The 2024 postgraduate conference for the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, UK and Ireland (ASLE-UKI) will be hosted by the Edinburgh Environmental Humanities Network at the University of Edinburgh. ASLE-UKI welcomes participation from postgraduate and early career scholars, readers, and creative practitioners interested in the relationships between literatures, arts, environments and cultures – past, present, or future from anywhere in the world.

**Conference Theme:**
The themes of the 2024 conference are ‘**Attention**’ and ‘**Noticing**’. Understanding the complexities of our environments requires our close attention. A considerable body of scholarship has taken to this task, inspired particularly by Anna Tsing’s work on the ‘arts of inclusion’ (2010). Tsing’s call for attention was initially tuned towards how various types of experts include newcomers in their love of particular plants, creatures and fungi. Subsequently, this relational mode moved to the individual cultivating various alternative ‘arts of attentiveness’ (van Dooren et al. 2016) or ‘arts of noticing’ (Tsing 2015) that will aid in ethically recalibrating our ecological relations. But in a time of shortening attention spans and pronounced visuality, what role does attentiveness truly play? How can we pay attention to more-than-human entities and multiple timescales? What needs to come after noticing? How can attentive literature and other aesthetic forms craft meaningful responses of ecological care? As with previous ASLE-UKI conferences we are
happy to receive papers on any aspect of literature, culture, creative practice and the environment, but we particularly welcome responses to the following prompts:

**Is attention limited?** In an era of constant distraction, our attention spans seem to be shrinking. We welcome papers that address the challenges of noticing or attending to in the technological age; how can we pay attention when we are overwhelmed by a sense of informational overload? What role might literature play in this? Too often, noticing is understood as a visual process. We welcome papers – particularly about non-Eurowestern traditions – that consider what other perceptual and embodied experiences can afford that simply seeing might not? How are haptic or bioacoustic practices (Sounding Soil 2023), for example, changing the way we notice and thus our ontological understanding? Even then, not all entities are directly sensible to our individual bodies (Krzywoszynska 2019). How does this define how we pay attention to the more-than-human, and how care ethics are subsequently shaped (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017)?

**What forms of attentiveness are there?** The proposed geological epoch of the Anthropocene has given greater attention to certain forms of temporality, as well as to the unjust geosocial distribution of its cause and effect (Yusoff 2018). But what are the links between various forms of attention and our understanding of time? How does this relate to indigenous knowledges whereby, as Rangi Matamua writes, attention to ‘local environment and ecological change’ has a history of determining experiences, orientations, and units of time (2020; Whyte 2017). Furthermore, what can site-specific creative practices, for instance, relatedly teach us? How does close attentiveness to the natural world, as seen in Alycia Pirmohamed’s debut collection *Another Way to Split Water* (2022), tie into memory and our understanding of ourselves, our identity and transformations. Often paying attention is seen to also slow one down. Hence, how might certain modes of attention allow us to think about slow, unseen, unjust environmental violence (Nixon 2011; Davies 2019)? What new formal innovations are most suitable? What is the role of noticing in time-keeping practices and where does this sit within a context of climate crisis (Bastian and Bayliss Hawitt 2023)?

**What comes after attention?** Research articles on attentiveness or noticing often focus on how to pay attention: how to detect myriad ecological changes or how close read literary texts. Yet, what comes after attention is not necessarily always expanded upon. Eva Haifa Giraud’s *What Comes after Entanglement?* recognises this, eliciting the limits of theories of relationality, while parsing possibilities for political action (2019). With this in mind, we invite contributions that consider how attention moves into accountability, artistic expression, or political action. How might attentive forms of science fiction, fiction, poetry, drama — or other aesthetic forms — craft meaningful responses to environmental issues? What is the role of attentiveness in justice and ethics and care (Chao and Kirksey 2022), and how do arts of noticing translate into response-
abilities? How has literature and literary studies, and the humanities more broadly, interpreted this?

**How to notice ourselves?** Attention involves a level of direction and selection. While it can be both a passive and a deliberate act, it necessitates a degree of un-attention. Turning towards something, often means switching our attention away from another (Clark 2020). In era of massively distributed ecological crises, how can we possibly attend to everything, everywhere, all at once? How do we justly navigate or even challenge this dynamic; how might attentiveness be multiplied and maintained? Furthermore, despite the values of directing our attention towards human and more-than-human others, ethical research requires that we attend to ourselves too, our positionality and our practices. We welcome papers on self-reflexive attention within the academy. What kinds of attention would ensure more equitable Environmental Humanities research? How might noticing our own positionalities and our practices ensure that marginalized voices are given space and heard and in the scholarship and discourse of environmental injustice (Todd 2016)?

**How do others incite our attention?** Might we do more with ‘arts of inclusion’? How do others capture our imagination and capacity for love in order to allow greater attention to the more-than-human world? Much writing in the environmental humanities, such as van Dooren and Rose’s ethographic approach (2017), seek to draw others into care — how might they also be arts of inclusion? Or how might the arts of inclusion depend on direct contact with the species involved, accompanied by a guide or mentor? What might it mean to require field experience or exposure, for scholars in the humanities, who often have little training in this?

The conference will be hosted by the Edinburgh Environmental Humanities Network (University of Edinburgh) and will take place in person in Edinburgh from Thursday 5 September to Friday 6 September, 2024. Though both days will be devoted to panels and plenary speakers, Thursday afternoon will also have a choice of ‘outings’ or activities, including an attention-orientated trip to Arthur’s Seat.

**Submission Process:**
We welcome proposals for 15-minute papers. To propose a paper, please submit an abstract of around 250 words and a brief speaker biography by 23 February 2024 using this form: [https://forms.office.com/e/Rv7nga7xuj](https://forms.office.com/e/Rv7nga7xuj)
References Cited:


For any problems with your submission, please contact us at: asleuki2024@gmail.com