paper offers a preliminary examination of a number of interrelated questions to do with how societal responses to volcanoes have developed over time, the differing impact of historical eruptions on communities, the role of politics and religion in influencing community vulnerability and resilience, the way progressive human modifications of the landscape affect volcanic hazard, and the manner in which painfully learnt human adaptations to volcanic risks are eventually ignored and cause societal maladaptations.

Greg Bankoff works on community resilience and the way societies adapt to hazard as a frequent life experience. For the last 25 years, he has focused his research primarily on the Philippines seeking to understand how societies, both past and present, have learnt to normalize risk and the manner in which communities deal with crisis through a historical sociological approach that combines archival analysis with fieldwork, community mapping, interviews and focus groups. An historical geographer, he is Professor of Modern History based at the University of Hull and

has published extensively including approximately 100 referred journal articles and book chapters. His most recent publications include co-authoring The Red Cross's *World Disaster Report 2014: Focusing on Culture and Risk* and a companion, coedited volume entitled *Cultures and Disasters: Understanding Cultural Framings in Disaster Risk Reduction* (2015).

Steven Hartman (Tourism and Geography, Mid-Sweden University)

What is new? What is changing? What remains the same?: rethinking the trajectories of environmental humanities and sciences in the coming decade

Environmentally engaged research in the humanities extends back well over half a century, most notably in fields such as environmental anthropology and archaeology, environmental history, environmental ethics, and more recently in literature and environment studies. Environmental research and scholarship typical of these distinct humanities disciplines can be contrasted with those of an interdisciplinary Environmental Humanities community of practice now unfolding in some international contexts. This talk briefly situates that emerging Environmental Humanities field in current academic landscapes, which are far from uniform across national, regional and cultural boundaries. Looking ahead over the coming 5-10 years the talk cautiously suggests a few promising pathways (as well as potential challenges) for collaboration not only among academics working in different humanistic disciplines, but also between humanities scholars and their counterparts in the Arts, the Social Sciences and the Natural Sciences.

Steven Hartman, Professor of Sustainable Geographies in the Department of Tourism and Geography, Mid Sweden University, in Östersund, Sweden, is a literary translator, creative writer, literary scholar and inveterate border crosser. For nine years, he has chaired the Nordic Network for Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies (NIES), and beginning this year, he is the convenor of the Humanities for the Environment Circumpolar Observatory based at Stefansson Arctic Institute in Akureyri, Iceland. His work focuses on mapping environmental consciousness and environmental memory in literature; integration of environmental humanities in global change research and policy; and collaboration among academics, artists and civil society in mobilizing public action on climate change. He leads the science-arts climate engagement project Bifrost — The Future is Now (2016-2019) and, with Astrid Ogilvie, co-leads the interdisciplinary research project Reflections of Change: The Natural World in Literary and Historical Sources from Iceland ca. AD 800 to 1800 (ICECHANGE, 2017-2020), funded by the Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences.

David Higgins (English and Environmental Humanities, Leeds University)

Writing Tambora: Textuality, Empire, and the Catastrophic Assemblage

This paper draws on my work on the Tambora eruption of 1815 and subsequent global climate crisis as a textual catastrophe. Focusing on the narrative of the eruption produced by the British administration in Java, I address how this fascinatingly heteroglossic source can be productively understood not so much as a cultural commentary on a natural disaster but as part of a material-discursive

catastrophic assemblage. However, I also reflect on the challenges associated with this sort of interdisciplinary 'material ecocriticism' approach; challenges that are ethical as well as conceptual.

David Higgins is Associate Professor in English Literature at the University of Leeds. He has published widely on Romantic literature and culture, including the monographs *Romantic Genius and the Literary Magazine* (2005) and *Romantic Englishnness* (2014). He currently holds an AHRC Leadership Fellowship for a project on British Romantic writing and environmental catastrophe, and am completing a book entitled *British Romanticism and Climate Change: Writing Tambora*.

Rich Johnson and Esther Edwards (Geography, Culture and Environment, BSU)

'Science'- of value to Hazard & Disaster Challenges;
An Exposé on Interdisciplinary Research.

In the Indian Himalaya, ongoing, multi-disciplinary, tri-lateral (Canada, India, UK), participatory (light) research is exploring interconnected questions of mountain system process-hazard dynamics, community heritage-vulnerability- resilience conditions, and rapid development implications (e.g. HEP) in the context of international sustainable development and disaster risk reduction policy accords, in order to fashion a more sustainable future. Pursuing this hybridisation of themes has required large shifts across traditional intra/inter subject boundaries, and so many lessons have already been learned. This approach has without doubt been hugely beneficial in delivering an enhanced level of knowledge involving a range of non-academic organisations and communities speaking their local languages. Here we draw upon these research experiences, making the case that physical sciences are very much part of the effort to seek better understanding of and futures for the world, where a holistic understanding has to draw upon the in-depth approaches and outcomes of a range of disciplines. We seek to show the benefits of this approach to date, but equally to generate debate around a number of contentions; a challenge we should embrace together:

(1) Current thinking suggests that Interdisciplinarity has great potential to provide something greater than the sum of its parts. We suggest that this needs to be a genuine meeting of minds and a willingness to work together on the part of all the players. Hence we ask 'interdisciplinarity for whom and using who's methods?'

(2) Is this interdisciplinary endeavour merely following an in-vogue paradigm and being used as a vehicle of power for some parts of the interdisciplinary whole? Indeed disciplinarity seems to be negatively cast, being touted as a dirty word by some. But let's not forget if we don't develop discipline based knowledge, with parity, then we fail to populate cross-disciplinary endeavours with an improving knowledge and technique baseline, this will in due course stifle the progress of interdisciplinarity. Hence let's not throw out the baby with the bathwater!

(3) Employers delivering technical services do still seek depth of disciplinary knowledge, so we need to create degree programmes that deliver societally relevant depth and breadth- this calls for a mix of the old and the new, not just radicalism!

(4) The language and approach of interdisciplinarity to date generates genuine discomfort in the scientific community- this we cannot ignore; together, we need to co-produce a better model of interdisciplinarity that fully embraces all of the disciplines represented in any project partnership.
These are not mindlessly provocative, anachronistic denials of the world; but instead genuinely open reflections of earth scientists/ geographers who do work in an already diverse discipline and more so across boundaries. We all have to talk, in common tongue, seeking to understand the array of contributions that can be brought into the mix, otherwise interdisciplinarity will develop within intrinsic bias/ reduced capacity and therefore fall short in optimising pathways to impact.

Dr Esther Edwards, Senior Lecturer in Geographic Information Systems, has changed tack a number of times during the course of her career, starting off in researching and teaching Coastal Management. She then spent a number of years working on aerial survey projects using low-cost digital systems for a variety of different applications, often, but not exclusively, in developing countries. Interesting and challenging projects include surveys of village encroachment on Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda; rehabilitation of semi-arid savannah in the rift valley, (Baringo) Kenya; landslide mapping and monitoring, San Cayetano, Colombia and coastal sand dune monitoring around the coasts of western Europe. This work precipitated a new direction in teaching in Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems. Esther's current research interests are in community vulnerability and resilience to hazards focussing on mountain communities in the Kullu Valley, Indian Himalayas.

Dr Rich Johnson, Reader in Physical Geography, is the Chair of BSU's 'Changing Landscapes Research Group', and a physical geographer/ geomorphologist by academic training and career vocation. He has worked inside academia (research and teaching), and also as a commercial geomorphologist and project manager for an international consulting engineering company- where he regularly worked with technical specialists across a wide range of disciplines, local to international clients and public stakeholders. His research portfolio is twin track: (1)Upland/ mountain sediment system dynamics in the English Lake District. Exploring the movement of sediments by flood and landslides processes in mountain catchments, and their consequent hazard and risk dimensions; and (2)Multi-disciplinary assessments of floods, heritage, vulnerability and resilience in the Indian Himalaya. These fall under the banner of disaster risk reduction, which calls for effective multi and inter-disciplinary research. Accordingly, it uses as range of science, social science, and humanities techniques and community based participatory engagement tools.

Ecopoetries and ecopoetics: Chair, Terry Gifford

Terry Gifford is Visiting Scholar in Environmental Humanities at Bath Spa University and Profesor Honorifico at the University of Alicante. He is the author of seven collections of poetry, most recently, with Christopher North, *Al Otro Lado del Aguilar* (2011), in English and Spanish, and *Ted Hughes* (2009), *Reconnecting With John Muir: Essays in Post-Pastoral Practice* (2006), *Pastoral* (1999), *Green Voices: Understanding Contemporary Nature Poetry* (2011 [1995]), editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Ted Hughes* (2011) and *New Casebooks: Ted Hughes* (2015), and is

a contributor to *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Environment* (2014). He is currently editing Ted Hughes in Context for CUP and preparing a new collection of poetry, *A Feast of Fools*, for Cinnamon Press.

Emily Brady (Philosophy and Environmental Humanities, Edinburgh University)

Reflections at the Intersection of Aesthetics and Environmental Ethics

Three topics will be covered in my presentation. First, I reflect on the challenges that aesthetics faces in relation to environmental ethics. Environmental ethicists often view aesthetic considerations as less serious than ethical ones, which leads to the neglect of some very useful discussions taking place among environmental aestheticians. Second, I ask what special expertise philosophers can offer to the environmental humanities and share some thoughts about navigating the challenges of interdisciplinary research. Finally, I reflect briefly on my experience as the director of MSc Environment, Culture, and Society (University of Edinburgh), and how this multidisciplinary programme has developed over the years.

Emily Brady is Professor of Environment and Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh. She has research interests in aesthetics and philosophy of art, environmental ethics, eighteenth-century philosophy, and animal studies. Her most recent book is, *The Sublime in Modern Philosophy: Aesthetics, Ethics, and Nature* (Cambridge UP, 2013), and she is currently working on a co-authored book, *Aesthetics Between Nature and Culture*, with Isis Brook and Jonathan Prior.

Graham Huggan and Sarah Yoho (English and Environmental Humanities, Leeds University)

Literature and its Discontents: Environmental Humanities in Practice

Literary studies is one of the core disciplines of environmental humanities, at least in theory. What happens though when institutions require literature to be analysed -- and in a certain way -- as part of a particular degree programme, and what happens to interdisciplinarity in *theory* when subject-specific protocols, e.g. those attached to English Schools or Departments, are put into *practical* effect? The main aim of the paper will be to share the experiences of doctoral students on the Environmental Humanities ITN at the University of Leeds, none of whom have a literature background, but who are nonetheless required to meet the expectations of an English PhD.

Graham Huggan (University of Leeds) is project leader for an EU-funded ITN (Innovative Training Network) in Environmental Humanities (ENHANCE), which involves twelve doctoral researchers spread across three different countries: Germany and Sweden, as well as the UK. **Sarah Yoho** is one of the four Leeds-based researchers.

Harriet Tarlo (Creative Writing, Sheffield Hallam University)

I shall talk informally about particularity in relation to the theme of the symposium. Drawing an ecological reading of this concept out of the poetry and poetics of Thomas A. Clark, I shall go on to relate it to my own poetry and poetics, and to the cross-disciplinary practice I am engaged in with the artist Judith Tucker. I shall also raise the question of what we mean when we talk about cross, inter, intra, multi and trans disciplinarity in relation to work in the environmental humanities and beyond, and whether deep exploration and differentiation of these terms may help us in our endeavours or is merely a distraction?

Harriet Tarlo's publications include *Field: Poems 2004-2014; Poems 1990-2003* (Shearsman 2016, 2014, 2004); *Nab* (Etruscan, 2005) and, with Judith Tucker, *Sound Unseen* and *behind land* (Wild Pansy, 2013 and 2015). She is editor of *The Ground Aslant: An Anthology of Radical Landscape Poetry* (Shearsman, 2011). Critical work appears in volumes by Salt, Palgrave, Rodopi and Bloodaxe and in *Pilot, Jacket*, *English* and the *Journal of Ecocriticism*. Her collaborative work with Tucker has shown at galleries including the Catherine Nash Gallery Minneapolis, 2012; Musee de Moulages, Lyon, 2013; Southampton City Art Gallery 2013-14; The Muriel Barker Gallery, Grimsby and the New Hall College Art Collection, Cambridge, 2015. She is a Reader in Creative Writing at Sheffield Hallam University.

Samantha Walton (English, Culture and Environment, BSU)

Early Career Researchers and Non-Academic Collaboration in the Environmental Humanities

In this talk I will reflect on my experiences working with extra-academic communities, media, businesses, NGOs, and policy makers as part of the British Academy-funded project *Landscaping Change* (2015-2016) and my current AHRC-funded project *Cultures of Nature and Wellbeing* (2016-2018). Specifically, I will address the challenges and opportunities of engagement work as they are experienced by early career researchers in a context in which non-academic networking and impact have become pre-requisites for winning research bids. A funding track record and funding potential have, of course, become both essential in order to secure a permanent position and in order to be granted sufficient leave and resources to undertake scholarly work. Taking this into consideration, I will address the positives, negatives, and contradictions of collaborative work in the environmental humanities for researchers newly launched in an academic career.

Sam Walton, Senior Lecturer in English at BSU, specialises in twentieth and twenty first century literature, from the modernist period to contemporary experimental writing, and in particular British literature and culture of the 1920s and 1930s. Her research is informed by environmental humanities and health humanities perspectives, and in June-July 2016 she was Environmental Humanities Research Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Study in the Humanities at the University of Edinburgh. A co-editor of the ASLE journal, *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism*, her work is supported by a British Academy Rising Star Engagement Award and an AHRC grant. She is the author of a scholarly monography, *Guilty But Insane: Mind and Law in Golden Age Detective Fiction* (OUP, 2015), and has also published several pamphlets of her own poetry, including *Animal Pomes*, which came out from Crater Press in 2015.