# The Cultural History of Climate Change Conference Program

**Venue:** Sir Roland Wilson Building, McCoy Street, ANU

## Monday 27 August

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session/Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:40-9:00</td>
<td>Registrations and Coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:10-9:20</td>
<td>Welcome to Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agnes O’Shea OAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:20-9:30</td>
<td>Conference Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Debjani Ganguly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:30</td>
<td>Keynote</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Timothy Morton, <em>This Is Not My Beautiful Biosphere</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-11:00</td>
<td>Tea/Coffee Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-12:30</td>
<td>Session 1: Climatic Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chair: Neil Ramsey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nick Mansfield, <em>Deconstructing the Sovereignty of the Earth: Bataille</em>, <em>Derrida and the Natural Politics of Climate Change</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elaine Kelly, * Dwelling in the Future*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linda Williams, <em>The Little Ice Age and 17th Century Concepts of Nature</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-1:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30-3:00</td>
<td>Session 2: Communicating Climates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chair: Tom Bristow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deb Anderson, <em>Life Narratives, Drought and Climate Change</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Devin Bowles, <em>Holding back Chaos: Climate Change Denial and the Need to Believe</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catherine Simpson, <em>Gaia &amp; Ecological thinking in the Age of the Anthropocene</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-3:30</td>
<td>Tea/Coffee Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30-5:00</td>
<td>Session 3: Climates of Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chair: Gillian Russell</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kate Rigby, <em>Unnatural Disasters: Rereading Extreme Weather Events from Jeremiah to Carpentaria</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deborah Jordan, <em>Climate Change Narratives in Australian Fiction</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adeline Johns-Putra, <em>Why Care? Reinventing Ecofeminism in a Time of Climate Change</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tuesday 28 August

9:00-10:30  **Session 4: Climatic Histories**  
Chair: Adeline Johns-Putra  
Tom Bristow, *Necessary Impurities and the Geological Sublime: Reading Standpoint in the Literary Anthropocene*  
Tom Ford, *The Climate of Literary History*  
Chris O’Brien, *Rethinking Seasons: Changing Climate, Changing Time*

10:30-11:00  Tea/Coffee Break

11:00-12:30  **Session 5: Picturing Climate Change, Curating Climates**  
Chair: Josh Wodak  
Helen McDonald, *Fred’s Place: A Dry Aesthetic*  
Karla McManus, *Photographing Nuclear Power in the Evolving Age of Climate Change*  
Guy Abrahams and Jodi Newcombe, *Changing Climate Culture: What Role for the Arts?*

12:30-1:30  Lunch

1:30-2:30  **Session 6: Climate Law**  
Chair: Hamish Dalley  
Nicole Rogers, *Climate Change Litigation and the Awfulness of Lawfulness*  
Christine Black, *An Arctic Narrative: Understanding Climate Change History through Lawful Behaviour*

2:30-3:00  Tea/Coffee Break

3:00-5:00  **Artists Roundtable: Art in the Era of Climate Change**  
Convened by Ursula Frederick and Josh Wodak  
Discussant: Denise Ferris  
Speakers:  
Mandy Martin  
Josephine Starrs & Leon Cmielewski  
onacloV  
Mitchell Whitelaw

5:00-6:00  Closing Drinks
**Abstracts and Biographies**

**Guy Abrahams**  
**Changing Climate Culture: What Role for the Arts?**

CLIMARTE and Carbon Arts are organisations that believe the cultural sector can be harnessed to inform, engage and inspire action on climate change and sustainability. We believe the arts have a major role and responsibility to encourage the transformational thinking required to move us away from our current destructive practices, and towards the environmental sustainability that we need to protect life on our planet. We seek to promote and facilitate climate and sustainability related awareness and imagination through arts commissions, events, exhibitions, research and advocacy.

This presentation will give an overview of international and Australian arts initiatives that are engaging with climate and sustainability issues at an individual and institutional level. It will demonstrate that the strong sense of community amongst individual and organizational members of the cultural sector ideally situates this sector to play a pivotal role in disseminating, exploring and sharing information through creative reciprocal learning. The variety and breadth of arts initiatives indicates that the cultural sector, and its core constituent – creativity – can provide many positive models for engaging the public in imagining and shaping a more sustainable future.

**Biography:**
Guy Abrahams is a Co-founder of CLIMARTE, a not-for-profit organisation that promotes the role of the arts in informing, engaging and inspiring action on climate change and sustainability, and Director of the Art+Environment consultancy. Guy has worked as a lawyer and a gallery director, has been on the Boards of numerous organisations, and has recently completed a Master of Environment at the University of Melbourne.

**Deb Anderson**  
**Endurance: Life Narratives, Drought and Climate Change**

This paper draws upon oral histories recorded during a recent, remarkable period of contestation over climate knowledge in Australia to investigate cultural conceptions of climate. It explores what drought means for rural Australia—for identity—in a climate change world, arguing that, through an examination of how the past shapes present understandings of climate, drought can be viewed as a cultural concept whose primary connotations are less related to rainfall than to an overarching, mythic narrative of endurance.

An extensive oral history collection (for Museum Victoria) was conducted in rural Australia—annual recordings in the Mallee wheat-belt of Victoria—from 2004 to 2007. Fortuitously, the timing of the study coincided with a momentous shift in Australian public awareness of climate change. The oral histories captured significant moments of reflection and self-reflexivity on the meaning of climate, revealing contestation over expertise and experience as inherently partial forms of knowledge, and exposing the core interpretive problems of climate change. Despite shifts in climate change perception, however, the oral histories were found to embed discourses of survival, uncertainty and adaptation that arguably represent a historical, battler narrative of endurance—revealing livelihoods and identities at stake.

Thus, this paper argues for the significance of the historical and cultural dimensions in understanding issues of climate in Australia, while canvassing the broader power and application of oral history in cultural research on anthropogenic climate change.

**Biography:**
Deb Anderson teaches at Monash Journalism and writes on higher education for Melbourne’s broadsheet, *The Age*. Her doctoral thesis (2011) examined oral histories of the lived experience of drought and shifting perceptions of climate change in rural Victoria. Her fascination with climate likely stems from her youth, spent in Queensland’s Wet Tropics.
Christine Black
An Arctic Narrative: Understanding Climate Change History Through Lawful Behaviour

This paper is written in a politico-poetic genre so as to loose its theoretical content from the colonial constrictions of academic engagement, and instead bring forth the relatedness with the reader and in so doing draw their attention to the importance of lawful behavior towards the earth. The paper takes the reader on a journey into the wilds of the cultures that border the Arctic Ocean and questions the validity of their laws to protect both Native Women and the earth. Through a close examination of the practices of security gangs and their said duty to protect, those laws are questioned and given another reading; a reading that asserts Native Women have much to offer the realm of security, due to their experiences as both victims of violence as well voices that can speak for the earth.

Biography:
Dr. C.F. Black is a descendant of the Kombumerri and Munaljahlai peoples of South East Queensland. Christine is the author of The Land is the Source of the Law: An Dialogic Encounter with an Indigenous Jurisprudence (Routledge, 2011).

Devin Bowles
Holding back Chaos: Climate change denial and the need to believe

Scientific understanding of the greenhouse effect is well-established, yet substantial climate change scepticism persists. If the level of intellectual and emotional acceptance of the state of the planet is less than that warranted by the science, even less is it translated into action to curb climate change. This initially appears incongruous with credible warnings that continued warming threatens economic growth, reduces food production, and increases conflict risk.

Retreat from scientific or common-sense thinking about climate change is consistent with Clifford Geertz’s contention that religious belief is called upon when reality’s chaos exceeds a person’s analytical powers or capacity for moral understanding. The chaos of climate change challenges on both fronts. While the basic science of climate change is clear, the causal processes between turning on a light and drought intensification in India are complex, and evade complete understanding. Specific weather events cannot be forecast even in the medium – term, relegating prediction to a (mere) statistical exercise.

Basic to a moral understanding of the world is the assumed value of human life. Scientific revolutions which challenge the pre-eminence of Homo sapiens and oust humanity from its chosen and inevitable place in the universe have always faced stiff opposition, as Galileo and Darwin might attest. Climate change threatens the assumptions of inevitable human progress and hence of human immortality. That climate change imperils people’s lives and ways of life through weather’s capriciousness suggests a randomness to suffering that tests the limits of moral comprehension. The present moment is crucial to the future of the climate and indeed of civilisation. The saga of our species swings on the pivot of our response to the challenge that climate change poses to our analytical and moral faculties. How we think and what we believe about the climate will determine the path of human events.

Biography:
Devin Bowles is a PhD candidate in population health and epidemiology at the ANU. He has previously published articles on cultural history and psychology, among other topics.
Tom Bristow
Necessary Impurities and the Geological Sublime: Reading Standpoint in the Literary Anthropocene

This paper takes a conceptual starting point from the impossibility of simile as indicated by the travel writings of Aldous Huxley. Locating this 'limit' as a problem of communication within a climate change context, this paper attends to an extensive ecopoetics as a methodology for reading voice, address, simile and metaphor within standpoint as a means to question the representation of the subject of poetry. How might a synthesis of theoretical issues in the public understanding of science and pro-environmental behavioral change articulate poetry's resistance to ‘information reduction’ in literature of the anthropocene, as witnessed in a stance that refuses paraphrase? Is difficult poetry of use to understanding climate change, or do modern literary modes lend themselves to a fresh understanding of the individual within a planetary imaginary? A brief excursion through a post-Movement and post-Romantic landscape of J.H. Prynne and John Burnside, respectively, offers some notes toward a British response to these questions.

Biography:
Tom Bristow is a lecturer in English Literature at the University of New England, New South Wales. Tom previously taught at the University of Edinburgh; he is currently the Vice President (Australia) of the Association for the Study of Literature, Environment and Culture—Australia, New Zealand (ASLECANZ).

Tom Ford
The Climate of Literary History

Considered as a theme or topos of literature, climate has become an increasingly vital site of cultural research over the last decade or so. Literary theorists have also begun to question how climate change might compel us to rethink the way literary history has traditionally been carved up, proposing period schemas that are based on climatic epochs, for instance, or dominant energy sources. My paper tries to position these recent efforts within a longer history of critical reflection on the climates of literature. I focus on climate as an operative concept within literary history, rather than as a subject of imaginative writing.

The concept of climate, I want to argue, intervened in some formative ways in the disciplinary development of literary history—moments that continue to shape much of what literary historians do, but which have tended to be forgotten, occluded, or rewritten in entirely non-climatic terms. Recovering this history is important given our current critical position, I suggest, because climate’s fitful interventions within literary history help to account for some of the inherent paradoxes of that discipline. As many of its most skilled practitioners have recognised, these are paradoxes that make practicing the discipline effectively impossible. But perhaps they now also provide some potential purchase on the well-known conceptual impasses that confront our understandings of natural and social time, and of historical agency, in the Anthropocene. For the most part, I’ll be looking at Hippolyte Taine, author of what Kenneth Rexroth once called the first “ecological theory of literature,” and Virginia Woolf, who I will read as a similarly climatic historian of literature.

Biography:
Thomas Ford is an ARC Postdoctoral Fellow at the Humanities Research Centre, ANU. He is currently completing a book on Romantic Atmospheres: The Poetics of Aerial Culture, 1774-1848.
Adeline Johns-Putra  
**Why Care? Reinventing Ecofeminism in a Time of Climate Change**

Is our experience of climate change gendered? The merest of glances through a list of climate change fiction will reveal a significant number of writers whose work is often designated as concerned with gender: Doris Lessing, Margaret Atwood, Jeanette Winterson, for example. The presence of such novels suggests—indeed, it insists—that the only way for fiction to render the global, ‘hyperobjective’ experience of climate change is to gender it.

Yet, by distilling the human experience of climate change to the question of gender, such novelistic treatments of climate change draw on a long critical history of ideals and expectations around women and the natural environment. This history includes not simply what one might think of as pre-twentieth-century idealisations of both femininity and nature, but the critical expectations that fall under the rubric of ‘ecofeminism’. Significantly, because these novels seemingly decontextualise gender, they tap directly into ideas about an unmediated link between women and the environment that have long undermined ecofeminism. They tend to replay rather than revise simplistic strains of ecofeminism, which would have it that core characteristics of womanhood may be aligned with core characteristics of— for want of a better word— nature.

Where, then, are the novels that activate a more nuanced critique of care, one that does justice to the complexity of the human experience of climate change? Works such as Margaret Atwood’s ‘simultanial’ novels, *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood* and Jeanette Winterson’s *The Stone Gods* gesture to this common ground between women and nature. Arguing that Atwood and Winterson, contrary to expectations, make a surprisingly reductive investment in a feminised and maternalised ethic of care, this paper presents, as an alternative, a reading of Sarah Hall’s *The Carhullan Army*. I approach Hall’s novel via Catriona Sandilands’ theorisation of feminist environmentalism as ecological citizenship, inflecting this (if time permits) with Donna Haraway’s anti-dualist critiques and Karen Barad’s concept of agential identity. Such a reading, I argue, usefully reveals the risks that attend the over-investment in care in a time of climate change, risks boded by the enthusiastic ecofeminism of Atwood’s and Winterson’s novels.

**Biography:**

Adeline Johns-Putra is currently a Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Exeter; from September 2012, she will be a Reader in English Literature at the University of Surrey. She has written books on epic poetry and Romantic women’s writing, and is completing a monograph on climate change and the contemporary novel. She is Chair of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (UK and Ireland).

Deborah Jordan,  
**Climate Change Narratives in Australian Fiction**

The mediation of an environmental awareness becomes the democratic foundation for political and ethical decisions on how the environment can be managed. The literary imagination provides one strand of investigation of how a culture defines its relationship with the natural world. When climate change is represented as a new phenomenon, surprisingly few novels, both in Australia and overseas, address the issue. On the other hand there is a rich tradition in Australian white and Indigenous literary fiction addressing the impact of extreme weather events and ‘natural’ disasters, rapid environmental change, and even in the immigration/migration frame the rupture and disjunction of environmental contexts, human adaptation and maladaptation to new environments. This paper addresses the key novels, past and present, in Australian literary fiction that offer readers insight into climate change, both in a critical literary context and the context of the history of the book.

**Biography:**

Deborah Jordan is currently working on a wider project on climate change narratives across literature, film and media with others at the University of Queensland. She is a cultural historian and writer.
Elaine Kelly  
Dwelling in the Future

This paper outlines some historical junctures of climate and human migration in order to think through the political and ethical issues of dwelling and mobility today. Migration studies have tended to remain strongly within the nation-state structure when analysing movement across and within borders. In this paper I draw on some preliminary research into various scientific perspectives on the climate-migration nexus. From here, I will unpack its findings and assumptions in an effort to think through the relationship between borders, migration and belonging. In 2009, scientists Carto et al. wrote a paper titled ‘Out of Africa and into an Ice Age’ in which they hypothesised that migration out of Africa over 100,000 years ago may have been climate-driven. What does such an insight reveal to us? What sorts of political, ethical and cultural insights can we draw out of this?

Engaging with the works of Jacques Derrida, Emmanuel Levinas and Timothy Morton, this paper will speculate on futuristic dynamics of dwelling and mobility by looking into the past. How can an ‘ecological thought’ accommodate the issue of migration and dwelling?

Biography:  
Elaine Kelly is Chancellor’s Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Technology, Sydney. Her research looks at the renegotiation of sovereignty and rights in the context of climate change, with a particular emphasis on how these affect the politics and ethics of dwelling.

Nick Mansfield  
Deconstructing the Sovereignty of the Earth: Bataille, Derrida and the Natural Politics of Climate Change

Through a Bataillean reading of Derrida’s discussions of nature, as well as an analysis of the literature of the cultural politics of climate change, I attempt to show how on both sides of the environmental debate, the human belief that its role is to control the earth (either by exploiting or saving it from exploitation) misunderstands the fundamental asymmetry of the human relationship with Nature. Edwards (1996) and Demerritt (2001) have compared national approaches to climate change to the command and control systems of the Cold War, arguing that they exhibit the same “closed world discourse” – an understanding of the world as a single entity to be managed authoritatively in order to ward off apocalypse.

I argue that the understanding of Nature as a varied but ultimately single thing, implying an ecological consistency and co-ordination between an infinite number of collocated phenomena and processes, feeds our misapprehension that we are stewards of the earth.

The “earth” and “nature” function then in the same quasi-transcendental way as sovereignty, justice and democracy-to-come in Derridean thought: as tropes of an indefinite and irreducible excess, they orient and govern our projects, without being reachable, promising our extension and threatening our reduction to nothing in the same double event. In this way, by overcoming the concept of Nature, Derridean thinking can be developed towards an account of the politics of the environment.

Biography:  
Nick Mansfield is Dean, Higher Degree Research at Macquarie University. He has written extensively on subjectivity, sovereignty, war and climate change, with an especial focus on the work of Jacques Derrida. He is one of the general editors of the journal Derrida Today, published by Edinburgh University Press.
**Helen McDonald**  
*Fred’s Place: A Dry Aesthetic.*

It has often been said the late Fred Williams ‘painted the Australian landscape as we see it today’ (Lyn Williams). Critical attention has not previously been given to the fact that the present dryness and scruffiness of places the artist preferred to paint in south-eastern Australia are a result of colonial clearing of land once farmed by Indigenous tribes.

This paper argues that a concept of place and an understanding of painting as sensation improve on popular formalist interpretations of his art in that they explain how affect operates in it. Williams’s sensitivity to dryness and damage in the cleared landscapes of Australia enabled him to produce paintings that convey a modernist, ‘skeptical beauty’ (Beech) that indirectly prefigures eco-critical concerns.

**Biography:**  
Helen McDonald is an Honorary Fellow in the Art History Program, School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne. She is the author of *Erotic Ambiguities: The Female Nude in Art* (London & New York: Routledge, 2001) and *Patricia Piccinini: Nearly Beloved* (Sydney: Piper Press, 2012). Focusing on contemporary and late modernist art, including Australian Aboriginal art, her recent research explores aesthetics of dryness and dry country through the lens of climate change.

**Karla McManus**  
*Photographing Nuclear Power in the Evolving Age of Climate Change*

Climate change has become of central importance for cultural producers in the 21st century as theoretical and aesthetic concerns about humanity's relationship to our environment have complicated the traditional dialectic of man and nature and inspired new ways of representing the world. Nowhere has the relationship between climate and culture been more fully explored than through the medium of photography, where the documentary role of the camera has functioned as mediator between the out-of-reach changes taking place in the world’s climate and the everyday experience of the average viewer at home. Photography has come to inform and shape our historical understanding of ecology, environmentalism, and climate change, representing complex ideas in simplified and often visceral visual forms.

This paper will explore how photography has been used to represent the changing social, cultural and political response to climate change through a single subject: nuclear power. Scholars have increasingly become interested in the photographic representation of the atomic age, concerned with the visual representation of the Cold War ethos found in much of the mass media and vernacular photography of the second half of the 20th century. While the atomic age is undoubtedly an artefact of the Cold War era, what will future historians name this age of ecological crisis that has led to disasters such as Fukushima, brought about by decaying Cold War technology and heightened by fears of global environmental instability? By looking at the recent work of contemporary photographers concerned with the ecological impact of nuclear power, this paper will demonstrate how photography has contributed to the cultural shaping of climate. Equally, I will argue that the photographic response to nuclear power has shifted to reflect a changing historical understanding, in which climate is now a central concern for the future of our contemporary global society.

**Biography:**  
Karla McManus is a PhD student in the Interuniversity programme in Art History at Concordia University, Montreal, and a part-time lecturer in the department of Art History. Her research focuses on the presentation and interpretation of landscape photography as environmentalist in contemporary visual culture.
Jodi Newcombe
Changing Climate Culture: What Role for the Arts?

CLIMARTE and Carbon Arts are organisations that believe the cultural sector can be harnessed to inform, engage and inspire action on climate change and sustainability. We believe the arts have a major role and responsibility to encourage the transformational thinking required to move us away from our current destructive practices, and towards the environmental sustainability that we need to protect life on our planet. We seek to promote and facilitate climate and sustainability related awareness and imagination through arts commissions, events, exhibitions, research and advocacy.

This presentation will give an overview of international and Australian arts initiatives that are engaging with climate and sustainability issues at an individual and institutional level. It will demonstrate that the strong sense of community amongst individual and organisational members of the cultural sector ideally situates this sector to play a pivotal role in disseminating, exploring and sharing information through creative reciprocal learning. The variety and breadth of arts initiatives indicates that the cultural sector, and its core constituent – creativity – can provide many positive models for engaging the public in imagining and shaping a more sustainable future.

Biography:
Jodi Newcombe is a curator and creative producer specialising in artistic responses to environmental challenges. Jodi is director of Carbon Arts, an organisation working to facilitate an increased role for artists in generating awareness and action on climate change. An environmental engineer and economist by training with an international career in consulting to business and government, Jodi is committed to multi-disciplinary and creative approaches to progressing a low-carbon future.

Chris O'Brien
Rethinking Seasons: Changing Climate, Changing Time

In Western thinking weather, climate and time are bound in a seldom-explored conceptual nexus. Hesiod, Hellenistic Greeks, the Romans, British Almanacs, and, since the Seventeenth Century, official scientific studies of weather have understood climate in terms of regular and typical kinds of weather at particular times of year. Nature was like a clock, working to time. Weather happens in time, but also often marks time. With British colonialism these ideas were exported to this continent. So, culture shaped climate.

Examining both the weather history and the history of weather observation in Australia’s far north this paper will show that colonisers imposed a temporal regularity on the region’s weather and climate discordant with its recorded weather history. It also demonstrates that this notion of climate linked to regularly timed weather events was blind to a salient feature of the region’s atmospheric dynamics: its temporal variability from one year to the next.

With climate change we now have the complexity of additional variation to an already variable climate. Generally discussed in terms of quantities – rising average temperatures, increasing or decreasing mean rainfalls – climate change also has crucial and often overlooked temporal dimensions. This paper will highlight the need to understand historical patterns in the timing of weather in understanding climate and climate change, as well as the implications of these patterns for current Western ideas about seasons. It will also argue that a more sophisticated understanding of the weather-climate-time nexus will not only help us better grasp the implications of climate change, but also will yield many signals as to its progress. Finally, I will speculate on how climate change might manifest in northern Australia on a variety of time scales.

Biography:
Dr Chris O’Brien is a Post-Doctoral Researcher with the Northern Research Futures Collaborative Research Network (CRN) based at Charles Darwin University (CDU), Darwin. CRN is a research initiative linking CDU with ANU and James Cook University. Chris is also affiliated with ANU’s Centre for Environmental History. On July 13 Chris was awarded with a PhD in History from ANU for his thesis A Clockwork Climate: An Atmospheric History of Northern Australia. An historian with research interests in weather, climate, oceans, modern scientific and environmental knowledge, northern Australia, southern Asia and time, Chris also holds a first-class honours degree in History from Sydney University.
Kate Rigby

Unnatural Disasters: Rereading Extreme Weather Events from Jeremiah to Carpentaria

In Tim Morton’s analysis, the concept of “nature” is an impediment to what he considers truly ecological thought. Extending that argument, this paper proceeds from the premise that the related concept of “natural disaster” is blocking the recognition of human agency in the etiology of today’s extreme weather events. In problematising this paradigmatically modern concept, the paper considers a number of literary representations of extreme weather events from pre-modern, or non-modern, and post-modern contexts, which can be seen from a contemporary material ecocritical perspective to disclose the distributed or heterogeneous agency involved in such events, while enjoining human responsibility in response to them. Among the texts to be considered are biblical prophetic writings (especially Jeremiah), the poetry of Judith Wright and Alexis Wright’s novel Carpentaria.

Biography:
Kate Rigby FAHA is an Associate Professor of Comparative Literature in the School of English, Communications and Performance Studies at Monash University. Her research brings an ecophilosophical perspective to the study of literature and religion, and her publications include Topographies of the Sacred: The Poetics of Place in European Romanticism (2004) and Ecocritical Theory: New European Approaches (2011).

Dr Nicole Rogers
Climate Change Litigation and the Awfulness of Lawfulness*

Law as a mode of cultural discourse appears singularly ill-equipped to engage with futuristic predictions of climate change. I am not referring here to new Acts as Parliaments can freely legislate in response to futuristic predictions of climate change, subject only to constitutional and (very real) political constraints. I am referring to judge-made law. The ongoing triumph of legalism, or continued conservative application of existing laws, necessitates a reigning in of the judicial imagination. To indulge in futuristic climate change imaginings or to factor futuristic climate change predictions into judicial decision-making constitutes a radical departure from the coherent, consistent, incremental development of judge-made law which is widely celebrated in that popular ‘fairy tale’: the doctrine of precedent.

In climate change litigation we find radical attempts to adapt existing doctrines to new climate change contingencies. Some judges have proved sympathetic to such attempts. Others have stubbornly continued to read such doctrines within the commercial or other contexts in which they developed. Yet downplaying the importance of climate change considerations in the application of existing legal rules does not mean that dire climate change predictions will simply go away. In fact, it is more than likely that a conservative judicial aversion to futuristic climate change predictions and a stubborn application of ‘normal’ rules within, only, ‘normal’ contexts will simply hasten the advent of an apocalyptic climate-changed future. Herein lies the ‘awfulness of lawfulness’.


Biography:
Dr Nicole Rogers is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Law and Justice at Southern Cross University. She is interested in the intersection between law and climate change, and law and performance studies theory. Her other research interests include wild law and environmental activism.
**Catherine Simpson**  
**Gaia & Ecological thinking in the Age of the Anthropocene**

“There is no such thing as ‘bad weather’, only inappropriate clothing, and likewise there is no such thing as ‘saving the planet’. Gaia is well beyond our capacity to destroy, although we are making it horribly uncongenial for ourselves, our symbionts and other organisms we love” (Garrard, p. 205).

Since James Lovelock proposed the Gaia hypothesis in 1982, conceptualising the Earth as a self-regulating, evolving system, notions of equilibrium and harmony have pervaded ecological thinking. Gaia is “a powerfully productive scientific metaphor and has considerable value as a way to imagine the planet as at once vulnerable and vast, enduring and evolving” (Garrard 201). Climate change and the contemporary ecological crisis have provided an impetus and opportunity for collaborative scholarship and alternative engagements across the science/humanities divide. Deborah Bird Rose and Libby Robin argue that it’s essential for humanities scholars to be part of the ecological conversation as it seeks to develop new knowledge practices in order to “engage with connectivity and commitment in a time of crisis and concern” (Rose and Robin). Applying ecological thought to contemporary “matters of concern” (Latour) can alert us to the limitations of our knowledge, while simultaneously impelling us to act from our enmeshed position in a precariously balanced world.

Since the “failed” Copenhagen Summit, there has been a shift in climate change discourse from “experts”. We have moved away from doom and gloom discourses and into the realm of what I shall call “situated” hope (Simpson 2009). “Situated” hope is not based on blind faith alone, but rather hope grounded in evidence, informed judgments and “situated knowledge” (Haraway). Describing the importance of Mike Hulme’s book, *Why we Disagree about Climate Change*, Sheila Jasanoff argues that, that “without downplaying its seriousness, Hulme demotes climate change from ultimate threat to constant companion, whose murmurs unlock in us the instinct for justice and equality”. Might the “murmurs” that Jasanoff gestures to here, also be articulated as hope? This paper ponders what an ethics of hope might look like in the Age of the Anthropocene.

**Biography:**  
Catherine was seconded from Media to the Department of Environment & Geography to convene Macquarie University's new Science Communication programme. Her established research areas are Australian and Turkish cinema, gender and the body, screen automobile cultures, film festivals, and the work of Australian female filmmakers; emerging interests include the ecological humanities and science communication. She co-edited *Diasporas of Australian Cinema* (2009, Intellect).

**Linda Williams**  
**The Little Ice Age and 17th Century Concepts of Nature**

This paper considers the rise of the concept of the sublime in the 17th and 18th centuries in the context of what has been called the ‘little ice age’- a period of exceptionally cold winters in Europe. In particular it addresses the origins of the idea of the sublime in nature in the writings of Anthony Ashley Cooper (third earl of Shaftesbury) along with other late 17th and early 18th century English accounts of the sublime such as those of John Dennis and Joseph Addison.

By the late 18th century concepts of the sublime were central to Enlightenment aesthetics whilst also becoming a crucial foundation of Romanticism, and the paper seeks to identify the origins of these dual tendencies in European cultural history by gauging the extent to which such concepts of the sublime may have been shaped by responses to significant climatic change.

**Biography:**  
Dr Linda Williams is Associate Professor of Art, Environment and Cultural Studies at RMIT University where she runs the AEGIS Research Group (Arts, Ecology, Globalization and the Interpretation of Science) and Spatial Dialogues: Public Art and Climate Change—an ARC Linkage Project on International Environmental Art. She has published widely on visual culture along with the history of culture and science, philosophy and ecocritical theory.
Other Speakers

Leon Cmielewski and Josephine Starrs
Leon Cmielewski and Josephine Starrs are artists whose long term collaboration has produced a variety of screen-based installations. Their work often uses play as a strategy for engaging with the social and political contradictions inherent in contemporary life. Their recent media artworks including Incompatible Elements and Land|sound|scape are situated at the juncture of cinema, information visualisation, and data mapping, playing off the tensions between the large and small screen, and between information and sublime landscape.

Denise Ferris
Denise Ferris lives on the Monaro the high country of New South Wales. She is currently Honours Convenor and supervises HDR students at the School of Art, ANU. Celestial Spaces, an upcoming exhibition in China was made on Kiandra’s abandoned goldfields. Current work Once Upon an Island of White has been made over a decade in Perisher Valley. This photographic archive concerns the predictions on naturally occurring snow in the Australian Alps.

Ursula Frederick
Ursula K. Frederick is a practicing artist with a focus on photography, video and printmaking. Ursula's background as an archaeologist, her interest in climate change and her current doctoral research on car cultures reflects her broader research interest in the ways by which humanity shapes the world.

Mandy Martin
Mandy Martin was born in Adelaide, studied at the South Australian School of Art, 1972-75. Between 1978 – 2003 she was a lecturer at the School of Art, ANU, and then a Fellow there between 2003- 06. She is currently an Adjunct Professor, Fenner School of Environment and Society, ANU. She is currently working on “Desert Lake; Art, Science and Stories from Paruku” which is a project looking at global drivers affecting the Walmajarri people and their Country in the Tanami Desert. She lives in Central West NSW.

Timothy Morton

onacloV
onacloV is a visual artist, trained at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris and Marseille and the ANU School of Art, and holds a PhD from the University of Canberra. She has exhibited extensively and been the recipient of numerous awards and grants, and has led and facilitated artistic, scientific, and cultural collaborations that resulted in largescale collaborative installation artworks.

Mitchell Whitelaw
Mitchell Whitelaw is an academic, writer and artist with interests in new media art and culture, especially generative systems and data-aesthetics. His work has appeared in journals including Leonardo, Digital Creativity, Fibreculture, and Senses and Society. In 2004 his work on a-life art was published in the book Metacreation: Art and Artificial Life (MIT Press, 2004). His current work spans generative art and design, digital materiality, and data visualisation. He is currently an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Arts and Design at the University of Canberra, where he leads the Master of Digital Design.

Josh Wodak
Dr Josh Wodak is an artist and researcher working in Media Arts. His practice and research are about climate change and environmental sustainability, which he investigates through artistic practice that draws on science and technology. His Practice Based Research PhD in Media Arts at ANU concerned how Responsive Environments (as a form of Interactive Art) may be created to evoke environmental responsibility.