



ASLE-UKI Biennial Conference: Northumbria 2022

‘Epochs, Ages, and Cycles: Time and the Environment’

6-8 September 2022

Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne

Keynote Speakers:

Elizabeth-Jane Burnett (Northumbria University)

Samantha Walton (Bath Spa University)

Plenary Roundtable Speakers:

Todd Borlik (Huddersfield); Andrew Crumey (Northumbria);

Greg Lynall (Liverpool); Tess Somervell (Oxford)

Northumbria University was delighted to host the 2022 Biennial Conference of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, UK and Ireland. The conference went ahead successfully, and this page remains as an archive of the event.

The purpose of ASLE-UKI is to encourage scholarship, criticism, and appreciation of environmental literature and of the relationship between literature and environment, through activities and publications based in the UK and Ireland. For the 2022 conference, we are guided by Edmund Burke's observation that society is 'a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born'. Nowhere is this truer than in our relationship with the environment, which is shaped by decisions made by countless generations of hunters, gatherers, farmers, gardeners, builders, miners, and engineers, and where every choice we make today may have profound environmental implications for countless future generations. Conference delegate will be exploring a wide range of topics, including:

- **Deep time:** how have writers responded to the deep past as revealed by geology, palaeontology, and archaeology? How are notions such as the Anthropocene, the Capitalocene, the Sixth Extinction, or the Great Acceleration reflected in environment writing?
- **Historical time:** how was environment discussed in the Middle Ages, the age of Enlightenment, or the age of empire? How far are ecocritical models applicable to pre-industrial literary cultures? How is the environment reflected in historical fiction?
- **Circular time:** how are years, months, seasons, life cycles, and daily rhythms represented in literature? How do writers balance teleology with circularity? How are ideas, tropes, and literary forms cycled and recycled?
- **Future time:** how do writers imagine our environmental futures, from the day after tomorrow to the last syllable of recorded time? How do the choices we make now impact on the future? Can literature change the world?

Full Programme: Outline View

Saturday 3 September

9.00 am: Opening Remarks and Event Introduction.
9.30 am: Parallel Sessions 1
10:50 am: Ten-minute break
11.00 am: Publishing Workshop
12:30 pm: One-hour lunch break
1.30 pm: Parallel Sessions 2
3.30 pm: 30-minute break
4.00 pm: Online Networking event with breakout rooms.
6.00 pm: Online day ends.

Monday 5 September

5.00 pm: Meeting of the ASLE-UKI Executive Committee (Committee only)
8.00 pm: Informal pub gathering at the City Tavern (All welcome). Pub grub is available.

Tuesday 6 September

8.30 am: Coffee and Registration
9.00 am: Welcome from the President of ASLE-UKI, John Miller (University of Sheffield), and the chair of the conference organising committee, Brycchan Carey (Northumbria University).
9.15 am: Plenary 1: Samantha Walton (Bath Spa University) ‘Everybody Needs Beauty: The History, Politics and Future of “Healing Nature”’
10.30 am: Coffee
11.00 am: Parallel Sessions 1
12.45 pm: Lunch
1.30 pm: Parallel Sessions 2
3.00 pm: Coffee
3.30 pm: Parallel Sessions 3
5.00 pm: Comfort break
5.10 pm: ASLE-UKI Biennial General Meeting
6.15 pm: Wine Reception sponsored by Cambridge University Press. Includes the launch of *Modern British Nature Writing, 1789-2020: Land Lines* and *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Anthropocene*, as well as presentation of the winners

of the 2021 ASLE-UKI Book Prizes.

7.15 pm: Creative Writing Reading Event

Wednesday 7 September

8.30 am: Coffee

9.00 am: Parallel Sessions 4

10.45 am: Coffee

11.15 am: Plenary 2: Roundtable Discussion on Time and the Environment chaired by Brycchan Carey

12.45 pm: Lunch

1.30 pm: Excursions or self-guided time

7.30 pm: pre-dinner drinks in the lobby of the Sutherland Building

8.00 pm: Conference Dinner in the Great Hall of the Sutherland Building

The Sutherland building is on Northumberland Road at the centre of the main city campus.

Thursday 8 September

8.30 am: Coffee

9.00 am: Parallel Sessions 5

10.45 am: Coffee

11.15 am: Parallel Sessions 6

12.45 pm: Lunch

1.30 pm: Parallel Sessions 7

3.00 pm: Comfort Break

3.10 pm: Plenary 3: Elizabeth-Jane Burnett (Northumbria University). 'Earth, Sea, Sky and In-between: Readings from The Grassling, Swims, Of Sea and Moss'

4.25 pm: Closing remarks: ASLE President, Conference organisers

4.45 pm: Conference ends

5.00 pm: Informal social gathering at a local pub

Saturday 3 September: Full Online Programme

Date: Saturday 3 September 2022

Time: 9 am – 6 pm UK time (British Summer Time/BST)

We are delighted to offer a free, online conference day open to all, whether or not you are also attending the main in-person conference. You do not need to be an ASLE-UKI member to attend the online conference, although we encourage you to [join us](#) if you are not a member.

9.00 – 9.20 am: Opening Remarks and Event Introduction

Speaker: Dr John **Miller** (University of Sheffield) President of ASLE-UKI

9.20 – 11.05 am: Parallel sessions 1

1.1 Ecological Knowledge and Responsibility in Literature (article presentations)

Chair: Vera **Fibisan** (University of Sheffield).

9.20 – 9.25

Introductions

9.25 – 9.45 am

Abhra **Paul** (National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER), Bhubaneswar, OCC of Homi Bhabha National Institute, India) ‘Who cares if one species is lost?’ Reading Barbara Kingsolver’s Selected Works as Anthropocenic Extinction Narratives

9.45 – 10.05 am

Ghulam **Rabani** (Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee) Interventional Historicity: A Post-Colonial Ecocritical Study of Uzma Aslam Khan’s *The Miraculous True History of Nomi Ali*

10.05 – 10.25 am

Dipayan **Dutta** (University of Warwick) Imagining Future through the Perceptions of Shared Elementality: Studying Images of 21st Century American Eco-poetry

10.25 – 10.45 am

Inhye **Ha** (Incheon National University) Daniel Defoe’s Weather Writing

10.45 – 11.05 am

Discussion and conclusions

1.2 Socio-political Ecological Stories (article presentations)

Chair: Jasmin **Kirkbride** (City, University of London)

9.20 – 9.25

Introductions

9.25 – 9.45 am

Saba **Pirzadeh** (Lahore University of Management Sciences) Resource War and Resistance in Nigerian Writing

9.45 – 10.05 am

Laura **Albertini** (University of St Andrews) 'Partisans for nature and the future' – rhetoric of nature and opposition in the No TAV movement

10.05 – 10.25 am

Karen **Eckersley** (Nottingham Trent University) Leonora Carrington's 'geostories': surreal visions of future ecologies

10.25 – 10.45 am

Lenka **Filipova** (Independent scholar/Freie Universität Berlin) Gendered Temporalities of Oil in Imbolo Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were*.

10.45 – 11.05 am

Discussion and conclusions

10 min BREAK

11.15 am – 12.45 pm: Publishing Workshop

Workshop on academic publishing within the Environmental Humanities aimed at PGR students and early-career researchers

Chair: Jasmin **Kirkbride** (City, University of London)

Speakers: Dr John **Miller** (University of Sheffield), Dr Richard **Kerridge** (Bath Spa University), and Dr Alex **Campbell**

45 minutes BREAK

Parallel sessions 2

1.30 pm – 3.00 pm:

2.1 Roundtable and Q&A: ‘Show and Tell: Roundtable on Practice-Based Research and Creative Writing PhDs’

Chair: João **Guimarães** (University of Porto).

Participants: Katharina Maria **Kalinowski** (host); Vera **Fibisan** (University of Sheffield); Sofie **Schrey** (Northumbria University); Anna **Selby** (Manchester Metropolitan University).

1.30 pm – 3.00 pm

2.2 Deep Time in Green Literature (article presentations)

Chair: Brycchan **Carey** (Northumbria University)

1.30 – 1.40

Introductions

1.40 – 2.00 pm

Ollie **Case** (University of Worcester) ‘This impersonal thing, which I’m dared to do by my friends, the flight of time’: The Aesthetics of Posthuman Deep Time in Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*

2.00 – 2.20 pm

Anne-Sophie **Balzer** (Augsburg University) ‘And just like that /we begin to freeze’: Cryospheric Intimacy in the Poetry of Vivian Faith Prescott’s *The Last Glacier at the End of the World* and Helen Mort’s *The Singing Glacier*

2.20 – 2.40 pm

Deborah **Bowen** (Redeemer University, Ancaster, Ontario) Reading deep time: contemporary Canadian geopoetry

2.40 – 3.00 pm

Discussion and conclusions

30 min BREAK

4 pm- 6 pm – Networking event with breakout rooms

Chair: TBA

IT support and breakout rooms: Jasmin **Kirkbride** (City, University of London)

Pre-event Organising Contacts

Main contact, reviewer article submissions, scheduling: Sofie Schrey (Northumbria University)

Contact and ASLE-UKI PGR representative: Vera Fibisan (University of Sheffield)

Contact and ASLE-UKI PGR representative, additional IT support: Jasmin Kirkbride (City, University of London)

Event Day Contacts

General organisers: Sofie Schrey and Vera Fibisan

IT (links & Zoom): Jasmin Kirkbride

Email support, roundtable chair: Sofie Schrey

Chat moderator: Sofie Schrey

Introduction: Dr John Miller, ASLE-UKI president

Workshop invited speakers: Dr John Miller, Dr Richard Kerridge, and Dr Alex Campbell

Roundtable host: Karolina Maria Kalinowski

Programme: Tuesday 6 September

All events take place in City Campus East One (CCE1). Plenary sessions, refreshments, etc, are on the ground floor. Breakout sessions are on the second floor.

8.30 am: Coffee and Registration (Lobby)

9.00 am: Welcome Address (002)

A welcome from the President of ASLE-UKI, John **Miller** (University of Sheffield), and the chair of the conference organising committee, Brycchan **Carey** (Northumbria University).

9.15 am: Plenary 1 (002)

Samantha **Walton** (Bath Spa University) 'Everybody Needs Beauty: The History, Politics and Future of "Healing Nature"'

Chair: John **Miller** (University of Sheffield)

10.30 am: Coffee (Lobby)

11.00 am: Parallel Sessions 1

1.1. Medieval and Early Modern Environments

Time: Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm

Chair: Todd Borlik (University of Huddersfield)

Room: 214

Ana Alho (University of Lisbon) Iconographic reading of the gargoyles and the respective hydraulic system in the Westminster Abbey.

Caroline Harris (Royal Holloway, University of London) The cute and the killable: reading and writing the deer hunt scene in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Emily Naish (University of Sheffield) 'No wood, no Kingdome': The Writing of Forests and the English Literary Inheritance in the Elizabethan Age

Edward Stein (University of Cambridge) In a Pickle: (Self-)Preservation in the Travel Narratives of John Taylor, the Water-Poet

1.2. Modernism and Environment

Time: Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm

Chair: Enaie Maire Azambuja (School of Advanced Study, University of London)

Room: 221

Domonique Davies (University of Reading) Wallace Stevens's Disanthropic Prophecies

Matthew Griffiths (Non-affiliated researcher) Beyond the Acts: Reading Virginia Woolf's dangling pastoral in the 21st century

Sofia Roberg (Mid Sweden University) Flower, Grape Leaf, Fruit. On Cyclical Time and the Creativity of Nature in Rainer Maria Rilke's Die Sonette an Orpheus

1.3. New Ways of Writing

Time: Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm

Chair: Richard Kerridge (Bath Spa University)

Room: 226

Alice Carlill (Goldsmiths College, University of London) Ecological Grief and Anticipatory Mourning in Jessie Greengrass's *The High House*

Natalie Joelle (Birkbeck, University of London) The Gleaners' Alphabet: twentysix glean stations

Cristina Peligra (Università degli Studi di Padova) Past, present and future in Zwemlessen voor later (Swimming lessons for later). Dutch climate poetry and the representation of time and its cycles.

1.4. Phenology, Cycles, and Landscape

Time: Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm

Chair: Vera Fibisan (University of Sheffield)

Room: 213

Michelle Bastian (University of Edinburgh) Engaging with phenology to understand more-than-human climate change temporalities

James Kelly (Independent scholar) Time and landscape in Michel Serres' 'L'Incandescent'

Melina Lieb (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz/Germersheim) The Interplay of Circularity and Linearity in 21st-century Nature Diaries

Anna Selby (Manchester Metropolitan University) A Poetry Almanac

1.5. Politics and Ecocriticism (Roundtable)

Time: Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm

Chair: John Parham (University of Worcester)

Room: 223a

Participants:

Sam Solnick (University of Liverpool)

Aidan Tynan (Cardiff University)

Pippa Marland (University of Bristol)

1.6. The Ecologies of Nation-Building: Production of Natures and Histories Across the Atlantic

Time: Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm

Chair: Jenny Bavidge (University of Cambridge)

Room: 222

Carlos Abreu Mendoza (Texas State University) The C(o)urse of Rivers: Hydraulic Modernity in Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and José María Samper

Aarti Madan (Worcester Polytechnic Institute) Estanislao Severos Zeballos, or Nineteenth-Century Argentina's Environmental Unconscious

Enrica Renata Leydi (Bologna University) Leopardi's Volcanic Landscape: The Broom, or the Flower of the Desert (1836)

Axel Pérez Trujillo (Durham University) Into the Vastness of the Plains: Continentalism and Colonialism in Ezequiel Martínez Estrada

12.45 pm: Lunch (Ground Floor Hub)

1.30 pm: Parallel Sessions 2

2.1. Contaminated Landscapes in Historical, Deep and Cyclical Time (Preformed Panel)

Time: Tuesday 6 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm

Chair: Elizabeth Edwards (University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies)

Room: 221

Mary-Ann Constantine (University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies) Avernus in Paradise: poisoned water in the landscapes of Romantic-era Wales

Andrew Webb (Bangor University) ‘the deep dark zero’: Dylan Thomas and the contaminated landscapes of the future
Jamie Harris (Aberystwyth University) After Chernobyl: Welsh poetry and nuclear power

2.2. Crisis, Change, and Isolation through time in the English Countryside

Time: Tuesday 6 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm

Chair: Tess Somervell (Worcester College, University of Oxford)

Room: 223a

Nick Pepper (Northumbria University) The countryside fortress: The conflicted experience of Northumberland’s foot-and-mouth crisis

Emma Yeo (Durham University) “the most outrageous Daie for winde & snowe that ever did blow”: Exploring man’s relationship to weather and the natural environment in early modern diaries

Alexander Hibberts (Durham University) Countryside as Refuge: Marine Transgression and Landscape Transition at Hastings Augustinian Priory, c.1350-1417

2.3. Desert and Drought

Time: Tuesday 6 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm

Chair: Vera Fibisan (University of Sheffield)

Room: 213

Ashley Cahillane (National University of Ireland, Galway) Climate Change, Drought, and Environmental Time in Fabienne Bayet-Charlton’s *Watershed*

Hilla Peled-Shapira (Ariel University and Bar-Ilan University) The Desert in the Service of the Authorities: An Ecocritical Reading of Iraqi Literature of Exiles

2.4. Gardens

Time: Tuesday 6 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm

Chair: Michelle Bastian (University of Edinburgh)

Room: 222

Joanna Dobson (Sheffield Hallam University) Strange temporalities: horticulture and the narration of trauma in WG Sebald’s *The Emigrants*

Varna Venugopal (Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, India) “I am seeing a mulberry bush but thinking pandemic”: Vegetal Temporalities during the Coronavirus Crisis

2.5. Human/Non-Human Interactions

Time: Tuesday 6 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm

Chair: Mo O'Neill (University of Sheffield)

Room: 226

Brycchan Carey (Northumbria University) Bull-baiting bad; birdwatching good: Percival Stockdale, Gilbert White, and the clerical origins of the animal rights movement

Joseph Hardwick (Northumbria University) Animal Sunday, the natural world, and the problem of 'liturgical time' in the early twentieth-century Church of England

David Tierney (University of Liverpool) Speculating The Future of Farmed Non-human Animals

2.6. Watery Bodies, Wetlands, and Maritime Ecologies in Early Modernity (Preformed Panel)

Time: Tuesday 6 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm

Chair: Rosamund Paice (Northumbria University)

Room: 214

Tamsin Badcoe (University of Bristol) 'A pitcht peece of reason calkt and tackled': The Uncertainty of Early Modern Maritime Ecologies

Jemima Matthews (King's College London) The sea made this': Entangled maritime resources of the 1630s

Todd Borlik (University of Huddersfield) The Curse of the Wetlands: Malaria and Magic in The Witch of Edmonton

3.00 pm: Coffee (Lobby)

3.30 pm: Parallel Sessions 3

3.1. Extraction and Exploitation

Time: Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm

Chair: James Kelly

Room: 221

Elizabeth Carolyn Miller (University of California, Davis) Temporalities of Extraction

Arthur Rose (University of Exeter) Asbestos: A Matter of Time

3.2. Narrating Rural Change: socio-ecological pasts, present and futures (Preformed Panel)

Time: Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm

Chair: Matthew Jarvis (Aberystwyth University)

Room: 213

Kirsti Bohata (Swansea University) Trees in Time: Afforestation and Solastalgia

Chris Pak (Swansea University) Apocalypse and Utopia: Narrating Rural Change in Welsh Science Fiction

3.3. Nuclear Narratives

Time: Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm

Chair: Matthew Griffiths

Room: 222

Armelle Blin-Rolland (Bangor University) 180 days, 100 000 years: Factory Farms, Industrial Slaughterhouses, Nuclear Sites and More-than-human Spacetimes in Contemporary France

Emma Davies (Bath Spa University) Chernobyl: a history of the future

Philippa Holloway (Staffordshire University) Then, Now, Forever? Researching and Writing Nuclear Landscapes for The Half-life of Snails

3.4. The Spectacle of Extinction (Preformed Panel)

Time: Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm

Chair: Dominic O'Key (University of Sheffield)

Room: 226

Deborah Schrijvers (University College Dublin) Moonwalking in the Berlin Zoo: Resisting Giant Panda Reproductive Regimes

Kári Driscoll (Utrecht University) Extinction as Spectacle

Hannah Boast (University College Dublin) Endangered Animals in Palestinian Film

3.5. Time, Identity, and Place

Time: Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm

Chair: Hilla Peled-Shapira (Bar-Ilan University and Ariel University)

Room: 214

Ana Victoria Mazza (University of Glasgow) Nervous Migrations: Landscape, Time and Identity in Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North and Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions

John Miller (University of Sheffield) 'This Fearful and Stinking Pocket of Nether-Life': Edgar Mittelholzer's Spectral Jungle Histories

Roberta Sala (University of Turin) The return of time. Forests, wind, snow and the epochs of human existence in the poetry of Gennadij Ajgi.

3.6. Reefs and Islands

Time: Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm

Chair: Pippa Marland (University of Bristol)

Room: 223a

Rachel Dowse (Independent researcher) Island Identities: Place, Past and Present on Flat Holm

Laoighseach Ní Choistealbha (National University of Ireland, Galway) The abandonment of Hirta Island in Simon Ó Faoláin's 'Tréigint Eilean Hiort: cuimhní ceathrar'

5.00 pm: Transit break

5.10 pm: ASLE-UKI Biennial General Meeting (002)

All members of ASLE-UKI are encouraged to take part in the BGM.

6.15 pm: Wine Reception (Lobby)

Sponsored by Cambridge University Press. Includes the launch of *Modern British Nature Writing, 1789-2020: Land Lines* and *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Anthropocene*, as well as presentation of the winners of the 2021 ASLE-UKI Book Prizes.

7.15 pm: Creative Writing Reading (002)

A medley of readings of poetry and prose on environmental themes written and read out live by ASLE-UKI members. Free and open to all. Bring your glass of wine in from the reception!

Programme: Wednesday 7 September

All events take place in City Campus East One (CCE1). Plenary sessions, refreshments, etc, are on the ground floor. Breakout sessions are on the second floor – with the exception of the two short films (session 4.3) which will be shown in the ground floor lecture theatre 002.

8.30 am: Coffee and Registration (Lobby)

9.00 am: Parallel Sessions 4

4.1. ‘Our future is still the future of 1973’: Militant Ecologies and the Work/Energy Crisis (Roundtable)

Time: Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am

Chair: Daniel Eltringham (University of Sheffield)

Room: 226

Participants:

Fred Carter (University of Amsterdam)

Tom Crompton (University of Warwick)

Daniel Eltringham (University of Sheffield)

Natalie Joelle (Birkbeck College, University of London)

Emila Weber (University College London)

4.2. Deep-Time Eco-poetics

Time: Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am

Chair: Vera Fibisan (University of Sheffield)

Room: 213

Amal Al-Rowisan (University of Birmingham) Robinson Jeffers’s Perception of and Responses to Modernization: A Critique of historical Cycles Vs Deep Time

Jeremy Davies (University of Leeds) Recent Geologic Time

Chao Xie (Zhejiang Gongshang University/ University of Cambridge) On “Deep Time” and Environmental Ethics in Gillian Clarke’s Ecological Poetry

4.3. Two Short Films: ‘Newland’ and ‘Fawley’ (Preformed Panel)

Time: Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am

Chair: Matthew Kelly (Northumbria University)

Room: 002

Short Film: ‘Newland: New Vision for a Wilder Future’

Short Film: ‘Fawley’

Followed by discussion of the films led by **Pippa Marland** (Bristol) and **Matt Kelly** (Northumbria)

4.4. Temporal and Environmental Imaginaries

Time: Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am

Chair: Hilary Bedder (Anglia Ruskin University)

Room: 214

Lee Barron (Northumbria University) Imagining the Novacene: Artificial Intelligence and Visions of Technological Environmental Futures

Gemma Curto (University of Sheffield) Writing a green geometry of chaotic forms: intersections in Stoppard’s Arcadia

Evelyn O’Malley (University of Exeter) ‘Peace and Quiet and Open Air’: New York weather in screen musicals of the Covid-19 pandemic

Evy Varsamopoulou (University of Cyprus) Temporal Imaginaries in a World Without Time

4.5. The Historical Novel

Time: Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am

Chair: Mandy Haggith (University of the Highlands and Islands)

Room: 222

Mariadele Boccardi (University of the West of England) Time, scale, representation and environmental historical fiction: Jim Crace’s Harvest (2013) and Ian McGuire’s The North Water (2016)

Kennedy Dragt (Université Catholique de Louvain) Apocalyptic Visions: Medieval Mysticism as Future-past Speculative Hope in Two Contemporary Novels

Jane Hibbert-Nicolov (Birkbeck College, University of London) A Balkan Pastoral: Anton Donchev’s historical novel ‘Time of Parting’

Sadhna Swayamsidha (Indian Institute of Technology, Madras)

Anthropo-timescapes: Rethinking the Landscapes of Oppression in Mamang Dai’s The Black Hill

4.6. Writing for a Changing World

Time: Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am

Chair: David Tierney (University of Liverpool)

Room: 223a

Melanie Ebdon (Staffordshire University) “At midnight when the year turned”: shifting cycles and the pastoral posthuman in Jon McGregor’s ‘Reservoir 13’

Bernadette McBride (University of Liverpool) Cruel Optimism and Climate Crisis

Kat Waters (University of Leeds) Primitive Futures: Nostalgia and Modernity in the work of Paul Kingsnorth

Penelope Wells (Bournemouth University) Weird weather, women, and why they are powerless against climate change in contemporary eco-novels: a socio-political ecocritical perspective.

4.7. Water Works: Responding to Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Centuries Water Systems (Preformed Panel)

Time: Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am

Chair: Catherine Evans (University of Manchester)

Room: 221

Rosamund Paice (Northumbria University) Milton versus the Medici: Controlling Water in the Gardens of Eden and the Pratolino

Claudine van Hensbergen (Northumbria University) Gabriel Caius Cibber’s ‘Curious Works’: Charles II’s Fountain in Soho Square (1681)

Jodie Matthews (University of Huddersfield) Lucid Undulation’: Erasmus Darwin, Josiah Wedgwood and the Industrial Canal

10.45 am: Coffee (Lobby)

11.15 am: Plenary 2: Roundtable Discussion on Time and the Environment

Time: Wednesday 7 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 am

Chair: Brycchan Carey (Northumbria University)

Room: 002

Participants:

Todd Borlik (University of Huddersfield)

Andrew Crumey (Northumbria University)

Greg Lynall (University of Liverpool)
Tess Somervell (University of Oxford)

12.45 pm: Lunch (Ground Floor Hub)

1.30 pm: Excursions or self-guided time (CCE1 Main Entrance)

Excursions will leave at 1.30 pm sharp from the main entrance to CCE1. If you have booked on an excursion, please check your email for precise information about the trip. You will need to pay any fees on the day.

7.30 pm: pre-dinner drinks in the Lobby of the Sutherland Building

8.00 pm: Conference Dinner in the Great Hall of the Sutherland Building

The Sutherland building is on Northumberland Road at the centre of the main city campus.

- [Find the Sutherland Building on Google Maps](#)
 - [Campus Map](#) (the Sutherland Building is building number 27)
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Programme: Thursday 8 September

All events take place in City Campus East One (CCE1). Plenary sessions, refreshments, etc, are on the ground floor. Breakout sessions are on the second floor.

8.30 am: Coffee and Registration (Lobby)

9.00 am: Parallel Sessions 5

5.1. Empire and Environment

Time: Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am

Chair: Jeremy Davies (University of Leeds)

Room: 221

Hilary Bedder (Anglia Ruskin University) ‘The individual ... perishes, the whole remains’. Exploring long-term continuous and multi-species life in Olive Schreiner’s *The Story of an African Farm*

Heather Craddock (University of Roehampton and Kew Gardens) Botanical Time: Writing the Colonial Plant in the Miscellaneous Reports of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Isabella Maria Engberg (University of Aberdeen) The Discrepancies of the “Anthropozoic Age”: Evolutionary Deep Time and the Age of Culture in Ernst Haeckel’s *A Visit to Ceylon* (1882; 3rd ed. 1893)

Richard Kerridge (Bath Spa University) Decolonizing the love of wild nature

5.2. Evolution and Transformation

Time: Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am

Chair: TBA: Please Volunteer

Room: 214

Karin M. Danielsson (Mälardalen University) Time to Cultivate Your Inner Seal: Eric Linklater’s “Sealskin Trousers” as Posthumanist Guide to Mutability

Ines Kirschner (University of Aberdeen) ‘The Pinnacle of Apishness’: Evolution and (Un)Becoming-Human in Yoko Tawada’s *Memoirs of a Polar Bear*

Heather Milligan (University of Edinburgh) Queer Ecology and Evolutionary Time in K-Ming Chang’s *Bestiary*

5.3. The North

Time: Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am

Chair: Vera Fibisan (University of Sheffield)

Room: 223a

Jenny Bavidge (University of Cambridge) 'A place of endless magic': Childhood and Time in the work of Robert Westall

Hilary Bowling (University of Liverpool) The emergence of the ecospectre in contemporary fiction set in the British north

Harriet Tarlo (Sheffield Hallam University) Spillways: creative cross disciplinary responses to the South Yorkshire Hydrosphere

5.4. Without End: An Interim Ecology of Forms (Roundtable)

Time: Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am

Chair: Henry Ivry (University of Glasgow)

Room: 213

Participants:

Jos Smith (University of East Anglia)

Henry Ivry (University of Glasgow)

Julia Jordan (University College London)

Maria Sledmere (University of Strathclyde)

Ben Smith (University of Exeter)

5.5. Writing the Anthropocene

Time: Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am

Chair: James Kelly

Room: 226

Santi L. Famà (Stockholm University) Towards a Post-Anthropocentric Narration: Comparing Gadda's and VanderMeer's Storyworld Building

Karen Lloyd (Lancaster University) The Cultural Landscape in the Anthropocene

Sanchar Sarkar (Indian Institute of Technology Madras) The Carbon Coin: An Eco-speculative Approach to Decarbonise the Earth in Kim Stanley Robinson's The Ministry for the Future

5.6. Decomposition/Recomposition: From medieval to modern literature (Roundtable)

Time: Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am

Chair: Rosamund Paice (Northumbria University)

Room: 222

Participants:

Francesca Brooks (University of York)

Hannah Armstrong (University of York)

Rebecca Drake (University of York)

Catherine Evans (University of Manchester)

10.45 am: Coffee (Lobby)

11.15 am: Parallel Sessions 6

6.1. Animal Histories (Preformed Panel)

Time: Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm

Chair: John Miller (University of Sheffield)

Room: 226

Laura Gelfand (Utah State University) Love, Respect, and the Legacy of the Lupa Romana

Indigo Gray (University of Sheffield) Slime and Protoplasm: Evolution and Descent in the Animalia of Germinal

Mo O'Neill (University of Sheffield) The Vegetarian Limits of Edward Carpenter's Modernist Self-fashioning

6.2. Daily Time and Deep Time: form, language and writing the earth (Preformed Panel)

Time: Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm

Chair: Andrew Webb (Bangor University)

Room: 221

Elizabeth Edwards (University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies) Home Circuits: queer temporalities and Welsh landscapes

Diana Wallace (University of South Wales) 'Eternal time': place, space and time in Margiad Evans's Autobiography (1943)

Matthew Jarvis (Aberystwyth University) Singing in Deep Time: The Work of John Barnie

6.3. Disaster, Trauma, Apocalypse

Time: Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm

Chair: Arthur Rose (University of Exeter)

Room: 213

Andrea Ashworth (Edge Hill University, Ormskirk) 'Maybe the Birds': A Short Story
Contemplating Environmental Disaster

Reigine Davenport (Plymouth University) Traumatic Encounters, Insidious Futures:
Anticipating climate change in Oana Aristide's Under the Blue

Anastasia Natsina (University of Crete) The end of time: Apocalypse and post-
apocalypse in Modern Greek fiction

6.4. Improving Nature in Early Modern England

Time: Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm

Chair: Todd Borlik (University of Huddersfield)

Room: 214

Chloe Fairbanks (Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford) 'Marry, sir, she's the
kitchen': women's work and transcultural encounters in Shakespeare's Windsor

Bonnie L. Johnson (Newnham College, University of Cambridge) Trees, Ballads, and
Iconoclasm in Richard II

Tess Somervell (Worcester College, University of Oxford) The Wand'ring Glebe: Georgic
Histories of the Soil

6.5. Romanticism and Time

Time: Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm

Chair: TBA, Please Volunteer

Room: 002

Katerina Lontou (University of Leeds) Close Reading the Apocalypse: what can poetry
reveal about the future of the planet?

Xiaoxiao Ma (University of Leeds) 'Paths to freedom': Nature and Circular Time in John
Clare's 'The Mores'

6. 6. Science Fiction/Speculative Fiction 1

Time: Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm

Chair: Chris Pak (Swansea University)

Room: 222

Lucy Nield (University of Liverpool) ‘They’d think we were Gods’ Anthropocentrism, Dogs and The Natural World Paulo Baciag Lupi’s ‘The People of the Sand and Slag,’ a haunting look at the future for humanity

David Shackleton (Cardiff University) “Failing Economies and Tortured Ecologies”: Octavia E. Butler’s Climate-Changed Worlds

Mònica Tomàs (Rutgers University) From colonial pasts to cosmopolitical futures: the telescoping timeframes of genre fiction

6.7. The English Countryside of the Mid-Twentieth Century

Time: Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm

Chair: Joanna Dobson (Sheffield Hallam University)

Room: 223a

Catherine Ellis (Independent Scholar) “When we walked in the woods your face was so young and happy, almost as it used to be”: nostalgia and the natural world in Agatha Christie’s *The Hollow* (1951)

Anna Kirsch (Durham University) Representations of English Heritage in Crime Fiction: Nostalgia for a Golden Age in Agatha Christie to P.D James and Ruth Rendell

Niall Oddy (The Open University) The country, the suburb and the city: An ecocritical reading of Barbara Pym’s ‘Less Than Angels’ (1955)

12.45 pm: Lunch (Ground Floor Hub)

1.30 pm: Parallel Sessions 7

7.1. Indigenous Literatures of North America: Charting Literary Territories

Time: Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm

Chair: Todd Borlik (University of Huddersfield)

Room: 221

Brianna Burke (Iowa State University) Remaking, Rewriting, Reimagining the world in Thomas King’s *The Back of the Turtle*

Anik Chartrand (Brandeis University) Beyond Storytelling: James Welch’s *Fools Crow* as a Contemporary Native American Bundle System

Abbey Ballard (University of Worcester) 'Coax Stories out of the Permafrost': Stories from the Ice Within Tanya Tagaq's *Split Tooth*

7.2. Animal Temporalities (Preformed Panel)

Time: Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm

Chair: John Miller (University of Sheffield)

Room: 226

Vera Fibisan (University of Sheffield) Temporality and hydromaterialism in Elizabeth-Jane Burnett's *Of Sea*

Christie Oliver-Hobley (University of Sheffield) Sad, deserted shore, your fickle friends are leaving': Time, Melancholy and Migration

Dominic O'Key (University of Sheffield) The Rewilding Plot: Writing Conservation Futures in the Sixth Extinction

7.3. Contemporary Ecopoetics

Time: Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm

Chair: Julia Jordan (University College London)

Room: 223a

Sara Shahwan (Goldsmiths, University of London) Ecological Identity in the Making: The Role of the Environment in Migrant Children's Poetry

Hazel Streeter (University of Bristol) 'Keeping to its Clock': Hearing More-than-human Temporalities in Alice Oswald's *Falling Awake*

7.4. Environment on Screen

Time: Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm

Chair: Samantha Walton (Bath Spa University)

Room: 213

David Ingram (Independent scholar) Social realism, time and environment in Clio Barnard's film 'Dark River' (2017)

Sofie Schrey (Northumbria University) 'A Red Blight': Fungal Biohazard Narratives and Environmental Decline in Modern Video Games

Andy Thatcher (Bristol University) Common Place – reporting on a practice-based PhD in Film

7.5. Science Fiction/Speculative Fiction 2

Time: Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm

Chair: David Shackleton (Cardiff University)

Room: 214

Ingemar Haag (Stockholm University) Time Regained

Jasmin Kirkbride (University of East Anglia) Timeless narratives: exploring chronological anonymity and hopeful longevity in dystopian climate fiction

Jonathan Thornton (University of Liverpool) Deep Time and Generational Time in Speculative Fiction: Adrian Tchaikovsky's Children of Time and Namwali Serpell's The Old Drift

7. 6. Time and Tide

Time: Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm

Chair: Melina Lieb (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz/Germersheim)

Room: 222

Mandy Haggith (University of the Highlands and Islands) The Liminal Zone

Rachel Murray (Northumbria University) 'a well excavated grave': Marianne Moore's Marine Archive

Helen Tookey (Liverpool John Moores University) 'Hear Us O Lord': an AHRC Research Network project taking Malcolm Lowry's ecopoetical short stories to sea (co-presented with Alan Dunn, Leeds Beckett University)

3.00 pm: Comfort and Transit Break

3.10 pm: Plenary 3 (002)

Elizabeth-Jane Burnett (Northumbria University). 'Earth, Sea, Sky and In-between: Readings from The Grassling, Swims, Of Sea and Moss'

Chair: **Richard Kerridge** (Bath Spa University)

4.25 pm: Closing remarks: John Miller, ASLE President, Conference organisers (002)

4.45 pm: Conference ends

5.00 pm: Informal social gathering at a local pub – The City Tavern,

Abstracts of Papers

These are the abstracts of individually submitted papers. They are presented in alphabetical order by surname.

Ana Alho (University of Lisbon)

Iconographic reading of the gargoyles and the respective hydraulic system in the Westminster Abbey.

Panel 1.1, Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm, Room 214

Westminster Abbey is a particular case in the history of English medieval architecture. Its construction began in 1245, having emerged by the will of a single person: King Henry III. It was he who financed the work almost in its entirety. This monarch sought to strengthen the position of the English monarchy in relation to powerful France. Saint Edward was his trump card, since there was still, at that time, no saint in the lineage of French kings. The reconstruction of King Edward's tomb thus represented a part of the enormous efforts undertaken towards the revaluation of the English royal house. The new Westminster Abbey was not only to become one of the most magnificent churches in the West, supplanting all the great buildings in the kingdom, but also, and above all, to overcome competition from the great French cathedrals. This is how Westminster became the most "French" church in English Gothic.

For this international congress, we will focus our attention on the hydraulic system of Westminster Abbey, from the collection, distribution and evacuation of the water, to the registration, description and iconographic analysis of the gargoyles present in the built complex.

Amal Al-Rowisan (University of Birmingham)

Robinson Jeffers's Perception of and Responses to Modernization: A Critique of historical Cycles Vs Deep Time

Panel 4.2, Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 213

With the development of the science of ecology, ecopoetry extends the ecocritical critique by critiquing the socio-political and economic ideologies behind the human and nonhuman relationship and advocating ethical relations. Through this critique, it presents the contrast of this relationship in different historical periods through themes of Ages and cycles. This paper presents Robinson Jeffers's poetry on modernity as an example of ecopoetic critique of historical cycles. It aims at presenting Jeffers's perception and response to modernization. Consequently, this modernization results in exploitation and ecological violence for the prosperity of the culture which makes it different from deep time.

Jeffers responds to these rapid cultural changes that impact both humans and their environment in three different responses. First, Jeffers responds to the cultural changes and humans' acts of prosperity by accepting them as part of the historical cycles while at the same time socially withdrawing from the culture. He accepts the emergence of this historical time as an inevitable which he tries to shield from. Jeffers's "Shine, Perishing Republic" relates the necessity of physical withdrawal as a retreat from modernization and cultural destructive expansion. Secondly, Jeffers proposes a restoration to basic enduring values of deep time through his contrast with the permanence and the enduring power of nature and its basic symbols such as the rock, hawk, and the mountains. "Gray Weather," presents Jeffers's admiration of timelessness and celebration of deep time in contrast to shallowness and the changes of modernity. Thirdly, Jeffers's response develops into a direct critique of the cultural changes that are motivated by excessive power in the context of WWII instigated by his accumulated apathy and a prolonged withdrawal. "Prescription of Painful Ends" presents a critique of present social destructive change through a contrast between the concept of change in the past and present.

Andrea Ashworth (Edge Hill University, Ormskirk)

'Maybe the Birds': A Short Story Contemplating Environmental Disaster

Panel 6.3, Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm, Room 213

Ecological upheavals, extreme weather, extinction threats – barely a week goes by without us hearing of yet another disaster, either at home or overseas.

It is no wonder then, that writers are starting to engage deeply with the natural world in their work. Indeed, not only this, but many are now actively foregrounding nature, in a bid to ensure it plays as prominent a role as possible in their writing.

My own practice-based research engages with the natural world in a deep way also, and involves the creation of new short stories, which aim to provide a fictional space for the environment. One story, 'Maybe the Birds', considers the notion of future time and imagines what might happen should an unspecified environmental disaster threaten all life on Earth. As writer Ben Okri says, in a recent article calling for creatives to engage with the climate crisis, 'Sometimes I think we must be able to imagine the end of things, so that we can imagine how we will come through that which we imagine'.

In my story, most life has succumbed to an unknown illness in the aftermath of an ecological catastrophe. One woman, a sculptor, has already lost her partner and, fearing she is becoming ill also, decides to make ceramic bird syringes – or voice boxes – in order to try and keep birdsong alive at least. In what may be a final act of artistic activism, she hangs these in the trees so her dog can hear them when the wind blows, her legacy being to 'leave him the birds' after she has gone.

The story was shortlisted for the inaugural Short Fiction Wild Writing Prize in 2021 and my 20-minute presentation will feature a brief introduction and a reading from it.

Lee Barron (Northumbria University)

Imagining the Novacene: Artificial Intelligence and Visions of Technological Environmental Futures

Panel 4.4, Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 214

This paper focuses on a science-fiction-infused mode of environmental philosophy and technological speculation. As such, the paper is based on the examination and discussion of James Lovelock's 2019 book, *Novacene: The Coming Age of Hyperintelligence*. Novacene represents a distinctive artificial intelligence (AI) inspired vision of Lovelock's long-argued Gaia thesis, based on the view that living organisms can form a self-regulating system to maintain life on Earth. In *Novacene*, Lovelock argues that as the planet develops from the Anthropocene, the age defined by human activity and its influence on planetary eco-systems, it will evolve into the Novacene period – the age of machine hyperintelligence. While critics such as Nick Bostrom (2017) flag dangers inherent with such an advance in artificial machine intelligence, Lovelock envisions this future as an era of benevolence because as it will not be 'the violent machine takeover seen in many science-fiction books and films. Rather, humans and machines will be united because both will be needed to sustain Gaia, the Earth as a living planet' (2019: xii). The paper argues that the book adds a novel ecologically-focused addition to the 'Singularity' prognosis for mid-twenty-first century artificial intelligence – the creation of general artificial intelligence. Hence, while critics of AI stress its negative environmental impacts (the extraction of minerals for batteries, the growing consumption of electricity to power datacentres), Lovelock envisions AI as the means of staving off ecological degradation as the Novacene epoch will be characterised by a 'new electronic life' or the 'new IT Gaia' (2019: 111). While fictional and theoretical, it is significant that a technology initiated in the 1950s and reflecting the computer-speculations of Alan Turing regarding machine thinking, Lovelock envisions AI as the key to the humanity's environmental future, and the future of humanity.

Michelle Bastian (University of Edinburgh)

Engaging with phenology to understand more-than-human climate change temporalities

Panel 1.4, Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm, Room 213

Many scholars have argued that the climate crisis is in part a problem of time, with ecological, political and social systems thought to be out of sync or mistimed.

Discussions of time and environment are often interdisciplinary, necessitating a wide-ranging use of methods and approaches. However to date there has been little to no engagement from humanities or the social sciences with the scientific field of phenology, the scientific study of life cycle timing across species, including plants, animals and insects. Eco-literary studies has been one exception where the phenological work of Henry Thoreau, Aldo Leopold and Gilbert White, have drawn increasing attention. In this paper I will discuss findings from a new field philosophy project that works with ecologists and citizen scientists to ask ‘what is time?’ via the study of phenology. I will suggest that phenology can offer environmental humanities scholars novel inroads to thinking through temporal relations across species and environments. Drawing on Elaine Gan and Anna Tsing’s (2018) interest in the way time participates in processes of ‘how things hold’ I’m interested in how the flexibility of time and timing, issues at the heart of phenology, play a role in adaptation to change. What can we learn about the range of temporal strategies that plants, animals, fungi and others use to respond to changing climates, and what can we learn from them? In particular, what kinds of research possibilities might open up from more interdisciplinary conversations? In sum, this paper will propose phenology as a novel and fascinating avenue for thinking about the role of time in multispecies efforts to recuperate, repair and transform in a time of climate change.

Jenny Bavidge (University of Cambridge)

‘A place of endless magic’: Childhood and Time in the work of Robert Westall

Panel 5.3, Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 223a

This paper will examine the landscapes of Robert Westall’s North-East England, both realist and fantastical. Westall was an important and popular writer of the twentieth century but is now perhaps less read than authors who share some of his style and concerns, such as Alan Garner. Like Garner’s novels, Westall’s writing for children invites his readers to think and travel in deep time, activating, to use Nick Campbell’s term, ‘the archaeological imagination’ of post-war British children’s fiction. Focusing on Westall’s *The Wind Eye* (1976) and the time-slip story *The Watch House* (1977), plus a trip west to look at the folk-horror of *The Scarecrows* (1981), this paper will seek to add to existing discussions of Westall’s representation of the North-East in the light of ecocritical thinking. Westall’s landscapes are constructed through anthropocenic layering of pastoral memory and industrial ruin and I will argue that the novels are narrated in a mode of specifically Geordie eco-gothic, in which the afterlife of the Tyne’s industries is set against and connected to the dark ‘endless magic’ of Northumberland.

Hilary Bedder (Anglia Ruskin University)

‘The individual ... perishes, the whole remains’. Exploring long-term continuous and multi-species life in Olive Schreiner’s *The Story of an African Farm*

Panel 5.1, Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 221

This paper explores the fiction of Olive Schreiner and how her use of long-term temporal frameworks emphasise life as a continuum. Focussing on *The Story of an African Farm* (1883), I analyse her positioning of the individual within a world of transience and humanity as a collective. I also examine how Schreiner pinpoints the human mind as problematic in that it hinders acceptance of our own transience and a long-term perspective. My paper considers Schreiner’s use of complex structural patterning which enables her to embed the long-term but also to demonstrate how cyclical time and reiterations are also integral to the temporality of life. Through presenting humankind as a species, a viewpoint advocated by Dipesh Chakrabarty (2009), I argue that Schreiner repudiates critique of the novel as unsuited to a long-term perspective.

I use a vegetal perspective, particularly that of Michael Marder’s radical vegetal philosophy, to open up new readings of Schreiner’s work. Such an approach recognises how vegetal ontology blurs the boundaries between multiple and individual, life and death, temporal linearity and cyclicity, showing such boundaries to be zoocentric. I also examine Schreiner’s collective standpoint through the lens of Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the continuous nature of the ‘will’, a view that Schreiner herself recognised as having an affinity with her own vision.

A Schopenhauerian perspective is also helpful in exploring Schreiner’s presentation of an evolutionary connectivity between all lifeforms that is both material and metaphysical. She promotes such connectivity as that which enables humanity to find its place within a unified and interconnected life: part of a ‘living thing, a One’. There has been little ecocritical attention paid to Schreiner, but my reading frames her work as relevant to current environmental debates, and offers Schreiner as an ecological thinker who positions humankind within a long-term and multi-species world.

Armelle Blin-Rolland (Bangor University)

180 days, 100 000 years: Factory Farms, Industrial Slaughterhouses, Nuclear Sites and More-than-human Spacetimes in Contemporary France

Panel 3.3, Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm, Room 222

180 days, the title of a 2013 novel by Isabelle Sorrente, is the duration of a pig’s life on a factory farm. 100 000 years, the title of a 2020 comics reportage by Pierre Bonneau, Gaspard d’Allens and Cécile Guillard, is the length of time during which high- and level-medium nuclear waste must remain undisturbed once buried underground. This paper thinks through these two extremes – the factory farm’s inhumane compression of a nonhuman animal’s lifecycle to industrial slaughter, the staggering beyond-human

timescale of radioactive waste in deep geological repositories to-be-built – to explore narratives and counter-narratives of time and space for life on a changing planet. With a focus on the environmental history of contemporary France as a nuclear and industrial-agricultural nation, this paper analyses factory farms, industrial slaughterhouses and nuclear sites as what I term hyper-sites: as materialisations of ‘hyper-separated’ binaries (Plumwood 1993), and sites of complex more-than-human entanglements, interlocked in and opening onto – like a hypertext – broader networks of power and resistance across space and through time. It draws on a corpus that includes comics, podcasts, literature, film, art, political discourse and direct action, as texts that expose and contest the anthropocentric, gendered, (neo-)colonial, capitalist and nationalistic divisions of space and time that factory farms, industrial slaughterhouses and nuclear sites materialise, and their unjust, immediate and slow impacts on bodies and territories. This opens, in turn, onto renewed understandings of spacetimes as more-than-human, in rethinking and rescaling human-centred temporalities and spatialities through animals’ right to live uncaged as more-than-meat and the other-than-human liveliness of the ground, and in sketching the outlines of multispecies and planetary futures.

Mariadele Boccardi (University of the West of England)

Time, scale, representation and environmental historical fiction: Jim Crace’s *Harvest* (2013) and Ian McGuire’s *The North Water* (2016)

Panel 4.5, Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 222

Ecocritical approaches to fictional representations of environmental change often centre on the question of how the form and conventions of the realist novel, based as they are on human timescales, are suited to encompass chronological spans that far exceed what is commensurable to human experience. My paper considers the contribution of contemporary historical fiction to questions of scale and representation, with reference to the diverging approaches to time and the environment in Jim Crace’s *Harvest* (2013) and Ian McGuire’s *The North Water* (2016). The former is notoriously reluctant to establish external historical or indeed geographical referents for its setting and action, instead relying entirely on internal, non-contextual clues to construct a chronological frame for the events; the latter brims with contextual allusions to key historical and environmental moments that span from the decline in whaling when fossil fuels come to prominence as energy sources to Greenpeace’s successful global “Save the Whales” campaign in the late twentieth century.

The close attention to the respective strategies to represent time and the environment in *Harvest* and *The North Water* then leads to a broader discussion of the historical novel. Here, I argue that because of its implied double timeframe (the time of the setting and the time of the writing), the genre of the historical novel addresses questions of time,

scale, representation and the environment in a distinctive way: its retrospective nature traces the origins for the present environmental crisis to capitalist practices of resources exploitation, extraction and injustice and show that these practices still recur in the twenty-first century. The relationship between environmental change and perceptions of time in historical fiction thus differs from that in novels focused on one instance of environmental catastrophe and its aftermath.

Hilary Bowling (University of Liverpool)

The emergence of the ecospectre in contemporary fiction set in the British north
Panel 5.3, Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 223a

This paper focuses on how the landscapes of contemporary fiction are changing in response to climate change. No longer stable pastoral spaces, or even conventional Gothic sites which house individual or collective trauma, they are haunted by new types of spectres of the past and future environment. These ghosts draw attention to the aliveness of the past, but also refuse to allow the re-organisation of space and time in ways that conform to traditional hauntings. Drawing on the writings of Timothy Morton and Bruno Latour, I will consider how the environmental spectre provokes a wide range of affects, beyond those of fear and horror. This asserts the otherness of place, while paradoxically allowing weird connections to emerge between environment and human subject.

I will consider how the ecospectre prompts the rethinking, and re-feeling, of landscape in contemporary novels such as “Starve Acre” (Andrew Michael Hurley) and “Fell” (Jenn Ashworth). Through focusing on narratives set in the British north, I will investigate both the specificity of hauntings, and also the ways in which these localised phenomena carry planetary significance. In following this line of enquiry, this paper also explores how they draw attention to consequences of past actions, and why, following Derrida and Laura White, it is necessary to ‘talk with’ and ‘to’ ghosts, in our era of anthropogenic climate change.

Ashley Cahillane (National University of Ireland, Galway)

Climate Change, Drought, and Environmental Time in Fabienne Bayet-Charlton’s *Watershed*

Panel 2.3, Tuesday 6 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, Room 213

This paper considers how a twenty-first century Australian drought narrative, Fabienne Bayet-Charlton’s novel *Watershed* (2005), offers valuable insights in relation to the slower, intergenerational, regressive, and cyclical temporalities of climate change and global ecological destruction.

Rob Nixon has argued that literature can render visible the ‘slow violence’ of large-scale

catastrophes such as ocean acidification, deforestation, and climate change. More recently, Sarah Nuttall has progressed a concept of 'pluvial time', which refers to gradual, suffusive, and cumulative ecological changes best apprehended as 'the wet getting wetter'.

Using these ecocritical notions of temporality, this paper attends to the formal innovations of the underread but accomplished novel *Watershed*. *Watershed* describes and represents an anthropogenic drought in rural Victoria, and it constructs a slow plot driven by human characters who are suffering psychological stagnation and setbacks. The text's articulation of stagnated plot and character development mirrors how drought is a slow and attritional catastrophe, something which has much import for thinking through the 'slow violence' of contemporary ecological catastrophes. Through its focus on drought, the text also reflects on the significance of water to the human body, which helps it to balance larger concepts of time and space with smaller ones connected to bodily processes. The paper will also address how the novel's drought-inspired form is influenced by the history and politics of its setting. Ultimately, I will show how water-oriented ecocriticism, or the 'blue humanities', can offer insights on environmental time in the Anthropocene.

Brycchan Carey (Northumbria University)

Bull-baiting bad; birdwatching good: Percival Stockdale, Gilbert White, and the clerical origins of the animal rights movement

Panel 2.5, Tuesday 6 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, Room 226

The Hampshire clergyman Gilbert White (1720-1793) is well known as the author of *The Natural History of Selborne* (1789) which did much to fashion perceptions of the English countryside as well as to popularise birdwatching. Less well known is Percival Stockdale (1736-1811), the irascible vicar of Lesbury in Northumberland whose voluminous but now largely forgotten publications included a series of pamphlets excoriating the then popular custom of bull-baiting. In this paper, I contrast their attitudes towards non-human animals and argue that both can be seen as among the precursors of a new ethos that not only encouraged understanding of non-human animals, but which also advocated an actively protective stance towards them.

Alice Carlill (Goldsmiths College, University of London)

Ecological Grief and Anticipatory Mourning in Jessie Greengrass's *The High House*

Panel 1.3, Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm, Room 226

Increasing planetary publics are experiencing ecological grief and solastalgic disorientation from living in landscapes and environments that are progressively impacted by ecological crisis and collapse. Yet, the urgency of this crisis is as urgently

disavowed by the West in favour of an amnesiac, temporally-static nostalgia that valorises the past and promises its preservation and restoration by recommitting to an ecocidal status quo and evermore invasive extractivism in order to guard against the perceived risks of unruly, unmanageable futures. Conceiving of the past as innocent, conjuring nature as once pristine but now lost, and positioning present environmental crises as either unprecedented or world-ending is, however, a narrative of neo-colonial violence ignorant of the reality that these crises are intensifications and extensions of settler colonial-capitalism. Existing theories of mourning and memory have indicated how a resistant melancholy might activate a sense of the present as haunted and constituted by the past; ecological grief and ensuing mourning might therefore be a structure of feeling and cultural practice by which to remember and assert settler colonialism's histories of violent dispossession and its (ongoing) role in ecological crisis. But if ecological mourning is about remembrance of the lost, it is as much about anticipation of the to-be-lost. The temporality of ecological grief and mourning, in other words, is as futurally-oriented as backward-looking. Using Anglophone literature, I scrutinise how ecological grief, memory, and mourning interact and coalesce within the texts in order to depart from dominant backward-looking anthropocentric paradigms, remembering and memorialising the losses of the past, present and future whilst incorporating a recognition of the nonhuman, and accounting for (differential) human culpability and responsibility. By establishing a more textured, simultaneous, palimpsestic sense of temporality, I consider whether this literature might resist the West's nostalgic, apocalyptic self-absorption and imagine more egalitarian futures.

Heather Craddock (University of Roehampton and Kew Gardens)

Botanical Time: Writing the Colonial Plant in the Miscellaneous Reports of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Panel 5.1, Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 221

This paper will explore the writing of plants in the British Empire using archival materials from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in dialogue with literary examples of colonial botanical fiction and travel writing. Focusing on representations of Caribbean plants, this is an examination of how useful ecocritical and plant studies approaches are in addressing nineteenth century and non-literary writing about plants. I will consider the value of concepts which attempt to map the time scales of plants onto human temporal frameworks, such as the 'Plantationocene', arguing that plants such as trees offer opportunities to think on a wider, intergenerational scale. Much of the archival collection known as the Miscellaneous Reports is made up of printed annual reports from botanic gardens across the empire. By acknowledging that the attempts to regulate and record plant lives in these documents are structurally incompatible with the slow, seasonal time scales on which plants exist, this paper will address the role of

language and writing in the exploitation of colonial plants. This supports the process of reframing human relationships with plants for the future, moving away from exploitative relationships towards those which centre long-term sustainability.

Gemma Curto (University of Sheffield)

Writing a green geometry of chaotic forms: intersections in Stoppard's *Arcadia*

Panel 4.4, Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 214

The present paper aims to read Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia* (1993) as a text that seeks to provide philosophical enquiry into the world studied by science through its discussion of chaos in nature. Based on recent archival work on notes and early drafts of the play, I will explore how Stoppard clearly centres the butterfly effect, chaos and scaling as essential to the play and see 'art is[as] a theory about the way the world looks' (Stoppard *Arcadia*, by Sir Tom Stoppard; notes and early sectional drafts 1991, 11). While Stoppard departs from Kantian's critical philosophy, which limits scientific activity to simple problems and clearly separates it from the domain of philosophy (Prigogine and Stengers *Order out of Chaos: Man's New Dialogue with Nature*, 1984), I contend *Arcadia*'s main tropes reconcile free will and determination through its engagement with chaos theory. Stoppard's reading of *Order out of Chaos* (1984) and *Chaos: Making a New Science* (Gleick, 1987), position *Arcadia* as a play which seeks support for an alternative to classical science, as 'chaos is the new terra incognita' of the time (Stoppard 1991, 1). In our world complexity flourishes, and those looking to science for a general understanding of nature's habits will be well served by the laws of chaos.

Karin M. Danielsson (Mälardalen University)

Time to Cultivate Your Inner Seal: Eric Linklater's "Sealskin Trousers" as Posthumanist Guide to Mutability

Panel 5.2, Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 214

In this paper I argue that "Sealskin Trousers" by Eric Linklater can be read as a posthumanist model text, in which, as Rosi Braidotti puts it, "the process of becoming animal expresses the materialist and vitalist force of life, *zōé* as the generative power that flows across all species" (2009, 529).

"Sealskin Trousers," published in 1947, is a version of the selkie myth, with specific references to Francis James Child's ballad 113, "The Great Silkie from Sule Skerry."

Selkies are shape shifters, often female seals who become women when they go ashore and lay off their sealskins, but there are also male selkies, like the one in the Child ballad and this story. In "Sealskin Trousers," however, we are treated not only to a modern iteration of the selkie ballad, and the folkloristic motif of the animal bridegroom

(Carol G. Silver). This story also offers an (allegedly) scientific explanation of and guide to the transformation that takes place when the sealman's human girlfriend follows him into the sea, leaving her dress and her human fiancée behind. Since the story is narrated by the distraught fiancée, there are certainly strands of ambiguity and unreliability, but the combination of social criticism, evolutionary biology, materialist theory and animal myth creates a posthumanist affirmation of the possibilities of change, and of "attachment and connection to a shared world" (Braidotti, 530).

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Reigine Davenport (Plymouth University)

Traumatic Encounters, Insidious Futures: Anticipating climate change in Oana Aristide's *Under the Blue*

Panel 6.3, Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm, Room 213

As we anticipate the impact of current human actions on global ecological systems, a growing sense of anxiety and unease prevails. This paper suggests that literary representations of imminent climate catastrophes demonstrate how anticipation is inextricably bound up with future-oriented trauma and ecological anxiety. In its most extreme form, E. Ann Kaplan suggests that future-oriented trauma manifests itself as 'disturbing future-oriented cognitions and imaginations' (2016, p. 2) that are the temporal reverse of post-traumatic stress syndrome. Due to this temporal reversal, this phenomenon can be understood as 'pre-traumatic stress syndrome' (PreTSS). This paper will examine Oana Aristide's *Under the Blue* (2021) through the lens of future-oriented trauma and expand Kaplan's theory of PreTSS to include gradual and often elusive manifestations of future-oriented climate trauma. *Under the Blue* depicts a reclusive artist's journey from London to rural Devon and then to Africa in a bid to avoid nuclear radiation brought on by a global pandemic. Throughout this journey, the protagonist witnesses urban fires that appear to him as 'nightmarish orchards' and a recently deceased cow seemingly grows larger and moves nearer to his cottage. Through examining *Under the Blue*, this paper will produce insights into how literary representations of imminent environmental destruction can allude to existing relationships between anticipating climate catastrophes and future-oriented trauma.

This paper will also examine how *Under the Blue* inverts the popular cure narrative seen in many examples of pandemic-induced apocalypses. Through doing so, it critiques Western ecological values and relationships with 'the environment' by depicting human encounters with nonhuman animals, objects and landscapes under imminent threat from radiation as being fundamentally traumatic.

Domonique Davies (University of Reading)

Wallace Stevens's Disanthropic Prophecies

Panel 1.2, Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm, Room 221

While the work of Wallace Stevens features a range of vibrant human characters, he often expresses a distaste towards people. In letter extracts between 1907 – 1908 to his then fiancé, Elsie Moll, Stevens comments that 'most people are a great nuisance, and my own disposition is not remarkably lenient in such things.' Stevens is well known for his preference of places over people, writing in 'Adagia' (1957) that 'Life is an affair of people not of places. But for me life is an affair of places and that is the trouble.' Stevens's implied disdain towards humans slips into his poetics into what Greg Garrard describes as 'disanthropy'.

Sustained anthropogenic ecological damage resulting in the ecological crisis has focused our collective attention towards the future possibility of a world without humans. Confirmation that the sixth mass extinction is currently underway due to the human impact on the world has caused contemplation around the potential for human extinction. Garrard uses the term 'disanthropy' to describe this imagining of a world without people, noting that in the twentieth century, writers began to imagine 'for the first time' a world 'completely and finally without people'. My paper aims to build on Garrard's exploration into twentieth century disanthropic thinking to evaluate how far imagining this form of apocalypse may be helpful in conceiving an idea of our ecological future. Through showing how Stevens explores and depicts disanthropic narratives in his poetry through a close reading of 'The Plain Sense of Things' (1952), I will evaluate how these presentations of a world without people leads us to imagine our collective future.

Emma Davies (Bath Spa University)

Chernobyl: a history of the future

Panel 3.3, Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm, Room 222

The man-made natural catastrophe of radiation has changed how the world thinks about disaster, and the Chernobyl disaster has altered history from a story of war to a story of the future which will be fabricated from the ruins of disaster.

In this paper I explore the Chernobyl disaster as a rare form of man-made natural

catastrophe, and how time in the post-Chernobyl world has changed because human time and the weight of human imbalance no longer apply to it.

Much of the natural world is inherently unbalanced, including the atoms whose natural imbalance allowed the reactors at Chernobyl to harness energy. From the moment of disaster, time was dictated by the half-life of radioactive isotopes which are the new ruling inhabitants of the exclusion zone, and by their nature will remain so for tens of thousands of years.

Walter Benjamin notes that history is a story built by conquerors. But how are time and narrative affected when the conqueror is non-human? I will conclude by discussing radioactivity as a defining force in this new era of disaster: a new ruler that will outlive any current life on earth.

Jeremy Davies (University of Leeds)

Recent Geologic Time

Panel 4.2, Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 213

When does ‘geologic time’ begin? Ten thousand years ago? Fifty thousand? Either way, geologic time is often thought to be equivalent to the remote past. But there are reasons for taking a different view. Most obviously, there is the proposed Anthropocene epoch: the geologic boundary that marks its beginning might formally be placed in the year 1953. The subdivision of the Holocene epoch into three geologic ages has already introduced another such boundary within the span of recorded historical time.

There is a second reason for thinking that ‘geologic time’ is not simply a matter of the distant past. The Earth is always in rotational motion relative to other astronomical objects. Days, lunar months, and years are products of this mobility. Via Milankovitch cycles (gradual variations in the planet’s orbital path and spin, which regulate climate change by changing the way sunlight falls on Earth’s surface), these diurnal and annual rhythms are deeply integrated with long-term Earth system processes. Daily and seasonal cycles might properly be thought of as geologic events: days and years are episodes of geologic time.

I have explored both of these lines of thought—the Anthropocene in the context of Quaternary stratigraphy, and the ‘geological’ character of short-period planetary cycles—in previous work. In this paper I will develop the connections between the two. Geologic time is Janus-faced. It has a nearby, short-term, experiential aspect, as well as its extension through the deep past. Those two aspects of geologic time mutually make one another strange. I will discuss what it might mean to encounter the geologic dimension of everyday experience through a reading of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s ‘The Nightingale’ (1798).

Joanna Dobson (Sheffield Hallam University)

Strange temporalities: horticulture and the narration of trauma in WG Sebald's *The Emigrants*

Panel 2.4, Tuesday 6 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, Room 222

The temporalities of traumatic experience are complex, with the traumatic event rupturing consciousness so that it cannot be assimilated in the moment it occurs but is instead experienced belatedly through, for example, flashbacks and nightmares. The difficulties of representing such experiences have been widely discussed over the past 30 years (for example, Hartman 1995, Caruth 1996, LaCapra 2000) and remain a topic of lively debate (for example, Kurtz 2018; Bond & Craps 2020; Davis & Meretoja 2020). In this creative-critical paper, I read WG Sebald's 1992 novel *The Emigrants* and my own memoir-in-progress of childhood trauma and nature connection alongside Franklin Ginn's analysis of the domestic garden as a place of multiple temporalities 'animated by the imaginations of the future and the weight of the past' (2017: 2). Paying particular attention to the way Sebald references vegetable plots, greenhouses and fruit trees in his stories of exile, and drawing on my own writing about gardening after bereavement, I investigate both the possibilities and the limitations of gardens, horticulture and the life cycles of plants as avenues for exploring the bewildering discontinuities of time experienced in the wake of trauma.

Rachel Dowse (Independent researcher)

Island Identities: Place, Past and Present on Flat Holm

Panel 3.6, Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm, Room 223a

Flat Holm is a small island nature reserve in the Bristol Channel, five miles from the coast of Cardiff. It has an extensive history which it seemingly wears on its sleeve – 18th Century and WWII fortifications still stand alongside a fossilised sea bed, medieval burial sites, rare plants introduced by monks and the remains of a Cholera isolation hospital.

The preservation of Flat Holm's history has been helped and hindered by its remote location. Many traces of these different histories still exist, when they might have been cleared away if located on the mainland. However due to the difficulty of accessing the island, these histories are being forgotten, and their physical representations crumbling away. Meanwhile, the island has become an important breeding site for gulls, who now dominate the island in the summer months.

This paper will be an examination of how history and memory affect a place, using the unusual circumstances of Flat Holm to explore different aspects of how this has been reflected in written representations of the island. Desire to preserve or destroy can affect the management plans of "historical" places, which in turn affects people's reactions and memories which make up their concept of a place itself.

This is an update on a paper originally given at the Landscaping Change conference at Bath Spa University in 2016, when I had recently returned from 5 months of living and volunteering on the island. I intend to return to the island this summer and this paper will continue my initial examinations of how history, memory and management have been instrumental in defining a sense of “place”, in the context of changes to the island in the last 6 years, including a new project to raise awareness of the island notably called “A Walk Through Time”.

Kennedy Dragt (Université Catholique de Louvain)

Apocalyptic Visions: Medieval Mysticism as Future-past Speculative Hope in Two Contemporary Novels

Panel 4.5, Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 222

One of the most common narrative forms in Anthropocene literature is (post)apocalyptic fiction. These narratives stress the urgency of the climate crisis and help us imagine possible futures. Such texts frequently present linear timelines based on the destruction of life as we know it and the subsequent emergence of new ways of living or being. However, as Peter Vermuelen notes in *Literature and the Anthropocene*, Anthropocene apocalypses are “just as much post-apocalyptic” as they are “pre-modern” (151). The turn toward a violent pre-modern apocalyptic imagination in Anthropocene texts is frequently accompanied by a renewed fascination with pre-modern religion. Still, apocalypse is not just “a matter of destruction” (152). As its Greek and religious roots indicate, it is also “a moment of revelation” (152). Thus, this paper examines two contemporary novels—*Matrix* by Lauren Groff (2021) and *Unknown Language* by Huw Lemmey (2020)—that re-imagine the lives of twelfth-century mystic-poets and express the positive potential for mystic imagination in the Anthropocene. In their respective re-iterations of Marie de France and Hildegard of Bingen, Groff and Lemmey explore the interplay of queer, feminine, and divine love as a way of re-animating the environment and restoring relationship with the more-than-human world across time. Groff’s text is a historical fiction that speaks to the present, and Lemmey’s is an experimental post-apocalyptic poetry narrative in which Hildegard of Bingen is credited as a co-author. These novels avoid a traditionally linear format in order to explore how a rupture of the medieval eco-mystic tradition—particularly one inspired by queer monastic women—can produce the possibility of revelation in the Anthropocene. Additionally, this paper explores how these texts work to redeem a historically homophobic and environmentally destructive tradition by expressing how imaginations of discursive forms of faith can reverberate through time to renegotiate relationships with the (super)natural world today.

Melanie Ebdon (Staffordshire University)

“At midnight when the year turned”: shifting cycles and the pastoral posthuman in Jon McGregor’s ‘Reservoir 13’

Panel 4. 6, Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 223a

Through the cycles of the thirteen years which structure the chapters of his fourth novel, McGregor’s acclaimed 2017 work shows a shift in the ecosystem of a place, the concept of the human and the role of novel-writing in the posthuman world. This paper will explore the development of the theme of the cyclical rhythms of nature in this novel (a key feature of traditional pastoral writing from the ancient world to the present), while analysing the fluctuation of these patterns in the context of global climate change – a change which throws the human species into new focus. My paper will present analysis of the ways in which ‘Reservoir 13’ relinquishes many of the coordinates of conventional novel-writing (character, plot, teleology) and instils in their place a vision of the human as just one of many species embedded within a subtly, yet perilously, shifting pattern of natural cycles. Comparisons will be made to McGregor’s other works, as well as contemporary British novelists who are publishing fiction which similarly problematises and rewrites the human within the context of changing natural cycles such as Sarah Hall, Megan Hunter, Fiona Mozley and Evie Wyld.

Catherine Ellis (Independent Scholar)

“When we walked in the woods your face was so young and happy, almost as it used to be”: nostalgia and the natural world in Agatha Christie’s *The Hollow* (1951)

Panel 6.7, Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm, Room 223a

The Hollow, Agatha Christie’s 1951 theatrical adaptation of her 1946 novel of the same name, takes place in the garden room and terrace of Sir Henry Angkatell’s countryside home, set in a small village eighteen miles from London. This room, described as ‘informal [...] but furnished with taste’, plays host to a weekend gathering of family and friends complete with cocktails, adultery, a glamorous movie star and, as one would expect in one of Agatha Christie’s theatrical adaptations, a brutal killing and subsequent investigation.

While the play’s substantive action focuses on human drama and the solving of the murder by the visiting detective, Inspector Colquhoun, the natural world beyond the confines of *The Hollow*’s suggested box set offers more than a series of entrances, exits and alibis. Hidden from the audience behind garden doors, glimpsed through French windows, or artificially displayed in paintings, baskets of eggs or vases of dahlias, the countryside is presented as a key preoccupation for every character that crosses the stage, mediated entirely through their conversations with one another.

In this paper I consider how Christie’s victims and suspects are characterised by their relationship to the ultimately untameable natural world, and how their nostalgia for,

rejection of, or day-to-day immersion in the wilds of the English countryside underscores their emotional connections to one another in different phases of their lives: adolescence, adulthood, before and after the murder, and entering the modernity of post-war Britain. Far from being a mere country-house cliché or functional source of hiding places, Christie's offstage gardens offer fertile ground for subtle depictions of emotion, fantasy and anxiety in a rapidly changing world.

Isabella Maria Engberg (University of Aberdeen)

The Discrepancies of the "Anthropozoic Age": Evolutionary Deep Time and the Age of Culture in Ernst Haeckel's *A Visit to Ceylon* (1882; 3rd ed. 1893)

Panel 5.1, Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 221

In *Generelle Morphologie* (1866), the German naturalist Ernst Haeckel systematised the study of morphology along the evolutionary lines that Charles Darwin had put forward seven years earlier in the *Origin of Species* (1859). As an interesting side product, he coined the word ecology and proposed that the 'Anthropozoic Age', a relatively new term surfacing around this time, should take the most recent place in the record of paleontological time periods. To Haeckel, 'this comparatively very short time can only be called the age of man, or of culture, because of the overwhelming influence humans and their culture has had on the transformation of Earth's crust' (II.317). This paper first examines Haeckel early concept of the "Anthropozoic Age" in relation to his excessive and yet ambiguous use of the word "culture" in his scientific and philosophical work. It then illustrates the ways in which his later travel narrative, *Indische Reisebriefe* (1882; *A Visit to Ceylon*, trans. to English by Clara Bell in 1883), projects notions of the "Anthropozoic Age" onto literary scenes from his journey to the British-governed Ceylon. Haeckel presents the reader two diverging paleontological timescales: the sense of a deep and interconnected past of the island's organisms and the presently escalating consequences of human cultivation and colonisation of the lands. Lending different scientific, political, and aesthetic attention to the depiction of the two environmental developments, discrepant images are fused in his hopes and visions of a new and better "Age of Culture". Haeckel's travel report thus contains a very early literary response to the concept of living during a time in which humanity dominates the world's environments, but the narrative also highlights the concept's conflicting entanglement with contemporary philosophical and socio-political discourses.

Santi L. Famà (Stockholm University)

Towards a Post-Anthropocentric Narration: Comparing Gadda's and VanderMeer's Storyworld Building

Panel 5.5, Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 226

A growing strand of contemporary fiction engaging with the so-called Anthropocene attempts to showcase reality as deeply entangled, namely as the result of actors and events that are always closely interdependent. My paper will delve into the narrative formal tools and structures used to represent reality in such a manner, pushing the reader to question human exceptionality, and rejecting the notion of life as a stand-alone phenomenon since every living being is seen as in “symbiosis with the universe” (Gadda 1953, p. 654). I will hence discuss the position the human figure takes within its environment via the reframing of 1) the notion of natural history—encapsulating both human and nonhuman history, since here human-made products will be considered as the result of the industrious nature that resides in humans; and 2) of human temporality, thus positing a human specimen’s life within the “path of generations” (Gadda 1938-1941, 1963, 1971, p. 97), meaning an ideal time-path that trails beyond the existence of single generations or species and that can be juxtaposed to McPhee’s notion of deep time.

Building on Caroline Levine’s (2015) and Marco Caracciolo’s (2021) new formalist approach, I claim that studying forms is a pivotal step in finding ways to represent the enmeshment life is made of. In particular, I examine how Carlo Emilio Gadda’s modernist novel “That Awful Mess on the Via Merulana” (1957) and Jeff VanderMeer’s more recent “Southern Reach Trilogy” (2014) succeed in narrating mysteries that cannot be solved because reality is so entangled that it becomes impossible to identify a culprit. By offering a close reading of these literary works, I aim to showcase how both authors’ use of network-like narrative forms prompts a sense of uncertainty and unsolvability, which ultimately exposes human fallibility and marginality.

Matthew Griffiths (Non-affiliated researcher)

Beyond the Acts: Reading Virginia Woolf’s dangling pastoral in the 21st century
Panel 1.2, Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm, Room 221

This paper will focus on Virginia Woolf’s engagement with, and suspension of, the pastoral mode in her final novel, ‘Between the Acts’ (1941). Poised at a moment of uncertainty before the outbreak of the Second World War, the book opens on to an indefinite future, a point of rupture through which flow the historic past – in the pageant of English history central to the book, and in reflections on the changing landscape – and the prehistoric, in the references that emerge from Mrs Swithin’s reading of the fictive ‘Outline of History’. Indeed, the allusion to St Swithin’s Day in her name connotes a juncture between possible climatic futures.

As pastoral, the novel leaves the city behind in the figure of stockbroker Giles Oliver, whose return to family seat Pointz Hall represents a rural retreat into which he brings his concerns about the coming war. But the risk to the country – in both senses – is also a threat to pastoral itself, with an overflight by aeroplanes and the incursion of violence

into the rural imaginary suggesting the potential breakdown of modal norms. While the end of the historical conflict in 1945 enables a sense of resolution that the novel itself cannot provide, I will argue that reading 'Between the Acts' in the 21st century restores that sense of uncertainty, if we appreciate climate change as a crisis of the same quality that Woolf envisages in the early 1940s. In turn, such a reading offers a way of understanding the Anthropocene that suspends conventional modalities of thought. It forces us to situate our lifeworlds, the stuff of fiction, in deep, historic and future time, ending with a profound caesura in the pastoral cycle, a point of no return.

Ingemar Haag (Stockholm University)

Time Regained

Panel 7.5, Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, Room 214

“Out of habit he looks at his watch – stainless-steel case, burnished aluminum band, still shiny although it no longer works. He wears it now as his only talisman. A blank face is what it shows him: zero hour. It causes a jolt of terror to run through him, this absence of official time. Nobody nowhere knows what time it is.”

When Snowman/Jimmy, the protagonist in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, wakes up in a post-apocalyptic world, he is terrified by the absence of official time. His dysfunctional watch, this debris of time lost, still relates to a temporal order by means of its “talismanic” power to bring luck. It is thus vaguely oriented towards the future by virtue of faith, as if Snowman nourishes a belief that human history will once again be written.

This is just one example of how time is “regained”, or resurrected, in secular post-apocalyptic narratives. In this particular case, time is still related to a human order, but in many post-apocalyptic narratives time is dissociated from the human sphere; time is no longer “subjective”, “recalled”, “experienced”, “official”, “measurable”, or connected to the life span of human individuals. Instead, we are confronted with a “dehumanized” time that surpasses the human scale, a “hyperobjective” time, an evolutionary time in which the human subject is subjected to the forces of microbiological life and DNA-mutations. The renewed conceptions of time will re-position and re-define the human subject in this new environment.

In this paper I will explore these conceptions of time and how human beings relate to them in a series of postapocalyptic narratives: Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Galápagos*, Marlen Haushofer's *Die Wand*, Guido Morselli's *Dissipatio H G*, Don De Lillo's *Zero K*, Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, Thomas Glavinic's *Die Arbeit der Nacht*.

Mandy Haggith (University of the Highlands and Islands)

The Liminal Zone

Panel 7.6, Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, Room 222

Tidal time cycles up and in, out and down twice daily, bulging to springs and shrinking to neaps twice monthly, reaching maxima and minima twice yearly. This double time can be a rhythmic model for human hybridity that pulses always slightly out of kilter with the sun, roaming the calendar in its loony way. For the past couple of years a project called The Liminal Zone has explored the tidal zone as a metaphor for boundaries and binaries in our lives. It is a hybrid of an academic project at the University of the Highlands and Islands, funded by the Carnegie Trust for Scottish Universities, and a poetry project, funded by Creative Scotland. The edges that have been blurred in the project include those between work and play, teaching and creative practice, art and science, youth and age (menopause), life and death, past and future (climate change) and the real and virtual worlds. The action research methodology has been designed as a series of tidal cycles, involving a mix of quantitative, qualitative and poetic inquiry methods, through which a body of poetry (and other art) has accumulated on the strandline. The paper will share some of this work, while ruminating on our findings about the rhythms and temporal cycles of boundary crossing and creative practice in the liminal zone. It will include discussion of how a flood of theoretical ideas, including concepts from tidalectics, Derrida's term 'opening of space' and boundary objects in a Wenger-inspired landscape of practice, has helped to stimulate new thinking about both the tidal zone and our lived edges and interfaces. These ideas, together with writing from Charlotte Smith, Walt Whitman, Rachel Carson and Kamau Brathwaite, have trickled into poetry that is sometimes erased, and sometimes remains on the page after the tide has ebbed.

Joseph Hardwick (Northumbria University)

Animal Sunday, the natural world, and the problem of 'liturgical time' in the early twentieth-century Church of England

Panel 2.5, Tuesday 6 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, Room 226

In Christian and Jewish traditions, the sabbath is a moment for rest and reflection when individuals and communities take time out from the rhythms and pressures of working life. In an era of Covid-19 and climate crisis, the sabbath, and other examples of 'church' or 'liturgical time', takes on urgent importance. Writing in the journal *Religions* in 2021, the Yale academic Mark Roosen argues that Covid-19 lockdowns have reinforced a 'modern temporal order' in which 'the boundaries between home and work, rest and waking, and personal time and professional' have been 'significantly eroded'. The 'individualised digital lifeworlds' encouraged by this '24/7 time', Roosen contends, enables the environmental destruction and economic inequalities of 'disaster

capitalism'. To disrupt this harmful temporality, Christian churches in the UK, US and beyond have included in their calendars of worship environmental sabbaths, 'creationtides', and special prayers on environmental themes.

These developments in worship, and the valuing of 'liturgical time', have historical precedents. This paper uses the example of England's national Church, the Church of England, to show how special days and liturgies, which were intended to concentrate the community's attention on natural world themes, were introduced into the church year. Special consideration is given to one such special day – 'Animal Sunday'. This special Sunday for animals, which grew in popularity from the 1890s, illustrates several of the tensions that have accompanied modern efforts to revise church calendars, and liturgies, so that they allow for a fuller engagement with ecological issues and human-animal relationships. Was one day enough? How could worship habituate worshippers to new ways of interacting with the more-than-human world? How could ancient and familiar liturgies, represented in prayer books, be altered to reflect new concerns and issues? The difficulty of finding time for animals in Anglican worship suggest that rethinking 'liturgical time' might be most difficult for those churches which follow prescribed liturgies and have special relationships with national communities.

Caroline Harris (Royal Holloway, University of London)

The cute and the killable: reading and writing the deer hunt scene in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Panel 1.1, Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm, Room 214

The late fourteenth-century quest poem Sir Gawain and the Green Knight recounts three hunts that take place during Gawain's stay in the castle of Sir Bertilak: of deer, boar and fox. While much scholarship interprets the hunting passages in relation to the juxtaposed account of the questing knight's temptation by the wife of his host, this paper focuses instead on a critical analysis of the deer hunt itself. It examines the medieval chase – and the Gawain poet's literary hunt in particular – by offering a reading through cuteness and with deer at its centre. It also presents ecopoetic practice in the form of a new translation of lines from the deer hunt scene. In *Our Aesthetic Categories* (2012), Sianne Ngai underlined the power relationships of cuteness, which she calls "an aesthetic response to the diminutive, the weak, and the subordinate": the cute is political. In recent years, theory from the growing field of cute studies has been applied to works by Chaucer (Kau), Shakespeare (Cochran) and Emily Dickinson (Sorby). Using cuteness as a critical tool draws attention to aspects of the medieval chivalric environment and attitudes towards deer such as taming and domestication, the aesthetics of the hunt, the significance of containment and enclosure, and the hierarchies that were observed. My own translation from the Middle English seeks, first, to amplify the experience of the does and hinds being hunted – for whom this 'deer

drive' is a massacre – and second, to enact a kind of 'cutifying' on the text through formal processes, in order to disrupt reading and encourage critique. While medieval societies would not have responded to deer as cute in the way that post-Bambi sensibilities do, there are also interesting correspondences with current policies and perspectives on deer and killability, populations and culling.

Jane Hibbert-Nicolov (Birkbeck College, University of London)

A Balkan Pastoral: Anton Donchev's historical novel 'Time of Parting'

Panel 4.5, Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 222

National identity has been a preoccupation of Bulgarian authors since Bulgaria's independence from the Ottoman Empire at the end of the nineteenth century. I examine Anton Donchev's re-imagination of national identity in his 1964 historical novel *Time of Parting* (*Vreme Razdelno*) set in the seventeenth century Ottoman period among the shepherds of the Rhodope Mountains of Southern Bulgaria. It is one of the most popular yet frequently reviled works in the Bulgarian literary canon.

Although the work is presumed to reflect the Communist Party's efforts to define along nationalist lines the origins of the ethnic Bulgarian Muslims of the Rhodope Mountains (a legacy of the Ottoman years), in reality it offers readers an alternative vision of identity linked irrevocably to the nobility and power of Bulgaria's mountains and landscape. The novel was written just as the Stalinist collectivisation of Bulgaria's agriculture was reaching its culmination with the nationalisation of the large herds of sheep and goats tended for generations in the Rhodope region, putting an end to centuries of nomadic pastoralism and tradition. Understanding the work as a pastoral novel reveals a critique of the destructive and sorrowful effect of collectivisation on centuries of rural life through the forcible separation of a rural population from its land. Nature and the mountains, the shepherds' Arcadia, are revealed as essential elements of national identity, surpassing religious difference.

The novel operates within several temporalities. While the action unfolds at a specific moment in Ottoman history, 1668, during the Cretan war with Venice, parallels with Bulgaria's history after the communist takeover in 1944 are unavoidable. Donchev then broadens the timescale to present a vision of belonging that not only stretches back into the ancient world through the aeons-old highlands but also shows how the immutable landscape offers continuity even in times of ideological change.

Philippa Holloway (Staffordshire University)

Then, Now, Forever? Researching and Writing Nuclear Landscapes for The Half-life of

Snails

Panel 3.3, Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm, Room 222

Then, Now, Forever? Researching and Writing Nuclear Landscapes for *The Half-life of Snails*

‘In a room at the back of the building she finds rows of rusting bunk beds, a floor scattered with dead-eyed dolls and faded clothes. Frozen in time, the websites say, but there is evidence of time passing everywhere: the moulding material, the curling paint, the dried leaves heaped in the corners of the room.’ – Holloway, 2022

Since the 1986 Chernobyl disaster, the Exclusion Zone has become a tourist site, offering the chance to see a landscape, villages and cities ‘frozen in time’. As research for my novel, *The Half-life of Snails*, I engaged in embodied and psychogeographic research in Chernobyl’s Exclusion Zone to explore perceptions of landscapes that act as palimpsests of nuclearity.

These are spaces in which time is a recurrent tension, where past events still impact the emotions and behaviours of communities, policy makers and individuals, and where future use of land is marked in centuries-long half-lives. The individual human, too, is a unique palimpsest, existing in the Nuclear Anthropocene – a moment timestamped by the detonation of the first atomic bomb and the resulting presence of man-made isotopes in the ground (and by extension the bodies of those living there) (Lewis & Maslin, 2015; Miller, 2016) and therefore bringing conceptual perceptions into interactions with these landscapes. This paper will explore how I negotiated these tensions, both through my research and creative practice, and in the novel, to show how layers of time – past, present and speculative futures – affect our relationship with landscape and the nuclear industry and can be explored in literature.

David Ingram (Independent scholar)

Social realism, time and environment in Clio Barnard’s film ‘Dark River’ (2017)

Panel 7.4, Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, Room 213

How does the mode of social realism frame the complex times and spaces which make up the environmental realities of the Anthropocene? Ecocritics have argued that contemporary fictions have to deal with the enlarged spatial and temporal scales of our environmental crisis: space is global as well as local, and time includes not just the personal scale of everyday human life, but deep time and long-term futures. Science fiction has emerged as a genre well suited to such considerations: in a single graphic match, *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) spans thousands of years of human evolution. In contrast, social realist fictions tend to omit both deep time and historical time. Space is focussed on the local and personal and time on the present moment. This could be seen as an aesthetic limitation, but the affordances of social realism emerge from this intense focus on the everyday and the local which elicits empathy from the viewer.

Dark River, written and directed by Clio Barnard in 2017, follows the typical anthropocentric focus of social realist drama in its concern with blame and responsibility within a family in a particular locality. Yet the film is unusual in that it constructs a wider environment and a deeper sense of ecological time than most films in the social realist mode. The drama is placed within a social context of farming in the Yorkshire Dales in a time of biodiversity loss, and the landscape in which the drama is set has a past and a future. The film uses metonymy to connote the wider spatialities and temporalities of the rural environment, showing that social realist texts can hint at the complex spaces and times on which ecological understandings of the world depend.

Natalie Joelle (Birkbeck, University of London)

The Gleaners' Alphabet: twentysix g lean stations

Panel 1.3, Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm, Room 226

This paper presents a playful antidote to lean managerial language that was formalised in response to the so-called energy crises of the 1970s.

The Gleaners' Alphabet is part of what I call gleanologies: a gleanerly methodology: a study of gleaning, and a way of gleaning, focussed on and through the word that can mean both 'to gather and pick up ears of corn which have been left by the reapers' and take immaterial object, as in the sense of gleaning information. Gleanologies explore the relationships between the practice of gathering after the harvest and gathering knowledge known as gleaning, the gesture of leaning, and the genealogy of global lean management technologies, and in turn, lean culture, in the production of lean meat. Gleanologies is a militant vegan practice that unpack the patterns of violence and ecocide encoded in the lean management of everyday life.

The Gleaners' Alphabet is the foundation of an experimental gestural language formed by gathering lines from the leans of leaning gleaners who gather from post-harvest fields in visual culture from the biblical Book of Ruth to the contemporary cinema of Agnès Varda.

twentysix g lean stations writes back to the contemporary artists' book often considered to begin with Edward Ruscha's TWENTYSIX GASOLINE STATIONS, reconsidered in a time of gleaning after the harvest of global resources. Gleaning, leaning, out of 'gas', each station is lean language on strike for more than our species future but the future of all life.

It moves subsistence practices of gleaners often considered marginal and of the margins to the centre. Assembling the characters of the Alphabet to remake fields of gleaners – fields always available for the common right of gleaning – evokes gleaners gathering for commons for all. What can gleanological writing enable us to imagine?

James Kelly (Independent scholar)

Time and landscape in Michel Serres' 'L'Incandescent'

Panel 1.4, Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm, Room 213

This paper explores the connection between time and landscape developed by the French philosopher Michel Serres (1930–2019) in his book *L'Incandescent* (Paris, Le Pommier: 2003). It will begin with Serres' reflection on his description of a young girl and her grandfather on a farm in the mountains, following how his analysis teases out the temporal perspectives in the scene to invert the intuitive perception of landscapes as spatial mosaics by revealing space itself to be a "mosaic of time". So profound is this shift that Serres describes it in terms of an analogy with Plato's cave, enriching our perception through our discovery of the many different times inherent to the world. The remainder of the paper will address two corollaries of this shift: first, Serres' idea of "chronopaedia" as a means to bring together the different knowledges and perspectives inherent to the different time scales present in a landscape; second, how our growing awareness of the different time scales inherent to different elements of the world blurs the boundary between inert objects and active subjects – between activity and passivity – and how this feeds in to contemporary debates about humans and nature. The paper will conclude by arguing that in *L'Incandescent* Serres develops a philosophy that allows us to understand landscapes – and thus the world around us – not as spatial entities or as areas of the Earth's crust, but in terms of the times and rhythms inherent to the different elements of which they are composed – of the rock, of the mountains, of the forests, of the animals, of ourselves as humans – as well as the interactions and relations between the parts of this continuously evolving whole.

Richard Kerridge (Bath Spa University)

Decolonizing the love of wild nature

Panel 5.1, Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 221

This paper will first give a brief account of the relationship between colonial nature writing, in its various genres including non-fiction, the adventure story and the nature poem, and the continuing British enthusiasm for wild nature as spectacle, exemplified by television wildlife documentaries and youtube films, as well as by recent literature. I will then pose the question of how the love of wild nature can distance itself from this association, so as genuinely to fight free of it. What process of acknowledgement of the past has to take place before such a new nature writing becomes possible? What are the specific tropes that should be relinquished or radically changed? This argument will draw upon Jed Esty's description, in *A Shrinking Island*, of the defensive transference in the inter-war period of colonial tropes to domestic British nature writing; also on Sandeep Parma's analysis of the role of defensive, anxious nostalgia in contemporary white British nature poetry, and on Corinne Fowler's surprising deployment of short

stories in *Green Unpleasant Land*, her account of the British heritage industry's treatment of the legacies of empire and slavery. In the latter part of the paper I will briefly examine some examples of recent nature writing that engages with these concerns, including texts by Ali Smith, Lucy Durneen, Davina Quinlivan, Nicola Chester and Elizabeth-Jane Burnett.

Jasmin Kirkbride (University of East Anglia)

Timeless narratives: exploring chronological anonymity and hopeful longevity in dystopian climate fiction

Panel 7.5, Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, Room 214

In a literary moment where eco-utopian climate fiction is encouraged (Heise, Streeby, Trexler), this paper examines one of dystopian literature's overlooked virtues: its timelessness. It argues that while utopian or 'positivist' climate fiction is regularly tied to chronological events, dystopias tend to be either loosely moored or completely unmoored from the everyday timeline. This offers them a chronological anonymity which prevents them aging, both in market terms and in terms of the reader's reception. Using close reading, the paper juxtaposes case study texts – Kim Stanley Robinson's 'Science in the Capital' (2004-2007), Jeanette Winterson's 'The Stone Gods' (2007), James Bradley's 'Clade' (2015) and Emmi Itäranta's 'Memory of Water' (2014) – to argue that by depicting the future via deep time's intractable geologies, dystopia can create perpetually accessible and adaptable Anthropocene stories. Moreover, it suggests dystopia's usefulness as a tool to explore 'dialogic narratives with descendants and ancestors' (Whyte) and how we might repurpose our current cultural narratives for unknowable and unthinkable futures (Lear). Ultimately, this is an exploration of, and love letter to, dystopia's boundless chronological malleability, magnetic longevity, and surprising capacity to engender hope.

Anna Kirsch (Durham University)

Representations of English Heritage in Crime Fiction: Nostalgia for a Golden Age in Agatha Christie to P.D James and Ruth Rendell

Panel 6.7, Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm, Room 223a

In *The Country and the City* (1973), Raymond Williams posited that the country house novel evolved into the middle-class detective story. This paper addresses the ecological implications of nostalgia in the construction of an idealised English landscape. This paper uses selected samples from Agatha Christie, P.D James, and Ruth Rendell to chart the evolution of the pastoral mode into crime fiction.

There is no author more iconic than Agatha Christie. Indeed, Christie established the picturesque pastoral village as an exportable brand of English heritage/experience.

However, Christie's version of Eden restored is very much an Eden with a body count. Indeed, Christie's drive towards closure exposes the underlying fragility of England's post-war rural economies that were increasingly threatened from within.

Ruth Rendell had a low opinion of Christie's sentimental worldview which she believed demonstrated an ignorance of the gritty realities of life. Unlike Christie's St. Mary Mead, Rendell's fictional country town of Kingsmarkham is populated with ugly modern buildings and huge supermarkets. In contrast, P.D. James exhibits a fond nostalgia for Christie's rural England while mourning her own inability to bring closure to her novels. For James, everyone who comes in touch with a crime is contaminated, and there is no way to return to the way things were.

In her reflections on teaching crime fiction, Samantha Walton argues that reading ecological crime fiction provokes an adjustment of temporalities. Walton notes how the crime genre is inherently concerned with the ways in which ambiance, location, history and place-memory provide clues towards a mystery's solution. I build Walton's notion of temporality as a form of emplacement to argue that Agatha Christie, P.D James, and Ruth Rendell were communally building a fictional historical ideal of English pastoralism.

Ines Kirschner (University of Aberdeen)

'The Pinnacle of Apishness': Evolution and (Un)Becoming-Human in Yoko Tawada's *Memoirs of a Polar Bear*

Panel 5.2, Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 214

The first edition of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* includes a passage which describes a black bear 'swimming for hours with widely open mouth, thus catching, like a whale, insects in the water.' Darwin goes on to imagine 'a race of bears being rendered, by natural selection, more and more aquatic in their structure and habits, with larger and larger mouths, till a creature was produced as monstrous as a whale.' His musings on the prospect of an insect-eating whale-bear led some of his readers to conflate ontogeny (transformation within an individual organism's life cycle) with phylogeny (the evolutionary development of a species over vast stretches of time). This droll misprision of a bear's becoming-cetacean, which takes place over a single life span rather than millennia, torques the idea of change over time into the kind of surrealist territory Yoko Tawada's fiction, too, inhabits.

Tawada's novel *Memoirs of a Polar Bear*, a family saga of three generations of anthropomorphic polar bears, delights in such 'derangements of scale', as Timothy Clark calls them. Clark argues that the Anthropocene requires a new critical practice of 'reading at several scales at once'. This paper contends that Tawada's novel invites readers to do precisely that: to think across the scales of an individual life, the depths of evolutionary time, as well as the accelerated temporalities of human-induced climate

change. It argues that Tawada juxtaposes the scale of phylogeny, which attends to the evolution of polar bears over vast time frames, with the scale of ontogeny, which narrates the rapid becoming-human of the first bear. It then considers the gradual atrophy of human-like bodying over this generational lineage in relation to modern notions about the history of life – ideas of progress, telos – which place ‘Man’ at the apex of evolution.

Melina Lieb (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz/Germersheim)

The Interplay of Circularity and Linearity in 21st-century Nature Diaries

Panel 1.4, Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm, Room 213

The everyday is our most familiar time frame, and it is our starting point for interactions with more-than-human nature. While the temporality of the everyday is defined by repetition, rhythms and cyclicity, it is also “situated at the intersection of two modes of repetition: the cyclical, which dominates in nature, and the linear, which dominates in processes known as ‘rational.’” (Lefebvre 10) The linear is associated with the temporalities of capitalism, progress and consumption. Such linear capitalist time, however, fundamentally interferes with cyclical natural time and bodily rhythms, inhibiting and unsettling them. In response to this modern disturbance of natural circadian rhythms, 20th-century philosopher Henri Lefebvre developed his concept of rhythmanalysis as a “curative” and a way of “rehabilitating rhythm as an animating, bodily principle.” (Williams 441) A “proto-rhythmanalysis” can already be noticed in the early Nature Writing work of Gilbert White, anticipating “Lefebvre’s identification of the reciprocity between [the cyclical and the linear].” (Williams 438)

As the pressures of capitalist time have increased in the 21st century, it is worthwhile examining how contemporary Nature Writers negotiate the described interplay between circularity and linearity. As a literary format, diaries have a special salience for illuminating the rhythms and temporal patterns of the everyday. Accordingly, in this paper, I will consider a selection of 21st-century Nature Writing diaries, including Mark Cocker’s *A Claxton Diary* (2019), Karen Lloyd’s *The Blackbird Diaries* (2017) and Esther Woolfson’s *Field Notes from a Hidden City* (2014).

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Lefebvre, Henri. “The Everyday and Everydayness.” *Yale French Studies* 73 (1987). 7-11.
Williams, Rhian. “Gilbert White’s Eighteenth-Century Nature Journals as ‘Everyday’ Ecology.” *ISLE* 24:3 (2017). 432-456.

Katerina Lontou (University of Leeds)

Close Reading the Apocalypse: what can poetry reveal about the future of the planet?

Panel 6.5, Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm, Room 002

In a widely quoted excerpt, Laurence Buell argues that “Apocalypse is the single most powerful master metaphor that the contemporary environmental imagination has at its disposal” (p. 285, 1995). Apocalyptic thinking and language have a long and complex pedigree, which permeates religious texts, fiction, non-fiction, poetry, film-making, and pop culture. The apocalypse (either theological or secular) as an interpretative frame can open a new horizon and prompt reflective/reflexive thinking on (1) what disaster means for whom, (2) what the apocalyptic end reveals, and (3) what futures we (should/shouldn’t/could/may) desire. As apocalyptic tropes seem to be dominating public discourses of ecological crises and have almost become synonymous with the Anthropocene, the relevance of our cultural past comes under the microscope. If a climate apocalypse is already underway, what is the value of reading Romantic poetry? This paper aims to explore the resonance of William Cowper’s *The Task* (1785)- as a paradigmatic example of Romantic literature interested in eco-apocalypse and environmental degradation- with contemporary audiences, by demonstrating how close reading eco-apocalyptic and eco-utopian poetry can become an analytical tool for navigating present-day climate change. The purpose of this presentation is to explore the value of reading poetry in the midst of an ecological crisis and to discuss the extent to which reading can be revised and repurposed as a practice of ecological awareness, self-reflection and creative, imaginary speculation about our future on/with the planet. I argue for the development of “circular reading”, which can transfer the reader from the present to the past and then to the future and can prompt creative, open-ended thinking and self-reflection on the human/non-human relationship across diverse temporal scales.

Karen Lloyd (Lancaster University)

The Cultural Landscape in the Anthropocene

Panel 5.5, Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 226

We are living through – and moving increasingly rapidly towards – the most unstable cycle of environmental certainty in any recent geological era. Unofficially, scientists call this period the Anthropocene; the age in which man’s activities continue to have the most influence on our climate and ecosystems. What kinds of impacts do this unnerving present and future have on the way we think, write about and commodify landscapes, in particular the Lake District World Heritage Cultural Landscape Site. This paper seeks to reinterpret and reappraise the cultural landscape designation in the context of climate breakdown and biodiversity loss. It re-examines Wordsworth’s question ‘How is it that you live, and what is it you do?’ and calls for what the philosopher Bruno Latour has called a ‘parliament of things;’ one where objects – in this case the inhabitants of the natural world – are afforded agency and autonomy, and where humans (in the shape of farmers, tourists, ‘nature’ writers) reject the tropes of

commodification and preservation – and instead pursue the ‘rebranding’ of a landscape – one where it is possible to be in relation with the natural world.

The research takes the form of the literary essay. Each new section is a ‘Viewing Station’ (a concept established in Thomas West’s 1778 *Guide to the Lakes*). As a literary essay, the research will travel outside the academy to a wider readership, thus disseminating its suppositions more widely. The writing of an essay is also a means of becoming entangled with the world. Its pioneering nature offers resistance to the linear, the binary, the simple aesthetic; as Adorno states, ‘its proper theme is the interrelation of nature and culture.’ As a site of resistance, it is also able to survey, dismantle and reassemble new narratives through the spores of a new taxonomy.

Xiaoxiao Ma (University of Leeds)

‘Paths to freedom’: Nature and Circular Time in John Clare’s ‘The Mores’

Panel 6.5, Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm, Room 002

Helpston’s country roads and paths had been accessible before the Enclosure Act passed in 1809. However, after the arrival of enclosure, many of them ‘which ran across the new fields were either deliberately “discontinued”, or simply became ‘disused’ (Hindle, 1993: 132). John Clare’s ‘The Mores’ is an elegy ‘about the enclosure of a tract of moorland to the east of Helpston’ (Barrell, 1972:143). Although enclosure has closed local paths, as ‘a board sticks up to notice “no road here”’, Clare launches an ecological protest through imaginatively walking on them, and regarding them as ‘paths to freedom’ (ll. 70, 69). This paper will examine how in ‘The Mores’, Helpston’s pre-enclosure paths allow humans and nonhumans the common rights of way, and make possible the walker-poet’s perception of nature’s freedom (l. 69). It first discusses that Clare follows eighteenth-century landscape-poets to describe the picturesque moorland’s autonomy. The poet uses his knowledge of the area to highlight that the moorland’s unbroken continuity transcends centuries. Then, it explores how the poem’s cows and sheep manifest their common rights to various types of habitat in their regular daily rhythm, and how the shepherd shares the sheep’s freedom by tracing them on the same route in unifying movements. Finally, it investigates how the poem shows moorland flowers blooming in shifts by the rhythms of season, and how the ground’s spontaneous transformation offers the traveller imaginative freedom. By imaginatively walking on Helpston’s pre-enclosure paths, Clare celebrates nature’s freedom that they lead to, and expresses his resentment against the disruptive forces of enclosure.

Ana Victoria Mazza (University of Glasgow)

Nervous Migrations: Landscape, Time and Identity in Tayeb Salih’s *Season of Migration*

to the North and Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions
Panel 3.5, Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm, Room 214

Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George Handley (2011) urge us to consider deep and historical time in relation to place in postcolonial studies. Indeed, they claim that historicising nature is crucial when thinking about and working with postcolonial ecologies, since the separation of society (history) and nature has been a primary tool of colonialism and empire. This attention to the connection between land and both deep and historical time, the critics demonstrate, can be found in multiple examples of postcolonial literatures. However, only since the beginning of the 21st century have mainstream literary academics started considering the colonisation of nature as a concomitant process of the colonisation of a people, and identifying embedded environmental discourses in postcolonial works that had hitherto been labelled as anthropocentric. African literatures in particular have been neglected in comparison with the literatures of other regions (Caminero-Santangelo 2014). This paper explores the links between colonial geographical modification, time and identity in two African novels that narrate, in a circular way, the transformative stories of colonially educated subjects and their territories: Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (1966) and Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1988). The paper adopts a postcolonial ecocritical framework and makes use of comparative analysis and close textual reading. It argues that, in these novels, the human characters' perceptions of colonially altered landscapes across time record parallel changes inside and outside their structuring subjectivities. Because colonial geographical modification is closely linked with the educated individuals' identities and sense of place, nature is shown to be deeply entangled not only with history, but also with memory, myth, familial ties, and, of course, the future. Ultimately, the paper offers new insights into two key postcolonial works and contributes to the environmental humanities efforts to debunk the artificial separation of society and nature.

Bernadette McBride (University of Liverpool)

Cruel Optimism and Climate Crisis

Panel 4.6, Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 233a

Lauren Berlant said "A relation of cruel optimism exists when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing". This paper will look at short climate fiction by Lauren Groff alongside my own fiction to show how recent works of short Cli-Fi offer unique ways to explore cruel optimism in the face of the climate crisis.

My doctoral research examines how complex climate change feelings have led to a new wave of climate fiction or "cli-fi" that responds to our inability to process the magnitude of what the climate crisis means for us and other species. We don't yet have the language to fully describe or evoke the emergent emotions linked to unfolding climate

change though there are more and more attempts to find words and concepts to articulate these new emotions and affects such as the approaches in *An Ecotopian Lexicon* (Minnesota University Press, 2019) or *Earth Emotions: New Words for a New World* by Glenn Albrecht (Cornell University Press, 2019).

In this paper, I will show how my research-led short story collection examines resistant mourning. My story collection acts as anti-elegy and attempts to offer readers self-recognition in terms of the hard-to-process emotions surrounding climate change. My stories don't have story arcs, they have feelings arcs which mimic the psychological patterns and building and waning emotions and affects linked to climate crisis. I will look at "Dogs Go Wolf" from Lauren Groff's collection *Florida* (Penguin, 2018) and read from my own story "For the man who died in the wood" (Sunburnt Saints, pub. Seventy2One, 2021) to examine how the tendency to mourn without action, and continuing to embrace the obstacles which contribute to the climate crisis, stymies our flourishing.

Elizabeth Carolyn Miller (University of California, Davis)

Temporalities of Extraction

Panel 3.1, Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm, Room 221

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw a sharp rise in the industrial extraction of fossil fuel commodities. As large-scale mining projects spread across the British imperial world, new understandings of human life as dependent on finite and non-renewable resources shaped scientific discourses and literary imaginaries. This paper examines the complex temporalities of the literature of extraction-based life, especially concerning exhaustion, depletion, and the burning up of geological time. Texts discussed will include *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), George Orwell's documentary account of coal mining in northern England, and "Youth" (1898), Joseph Conrad's short story about overseas coal transport. Across several textual examples, the paper identifies a set of shared features that characterise the temporal features of the literature of extraction. In this way, the extraction of fossil fuel commodities is seen to give rise to new literary forms and modes of environmental understanding.

John Miller (University of Sheffield)

'This Fearful and Stinking Pocket of Nether-Life': Edgar Mittelholzer's Spectral Jungle Histories

Panel 3.5, Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm, Room 214

The Berbice River flows from Guyana's highlands, through some of the world's wildest forest, across a fertile coastal plain before meeting the Atlantic Ocean at New Amsterdam, capital of the Dutch colonial government that ruled from 1740 until 1803.

The Netherlands gained a foothold in South America in 1580, developing its economic interests in the region over the ensuing decades. Sugarcane was the principal crop in the growing number of plantations that were carved out of the forest and operated through the labour of thousands of slaves. In 1763, a cooper named Coffij lead one of the most notable slave uprisings of the Atlantic world. Ultimately, the rebellion would fail, but the events would reverberate through Guyana's history, not least through a proliferation of ghost stories through which the spirits of the Dutch continued to haunt the land even after Guyana's independence in 1966.

The spectral legacy of the Berbice Uprising provides the basis for one of the great forest ghost stories, Edgar Mittelholzer's *My Bones and My Flute* (1955), a tense and at times uncomfortable novel that blends colonial politics and the occult. Mittelholzer was a Guyanese writer of African and European descent, who knew the Berbice region well, travelling up the river in 1933, on an adventure which he recalled gave him 'the thrill of one about to penetrate into a territory of ghosts – the ghosts of the eighteenth century Dutchmen and their slaves'. This paper explores the conflicted meanings of the forest in the wake of the Berbice rebellion. Particularly, I am interested in how the ghostly history of plantation slavery merges with the depiction of logging so that *My Bones and My Flute* remains tied to colonial ideologies of progress in which the forest is cast as a devilish place to be exorcised.

Heather Milligan (University of Edinburgh)

Queer Ecology and Evolutionary Time in K-Ming Chang's *Bestiary*

Panel 5.2, Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 214

'There was no such thing as progress, just accumulation', a girl called Ben tells her lover Daughter, who worries that her new tiger tail signifies that she is becoming less evolved, 'moving backward'. This paper examines the evolutionary time of K-Ming Chang's experimental novel *Bestiary* (2020) and its implications for emerging discussions of queer ecology. Chang's transspecies hybrids resonate with anti-essentialist understandings of evolutionary theory (Morton, 2010) that see species categories in perpetual transformation, always becoming something else. By seizing on that moment of becoming-Other, Chang imbues her novel with a utopian quality, whereby natural laws—such as those governing evolution, gravity, and reproduction, may be overcome: characters grow tails and gills; two pirates father a daughter in the surrogate body of a crab; a boy jumps from a skyscraper and flies like a kite rather than plummeting to his death. By letting go of the discrete, static category of the 'human', Chang envisions lively post-human and more-than-human possibilities for survival in dangerous and degraded environments like food deserts, landfill sites, and flood zones.

Daughter's tiger tail comes to symbolise not only an unleashing of posthuman possibilities, but also a manifestation of her heritage: the event is foretold in the

Taiwanese folk tale of Hu Gu Po, a tiger spirit that lives inside a woman's body. Rather than escaping or refusing the family to embrace queerness and hybridity, Daughter combs her family history for lineages of queer desire, assembling the recovered stories into the meta-form of the text. This paper proposes that Chang's non-progressive and non-hierarchical approach to evolutionary time produces a fragmentary, experimental narrative form unusually suited to incorporating frameworks like deep time, evolution, and species adaptation.

Rachel Murray (Northumbria University)

'a well excavated grave': Marianne Moore's Marine Archive

Panel 7.6, Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, Room 222

Marianne Moore was a prolific collector of material on the subject of marine life. Her surviving papers at the Rosenbach Museum in Philadelphia contain a veritable treasure trove of articles and newspaper clippings on topics ranging from cuttlefish eyesight to dolphin 'aquabatics'. Paying particular attention to Moore's scrapbooks and vertical files, this paper will approach the author's marine archive as a form of time capsule, asking what it might communicate to us in our current ocean biodiversity crisis. I will consider what it means to encounter marine life in the form of carefully preserved ephemera, examples of which include an advert for hydroelectric dams which asserts that 'wildlife thrive when power men move in' and claims that the environment has been 'carefully preserved' for fish. I will also reflect on the fragility of these historical documents, some of which were in too poor a condition to be handled. The paper will focus on my experience of engaging with these disappearing marine artefacts, while also contemplating the archive's retention of material that has all but disappeared from cultural consciousness. One noteworthy example is a promotional photograph from the first underwater documentary, which was a sell-out hit when it was first released in 1914, but which has since sunk into obscurity. The photo, which depicts a violent scene in which a naked man stabs a shark to death, exists in stark contrast to the more familiar cultural representation of the ocean depths as a picturesque and pristine environment. Moore's creative treatment of this image in her scrapbook, I will suggest, draws attention to its status as a kind of submerged relic of that which Western society has sought to repress about its past, as well as its present, interactions with oceanic environments.

Emily Naish (University of Sheffield)

'No wood, no Kingdome': The Writing of Forests and the English Literary Inheritance in the Elizabethan Age

Panel 1.1, Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm, Room 214

This paper applies an ecocritical approach to representations of the environment in the Elizabethan period, with a focus on the forests found in the works of Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, and William Shakespeare. It argues for the importance of the English literary inheritance when studying pre-industrial texts through an ecocritical lens: this body of older literature complicated the often-anthropocentric Elizabethan view of forests. The research is situated within the context of a surge of concern around use of land and increased deforestation in the 1500s. Timber was the cornerstone of the Elizabethan economy, valuable in almost every aspect of daily life, and trees stood on good land that could (arguably) be better used for agriculture given the periods of death at the end of the sixteenth century. How could forests be left standing when increased agricultural yield was so needed? Yet the poets in question were influenced not only by these contemporary issues, but also historical literature. Here, trees are more than timber, holding a wealth of contradictory meanings inherited from two literary traditions: classical poetry and medieval romances. In the classical *Metamorphoses*, Ovid's visceral accounts of devastated young women being enclosed in bark could encourage respect for each individual tree beyond commercial value. Yet, in the medieval *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Sir Tristram's descent into unseemly madness upon entering the forest only increased distaste for woodlands. These ideas are reflected differently in the works of Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare: Sidney and Spenser are more earnest in their representations of forests as places of immorality, whilst Shakespeare draws on these sources more playfully. Yet, an examination of the influence of each author demonstrates how the stories we inherit can unnerve our anthropocentric thinking, making a case for the ecocritical study of literature from historical time.

Anastasia Natsina (University of Crete)

The end of time: Apocalypse and post-apocalypse in Modern Greek fiction

Panel 6.3 Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm, Room 213

This paper discusses the end of time as it is envisioned in selected Modern Greek fiction which develops apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic scenarios. By exploring what informs the vision of environmental collapse from the end of the 19th century up to the beginning of the 21st, the paper traces a line of questioning of the value of perpetual, aggressive growth and the cynical selfishness and greed associated with it; it also unveils a call for empathy and unity with the Other –human, animal, environment– as the only possibility of redemption. The 'fin du globe' contemplated in fin-de-siècle decadent literature that explores the ideas of Malthus and Spencer (Nikolaos Episkopopoulos' "Mother earth") is an early indication of this critique. The **Sleepwalker** by Margarita Karapanou (French Prize for Best Foreign Fiction, 1988) foreshadows Christian ecological ideas. It features the Messiah as a sexy serial killer-avenger born out of God's vomit on a Greek island infested by decadent (to the point of

paedophilia and rape) yet sympathetically rendered artists who represent the might and plights of Western man; the Apocalypse comes under tons of garbage and an unsettling sun that burns everything in scorching heat, forcing a redemptive openness. The cautionary tales of Elsa Korneti in **The Island on the Fish** (2020) draw their imagery from Biblical cataclysm and the Apocalypse, whilst reviving the bioregional vision of Gary Snyder's **Turtle Island**, and advocate for the importance of art in invoking life- and planet-saving empathy. Michalis Makropoulos' **Black water** (Greek State Prize, 2019) and **The Sea** (2020) explore post-apocalyptic worlds where pollution and flood respectively have all but eradicated human life and radically altered the conditions of survival. Informed by the ideas of deep ecology, Makropoulos advocates for a deep unity with the environment as an alternative way that may sustain life on earth.

Laoighseach Ní Choistealbha (National University of Ireland, Galway)

The abandonment of Hirta Island in Simon Ó Faoláin's 'Tréigint Eilean Hiort: cuimhní ceathrar'

Panel 3.6, Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm, Room 223a

Simon Ó Faoláin's Irish language poetic sequence 'Tréigint Eilean Hiort: Cuimhní Ceathrar' (The Abandonment of Hirta Island: Memories of Four) was published in his first collection *Anam Mhadra* (Coiscéim, 2008). The sequence, which contains four poems, describes the aftermaths of the abandonment of Hirta Island, the largest island of the St. Kilda archipelago in the westernmost part of the Outer Hebrides.

The island was inhabited from prehistoric times until 1930, when the last 36 residents were evacuated to mainland Scotland, at their own request. Similar events occurred in Ireland, most famously the evacuation of An Bhlascaod Mhór (the Great Blasket Island) in 1954, when the ageing Irish-speaking population were relocated to mainland Ireland due to harsh weather conditions and lack of medical care and services.

As well as underlining the similar histories of abandoned Gaelic-speaking islands in both Ireland and Scotland, this conference paper will perform a close reading of the poem. The poet's approach to remembering the island's abandonment – from the memories of four individuals – is of particular note, as three of the individuals in the poem are animals: the soul of a domestic dog, a fulmar, and the now extinct St. Kilda house mouse. By giving an account of the island's abandonment from the perspective of both animal and human residents, the poet underlines the shared ecology of the abandoned island, and the dramatic effects of modernity on the delicate systems – both cultural and ecological – of Hirta Island.

This poem is written in Irish, but English-language translations will be provided where necessary.

Lucy Nield (University of Liverpool)

‘They’d think we were Gods’ Anthropocentrism, Dogs and The Natural World Paulo Bacigalupi’s ‘The People of the Sand and Slag,’ a haunting look at the future for humanity

Panel 6.6, Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm, Room 222

Within her acclaimed paper ‘Animal Studies,’ Joan Gordon states that Science Fiction can provide ‘rich explorations of the concerns of animal studies,’ noting that SF is a ‘vital method of exploration,’ to consider ‘the relationship’ and ‘clear division between humans and other animals.’ Paulo Bacigalupi’s *People of the Sand and Slag*, offers us the opportunity to examine attitudes towards animals and the constructed hierarchy of humans over NHA’s and the natural world.

“Who needs animals if you can eat stone?” Jaak asks the group of technologized posthumans. They gather around a biologically organic dog, a specimen they have not had any experience of in their day to day lives. Bacigalupi’s characters have biologically technologized and augmented themselves almost unidentifiable as human, inhabiting a futuristic wasteland world, where animals and ‘the natural world’ are rare. A Speculative future one can hardly imagine.

Bacigalupi explores what humanity could technologically accomplish in the coming years, as well as the consequences of those accomplishments. By using contemporary fears surrounding concerns about the environment, longevity and human relationships with NHA’s, to present a dystopian technologized future. Derrida states, ‘now is the time for a new thinking,’ Bacigalupi uses this in his narrative to present haunting possibilities for changes in human attitudes and relationship the natural world.

This paper will use *The People of the Sand and Slag* to explore the consequences of anthropocentrism, as well the position animals hold in the world. I aim to discuss how the use of dogs in speculative fiction force a confrontation of our the natural world.

Bacigalupi’s novella allows us to consider human relationships with the natural world in a new light, one that we might not want to acknowledge.

Evelyn O’Malley (University of Exeter)

‘Peace and Quiet and Open Air’: New York weather in screen musicals of the Covid-19 pandemic

Panel 4.4, Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 214

Broadway closed on 12 March 2020 and New York City has been in full lockdown since 22 March. The sparkling darlings of musical theatre perform a YouTube livestream concert to honour Stephen Sondheim’s 90th birthday on 26 April. Holed up in cramped interiors, close-up after close-up face articulates and emotes the lyrics and music of their beloved composer. The concert’s title song “Take me to the World” is taken from Sondheim’s urban pastoral, *Evening Primrose*, a 1966 TV musical about a poet who

takes refuge from the world in a New York department store where he meets a hidden community and falls in love with a young woman who longs to re-join the world outside. Halfway through the concert, enter fresh air. Mandy Patinkin, the New York-based Broadway actor synonymous with Sondheim, appears outdoors. Behind him are leafless trees, evergreens and hills. He appears to be one of the New Yorkers who was able to escape upstate, to the Catskills or New Jersey perhaps? Breaching the forced intimacy of the YouTube interiors with a surprising experience of the outside, Patinkin brings the open air into homes across computer screens. He sings “Lesson #8” from Sunday in the Park with George, a cappella and a stream rushes by. Where does it flow? Downhill, feeding the ancient waterways and marshes that undergird Manhattan, where his peers are recording this concert, under the presently dark Broadway theatres, towards the sea.

This paper proposes that the water and weather that accompanies Patinkin, and indeed Sondheim as a distinctively New York composer, runs downstream into and through the significant imagery in two on-screen film musicals set and largely filmed in the city, disrupted by the pandemic, and released over a year later; director Lin Manuel Miranda’s *Tick, tick... BOOM!* and Stephen Spielberg’s remake of *West Side Story*. It argues that *West Side Story* and *Tick, tick... BOOM!* depict the material weather of New York City in cultural imaginaries of the city as a home to musical performance. Not only do these works uniquely reflect a period when open-air was brought sharply into renewed focus, they disclose how bodies are always becoming-with weather, performing weathering in the city, and inflect narratives of living in a changing climate.

Niall Oddy (The Open University)

The country, the suburb and the city: An ecocritical reading of Barbara Pym’s ‘*Less Than Angels*’ (1955)

Panel 6.7, Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm, Room 223a

Being best known as a writer of comedies of manners focussing on the social lives of English villages and suburbs, Barbara Pym might not be regarded as fertile ground for a study of the relationship between literature and the environment. Yet, as this paper shows, a reading of her 1955 novel ‘*Less Than Angels*’ reveals a close focus on human and nonhuman interaction.

The novel follows a group of anthropologists as they move between the city of London, an unnamed suburb and the countryside. While these characters are united by a shared professional interest in human cultures, they can be divided into two groups: those who pay attention to the environment around them and those who are too preoccupied by their own lives to notice. Their comments on – and ignorance of – nature, animals and the environment serve to depict human perspectives on the nonhuman. For the anthropologists of ‘*Less Than Angels*’ the ‘natural’ world is a world beyond the human

world: while those who live in the city think it must be found in the suburbs and those in the suburbs think it's in the country, the novel's depiction of the country presents an equally anthropocentric environment. Yet, whether in the country, the suburb or the city, nature is not removed from human life.

With characters from across the age spectrum and a climax with the death of one, 'Less Than Angels' foregrounds the human lifecycle, asking how within their lifetimes humans relate to the environment. It demonstrates human and nonhuman interconnectedness and portrays the failure of its human characters to understand that interconnectedness. As such, Pym's novel invites us to pay greater attention to our environment.

Hilla Peled-Shapira (Ariel University and Bar-Ilan University)

The Desert in the Service of the Authorities: An Ecocritical Reading of Iraqi Literature of Exiles

Panel 2.3, Tuesday 6 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, Room 213

While Iraqi literature of the middle and second half of the 20th century concentrated mainly on major cities and the urban space in general, some writers chose to focus on the desert as a vehicle of political, religious, and social criticism. The Iraqi desert, which is represented, among other features, by its climate and topography, is examined in this paper through a new ecocritical approach. An analysis of works by Iraqi writers Gha'ib Tu'ma Farman (1927-1990) and 'Abd al-Malik Nuri (1921-1998) shows that climate and the environment are not just a set on which events take place, but a dominant factor of the plot, especially in relation to the Iraqi desert, whose climate is significant in the development of the story, accelerates its events, and was used by the writers to criticize their state and their surroundings in a sensitive period of political persecution.

Cristina Peligra (Università degli Studi di Padova)

Past, present and future in Zwemlessen voor later (Swimming lessons for later). Dutch climate poetry and the representation of time and its cycles.

Panel 1.3, Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm, Room 226

The Poets for the Planet community of writers, artists and activists has campaigned to raise awareness of the current climate emergency and acted as catalyst to voice concerns and drive actions for a more sustainable future through arts and poetry locally and internationally. The notion of time is intrinsic to the movement: it came to life to respond to a sense of urgency, to an emergency, the latter indeed meaning a situation requiring immediate action. It does not surprise that Kate Simpson's 2021 edited collection of poems about the climate crisis is titled *Out of Time* (Valley Press). But how does this concept travel through space? How is the climate emergency received and how is the notion of time it is connected to reinterpreted internationally?

To look into this, this paper discusses the representation of time in poetry written by the Dutch-language community of klimaatdichters (climate poets), inspired by Poets for the Planet, taking as example their 2020 collection *Zwemlessen voor later*. Klimaatpoëzie (Swimming lessons for later. Climate poetry, Uitgeverij Vrijdag). In particular, this paper analyses how current artists in the Netherlands and in Flanders represent past and future, the careless yesterday and the future of seas of plastic, and their relation to the present day. Furthermore, it looks at how the flow of time is described as the current situation is metaphorically linked to seasonal cycles. Finally, it questions whether such interpretations could be seen or not as culture-specific in their connection to the local environment.

Sofia Roberg (Mid Sweden University)

Flower, Grape Leaf, Fruit. On Cyclical Time and the Creativity of Nature in Rainer Maria Rilke's *Die Sonette an Orpheus*

Panel 1.2, Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm, Room 221

In Rainer Maria Rilke's collection of sonnets *Die Sonette an Orpheus* (1922), the nature of poetry is explored through the classical Greek myth of Orpheus who descends into the underworld in order to retrieve his dead wife. However, the poems are also loaded with sensuous images of plants in different stages of their lives – from soil to flower to fruit. In this paper I analyse the use of plant motifs in Rilke's sonnets, and discuss how these contribute to rendering an image of cyclical time, where the veil between death and life is not as thick as one might like to believe. In my interpretation of the sonnets, Rilke does not only use plant life as a metaphor for poetic creativity, but also the other way around. Poiesis, making, is central to life itself, and the continuity between human art and the creativity of nature is emphasised in the late poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke. I combine close reading of a few of the poems – focusing on sonnet I:XIV – with a historical contextualisation of the idea of 'nature as an artist', and subsequently attempt to trace how this idea has influenced the poetry of Rilke.

Arthur Rose (University of Exeter)

Asbestos: A Matter of Time

Panel 3.1, Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm, Room 221

In 1959, the US Bureau of Mines produced a 20 minute promotional video entitled *Asbestos... A Matter of Time*. The film was coproduced with Johns Manville, the largest US producer of asbestos. Its ostensible purpose was to usher in a new era for asbestos, a 'miracle mineral' whose almost infinite versatility would propel its application to all aspects of daily life. The film announced the universal use of asbestos as an inevitability, 'a matter of time'.

The film's title has taken on darker connotations since 1959. The 'matter of time', which once described an eternity of universal use, now discloses a horizon connecting the substance to almost certain death. Asbestos is banned in over 60 countries as a result of its toxicity, the health effects of which manifest primarily in four discrete groups of Asbestos Related Diseases (ARDs): Asbestos-Related Pleural Abnormalities, Asbestosis, Lung Cancer and Mesothelioma. Common to each of these conditions is an uncertain temporality, distinct from being-towards-death, which relates to an interaction between human tissue and asbestos fibres, something akin to what Bernard Stiegler calls 'the technological rooting of all relation to time'.

Speaking about asbestos affords a particularly complex entanglement with time through three forms of temporality: an eternity implied by universal use, a horizon disclosed in being-toward-death, and an entanglement between human and technology, which expresses its many possible outcomes through a formal language of risk and fragility. Implicated in each of these temporalities is a fourth time signature, which I will call 'breath time': the time it takes to breathe asbestos into the body.

By analysing Asbestos... A Matter of Time, this paper will unpack asbestos's temporalities, compare them to the conference's focus on deep, historical, circular and future times, and show how this close engagement with matter can resurrect new meanings for time.

Roberta Sala (University of Turin)

The return of time. Forests, wind, snow and the epochs of human existence in the poetry of Gennadij Ajgi.

Panel 3.5, Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm, Room 214

In 1984 the collection of poems "Tetrad' Veroniki", by the Russian underground writer of Chuvash origin Gennadij Ajgi (1934-2006), was published for the first time in Paris. The booklet includes verses devoted to the early months of life of his daughter Veronika, born in 1983, together with some folk poems. What permeates each text is the search for a deep connection with a collective and primordial memory of mankind, seen as the only opportunity to reach authentic self-knowledge beyond any social conditioning. By contemplating Veronika's sleep, Ajgi senses the pre-existential dimension from which the child has recently been separated and to which every human being, included his dead father, is rejoined after death. This archetypal space, where the past, the present and the future of humanity overlap, is often portrayed in the verses through some recurring natural environments. Indeed, Ajgi's whole production revolves around the symbolic value of uncontaminated landscapes recalling Chuvash mythology and popular tradition. For instance, the colour white reflecting Veronika's pureness is the same as that of the snow, which, in the poet's works, represents the passing of time. Moreover, the oneiric voices of primordial forests and of the wind stand for a passage to

the mystical eternity evoked by the child's sleep.

Given these premises, my paper will focus on Ajgi's union with the timeless nature depicted in his verses as a way to escape the rigid and claustrophobic time-space articulation of Soviet society, where censorship forbade the publication of his works until perestroika. At the same time, I will investigate the minimalist language of the poet, shaped on the basis of both Veronika's pre-verbal communication and the forest's non-human sounds. Through the creation of this ancestral and universal form of expression, the writer aspires to overcome Soviet ideological narrative, giving back voice to marginalized subjects.

Sanchar Sarkar (Indian Institute of Technology Madras)

The Carbon Coin: An Eco-speculative Approach to Decarbonise the Earth in Kim Stanley Robinson's *The Ministry for the Future*

Panel 5.5, Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 226

The Anthropocene is distinctly characterised by the fossil-fuel culture, a seemingly indispensable civilisational paradigm that is directly linked to the continuity of human existence. With the growing momentum of the capital market, global wealth distribution, resource extraction, terragouging and rampant carbonisation, a species exclusive (human) monopoly has emerged that is influencing the planet's eco-geological trajectory. The ever-expanding human footprint suggests, "humans have wandered the Earth for thousands of years but never has our capacity to alter the Earth's ecosystem at a larger scale been more prominent than it is today" (Lahr). Environmental contingency planning is considered to be one of the major aspects of navigation in the contemporary genre of eco-speculative fiction. Eco-speculative narratives focus on the construction of potentially alarming environmental futures that are based on the current scenarios of climate change and global warming. They also explore alternative trajectories to counteract the inevitable aftereffects of carbonisation on Earth's planetary ecology. Kim Stanley Robinson's *The Ministry for the Future* (2020) conceptualises the formation of a statutory body, a vital arm of The Paris Agreement that can have the autonomy to implement policies for the preservation and conservation of the environment and survival of all the other non-human species across the Earth.

This paper intends to analyse the eco-speculative performativity in the Ministry's attempt to introduce a new form of global currency, the carbon coin that can facilitate carbon sequestration and eventual decarbonisation of the environment. It focuses on the Ministry's ingenious attempt to regulate a financial tool that has the capacity to mitigate an ecological problem, the "hyperobject" (Morton) of climate change driven by the uncontrolled emission of carbon dioxide. The paper will also highlight how the interdisciplinary connection between eco-speculative fiction and Economics can

create possible pathways to address the glaring issues of our time and future environment.

Sofie Schrey (Northumbria University)

‘A Red Blight’: Fungal Biohazard Narratives and Environmental Decline in Modern Video Games

Panel 7.4, Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, Room 213

Climate change narratives are being recognised more widely than ever before. As a result, they are becoming more and more foregrounded in almost every popular medium. With the video game industry continually booming alongside long-established media such as literature, film and television, it is no surprise that ecological themes can now be found in the latest games as well as in dedicated Nature Writing. In the last five years, some of the most popular games from across the genre spectrum have dealt with possible ecologically undesirable futures and connected biohazard themes in a very open manner, each in ways appropriate to their genre and target group. In this paper, I will examine six games from four franchises to determine modern representations of pollution and environmental damage in the newer narrative medium of video games. The main titles discussed will be the popular all-age accessible open-world Horizon franchise, which includes the two currently published instalments Horizon Zero Dawn (2017) and Horizon Forbidden West (2022); both currently available parts of the linear (post-)apocalyptic survival horror franchise The Last of Us (2013, 2020); T-rated indie game Kenna: Bridge of Spirits; and the very recent blockbuster open-world high fantasy game Elden Ring (2022).

With this analysis, I hope to provide an insight into the ways in which environmental decline can be (un)helpfully discussed in semi-educational media such as these, and to add to the discussion concerning the unique benefit of player agency as an element in this medium’s climate-educational dynamic.

Anna Selby (Manchester Metropolitan University)

A Poetry Almanac

Panel 1.4, Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm, Room 213

The naturalist poet Henry David Thoreau could tell the time of day by which flowers were opening or closing, and Aldo Leopold called a species’ first blooming of the year their birthday. In a time when the birthdays and spring bringers are arriving earlier or not at all and seasonality is affected by climate change, Anna Selby will share poems from around the world which mark this shift, from ancient wilderness poetry up to contemporary ecopoetry, as well as the naturalist poetry and research from her PhD at Manchester Metropolitan University on Plein Air Poetry and Ecology, with writing about

the seasonal changes under the Atlantic ocean and poems made outdoors, throughout the four seasons in an SSI wood in which Oliver Rackham wrote many of his books.

David Shackleton (Cardiff University)

“Failing Economies and Tortured Ecologies”: Octavia E. Butler’s Climate-Changed Worlds

Panel 6.6, Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm, Room 222

This paper addresses Octavia E. Butler’s imagination of ‘speculative time’ in her Earthseed novels. Its strategy is to read Butler’s novels alongside the future scenarios that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have been used in their reports since 1990. Butler’s novels resemble the IPCC scenarios in that both tell stories about climate-changed futures. However, Butler’s novels offer a different vision of the financial future. In their approach to climate change adaptation, the IPCC reports recommend risk management strategies that include improving access to credit and markets in order to construct a ‘sustainable’ and ‘resilient’ future. By contrast, Butler explores the harmful effects of debt. In what is presented as a repetition of the past for African American people, her imagined future is one of indentured labour, chattel slavery, and racialized violence. Conversely, Lauren Olamina’s Earthseed community is built on a type of shared risk which differs from that of the joint stock company or corporation. It is built on an ethic of care, similar to that which Christina Sharpe characterizes as risk shared between and among the Black trans*asterisked living in the wake of the transatlantic slave trade.

Although they function in significantly different ways from the IPCC reports, Butler’s novels create what the sociologist Ulrich Beck describes as a change in the ‘social definition and construction’ of knowledge about environmental risk. They can be read as implicit critiques of the IPCC reports, which import conceptions of risk developed by neoliberal financial institutions, and fail to factor race into their socio-economic projections. When read alongside Butler’s novels, what the IPCC present as neutral strategies for climate change adaptation, disaster risk management, and climate resilience, might actually turn out to be strategies for reproducing a white future.

Sara Shahwan (Goldsmiths, University of London)

Ecological Identity in the Making: The Role of the Environment in Migrant Children’s Poetry

Panel 7.3, Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, Room 223a

This paper investigates the role that the environment plays in fostering self-construction for children at times of displacement and migration. Drawing on participatory ethnographic methods, my study attempts to elicit the different ways migrant children

perceive and represent the environment through poetry and filmmaking. A group of children aged 11-14 were thus invited to take part in weekly workshops incorporating Arabic and English poetry over the spring and summer terms (Feb – May 2021), which led to their participation in the multilingual poetry and digital storytelling festival ‘Our Planet’ at Goldsmiths (June 2021). In their textual productions, the environment appears as a source of identification, an arena of struggle/resistance, and a healer of self/other tensions.

The negotiation of identities is brought to the fore in the multimodal analysis of the children’s collected poetry and short film entitled ‘Breeze’. Since both old memories and new impressions of the world cannot be separated, the affective and material dimensions of their environmental experience are examined in the light of what Thomashow (1996; 2020) calls ‘ecological identity work’. This entails the process of expanding awareness about the natural world and deepening understanding of the self as integrated within the ecological surroundings. Synthesising critical pedagogy with the transformative potential of ecopoetics, the therapeutic implications for developing an ecological identity are highlighted along the way.

Edward Stein (University of Cambridge)

In a Pickle: (Self-)Preservation in the Travel Narratives of John Taylor, the Water-Poet
Panel 1.1, Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm, Room 214

Critics often understand poetic aspirations for survival into posterity in architectural terms – in terms of monumentality – however I want to show how thinking of the poetic pursuit of fame in terms of the domestic art of preservation might unsettle our sense of reputational futurity as a function of human ingenuity and self-fashioning. Katie Kadue has described the “triumphant optimism” associated with early modern engagements with Virgil’s Georgics. The georgic poets believed that “unrelenting, all-conquering labor will reliably achieve both personal glory and a fruitful future” for society. Thinking about poetic futurity in terms of the labours of preservation, however, allows us to appreciate that the self-preserving poet is a figure of fantasy. In my paper, I will show how in the pamphlets of seventeenth century poet John Taylor we are encouraged to think of survival in precisely the terms I have laid out above. I will examine his use of images of pickling and desiccation. At the same time as his travels are situated in relation to the heroic feats of endurance of the likes of Columbus and Drake, these images place them in proximity to the more mundane keeping practices which accumulated around the store-cupboard. In his narrative of his voyage up the Thames in a boat made of brown paper, Taylor’s oars are made of two “Stock-fishes vnbeaten,” foreshadowing the beating they will receive by the river currents, but which they will ultimately withstand. Ultimately, I want to suggest that we should understand poetic fame not as something separate from other forms of preservation (food, textual, etc.). The memory of the poet

is, as Julie Sanders notes of memory more generally, necessarily “distributed across individuals, objects, communities, systems, and institutions.” As Taylor shows, this distribution of memory was the source of some anxiety.

Hazel Streeter (University of Bristol)

‘Keeping to its Clock’: Hearing More-than-human Temporalities in Alice Oswald’s *Falling Awake*

Panel 7.3, Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, Room 223a

Clock time, according to ecocritical time scholars such as Barbara Adam, Michelle Bastian, and Paul Huebener, is failing to coordinate humans with environmental hazards. Furthermore, the putative Anthropocene – with its scalar distortions, its ‘deep pasts and deep futures’ (David Farrier), and its disjunctions – raises many challenges to traditional Western industrial perceptions of temporality. My PhD research considers contemporary poetry which thinks critically about industrial clock time and explores alternative temporalities, better allowing us to perceive and react appropriately to environmental hazards, and suggesting other, de-anthropocentric ways of coordinating with the more-than-human. I am very much looking forward to attending this conference, the theme of which aligns so well with my own interests, and I would relish the opportunity to share a twenty-minute paper based on my research.

Alice Oswald’s 2016 collection, *Falling Awake*, measures a multiplicity of more-than-human times. My paper tracks Oswald’s interactions between the scale of the moment and the scale of deep time, between the temporal scale of the human and the temporal scales of insects, plants, water, and stone, finding that Oswald’s exquisite sound-world probes the inability of clock time to communicate essential life processes such as decay, dissipation and erosion. Instead, Oswald’s ‘Book of Hours’ records a multiplicity of rhythms, prosodic patterns and sonic resonances which decentre the human. In addition, the echoic temporal disjunctions characteristic of the Anthropocene, such as summoning and haunting, trouble singular or simple representations of time in the poems. In place of restrictive mechanical temporality, Oswald weaves a living and dynamic temporal field, which ultimately opens onto the possibility that poetry’s clockwork is a vital tool with which to coordinate with the more-than-human.

Sadhna Swayamsidha (Indian Institute of Technology, Madras)

Anthropo-timescapes: Rethinking the Landscapes of Oppression in Mamang Dai’s *The Black Hill*

Panel 4.5, Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 222

Indigenous communities have often visualized landscapes as an embodiment of memory and imagination that aids in connecting to the past and anticipating the future. The spatio-temporal realities embedded within the landscape construct a fundamental link between time and the environment. Indigenous narratives portray the contemporary climate crisis in terms of a diachronic scale by expressing worldviews that incorporate the entanglement of human and natural history. These narratives attempt to analyze topographical de-recognition in close relation to human psychological and emotional crises. The imposition of Euro-centric ideologies of enlightenment has obscured the native eco-centric creation stories and “indigenous cosmovisions” (Adamson, Monani) that are focused primarily on ecological insights and epistemologies. Adi tribe novelist Mamang Dai’s fictional work *The Black Hill* (2014) revisits the colonial history from a tribal perspective to exhibit how landscape alterations affect native inhabitants. Set in the mid-nineteenth century, the novel centers on the European intrusion and the establishment of the East India Company in the Northeast regions of India followed by its ecological, social and cultural impact on the tribal (indigenous) population of the place.

Human ways of perceiving the past and imagining the future are significant in the understanding of the Anthropocene landscapes. Relentless “anthroturbation” and focus on species exclusivity in the Anthropocene reveal a compartmentalized understanding that separates human history from natural history. These worldviews centered on the supremacy of human beings lead us towards what Bill McKibben phrases as “the end of nature” and thus a dystopian future.

This paper intends to foreground the time-environment-human interconnection within an indigenous framework. It will also attempt to evaluate Anthropocene landscapes as an embodiment of memory and imagination that not only functions as an external reality but also identifies with the existence of the human consciousness.

Harriet Tarlo (Sheffield Hallam University)

Spillways: creative cross disciplinary responses to the South Yorkshire Hydrosphere
Panel 5.3, Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 223a

As part of an AHRC network grant entitled HYDROSPHERES: CO-DESIGN FOR LANDSCAPE DECISION-MAKING, Tarlo and Martindale recently produced a collection of poems, *Spillways*, focused on the river and reservoir network of South Yorkshire. The voices and texts of many for whom this network is important, including geographers; water engineers; walkers; wild swimmers; farmers and Wildlife Trust and Yorkshire water employees, find their way into this work which is ongoing. This critical/creative presentation focuses on the temporal elements of the Hydrosphere network in relation to the past history of rivers and reservoirs and our fears for the future, both water shortage and flood. Whilst paying attention to the local landscape of the Don Valley and

Sheffield Lakeland, the paper will also consider bigger questions about landscape decisions past, present and future. Paying attention to water highlights the distributed nature, changing dynamics, and legacies of decision-making in marginal landscapes bordering on National Parks and urban conurbations. The hydrological network brings such locations together, in the worst-case scenario in floods such as that which occurred in Fishlake in 2019. How might this be considered in creative and useful ways that break through socio-geographical barriers to think about our environment differently? Can the voices of people up and down stream be heard by those that make the decisions, the technocracy (water companies, regulators and policy-makers), local authorities and large landowners? How might poetry and other arts help to do this, in terms of representing diverse voices, engaging the public in co design work around landscape/water decisions, and in acts of remembering and reimagining the hydrosphere? Can poetry broaden our concerns to consider the rights of the more than human world, the fauna and flora that is as dependent as we are on the health of our waterways? Can water itself have a voice?

Andy Thatcher (Bristol University)

Common Place – reporting on a practice-based PhD in Film

Panel 7.4, Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, Room 213

Common land is ubiquitous across much of England and plays a crucial and historic role to a great many people, from dog-walkers, to farmers, to radical protest communities, to novelists, to gypsies, to footballers, to conservationists, to archaeologists. And yet it remains widely misunderstood. My practice-based PhD asks the question: ‘what is common land?’ through using filmmaking, especially slow cinema, folk horror and essay film approaches, as well as writing and photography. Any answer needs to reckon with time, whether the *longue durée* of peat formation, years-long forestry cycles, the lifecycles of heathland butterflies, the changing faces of enclosure in response to technological and political change, or the lasting impact of wars. Commons are often viewed as a living link with an ancient, often idealised past, as pointing the way to a more just future, or as an impediment to it. As places of daily routine and belonging, they are also entangled with personal biographies, including my own. A common is a place where different temporal pulses and patterns mingle and clash in a uniquely complex way and artistic practice offers an excellent means of exploring and representing this.

I’m currently focussing on Grovely Wood, northwest of Salisbury. Grovely is a rich and important site, invaluable for exploring the many aspects of common land, and appears in the work of Roger Deakin, Oliver Rackham, W.H. Hudson, and William Cobbett. Oak Apple Day, which has pagan roots, is still celebrated by a nearby village and during which villagers assert their rights of common, won after over a century of protest.

This paper blends film, photography and field recordings to report on and give a sense of my findings to date, and aims to prompt debate on a matter of enduring importance and interest.

Jonathan Thornton (University of Liverpool)

Deep Time and Generational Time in Speculative Fiction: Adrian Tchaikovsky's *Children of Time* and Namwali Serpell's *The Old Drift*

Panel 7.5, Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, Room 214

The concept of deep time is essential to the idea of the Anthropocene, and poses the challenge of thinking about our impact on the environment and the planet in geological time rather than divisions of time within a single human lifespan. Speculative fiction has explored ideas of deep time since its conception, with the future histories of Olaf Stapledon, Cordwainer Smith and Robert A. Heinlein exploiting science fiction's galactic scope to imagine changes seen in society, technological progress, and astronomical bodies across scales of hundreds to billions of years. Insects, with their short generation cycles and fast rate of reproduction, adaptation, and mutation, can also help us consider time as a multi-generational phenomenon. In this paper, I will explore how two recent Arthur C. Clarke Award-winning speculative fiction texts, *Children of Time* (2015) by Adrian Tchaikovsky and *The Old Drift* (2019) by Namwali Serpell, use insects and arachnids in their SFnal exploration of deep time. In Tchaikovsky's *Children of Time*, the reader experiences the rise and development of a sophisticated society of artificially uplifted sentient spiders, through which Tchaikovsky portrays evolutionary time in contrast with the relativistic time dilation experienced by his human characters on a spaceship. In *The Old Drift*, a Greek chorus of mosquito drones possessing networked hive intelligence narrate the novel's story of Zambia's history of colonisation, resistance and ultimate self-determination across multiple generations of three families. I will explore how both novels rely on the intertwining of insectile, nonhuman perspectives with more standard human perspectives in order to portray movement through deep time and to suggest ways in which our relationship with insects can help us conceptualise geological time.

David Tierney (University of Liverpool)

Speculating The Future of Farmed Non-human Animals

Panel 2.5, Tuesday 6 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, Room 226

The relationship between humans and farmed non-human animals ranges from the "companion" animal relationship described by Donna Haraway to an abusive and traumatic relation predicated on violence. Even when farmed non-human animals are treated well, it must be acknowledged that they have been bred into existence almost

exclusively for human consumption, and with the growth of vegetarianism and veganism, the rise of cultured meat, and the accelerating climate catastrophe driving forward changes in diet, farmed non-human animals' may be on the cusp of a radical transformation and may have their existence vanish altogether.

Speculative fiction has the potential to predict and examine this future, but outside of a few notable exceptions such as Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, farmed non-human animals rarely appear in future-oriented speculative fiction. This paper will examine my depiction of farmed non-human animals in my research-led novel, *Ark*. *Ark* is set in a future Ireland, badly hit by the climate catastrophe, on a farmed non-human animal sanctuary which is one of the few remaining places where these non-human animals still roam outside. It is told from the perspective of humans, farmed non-human animals, and robotic non-human animal companions. In this paper, I will show how I draw on my interviews at The Farm Animal Sanctuary in Evesham, Jeffrey Masson's *The Secret World of Farm Animals*, and my time growing up in a farming community to shape my depictions of these non-human animals and the land they live on.

In doing so, I hope to show a potential trajectory of the future of farmed non-human animals, to capture their experience of the world, and to outline what our responsibility may be for these non-human animals in an environment that no longer uses them for sustenance.

Mònica Tomàs (Rutgers University)

From colonial pasts to cosmopolitical futures: the telescoping timeframes of genre fiction

Panel 6.6, Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm, Room 222

From toxic water pollution in Argentina to wildfires in California, it is clear that environmental injustice is not merely a future issue. Visions of impending catastrophe fail to contend with the deep colonial and capitalist roots of, in Kyle Powys Whyte's words, "a cyclical history of disruptive anthropogenic environmental change caused by settler and other colonial institutions that paved the way for extractive industries." Additionally, notions of future cataclysm may obscure environmental "slow violence," or breed climate "doomism" and despair. Much attention has already been paid to the capacity of narrative genre, especially science fiction, to represent the augmented time scales of the Anthropocene; in this paper, I further argue that genres such as science fiction and horror can narratively telescope timeframes, portraying complex environmental futures without eclipsing colonial pasts. I first review literary criticism discussing genre fiction's representation of climate change, as well as scholarship connecting the past apocalypses of colonialism and apocalyptic futures. I follow with close readings of two genre fiction narratives that take place in devastated post-colonial times: Octavia Butler's cli-fi *Earthseed* novels and Mariana Enríquez's gothic eco-horror

story “Under the Black Water.” In these works, genre elements dramatize existing environmental crises—climate change in California, toxic water pollution in Argentine slums—while highlighting socioeconomic inequality, demonstrating genre fiction’s ability to attend to the complexity of historical wrongs as well as speculating on future “what if” scenarios. Furthermore, both storylines offer opportunities for hope against a backdrop of socio-ecological devastation and despair. I close by drawing from my students’ group readings of these works in order to argue that reading genre fiction with others can help spark visions of cosmopolitical futures: futures in which both diverse human and nonhuman entities are conceived of as political stakeholders to whom care is due.

Helen Tookey (Liverpool John Moores University)

‘Hear Us O Lord’: an AHRC Research Network project taking Malcolm Lowry’s ecopoetical short stories to sea (co-presented with Alan Dunn, Leeds Beckett University)

Panel 7.6, Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, Room 222

Dr Helen Tookey and Dr Alan Dunn will present and reflect on the AHRC Research Network project they are running, which uses the writing of Malcolm Lowry (1909-57), in particular his posthumously published short story collection *Hear Us O Lord From Heaven Thy Dwelling Place*, to explore ideas around caring for our oceans and the natural environment. The project brings together artists, plastics researchers, musicians and retired mariners, as well as the public and environmental groups, and is taking place across a number of sailings between Liverpool and the Isle of Man – a place Lowry visited as a child and which later took on symbolic significance for him. (Project website: <https://malcolmlowry.com/>).

Lowry is best known for his 1947 novel *Under the Volcano*, but the stories he worked on over the last decade of his life have particular resonance for today’s world. Drawing on the landscape of the Burrard Inlet near Vancouver, the stories evince what we would now call an ecopoetics, an awareness of an environment under threat from industrial development and an urgent need for humanity to rethink its relations to the natural world.

Our project uses the ability of text to move and speak through time, taking Lowry’s words with us to sea and ‘recycling’ them as starting points to think about our own relationships with the ocean and other natural environments. In our presentation, we will show how the project has developed so far, the materials we have ‘salvaged’ (including sounds, words, images and objects), and reflect on the questions raised: what does it mean to set a writer’s words recirculating in a different time; what new ways of knowing might be created through a networking project such as this one; and what outcomes might that have in relation to the environmental crisis we face?

Varna Venugopal (Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, India)

“I am seeing a mulberry bush but thinking pandemic”: Vegetal Temporalities during the Coronavirus Crisis

Panel 2.4, Tuesday 6 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, Room 222

The global COVID-19 pandemic and the imposition of restrictive policies like lockdowns and mandatory quarantines catalyzed feelings of temporal estrangement and uncertainty among millions of people around the world. During the pandemic, our relationship with time changed drastically, resulting in the distortion of temporal perception marked by an increased difficulty in keeping track of time and the confusion “about what day of the week, of the month, and what time of the day it was” (Cellini et al. 2020). The interruption of normal routines constituted by a series of temporal landmarks in the regular citizen’s schedule also unsettled the perception of psychological time (Grondin et al. 2020). One of the ways in which people responded to this cognitive derangement was through gardening, which helped many in coping with uncertainty and trauma and in improving psychological health (Theodorou et al. 2021). Gardening also helped in cultivating emotional resilience during the temporal crisis that the pandemic unleashed. Plants function as seasonal and cyclical markers of time, and the imperceptibility of their temporal scale to humans often render the conceptualisation of plant-time comparable to geological time (McKertich 2016). Drawing insights from Michael Marder’s philosophy of ‘Plant-time’ (2015), I examine how pandemic narratives about gardening reveal the “qualitatively distinct modes and rhymes” of vegetal time (Marder 2013, 107). Reading Indian poet Arvind Krishna Mehrotra’s pandemic poem ‘Lockdown Garden’ (2020) in the light of Marder’s theorisations, I argue that the poem situates the pandemic- garden as a site of encounter between multiple temporalities (Miller 2010), where human-time is contaminated and confounded by plant time. Thus the spatially restricted and temporally estranged poet encounters his vegetal others “on their own turf” (Marder 3) in the garden, eliciting reflections on vulnerability and mortality that exists in the realm of the non-human.

Kat Waters (University of Leeds)

Primitive Futures: Nostalgia and Modernity in the work of Paul Kingsnorth

Panel 4.6, Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 223a

Paul Kingsnorth has become a controversial figure in nature writing for his work on belonging, which has placed emphasis on tradition, indigeneity, and long (or ancestral) inhabitation, and as such, can be interpreted as exclusionary and eco-nationalistic. Kingsnorth’s 2008 book *Real England* records the disappearance of local traditions in

England, pitting local 'place' against global 'space' in a critique of homogenous globalised culture. The book ends with a lengthy defence of nostalgia as a powerful motivator for change: 'a recognition that something valuable that once existed is in danger of being lost'. In a 2011 essay, Kingsnorth identifies himself as being 'prone to nostalgia' for 'past Golden Ages', but begins to question the usefulness of nostalgia as a response to ecological and cultural loss. His later essays on the use of pre-industrial tools rather than technology to forge a stronger relationship to place. These represent a departure from lamenting the past to imagining how past technologies might prove capable of grounding and reinforcing local place against industrialised, globalised space. Following Marianna Torgovnick's interrogation of the term, I consider 'primitivism' as a way to engage with Kingsnorth's appeal to a 'past in the present' and suggest that his rejection of modernity isn't necessarily a rejection of the modern, but an alternative way of envisioning the future that isn't committed to linear progression and technological advancement. More broadly, I consider the implications of the 'primitive' for contemporary nature writing.

Penelope Wells (Bournemouth University)

Weird weather, women, and why they are powerless against climate change in contemporary eco-novels: a socio-political ecocritical perspective.

Panel 4.6, Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 223a

Ecocritics generally align their research to a 'green' moral agenda (Garrard 2014) which demands an analysis of the socio-political forces at work within their chosen medium of study. I choose contemporary eco-novels, as whether you believe that society informs writers, or whether novel-writing informs society, it is important to continue the conversations on climate change, especially as COP26 (2021) has ended. Greenwood (Michael Christie), *How Beautiful We Were* (Imbolo Mbue), *The Overstory* (Richard Powers), *Gold Fame Citrus* (Claire Vaye Watkins), *Salvage the Bones* (Jesmyn Ward) and *The End We Start From* (Megan Hunter), span a century from 1938 to 2038, suggesting that concerns about climate-change are not new, and will increase. The context surrounding each environmental disaster is important. This paper aims to reveal conflicts between female characters and society's ruling forces, facilitating climate-change discussions whilst acknowledging that the 'powerlessness' of women is one of many debates that are so often concealed (Kerridge 1998). Eco-feminism is one of six socio-political positions I am currently researching through narrative enquiry. The way that the female characters experience environment disaster, the historical aspects of environmental events, the rhetoric used by the authors – all of these are as important as each character's perspective. Lastly, I look at how authors depict 'green' women, to see if the negative portrayal that has persisted in literature since medieval times (Rudd 2014), still lingers. We now have a wealth of research on how women today can engage

with ecological threat, from participation in ‘genteel’ local democracy (Staddon 2021) to fiercer approaches such as violence over mercury pollution (Lee 2018; Di Chiro 2021; MacGregor 2021; Njoh and Ayuk-Etang 2021; Pulkki et al. 2021; Staddon 2021; Valmiki 2021). But ‘green’ women are often portrayed as eccentric, powerless, or victims, and I examine how these views are socially constructed.

Chao Xie (Zhejiang Gongshang University/ University of Cambridge)

On “Deep Time” and Environmental Ethics in Gillian Clarke’s Ecological Poetry

Panel 4.2, Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, Room 213

A concept closely connected to the Anthropocene, “deep time” falls into a predicament of expression due to its wide temporo-spatial scale and overwhelming abstraction. The National Poet of Wales Gillian Clarke concretizes “deep time” through writing rocks, animals, and climate in her ecological poetry. Clarke interweaves the geological history and human history, scrutinizes human identity against the long evolutionary history, and foregrounds climate crises through both historical and future times. The poet’s ecological works take on deep and distant values of time as well as wide planetary consciousness, providing not only a feasible way of conveying “deep time”, but also inspirations for us to reflect on the interdependence between human and nature in the current Anthropocene era.

Abstracts of Preformed Panels and Roundtables

These are the abstracts of roundtables and preformed panels. They are presented in alphabetical order by panel title.

American Indian Literature Charting New Literary Territory

Panel 7.1. Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, room 221

Chair: Todd Borlik (University of Huddersfield)

Brianna **Burke** (Iowa State University). Remaking, Rewriting, Reimagining the world in Thomas King's *The Back of the Turtle*.

Anik **Chartrand** (Brandeis University). Beyond Storytelling: James Welch's *Fools Crow* as Contemporary a Native American Bundle System.

Abbey **Ballard** (University of Worcester). 'Coax Stories out of the Permafrost': Stories from the Ice Within Tanya Tagaq's *Split Tooth*.

This panel explores the work of American Indian authors as they chart new literary territory. Starting with the novel **The Back of the Turtle**, this panel explores King's work as it charts new territory by combining the Skywoman creation story with Genesis, creating a new hybrid and distinctly American religion for the 21st century that ultimately argues that creation is ever unfolding and that humans have a responsibility to work for paradise right here on Earth. The second paper argues for a new understanding of James Welch's **Fools Crow**, a rarely analyzed novel by the well-known Blackfeet and Gros Ventre writer, arguing that bringing a distinctly American Indian ethos to analyzing the novel — that of the medicine bundle — reveals whole new understandings of Welch's work.

We will need a 3rd (and perhaps 4th) panelist.

Animal Histories

Panel 6.1. Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm, room TBA

Chair: John **Miller** (University of Sheffield)

Laura **Gelfand** (Utah State University). Love, Respect, and the Legacy of the Lupa Romana.

Indigo **Gray** (University of Sheffield). Slime and Protoplasm: Evolution and Descent in the Animalia of *Germinal*.

Mo **O'Neill** (University of Sheffield). The Vegetarian Limits of Edward Carpenter's Modernist Self-fashioning.

"Love, Respect, and the Legacy of the Lupa Romana", Laura D. Gelfand (Utah State University)

Five years ago, two young wolves were captured on video walking through a nature reserve just outside Rome, and the return of the animals to this major metropolis was met with mostly positive responses from the city's residents. This is a stark contrast to the apprehension and violent reception wolves usually receive when they resettle areas where they have previously been eradicated in most of Europe and the US.

Rome was said to have been founded by Romulus, who together with his twin brother that he subsequently killed, was suckled by a she-wolf. Roman warriors were favorably compared to wolves, and the image of the she-wolf with her human foundlings appeared on Roman coins, armor, and elsewhere throughout the extensive reach of the Roman empire. Rome's founding myth, with its positive associations with wolves, differs dramatically from stories told about wolves elsewhere in antiquity where they were almost universally characterized as monstrous. Thanks to these negative representations wolves were completely eradicated from England and Scotland by the 17th century. Once they were no longer present in the environment, artists and others were able to further exaggerate the size and ferocity of wolves without having to worry that their exaggerated depictions would be contradicted by an encounter with a wolf in the wild.

Wolves were hunted extensively throughout Europe and the US, but thanks to their long, positive associations with them, wolves were not pursued in Italy with the destructive zeal or the goal of complete eradication found elsewhere. Mika Rissansen described the ancient Roman approach to the wolf as closely akin to totemism, and this deep, historical connection seems to have continued to the present day. In this paper, I investigate how the positive associations established by Romans in antiquity came to influence later representations of wolves in Italian literature and art, together with their treatment in reality, in areas that were part of the Roman empire. I contrast this with more negative representations of wolves elsewhere in Europe—which may also have originated in associations of Roman warriors with wolves—and compare how these negative representations continue to influence perceptions of wolves thousands of years after their initial invention.

“Slime and Protoplasm: Evolution and Descent in the Animalia of *Germinal*”, Indigo Gray (University of Sheffield)

Emile Zola's *Germinal* (1884) is ostensibly a novel about the local political struggles of coalminers in 1860s France, their attempts to strike and demand appropriate wages inevitably thwarted as they struggle against industrial capitalism, dehumanisation and a hungry 'beast' of a mine. Attention to representations of species in Zola's novel, however, elucidates a complex network of human and animal actors whose bodies coalesce with one another and with their damp surroundings. Informed by TH Huxley's 1868 theory of protoplasm, I argue that the presence of slime in *Germinal* – from coal-blackened phlegm to the ebbing tide within the mine – allows for questions about animality, evolution and origins to seep into the text. Huxley's formulation of the 'semi-liquid' or 'limpid liquid' protoplasm as the origin of all life situates *Germinal*'s miners in

direct contact with this primordial soup as they excrete and dip their toes into the slime of their environment. Tracking working bodies of humans, animals and the mine itself, I illustrate Zola's narratives of evolution and an oscillating march of progress as his characters look back at their lowly, slimy origins and forward at 'new men [...] starting into life, a black army of vengeance slowly germinating in the furrows.'

"The Vegetarian Limits of Edward Carpenter's Modernist Self-fashioning", Mo O'Neill (University of Sheffield)

My thesis-in-progress concerns the more-than-human thought of the essayist, poet, and social reformer Edward Carpenter (1844-1929). This paper addresses the complex question of Carpenter's historical positionality: critics have variously characterised Carpenter as either late Victorian, or the product of a specific moment of either Edwardian or fin de siècle political radicalism. Others have emphasised his affinities with literary modernism. But which of these categories is most useful for the purpose of conceptualising Carpenter's critically understudied contributions to pro-animal thought? I contend that exploring Carpenter's vegetarianism provides a route into answering this question. Both his vegetarian thought and the wider nineteenth-century vegetarian movement complexly related to questions of temporality: vegetarianism simultaneously emblematised both 'back-to-nature' primitivism, and the utopian emergence of progressive modes of relation to nonhuman animals and environments. Echoing broader anti-vegetarian rhetoric, Carpenter's critics also used his vegetarianism to stress the 'faddish' ephemerality of his thought, highlighting the diet's contingency in shaping his historical reputation.

First, this paper assesses Carpenter's attempts to navigate this association with faddism through his own vegetarian self-fashioning, presenting his dietary practices as modern, flexible, and undogmatic. Next, I examine two important aspects of Carpenter's vegetarianism: his health-based vegetarian advocacy, and the broader agricultural politics he developed through practicing farming at his smallholding in Millthorpe, Derbyshire. I argue that, despite his modern self-fashioning, Carpenter's emphasis on small-scale, individualised, 'clean' production and consumption was incommensurate with the challenges posed by the intensification of animal agriculture within industrial modernity. His vegetarianism provides a microcosm of a broader over-optimism in his utopian thought regarding the longevity and expansivity of the industrial capitalist system that he critiqued. However, I contend that his contributions to the nascent fin de siècle animal rights movement render him a transitional figure, who helped to advance the development of modern pro-animal thought.

Animal Temporalities

Panel 7.2. Thursday 8 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, room TBA

Chair: John **Miller** (University of Sheffield)

Vera **Fibisan** (University of Sheffield). Temporality and Hydromateriality in Elizabeth-Jane Burnett's *Of Sea*.

Christie **Oliver-Hobley** (University of Sheffield). Sad, deserted shore, your fickle friends are leaving': Time, Melancholy and Migration.

Dominic **O'Key** (University of Sheffield). The Rewilding Plot: Writing Conservation Futures in the Sixth Extinction.

"Temporality and Hydromateriality in Elizabeth-Jane Burnett's *Of Sea*", Vera Fibisan (University of Sheffield)

Elizabeth-Jane Burnett's latest collection of poems, *Of Sea*, is a key text of contemporary landscape poetry, which builds on her previous swimwork in *Swims* (2018). The collection gathers invertebrate 'encounters through swimming' (Burnett, 2021), closely linked to posthumanist notions advocated by Rosi Braidotti and Karen Barad, which see these encounters from the non-hierarchical perspective of the human body immersed and lowered in a body of water. This paper will examine the synergies between hydromateriality and posthumanism in light of the threats of terrestrial and blue

extinction. In addition to the blue conceptions of space and place, this collection also considers the land from the perspective of *Of Sea* or being immersed as a swimmer in a challenging environment. The sea and the field are mouths that are 'plaited' (Burnett 2021, p.17), a collective voice, song, and cry of the more-than-human, often finding itself in a perpetual realm of nullity. Furthermore, this paper investigates whether this work be considered ecoelegiac, and if so, why? Burnett's renewed swimwork is an aquatic escape that is simultaneously liberating and intoxicating, the more-than-human body balancing between the desire for exploration and self-preservation. Wild swimming is proposed here as an extinction ritual, where the act of extinction is seen as a lessening, a diminishing of certain species towards a permanent return to nondescript matter rather than a past event. Simultaneously, Burnett's poems build on the notion of loss as the 'bodily bringing together [of] the different structures of nothingness – tracing their entanglements – that the world can mourn' (Barad 2017, p.56) and energetically name. These individual encounters challenge anthropocentric perspectives by broadening them to more-than-human scales where water is only one conductive element between the here and now of swimwork and the broader implications of climate destruction.

"The Rewilding Plot: Writing Conservation Futures in the Sixth Extinction.", Dominic O'Key (University of Sheffield)

This paper sets out to theorize the "rewilding plot", a developing modality of contemporary literary realism in which ecological restoration is not simply described but forms the main social and environmental drama of a given work's narrative. It will do so by focusing in particular on two novels that differently imagine and dramatise wolf reintroduction projects in the north of Britain: Sarah Hall's *The Wolf Border* (2015) and

Charlotte McConaghy's *Once There Were Wolves* (2021). At their best, I argue, both texts model different futures and new natures; Hall and McConaghy harness the heteroglossia of the novel form to think through the concomitant contestations and convivialities of conservation coalition-building. Yet I will also be interested in showing how these texts, which both feature female protagonists who become pregnant, end up tethering their speculative pathways to reproductive futures which risk subordinating rewilding to the stories' open-ended social closure. Thus even the rewilding plot, a drama of uneven human–animal relations in the Sixth Extinction, might ultimately use nature as metaphorical foil for a redemptive and human protagonicity.

“Sad, deserted shore, your fickle friends are leaving’: Time, Melancholy and Migration”,
Christie Oliver-Hobley (University of Sheffield)

Martin Heidegger's writings on the nonhuman have been received by animal-studies researchers with disdain, chiefly due to his notorious thesis that ‘the animal’ is ‘poor in world’, while human Dasein is ‘world-building’. Time plays a pivotal role in the logic of this exceptionalism; humans enjoy an ‘ecstatic’ relationship with time, Heidegger claims, while nonhumans are unable to apprehend their own temporality. Heidegger argues that humans’ relationship to time is revealed, partly, in melancholia (Schwermut), a ‘disclosive’ mood within Heidegger’s philosophy, which exposes Dasein’s ostensibly unique capacity to mark what has been, hence what has been lost. Yet Heidegger acknowledges a problem with this notion of an atemporal animality via a bizarre act of ventriloquism: “Migratory birds! You, now the winter is coming, now we must soon depart.” I will think through this rare moment of Heideggerian uncertainty via two musings on time, melancholy and migration: Sandy Denny’s *Who knows where the time goes?* and J.A. Baker’s *The Peregrine*. Released/published in 1967, five years after Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, these cultural texts depict bird migrations from the perspective of humans who struggle to grapple with their incomprehension and resultant feelings of bereavement. Both narrativize, in their own modes, melancholia towards a passing moment, while asserting nonhuman capacities to apprehend both time and loss. My paper will explore the implications of this more-than-human melancholy, de-humanising Heideggerian phenomenology in the context of the Anthropocene.

Contaminated Landscapes in Historical, Deep and Cyclical Time

Panel 2.1. Tuesday 6 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, room 221

Chair: Elizabeth **Edwards** (University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies)

Mary-Ann **Constantine** (University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies). *Avernus in Paradise: poisoned water in the landscapes of Romantic-era Wales*.

Andrew **Webb** (Bangor University). ‘the deep dark zero’: Dylan Thomas and the contaminated landscapes of the future.

Jamie **Harris** (Aberystwyth University). After Chernobyl: Welsh poetry and nuclear power.

This panel explores the ways in which landscapes are imagined and represented as sites of renewal and destruction across three kinds of time frame: historical, cyclical and deep. It focuses in particular on accounts of contamination, from the lead and copper works of the early industrial revolution, to the imagined nuclear holocausts of Dylan Thomas’s late poetry, to the ways in which more contemporary poetry registers the radionuclides that fell as rain after Chernobyl. While each of the papers explores writing about a particular moment in history, our aim is to provoke discussion about the ways in which the various texts engage with ideas of historical, cyclical and deep time in order to register the contamination of landscapes that their authors encounter.

Paper 1:

Avernus in Paradise: poisoned water in the landscapes of Romantic-era Wales

Professor Mary-Ann Constantine

Water is central to landscape writing, but not all water is redemptive and cleansing. This paper examines descriptions of water used in mining and the industrial process by people visiting, living or working in Wales circa 1760-1820. Images and accounts of waterfalls, lakes, rivers and streams saturate late-eighteenth century tourist narratives: but the genre, firmly associated with the picturesque, is also a rich (and under-explored) source of information about the early decades of the industrial revolution. Drawing on published and unpublished accounts recovered by the recent ‘Curious Travellers’ project, I will focus on a complex and recurring cluster of associations around sites where water has been contaminated by copper and lead mining — from the stream running through the landscaped ‘Paradise’ at Hafod in mid-Wales, to the clear, empty lakes around Snowdon and the pool at Anglesey’s Parys Mountain ‘on whose waters, distasteful as those of Avernus, no bird is known to alight’.

Paper 2:

‘the deep dark zero: Dylan Thomas and the contaminated landscapes of the future

Dr Andrew Webb

Thomas’s ‘process’ poetry draws attention to the physical matter from which humans are formed and to which we return, and to the constant recycling of that matter into other life forms in an ongoing cycle of creation and destruction across what we now understand as deep time. It obsessively investigates the place of the human in this epochal time frame: an animal both part of and apart from this ongoing cycle. My paper will introduce this concept through a close reading of ‘The force that through the green fuse’ before turning to the manifestation of this obsession in late work informed by Thomas’s fears of nuclear holocaust. In particular, it will show how ‘In Country Sleep’ (1947), ‘Over Sir John’s hill’ (1949), and ‘Poem on his Birthday’ (1952) are haunted by

landscapes of future atomic war: ‘the deep dark zero’ and ‘the cyclone of silence’ that would follow nuclear holocaust. His engagement with these imagined sites of future contamination necessitate a re-engagement with the assumptions about deep and cyclical time that govern the earlier ‘process’ poetry. I will suggest that Thomas’s late poetry offers us with new ways to situate ourselves within the complexities of the current crises of climate and apocalypse.

Paper 3:

After Chernobyl: Welsh poetry and nuclear power

Dr Neal Alexander

During the 1980s, Wales was a fountainhead of anti-nuclear protests in which many of its foremost poets – working in both Welsh and English – were active participants. The Women’s Peace Camp at Greenham Common had its origins in a ten-day march from Cardiff organised by Women for Life on Earth; and in 1982, Welsh councils collectively proclaimed Wales Europe’s first ‘nuclear-free nation’ (though parts for Trident missiles were still manufactured at RMO Cardiff). Then, in early May 1986, radionuclides from the destroyed Chernobyl power plant in Ukraine fell on areas of North Wales. Subsequently, activists shifted their attention from Wales’s implication in the proliferation of nuclear weapons to its role as a producer of nuclear power at Trawsfynydd and Wylfa. In this paper, I will offer readings of two Chernobyl poems by Gillian Clarke and Einir Jones. Where Clarke depicts a condition of shared vulnerability to nuclear threats and imagines new forms of transnational solidarity, Jones’s darker vision focuses the reader’s attention upon the ways in which the slow violence of radioactive contamination demands a reckoning of deep time, particularly the deep future of its long-term effects. Finally, I trace the long aftermath of Chernobyl in the late work of R.S. Thomas – poet, priest, and anti-nuclear campaigner – which never mentions Chernobyl explicitly but is frequently inflected with the vocabulary and imagery of nuclear disaster.

Crisis, Change, and Isolation through time in the English Countryside

Panel 2.2. Tuesday 6 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, room 223a

Chair: Tess Somervell (University of Oxford)

Nick **Pepper** (Northumbria University). The countryside fortress: The conflicted experience of Northumberland’s foot-and-mouth crisis.

Emma **Yeo** (Durham University). “the most outrageous Daie for winde & snowe that ever did blow”: Exploring man’s relationship to weather and the natural environment in early modern diaries.

Alexander **Hibberts** (Durham University). Countryside as Refuge: Marine Transgression and Landscape Transition at Hastings Augustinian Priory, c.1350-1417.

This panel will explore themes of rural isolation and change at moments of environmental crises through three case-studies. From the 2001 foot-and-mouth crisis in Northumberland, we will take you back in time to an Augustinian Priory threatened by sea floods in the late medieval period via famine, plague and adverse weather in early modern times. Notions of the countryside as a fortress, defensive and isolating, and nature as an active protagonist will be amongst the common threads that we will tease out as our apparently discrete tales reveal their commonalities. Temporalities will be blurred as the themes of humanity, nature and landscape are drawn out through the overarching concerns of isolation and change. We will explore ideas of agency and authority in the face of natural disaster and crisis. In making these stories urgent and anchored to their eras, we will convey the emotional impact and immediacy of environmental crisis for individuals and communities caught up in them. We look forward to a varied panel discussion with rich input from the floor, particularly as we face a contemporary environmental crisis. We will approach these case studies as historians; the potential for responses from an ASLE audience to enrich and diversify this perspective will make for a fulfilling and absorbing panel.

The countryside fortress: The conflicted experience of Northumberland's foot-and-mouth crisis

'Countryside set to become a fortress' (Hexham Courant, March 3, 2001)

'Some farmers could be forgiven for regarding this epidemic almost as a blessing in disguise, for even before its dread tentacles spread into the district, farming was in the direst of straits', (Hexham Courant, Friday March 30, 2001).

As the 2001 foot-and-mouth outbreak intruded into Tynedale and started lapping at the boundaries of Northumberland National Park, local newspaper the Hexham Courant – bellwether to the mood in this part of the county – started to evoke the idea of the countryside as a fortress: isolated, resigned and scared. However, within a month of the outbreak starting the Courant dared to suggest that financial compensation to farmers was not only a salve, but a welcome ticket out of an industry in crisis. The national park authority found itself in the awkward position of simultaneously encouraging people to, and discouraging them from, visiting the park. The limits of its authority became apparent as the county council took over the emergency closure of footpaths.

Interviews with national park staff revealed the tensions that lay beneath the limits set around accessing the countryside – farms and communities were isolated, ancillary businesses serving rural communities foundered, but some farmers embraced the closure of footpaths across their land with alacrity. This section of the presentation explores these contradictions and tensions precipitated by an early 21st century crisis in the countryside.

"the most outrageous Daie for winde & snowe that ever did blow": Exploring man's relationship to weather and the natural environment in early modern diaries

Diaries provide a unique insight into the relationship between literate members of early modern society and the natural landscape. The early seventeenth century diary of

Thomas Chaytor, a member of the Durham gentry, is a key example. Writing in the 1610s with a perspective shaped by the trauma of late sixteenth century famine and plague outbreaks, Chaytor records the impact of adverse weather conditions upon his everyday life in great detail.

In Chaytor's diary weather appears as a protagonist in its own right. It is a force beaten back only by the "special providence of God". When unchecked by divine intervention excess rain or snow can isolate him from neighbours and friends, set his boat adrift and damage his harvest. Drought is also problematic during these years, with his recording of his anxieties regarding the harvest providing further insight into his relationship with his land.

An in-depth analysis of Chaytor's references to the landscape, with reference to a history of emotions approach, demonstrates the importance of providential thinking to understanding the exceptionally problematic weather conditions he was faced with at the end of his life. It also shows Chaytor to be a man beset by justifiable anxiety when facing down the risk of his countrymen starving.

In the second half of this paper, I compare Chaytor's perspective to that of his near-contemporaries from across England. I reflect upon how typical Chaytor's perspectives upon nature were and how useful diaries are for uncovering the truth of the relationships between early modern man and land.

Countryside as Refuge: Marine Transgression and Landscape Transition at Hastings Augustinian Priory, c.1350-1417

In 1406, John Pelham sought royal approval to move Hastings Priory, located in Priory Valley, to a new site twenty kilometres away. Pelham claimed this beleaguered institution of Augustinian canons was so beset by 'tempests and sea flood' that it was impossible to 'celebrate divine service'. Echoing Pelham, Moss (1824), Baines (1963), and Antram (2019) also attribute the priory's relocation, complete by 1417, to the destructive impacts of marine transgression.

The reasons for Hastings Priory's migration are more complex. Taking an ecocritical approach, this paper offers a new causal analysis which acknowledges non-anthropogenic agents, such as the ocean, as actors in historical narratives.

Conventional primary sources, such as charters, custumals, and buildings have been re-read to explore the priory's relationship with the surrounding geology, landscape, and natural world. Archaeological excavation and priory rent rolls, for example, illustrate a pre-meditated reaction to rising sea-levels on a destructive coastline. This involved transitioning Priory Valley from an urban nexus into a sparsely populated rural grange, more profitable in the long-term through greater resilience to regular flooding.

Recontextualising charters in the landscape also reveals a strategic partnership between Hastings Priory and Pelham; the canons migrating closer to valuable assets whilst Pelham's patronage enhanced his status as local powerbroker.

Ultimately, I suggest Hastings Priory sought the countryside as a place of refuge and improved connectivity to their estates and inland trade, challenging notions of rural

isolation. The canons utilised the rhetoric of environmental crisis to justify relocation, emphasising the agency of medieval institutions in face of devastating climate change.

Daily Time and Deep Time: form, language and writing the earth

Panel 6.2. Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm, room 221

Chair: Andrew **Webb** (Bangor University)

Elizabeth **Edwards** (University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies).

Home Circuits: queer temporalities and Welsh landscapes.

Diana **Wallace** (University of South Wales). 'Eternal time': place, space and time in Margiad Evans's Autobiography (1943).

Matthew **Jarvis** (Aberystwyth University). Singing in Deep Time: The Work of John Barnie.

This panel addresses the representation of daily time and deep time in life-writing, journals and poetic prose by five writers in and from Wales and the Welsh Borders. Spanning the periods from Romanticism to the contemporary, these are all texts which experiment, although in very different ways, with their use of form and human language in order to convey the complex relationships between temporality, place and the natural world.

Paper 1:

Home Circuits: queer temporalities and Welsh landscapes

Dr Liz Edwards

16 November 1785: 'after breakfast Went the Home Circuit. My Beloved return'd to the Library to draw her Map. I remained in the Shrubbery – Transplanting'

23 October 1788: 'My Beloved and I went the Home Circuit – very dark – inclined to mizzle. Carpenter at work – Mountain Peach nailed ... The fig tree nailed'

13 June 1789: 'We went the Home Circuit with [Mr Sneyde] ... We were delighted at having an opportunity of Consulting the first Botanist in England about our Trees and plants'

When Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby landed in Milford Haven from Waterford in 1778 they were in search of a new life together. After travelling up through Wales, they settled on Pen-y-Maes cottage, which they later renamed Plas Newydd, in Llangollen – never to return to Ireland. Over the following five decades, reading, walking, writing and not least gardening shaped their time and located them in north-east Wales. Year after year, Butler and Ponsonby cultivated their garden (trees, flowers, kitchen produce), recording its progress in almost daily detail as they walked the perimeter of their land, or made their 'Home Circuit'. The contemporary nature writer Mike Parker has noted how the never-forgotten lives and story of the 'Ladies of Llangollen' appears to acquire greater visibility at times of national crisis. In 2019, Parker's own 'On the Red Hill' gave a compelling account of four men's lives (two couples) at Rhiw Goch, a cottage in mid-Wales, through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This book is unusually (for

auto/biography) modelled on the seasons – one for each of the four characters in it – in a structure that replaces linearity with a more experimental and experiential sense of narrative time. Working between Butler, Ponsonby and Parker, this paper therefore uses life writing to explore the theme of queer temporalities in Welsh nature and place writing.

Paper 2:

‘Eternal time’: place, space and time in Margiad Evans’s *Autobiography* (1943)

Professor Diana Wallace

Margiad Evans’s *‘Autobiography’* is not an autobiography in the sense that we usually understand that term. Rather, it is a record of what Evans calls her ‘gravest (that is happiest) inner existence’, a spiritual autobiography which is deeply rooted in her responses to the natural environment around her home in the Welsh Border country near Ross-on Wye. It is also an experimental attempt to record the immediate moment, the ‘now of it’, through what she calls ‘earth writing’ recorded first in her daily journals. This paper will trace Evans’s exploration of time in relation to the natural world, culminating in her description of ‘the place where I feel I have reached my uttermost growth’. This space under an oak tree is where she attains a sense of existing in ‘eternal time which is immortality in life’. Living in close contact with nature during the war years, Evans felt that she had regained her childhood sense of deep connection, both physical and spiritual, to the earth. Shortly to be reprinted by Honno, *Autobiography* is a text which, to borrow Richard Mabey’s words, strives to find words ‘to bridge that divide between the otherness of nature’ and the human. As such, it speaks to us now, vividly and urgently, of our own connectedness to the natural world.

Paper 3:

Singing in Deep Time: The Work of John Barnie

Professor Matthew Jarvis

In his 1997 autobiographical essay ‘Just Words, That’s All’, Welsh poet, critic, and essayist John Barnie (born in 1941 in Abergavenny) emphasises what he sees as the absolute transience of humanity when set in the context of geological timescales, declaring that ‘Nothing we build, nothing we say or think, will survive deep time’. Making the point in even starker terms, Barnie argues that ‘extinction is the fate of all species and it will be that of our own’. What humanity should do in the face of this perception is perhaps the key question for Barnie’s work as a whole. This paper will consider how Barnie’s long multi-genre oeuvre responds to a vision of humanity as subject to inevitable temporal-material obliteration. It will pay particular attention to Barnie’s 1998 speculative prose volume *‘The Wine Bird’*, which places human action alongside a mythic duo (Death and King Alcohol) who allow the author to skip across twenty-six million years to address what – if anything – is left of a humanity that might have once been here. But it will crucially set this perspective against Barnie’s equally uncompromising celebration of human language – of the urge to ‘sing’ as he puts it in

‘Just Words, That’s All’, or (to cite his poem ‘Heroes’) to ‘heyoooooh, in the great mass of the air’.

Improving Nature in Early Modern England

Panel 6.4. Thursday 8 September, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm, room 214

Chair: Todd Borlik (University of Huddersfield)

Chloe **Fairbanks** (Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford). ‘Marry, sir, she’s the kitchen’: women’s work and transcultural encounters in Shakespeare’s Windsor.

Bonnie L. **Johnson** (Newnham College, University of Cambridge). Trees, Ballads, and Iconoclasm in Richard II.

Tess **Somervell** (Worcester College, University of Oxford). The Wand’ring Glebe: Georgic Histories of the Soil.

The conviction that humans could and should improve nature was widespread in Shakespeare’s England. This panel examines some literary engagements with the discourse of agrarian improvement, revealing how the management of the soil, food, and other natural resources shaped regional and national identity. Papers will address how the embodied experience of the land varied across lines of gender, class, race, or faith, and how the dream of improving nature was yoked to various biopolitical projects. In hindsight, agrarian improvement seems to promote cornucopianism—the notion that our species would find ways to continuously boost yields to accommodate an ever-swelling human population. Could it also trigger an awareness of limitations to growth and the moral imperative to become better stewards of the earth’s resources? In seeking to remake the earth in our image, are humans reciprocally refashioned in the process?

Narrating Rural Change: socio-ecological pasts, present and futures

Panel 3.2. Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm, room 213

Chair: Matthew **Jarvis** (Aberystwyth University)

Kirsti **Bohata** (Swansea University). Trees in Time: Afforestation and Solastalgia.

Chris **Pak** (Swansea University). Apocalypse and Utopia: Narrating Rural Change in Welsh Science Fiction.

Discourses of loss, crisis and erasure have been central to many Welsh stories, long before the term solastalgia was coined in Australia. This panel considers some of the cultural and socio-ecological narratives (past, present and future) which attempt to imagine and shape rural and national responses to ecological and climate crises, particularly as they relate to agricultural communities and landscapes. The 2021 ‘Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture’ notes that 90% of land is dedicated to

agriculture in Wales. Agricultural communities are frequently home to a high concentration of Welsh-language speakers and the ‘family farm’ is a potent symbol of both precarity and endurance, thus rural change is bound up with questions of cultural, linguistic and even national survival. Since 2015, when the Well-being of Future Generations Act passed into law, Wales has enjoyed a rare statutory definition of sustainability that includes a fourth pillar of ‘cultural sustainability’. This, alongside the other provisions of the Act, demands an holistic ecological-cultural solution to changes in rural land use which involve the wellbeing of rural cultures and communities as we move towards addressing the transformations necessary to address the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. Understanding the cultural discourses which emerge from and inform debates around rural change is an essential component of managing such transformations.

This panel looks back to a period of changing weather patterns in the eighteenth century, the ‘Little Ice Age’, via Welsh-language almanacs, and forwards to apocalyptic and utopian imagined futures via science fiction. It also considers the cyclical or recurring narratives of erasure in Welsh experiences of afforestation, looking back from a present moment of crisis to an earlier ‘battle for the hills’ (Bohata 2004).

The proposal emerges from a multidisciplinary academic, community and arts network entitled: ‘Narrating Rural Change: Socio-ecological pasts and futures of farming and land use’, funded to date by Learned Society of Wales and NERC.

Trees in Time: Afforestation and Solastalgia

Kirsti Bohata (Swansea University)

Trees have been promoted and widely embraced as a key component in mitigating climate change, but in some contexts trees are perceived to threaten rather than protect human communities. Carbon-offsetting adds to the complexity of afforestation policies, particularly in areas where comparatively low land prices give rise to a form of ‘carbon colonialism’ (Bachram 2004). In Wales, resistance to the ‘green land grab’ (Manji 2022) has been framed partly in terms of a prior wave of afforestation orchestrated by the Forestry Commission, which created large conifer plantations in upland areas, replacing hill-farming communities. This paper looks at the cultural reception and resistance to the afforestation programmes of the mid-twentieth century via the literature of the period, and considers the recurring tropes which inform contemporary discourse around afforestation (from offsetting to rewilding) in Wales. It suggests that long before the term solastalgia was coined, Welsh writers were charting a sense of grief, anxiety and shock to identity as their relationship with place was challenged by environmental transformation. It asks how far these cyclical, generational and recurring narratives inform or haunt contemporary discourses around land use and rural change in Wales and beyond.

Apocalypse and Utopia: Narrating Rural Change in Welsh Science Fiction

Chris Pak (Swansea University)

The 'Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015' is the first of its kind to connect the UN's Sustainable Development Goals to specific country-level legislation. According to the 2021 'Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture: Results for Wales,' 90% of Welsh land is dedicated to farming. Welsh farming has long been politicised, with idealised visions of agriculture and narratives of a return to the land as historically important discursive elements of Welsh Nationalism. The recognition of the need for change as a response to the effects of climate change and the national conversation about land use and farming in Wales discloses a contested space where visions of the future are hotly debated. This presentation considers works of Welsh science fiction that have attempted to narrate aspects of rural change from the vantage of futurity. Analysing Islwyn Ffowc Elis' *A Week in Future Wales: A Journey to the Year 2033* (2021; original Welsh version 1957), Lloyd Jones' *Water* (2014; original Welsh version 2009), and Cynan Jones *Stillicide* (2019), this presentation asks how rural change is conceived in the Welsh context and how these works relate to other narratives of climate change beyond the Welsh context.

The Ecologies of Nation-Building: Production of Natures and Histories Across the Atlantic

Panel 1.6. Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm, room 222

Chair: Jenny Bavidge (University of Cambridge)

Carlos Abreu **Mendoza** (Texas State University). *The C(o)urse of Rivers: Hydraulic Modernity in Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and José María Samper.*

Aarti **Madan** (Worcester Polytechnic Institute). *Estanislao Severos Zeballos, or Nineteenth-Century Argentina's Environmental Unconscious.*

Enrica Renata **Leydi** (Bologna University). *Leopardi's Volcanic Landscape: The Broom, or the Flower of the Desert (1836).*

Axel Pérez **Trujillo** (Durham University). *Into the Vastness of the Plains: Continentalism and Colonialism in Ezequiel Martínez Estrada.*

The entanglement between the nation and environmental imaginaries generates temporal geographies that extend from mythical origins to uncertain futures. In this panel, we aim to explore in depth how several men of letters portrayed the land as intimately connected with the history of their emerging nations. Their ecologies of nation-building reveal the political, epistemological and aesthetic commitments required to sustain the narratives of a nation's origins and its potential futures. More importantly, they manifest the temporality of environmental imaginaries, their construction through and within time. Considering Reyes Mate's assertion in *El tiempo, tribunal de la historia* (2018) that encourages readers to 'reflect on time' in its specificity, so as to grasp the 'vital rhythm' of a given epoch (24), the panel looks to embed history in the representations of land and territory in Argentina and Italy during

the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The first paper proposes to re-examine the nineteenth-century's hydraulic modernity through the discursive contagion of the national and the corporeal in the works of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and José María Samper. Exploring *Argirópolis* (1850), *Viajes de un colombiano en Europa* (1862), and other political writings by Sarmiento and Samper, it locates their place within the hydraulic despotism (Schama 1995; Pettinaroli and Mutis 2013; O'Bryen 2016) that characterizes the transnational modernization efforts unfolding across the continent. The second paper draws on Lawrence Buell's notion of the environmental unconscious to unpack nineteenth-century Argentina's paradoxical approach to production and preservation of nature. Using the writings of Estanislao Severos Zeballos (1854-1923) as a case study, it shed lights on the ways in Argentina's environmental unconscious emerges circuitously and politically through aesthetic practices. The third paper seeks to offer an analysis of landscape in Italian writer Giacomo Leopardi, anchoring its exploration in the poem *La Ginestra* (1836). The category of landscape will be help leverage the historicity of the concept of nature and its role in forming the environmental imaginaries of the twentieth century. The paper will offer a fascinating point of discussion to establish connection across the Atlantic, especially given the presence of Leopardi in Argentine writers. The fourth and final paper argues for the presence of dominant continentalist imaginaries—intimately linked to colonial modes of portraying the land—in the representations of the plains throughout Latin America, taking as its point of departure Ezequiel Martínez Estrada's *Radiografía de la Pampa* (1933) alongside his travel diaries. The Argentine Pampas have long been a contested site of political and ecological interests, one that is reflected in the countless volumes dedicated to portray its vast lands (Alonso 1990; Madan 2017; Thacker 1989). Martínez Estrada's writings establish a meta-reflection on the role of the Pampas in the Argentine nation, an exploration of how the process of colonisation and later nation-building has as its core the experience of the plains as a vacant place to be populated (Feustle 1972; Pollman 1991).

As an interdisciplinary and transnational collaboration, the panel aims to foster and share ideas as to how different cultures have engaged with the dialectic between nature and historicity latent in nation-building projects across the Atlantic.

The Spectacle of Extinction

Panel 3.4. Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm, room TBA

Chair: Dominic **O'Key** (University of Sheffield)

Deborah **Schrijvers** (University College Dublin). Moonwalking in the Berlin Zoo: Resisting Giant Panda Reproductive Regimes.

Kári **Driscoll** (Utrecht University). Extinction as Spectacle.

Hannah **Boast** (University College Dublin). Endangered Animals in Palestinian Film.

Conversations about extinction are always also conversations about time. The accelerating disappearance of the world's species as part of the Sixth Mass Extinction, itself one of the most widely-reported impacts of the Anthropocene era, serves as a constant reminder that time is running out for the environmental movement. In response to this threat, zoos frame themselves as 'buying time' for animals (Conway 2011) through conservation and breeding programmes. This shift is also an outcome of changing social norms in the late twentieth century that saw zoo practices of animal display appear increasingly out-of-time. In this context, zoo animals, particularly charismatic megafauna, have become incorporated into 'spectacles of extinction' (Brandon 2021) that circulate readily on social media, and bear complex and fraught relationships to conservation projects on the ground. This panel considers representations of extinction and the zoo across a variety of media, including literature, film, and an art installation, from Italy, the Netherlands, Palestine and Germany. In doing so, it illuminates the role of the zoo as an 'institution for managing time' (Boast and Seymour 2022; Szczygielska 2017), and the capacity for spectacles of extinction to mediate other forms of economic and political power.

The first paper, by Deborah Schrijvers, considers the giant panda, which has become an icon for conservation and of the fight against extinction. To alleviate the enormity of the looming Sixth Mass Extinction (Chrulew et al 2017), conservation programmes are set in place, both in situ (wild) and ex situ (captivity, such as zoos). One of the key strategies of ex situ conservation is breeding programmes. Zoos frame this practice as part of their commitment to conservation and collective action against mass extinction. Giant panda loans – as part of 'panda diplomacy' – are one of the most lucrative breeding programmes executed by zoos. These loans are granted for the purpose of research collaboration between China and the host zoo. The research objective is to let the giant pandas reproduce on foreign soil, to enlarge the giant panda population and fight its vulnerable status and extinction (Songster 2020). This paper aims to critically read giant panda loans to zoos through reproductive futurism (Edelman 2004, Parreñas 2018) by investigating the heteronormative and biopolitical Western zoo regimes of reproduction as applied to the (female) giant panda and her commodification. Through an analysis of the video installation *Panda Moonwalk or Why Meng Meng Walks Backwards* (2018) by German artist Kerstin Honeit, which takes the 'queer' behaviour of walking backwards of loaned panda Meng Meng to the Berlin Zoo as its topic, this paper looks at giant panda resistance. The paper argues that giant panda resistance is reconfigured as shared human and nonhuman political resistance in terms of gender, sexuality and race, both in and through this artwork.

In the second paper, 'Extinction as Spectacle', Kári Driscoll discusses two recent satirical zoo novels, Lodewijk van Oord's *Albrecht en wij* (2014) and Pascal Janovjak's *Le Zoo de Rome* (2019), in which the last remaining member of a species (a white rhinoceros in Amsterdam and an ironically unspectacular anteater in Rome) becomes the focal point of a media frenzy exploited or even orchestrated by the zoos to resolve

their financial woes. These grotesque spectacles of extinction lay bare the inherent contradictions of the zoos' dual commitment to conservation and commerce, and provide an opportunity for satirical commentaries on broader issues relating to the contemporary human–animal relationship. Both novels explicitly frame their zoos as heterotopias, counter-sites that simultaneously represent, contest, and invert the societies that erected them. Like the zoos, which bring together in one space multiple, otherwise incompatible spaces (and species), the novels feature multiple narrators and temporal layers. As heterotopic and therefore heterochronic spaces, these zoos are haunted, often literally, by the ghosts of history and of a future diminished by mass extinction. Despite their centrality to the plot of both novels, the star 'endlings' remain inscrutable and largely invisible to the reader, hidden behind the layers of history, culture, and spectacle, which are only partly deliberate. Taking this ambiguous interplay of visibility and invisibility as a starting point, the paper explores the aesthetics and politics of representing endangered species.

The final paper, by Hannah Boast, considers the relationship between animal conservation programmes and Palestinian national futures, via Palestinian director Rani Massalha's film *Giraffada* (2013). *Giraffada* has been widely available to metropolitan viewers since 2021 as part of Netflix's 'Palestinian Stories' collection, making it a high-profile representation of Palestinian life, and an incongruous one, centred not on high politics, but on a misfit boy's relationship with the giraffes of Qalqilya Zoo, in the West Bank (see Braverman 2013). The film, loosely based on a true story, depicts the efforts of the boy's father, the zoo vet, to restore its giraffe family, after the male giraffe is killed in an Israeli assault during the Second Intifada. This event threatens to leave a giraffe calf without a father. *Giraffada* functions as (somewhat heavy-handed) allegory, evoking the devastation inflicted on Palestinian families through Israeli occupation, and, in a final scene of the giraffe striding across the Separation Wall, the Palestinian spirit. At the same time, by portraying a Palestinian concern for endangered species and participation in (albeit unofficial) zoo exchange programmes, the film counters Israeli stereotypes of Palestinians as lacking environmental care, and articulates a vision for a Palestinian national future.

Two Short Films: 'Newland' and 'Fawley' (Preformed Panel)

Panel 4.3. Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, room 002

Chair: Kelly **Matthew** (Northumbria University)

"Newland: New Vision for a Wilder Future"

"Fawley"

Discussion of the films led by Pippa Marland (Bristol) and Matt Kelly (Northumbria)

In this panel, Matt Kelly (Northumbria) and Pippa Marland (Bristol) will introduce two recent short films, show the films, and lead a discussion.

The first is “Newland: New Vision for a Wilder Future”, directed by Suzie Cross and made by Suzie Cross and Dave Lynch for the AHRC-funded “Tipping Points” project at the Universities of Leeds and Bristol. The film centres on Yorkshire-based father and son farming team Andrew and Ted Hughes and is underpinned by the perception that although farmers play a significant part in shaping and maintaining the countryside their voices often go unheard. Suzie and Dave’s aim was to help dismantle negative preconceptions and stereotypes of farmers while encouraging greater respect for the land from the public. They also wanted to inspire more farmers to consider the legacy that they leave on the land and to work towards the regeneration of the countryside. The film won the Best Climate Emergency Film category in the AHRC 2021 Research in Film Awards.

The second is “Fawley”, directed by Chu-Li Shewring and Adam Gutch, which Matt Kelly will introduce in the context of his project looking at the decommissioning of twentieth-century energy infrastructure in Britain. The project includes this beautiful film about the decommissioning of Fawley power station in Hampshire that culminates in the demolition of its iconic chimney.

Water Works: Responding to Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Centuries Water Systems

Panel 3.6. Tuesday 6 September, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm, room 223a

Chair: Jemima **Matthews** (King’s College London)

Rosamund **Paice** (Northumbria University). Milton versus the Medici: Controlling Water in the Gardens of Eden and the Pratolino.

Claudine **van Hensbergen** (Northumbria University). Gabriel Caius Cibber’s ‘Curious Works’: Charles II’s Fountain in Soho Square (1681).

Jodie **Matthews** (University of Huddersfield). ‘Lucid Undulation’: Erasmus Darwin, Josiah Wedgwood and the Industrial Canal.

At a time of environmental crisis, studying histories of the manipulation of natural resources has never been more important. While our ancestors used different terms to talk of such matters, they engaged with (or stridently disengaged from) the same questions.

Water’s centrality to life has long made it a rich source for metaphor and symbolism. Engineered and managed water, however, has not garnered as much attention as other varieties of water. The ‘blue humanities’ has tended to prioritise certain ‘natural’ waters and their human and non-human inhabitants, especially saltwater environments (Brayton, Shakespeare’s Ocean, 2012; Mentz, Shipwreck Modernity, 2015). Yet recent studies (Mukherji, Impossible Engineering, 2009; Ash, The Draining of the Fens, 2017) have shown the potential for the study of managed or mechanical water systems (drainage and irrigation, sewer pipes and sophisticated hydraulics, wells and fountains).

This panel focuses on two contrasting types of managed water, fountains and canals, and explores the ways in which seventeenth- and eighteenth- century artists and writers conceptualised the power of water in relation to powers human, divine or of nature. Our papers investigate how specific water projects relate to their temporal moment as well as to broader conceptions of time, from the biblical to the geological. They also raise questions about the place of managed water systems in contemporary culture.

Watery Bodies, Wetlands, and Maritime Ecologies in Early Modernity

Panel 2.6. Tuesday 6 September, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm, room 214

Chair: Rosamund **Paice** (Northumbria University)

Tamsin **Badcoe** (University of Bristol). ‘A pitcht peece of reason calkt and tackled’: The Uncertainty of Early Modern Maritime Ecologies.

Jemima **Matthews** (King’s College London). The sea made this’: Entangled maritime resources of the 1630s.

Todd **Borlik** (University of Huddersfield). The Curse of the Wetlands: Malaria and Magic in The Witch of Edmonton.

Watery Bodies, Wetlands, and Maritime Ecologies in Early Modernity

The human body may be 60% water but dwelling on or near water is obviously fraught with peril. Drawing on the blue humanities and material ecofeminism, this panel charts some elemental entanglements with water as well as efforts to maintain a discrete distance from water through hydroengineering and nautical technology. The papers will examine the ways in which humans are both constituted and compromised by their watery environs.

Sailors were imagined as physically enmeshed with their vessels and the sea, contaminated by tar and salt (rather than the luxurious cargo they imported). Likewise, poor cottagers who dwelt alongside sodden fens and marshes were thought to be infected with diseases and humours that rendered them truculent and superstitious. Ecocriticism tends to privilege intimacy with the non-human environment but this panel illustrates that prior to the industrial era an intimacy with bodies of water was often perceived as terrifying or degrading rather than cleansing, edifying, or exhilarating.

Decomposition/Recomposition (Roundtable)

Panel 5.6. Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, room 222

Chair: Rosie **Paice** (Northumbria University)

Catherine **Evans** (University of Manchester)

Hannah **Armstrong** (University of York)

Rebecca **Drake** (University of York)

This roundtable will turn to the muddy, oozy spaces of estuary, fen, sea floor, and tideline. Work on the Blue Humanities has often prioritised wide oceans, but more recently Lowell Duckert (2017) and John Brannigan (2014) have focused attention on the places where land and sea combine. These environments are at times unappealing and inhospitable to human life, shifting and protean, characterised by their mixed nature. This roundtable discussion will see four new and emerging literary scholars, working from the medieval to modern, examine these spaces of decomposition and consider the materials that they have provided for literary (re)making, including in our own creative practices. We ask:

How do tidal landscapes engage writers with, and across, time?

What can Premodern Studies learn from contemporary ecocriticism, particularly the Blue Humanities, and vice versa?

How do spaces of decomposition complicate the division between the human and the natural?

How are our critical impulses shaped by our creative desires, and how might we undertake creative research alongside critical research?

Catherine Evans explores the spots where the ‘tide doth wash on the slimy beach’ in John Donne’s works (1572-1631). In Donne’s sermons, the mud of the sea stores aeons of epochal change, as he repeatedly asks “in what corner, in what ventricle of the sea, lies all the jelly of a Body drowned in the general flood?”

Hannah Armstrong presents work on another clergyman writer, Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924), best known for collecting ballads and folklore, but also one of the most prolific (but unpublished) Old Norse saga translators of the 19/20th century. Baring-Gould focused on his own retellings of the sagas, remarking that he was disinterested in “servile translations”. These creative recompositions emphasised and embellished the sagas’ ecological details to better suit 19th century romantic ideas of “authentic” medieval archipelagic landscapes.

Francesca Brooks’ current project looks at the writing of two late modernist Anglo-Welsh writers, Lynette Roberts (1909-1995) and Brenda Chamberlain (1912-1971), and their recomposition of medieval literature in landscapes at the water’s edge. In the tidal Welsh spaces of Chamberlain’s *Tide-race* (1962) and Roberts’s *Gods with Stainless Ears* (1951), these writers find early medieval voices resurfacing from the Old English elegies to *Y Gododdin*. Brooks will also draw on her own practice as a creative writer for whom the sea edge has loomed large, particularly during the pandemic lockdowns when remembered or imagined coastlines were a site of longing.

Rebecca Drake’s doctoral research peers between the texts of Middle English and Old Norse-Icelandic romance to understand late-medieval authors and audiences’ lived relationship with the maritime environments of the North Atlantic. As poet-in-residence at the Maritime Museum in Hull, an important medieval port connecting England and Iceland in the fifteenth century and an imaginative backdrop for the Middle English romance *Havelok*, Drake applied her knowledge as a medievalist to write a series of

poems retelling the museum's objects, re-situating them in the surrounding memory-laden ooze of the Humber.

'Our future is still the future of 1973': Militant Ecologies and the Work/Energy Crisis (Roundtable)

Panel 4.1. Wednesday 7 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, room TBA

Chair: Daniel **Eltringham** (University of Sheffield)

Fred **Carter** (University of Amsterdam)

Tom **Crompton** (University of Warwick)

Natalie **Joelle** (Birkbeck College, University of London)

Emila **Weber** (University College London)

Faced with the acute conjuncture of energy shortages, economic downturn, and decolonial liberation struggles, Fredric Jameson recognised an emergent structure of feeling 'crystallized in the great shock of the crises of 1973' (1984). Bringing together five contributors from the forthcoming special issue of *Green Letters*, "Militant Ecologies" (ed. Carter and Eltringham, 2023), this roundtable asks what it means to frame contemporary crises of capital, climate, and energy against the residual cultures and infrastructures of a decade that continues to shape petrocapitalist domination. "Our future is still the future of 1973," as Jeff Diamanti puts it in his recent *Climate & Capital* (2021). Grounding literary production against the terrains of struggle and the terminal landscapes of the 1970s, we take up the Midnight Notes Collective's framing of the 'work/energy crisis' (1980) to examine the multiple temporalities of labour militancy, extractive logistics and fossil futures across globally distributed flashpoints of resistance and counterrevolution.

Where Jameson and Diamanti articulate 1973 as a moment in which energetic, ecological, and financial flows are increasingly abstracted from the material world, an ecocritical reading of this work-energy nexus frames materialism and abstraction within a dialectical continuum as sites of contestation between labour, capital, and the deeper temporalities stored and released by fossil fuels. As a critical manoeuvre, thinking with militant ecologies also entails the relocation of 1970s ecopoetics away from neoromantic wilderness and towards the prison, the logistical blockade, the guerrilla encampment, the agroecological co-op, and the clandestine transmission of radical literature across linguistic and physical borders.

In his response, Fred Carter tracks the resource aesthetics of Marxist-feminist poetics between the oil shocks of 1973–79 and the anti-nuclear occupations of 1981, reading the 'work/energy crisis' through temporalities of radiation and refusal in Liliane Lijn's kinetic work 'Get Rid of Government Time.' Tom Crompton explores how experimental

British poets employed collage aesthetics as registration and response to deindustrialisation as a socioecological work/energy crisis, while Daniel Eltringham discusses how the translation of Indigenous Mexican poetry and temporal concepts by Anglophone poets in the early 1970s levelled a materialist challenge to settler and capitalist temporalities through the Mesoamerican calendrical system and cosmovision, grounded in solar energies and cycles. In her contribution, Natalie Joelle argues that lean managerial language was formalised in response to the so-called energy crises of the 1970s through the creative-critical methodology of “gleanologies”: a militant vegan practice that unpacks the patterns of violence and ecocide encoded in the lean management of everyday life. Lastly, Emilia Weber considers the alliance between Liverpool dockworkers and the environmentalist group Reclaim the Streets by tracing their collaborations across the 1980s as performances of militancy, from the dockers’ refusal to handle toxic waste and nuclear cargo to Reclaim the Street’s creative direct action protests. Responding to Mario Tronti’s insistence that ‘knowledge is tied to struggle’ (1966), such a poetics of militant ecology works to refigure sedimented relationships between praxis, autonomy, and knowledge by returning to 1973, a critical moment of resistance and refusal in the history of petrocapi-talism.

Politics and Ecocriticism (Roundtable)

Panel 1.5. Tuesday 6 September, 11.00 am – 12.45 pm, room 222

Chair: John **Parham** (University of Worcester)

Sam **Solnick** (University of Liverpool)

Caitlin **Vandertop** (University of Warwick)

Aidan **Tynan** (Cardiff University)

Pippa **Marland** (University of Bristol)

This roundtable presents an opportunity to discuss one of the oldest questions in ecocriticism. In *Romantic Ecology* (1991), Jonathan Bate asked, can ecocriticism only ‘concern itself with consciousness’ or might it politicise literary criticism in a new way? Notwithstanding a 2014 special issue of *Forum for World Literature Studies* on ‘activist ecocriticism’ the question remains unanswered. It has, however, assumed renewed importance in the light of escalating ecological crisis and burgeoning protest movements (e.g. school climate strikes, Extinction Rebellion (XR)). One aspect we’ll explore is how far literature can put historical periods into dialogue towards understanding current ecological predicaments and imagining sustainable futures. Our five speakers are all contributors to an upcoming (2023) volume of *Essays and Studies*, the annual publication of the UK’s English Association, entitled ‘The Literature and Politics of the Environment’. The roundtable will present for discussion two themes emerging from that volume.

Theme 1: can literary form help untangle the relationship between Britain’s imperial

past and today's ecological realities? Reflecting on the legacy of the sugar trade on post-industrial Merseyside, and the development of hydrocarbon capitalism, Sam Solnick will ask whether literary aesthetics (e.g. eco-gothic or 'irrealist' fiction) can help expose how dominant political forces became environment-making systems?

Correspondingly, Caitlin Vandertop will introduce the idea that matter can assume narrative agency. Reflecting on historical fiction from Hong Kong, she considers how recurring images of water's agency help us see the British Empire as a vast metabolic and circulatory system which reorganised flows of finance, resources and waste on a global scale, linking past waves of hydro-colonial violence to current struggles over postcolonial and environmental futures.

Theme 2: might contemporary writing and academic public engagement help us reimagine those environmental futures? Taking up Greg Garrard's plenary on 'Brexit ecocriticism' at the last ASLE-UKI conference, Aidan Tynan will foreground how writers like Paul Kingsnorth communicate the enormity of ecological collapse. He'll invite us to consider a key question: if 'dark ecology', nihilism, and eco-fascism are part of how literature imagines the future, how might ecocritics respond? Conversely, Pippa Marland will ask us to reflect upon what might be gained by rediscovering voices lost in environmental discourse and writing. The past, present and future intersect in regenerative farming – a particularly earthy and practical form of activism. Could nature-friendly farming voices, brought forward via academic public engagement, help us envisage a better environmental future?

Timothy Clark argues that the complexities of climate change disclose the limits of literary representation, questioning whether writing or criticism really can 'change the world'. Our introduction to this roundtable will conclude, however, with John Parham (the volume's editor) positing the interrelationship of thought and practice in Marx and Engels' *The German Ideology* as a model for an activist ecocriticism answerable to XR's fifth principle: to establish a cycle of 'action, reflection and learning, and planning for more action'. This will open-up the discussion to interventions from our ecocritical friends and colleagues.

Without End: An Interim Ecology of Forms (Roundtable)

Panel 5.4. Thursday 8 September, 9.00 am – 10.45 am, room 213

Chair: Henry **Ivry** (University of Glasgow)

Jos **Smith** (University of East Anglia)

Julia **Jordan** (University College London)

Maria **Sledmere** (University of Strathclyde)

Ben **Smith** (University of Exeter)

In Working Group II's contribution to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Assessment Report published earlier this year, there is a telling political and

temporal reorientation that occurs. Politically, there is an increased focus on an expansive account of “climate justice” which is meant to plot any account of climate change and action along axes of distribution, governance, and recognition. Far from imagining the planet or humanity as an en masse entity, the IPCC foregrounds the asymmetries and granularities of both human and nonhuman worlds. Temporally, the future planning scenarios of the document (a staple since the First Assessment Report) now include accounting for risk “introduced by human responses to climate change.” This element of recursive risk allows for a temporal multipolarity to enter the IPCC’s planning documents and signal the possibilities of different worlds. These different worlds are not linear or exclusive, but rather simultaneous and symbiotic. While the outcomes are all still fairly bleak, the Sixth Assessment Report offers an account of our current climate crisis that is both differential and responsive to the situated needs and local ecologies of human and nonhuman worlds, while also moving forwards and backwards in time to think beyond our current impact of impending apocalypse. We start with this lengthy diatribe on the IPCC report as it signals how a gap has emerged between the literary and scientific imaginaries of climate crisis. As a policy document, the IPCC is able to capture potential pathways in response to problems of “adaptation, vulnerability, exposure, resilience, equity and justice, and transformation.” These slow moving targets, however, often elude literary and critical forms. While literature has been instrumental in mapping out disaster, crisis, and apocalypse, a focus on ending has created something of an impasse, an articulation of acute crisis that may be masking a fear of something more chronic. What would a novel of “adaptation” look like? What creative forms can represent “exposure”? What is the critical mode of “transformation”? How, in other words, can we as critics and writers move beyond finality to think about the ongoingness of climate crisis? These questions backbone this roundtable as we seek to move beyond the choice of apocalypse or business-as-usual and explore new forms of ecology for futures both near and far. Our roundtable asks two interrelated questions: what sort of literary modes move beyond the end of the world and what critical forms can we use to read them? This roundtable is intended to be speculative and tentative, moving away from finality and surety and into an extended exploration of the messiness of the present.