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Introduction to *Environmental Communications* Special Issue

Spectacular Environmentalisms: Media, Knowledge and the Framing of Ecological Politics

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As we move firmly into the so-called Anthropocene—an era defined by human-induced global environmental change, neoliberal, consumer capitalism and the unprecedented flow of media, knowledge and communication—how is it that we *know* about the environment? More specifically: how is it we know about human-environment relationships—those tension-filled, ever-present, often-obscured, but inescapable relationships that are most likely overlain by some form of capitalist social relations? How do we know about ecological destruction embedded in these current human-environment relationships? How do we know *what to do about* the increasingly solid spectres of climate change and irretrievable biodiversity losses as well as the ordinarily polluted cities and fields many live in but count on for survival?

As we and the authors of this special issue of *Environmental Communication* contend, given the growing prominence of media and celebrity in environmental politics, we now increasingly know about the environment through different forms, processes and aspects of the *spectacle* and, in particular, the *spectacular environments* of a progressively diverse media-scape. Moreover—and forming the core focus of this issue—we argue that we are more and more being told about how to 'solve' ecological problems through *spectacular environmentalisms*: the spectacularised, environmentally-focused media spaces that are differentially political, normative and moralised and that traverse our everyday public and private lifeworlds.

The contributions published here derive from a series of UK-based Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Research Network-funded seminars and our own research projects. Hailing from a range of different disciplines including geography, media and cultural studies, environmental science, anthropology, sociology and development studies, we came together to try to better understand the relationships amongst spectacular forms of media and environmental issues. Initially prompted by the editors' interests in celebrity politics in the context of global humanitarianism (Goodman, 2010; Goodman and Barnes 2011; Littler 2009; Brockington, 2014), philanthrocapitalism (Goodman, 2013; Littler, 2009, 2015) and the environment (Boykoff and Goodman 2009; Boykoff et al, 2009; Boykoff et al, 2010; Brockington 2008; 2009; Goodman and Littler, 2013) —as well as by key media and environment texts by those in our network (Anderson, 2003; Doyle, 2011; Hansen, 2010; Maxwell and Miller 2012; Lester, 2010)—our collective conversations ranged across the multiplicity of meanings produced through spectacular environmental mediation, the role of media industries in ecological politics, pro-environmental celebrity promotion, anti-environmental greenwashing, the locations of agency in environmental change, the role and influence of 'green' élites and neoliberal capitalism and the politics of psychosocial affective dis/connections with more-than-human natures.

Put another way, our interests lie in critically examining the *contemporary cultural politics of the environment*: Those oft-contested and politicized processes by which environmental meanings are constructed and negotiated across space, place and at various scales which, in this case, involve assemblages of spectacle, science, media, discourse, celebrities, culture, environment and politics. As the contributions to this issue demonstrate, these assemblages involve not only the 'clear and present' spectacle-ised representations that gain traction in diverse media discourses, but also the many reverberations, feedbacks—and crucially—silences that are often implied or fleeting yet heavily inform affective

relationalities with the environment. Interrogating the mediated features of spectacular environmentalisms through its solid and more 'ghostly' forms – both of which are bound to contested positionalities, material realities and social practices (Hall 1997) —illuminates questions of how power and influence infuse the constructions of varied environmental knowledges, norms, conventions and 'truths'. In short, these politicised media processes influence a range of equally politicised ways of seeing, being with and relating to diverse environments through the tethering of the spectacular to the discourses and practices of the everyday (Cox and Pezzullo 2016; de Certeau 1984, Foucault 1980).

Knowing Spectacular Environmentalisms

But what, more specifically, *are* spectacular environmentalisms? In its most overt sense, the phrase captures the large-scale mediated spectacles about environmental problems. Here we might place such phenomena as the Live Earth concerts, Vanity Fair's *Green Issue*s, or celebrity environmental activity (such as Leonardo di Caprio's pronouncements at the 2016 Oscars about climate change, his documentary *The 11th Hour* or his formation of The Leonardo di Caprio Foundation 'to help restore balance to threatened ecosystems') (Hann 2015). Importantly, the word 'spectacle' draws attention to the mediation of the message. It carries with it a freight of critical baggage, being famously associated with Guy Debord's classic 1967 Situationist text *La société du spectacle* (*The Society of the Spectacle* [1983 (1986)). For Debord, mediated spectacle was typical of modern consumer society in which a process of visual commodity fetishism was supplanting real forms of human connection and sociality and thus should be abolished through acts of *détournment* or visual hijacking.

The strength of this Debourdian analysis of the spectacle is to draw attention to the effects of capitalism on media production and ideology and to the possibilities for its disruption. We can see the continued veracity of the lineaments of this analysis if we apply it to events such as Live Earth, which expended vast amounts of CO_2 to make vague gestures towards dealing with climate crisis without critiquing corporate polluters or a model of 'economic growth' that prioritizes increased production and profits—even of the 'green' sort—above the environment. And, we can see the continuation of *détournment* in the 600 posters put up around Paris critiquing corporate influence at the COP21 climate talks by the Brandalism collective, who produced a series of clever and visually disruptive 'subverts' in public spaces across the city.[1]

The problem of such a narrow theory of spectacle is that it relies on a paradigm where mass media is *de facto* false and relations between people are 'real'. There is little scope to imagine progressive social change beyond the subvertisement, to consider politics beyond the immediate protest, to consider the complex ways people use media to connect and disconnect, or to account for how the balance of power can change *through* media and its manipulations. For these reasons, media and cultural studies developed and continues to draw on a range of additional political and cultural theories as well as that of the spectacle: hegemony, representation, affect, ideology, psychoanalysis, political and cultural economy (Hall, Evans and Nixon 2013).

Spectacular environmentalisms also have another connotation. It gestures toward the breathtaking complexity of nature, the multiplicity of ecologies, of natural assemblages, of the infinite interdependence of our natural world and the relentless attack on this by people in the age of the Anthropecene. This itself connects to various genealogies and traditions: to the Romantic sublime, to deep ecology, to mysticism, to the picaresque, to Sunday rambling, to nature appreciation societies, to the Blakean injunction to see the world in a grain of sand. The diverse environments that 'environmental*isms*' wants to look after, in other words, is

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[1] See http://www.brandalism.org.uk/brandalism-cop21

often spectacular: it is strikingly and profoundly dramatic at the same time as quotidian and ordinary in the everyday complexity of spectacles of nature. The relationship between these two realms or meanings is critical, with the latter (spectacular nature) providing the former (commodified spectacle) with the resources it commodifies and 'spectacle-ises' and, conversely, the former (commodified spectacle) often polluting, and often attempting to extend the possibilities, engagements and affective resonances of the latter. How these multiple, variegated and complex instances of spectacular environmentalisms intersect, diverge and inform the mediation of contemporary environmental politics is a core concern of the papers and commentaries in this issue.

Mediating, Framing and Relating Spectacular Environmentalisms

Before introducing the contributions of this issue, we briefly explore three concepts — *mediation*, *framing* and *relating* — to provide a firmer theoretical landscape on which to describe how these multiple notions of spectacular environmentalisms intersect and are played out in the intellectual offerings here. These ideas provide crucial theoretical insights into 'spectacular environmentalisms' as a concept in its own right but also an insight into how spectacular environmentalisms are practiced, their effects and the assemblages that make them take on 'vital' material forms (e.g. Bennett, 2010). In addition, given the theoretical reverberations that our use of the terms 'spectacle' and the 'spectacular' elicit, our short exploration below signals the multidisciplinary approaches that the considerations of spectacular environmentalisms require if not demand.

Mediating Environmental Spectacle

The concept of mediation highlights how the different forms and figures of mediatised spectacles, e.g. green celebrity, wildlife film, info-graphics, subvertisements, interact between, with and among society and nature. Spectacle-ised media and media moments—alongside the human embodiments of the spectacle in the form of activists, celebrities and politicians—sit 'in-between' audiences and the natural world, sometimes imploring us to 'do something for the tigers' or clean water, sometimes entertaining us, sometimes teaching us about ecologies or their destruction. Yet, a great deal of recent social theory calls this simplistic characterization of the 'in-betweeness' of spectacular environmentalisms into serious question. Indeed, in their own special issue on 'mediating environments', Hroch and Stoddart (2015; 298) echo the likes of more-than-human 'actant' theorists (e.g. Latour, Haraway, Lorimer, Bennett, Deleuze) to state that mediation, for them, 'is a way of conceptualizing the way in which media, environments, and human actors intra-act in a shared space of relations in which materialities and meanings are made and re-made. … [M]ediation does not position nature outside or against its media representations, but asserts that media "perform" or "enact" socio-environmental relations.' Thus, as implied in several of the papers in this issue, Hroch and Stoddart point to the theoretical and political benefits of getting 'beyond representation' in the considerations of spectacular environmentalisms: 'Thinking through what we might call the "thick" lens of relation rather than representation enables us to consider the ways in which our understandings of representation can be complexified. In other words, mediation as a concept invites us to see even the "lens" of representation itself as a more-than-representational apparatus' (298). Whilst positing the study of 'mere representation' as an academic technique of the recent past is often today overplayed—in the process simultaneously patronising the past and those scholars who provided much richer multi-layered analyses than they are often given credit—the act of calling attention to the variety of possibilities for new forms of 'thick description' or inventive theoretical approaches to the relationship between mediation and environment remains useful and significant.

Indeed, we can note that the purposeful 'in-betweeness' of spectacular environmentalisms is a core facet of their mediation: they are designed to gain and maintain our attention through diverse mediated instances, forms and actants. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the figure of the so-called green celebrity, as several of the papers here detail, who deploy and use their 'star power' to save the environment. As performative mediation 'devices', green celebrities—who are very much a part of the global elite—are clearly speaking for and in the name of nature (cf. Boykoff, 2011). Put differently, nature and the atmosphere may not have media standing but, more and more, celebrities — including now the Pope (Brulle and Antonio 2015) — surely do.

The question remains, however, in terms of the effectiveness of these mediation devices and indeed, spectacular environmentalisms more generally: Do they distract, diffuse and dissemble or do they raise interest and awareness to the point of effective change? One simple answer is of course provided to us by the legatees of the Frankfurt School: green celebrities and spectacular environments merely entertain us into complacency and inaction. Or, even worse, they produce the false consciousness that our celebrity-induced, copy-cat, para-social purchases of hybrid and electric cars are actually making a difference, at the same time they reproduce the vastly unequal power relations that *also* define the Anthropocene (cf. Kapoor, 2012; Richey and Ponte, 2011). There really is no 'out' of capitalist social relations in this analysis: spectacular environmentalisms are the comforting and entertaining cage we build around ourselves as we grasp the bars in mediated glee and clap to the sights and sound of the end of the world.

The much more difficult and involved response here is one that doesn't *just* look to answer the question, but rather asks further questions about the contextualized impacts of spectacular environmentalisms — and in particular, green celebrities — in ways that bring their potentially more political nature to the fore (Cox and Pezzullo 2015; Miller, 2013; Wheeler, 2013; Brockington 2015). Can they have impacts? If so of what kind and why these types of impacts? Are these impacts in the realms of knowledge, understanding or perhaps even societal behaviour and positive social change? We are not disputing the power of mediated spectacle to distract, distort and de-politicise, but rather are also working to draw attention to the critical need to not just understand *the processes* by which spectacular environmentalisms distract and de-politicise but also how some of their various forms might and do contain potential conditions for more radical critique. This sceptical possible-ism suggests we need to ask about what 'work' spectacular environmentalisms do and can do in, for example, the *material* mediation of the effects of global climate change. How can spectacular environmentalisms be deployed and do work for the powerless and in the support of rights and justice? Our authors tussle with these questions here, indicating how critical engagement is needed from both theoretical *and* practical perspectives.

Framing Spectacular Environmentalisms

Spectacular environmentalisms frame — implicitly and/or explicitly — how individuals, society and humans more generally should not just think about the environment but also how we should relate to it. As Lakoff (2010) argued in one of the most cited papers in this journal, 'frames are communicated via language and visual imagery' (74). As he puts it, 'the messenger matters. Visuals matter. Body language matters' in the construction of environmental frames given that the '[t]ruth [of environmental destruction and how to solve environmental crises] must be framed effectively to be seen at all' (80). Thus, '[i]n order to communicate a complex fact or a complex truth, one must choose one's words carefully to activate the right frames to that the truth can be understood. If the hearer has no frames, then you have to choose your words carefully to build up those frames' (73). Put simply, '[t]he facts, to be communicated, must be framed properly (73).

Two important points stand out here in the context of the framing work of spectacular environmentalisms. First, spectacular environmentalisms function through visual grammars and registers as much or even more than they do the verbal. That drowning polar bear appearing on Facebook, the denuded, smoking Indonesian forests replaced with palm oil plantations and dying orangutans on TV, the next green celebrity fronting a 'healthy oceans' campaign on your Twitter feed, the breaking news of activists chaining themselves to the fences at Heathrow to stop the construction of another runway, a new info-graphic showing us that April, 2016 was the hottest on record: spectacular environmentalisms show us as much as tell us about ecological worlds and, indeed, do so through images designed to make a lasting impact on audiences through our growing technological capability to produce and consume visual media.

Second, spectacular environmentalisms, through this emphasis on the visual, are not simply about the transmission of facts, words and cognitively 'rational' knowledge but also about fostering emotion and ecologies of feeling. While underplayed in Lakoff's (2010) work, he does acknowledge that while 'many frame-circuits have direct connections to the emotional regions of the brain' and that 'you cannot be rational without emotions', to re-frame environmental issues, communication must 'work emotionally' (72). Environmental stories, he argues, must 'exemplify your values and rouse emotions' (79)', something we and the authors here would argue spectacular environmentalisms frequently do very well. Thus, spectacular environmentalisms work to frame affect as much as they do cognition: They are designed through visual means, to get our attention and pique our environmental imaginaries in ways that work to get us to feel, to connect and to 'do' (Cf. Lorimer, 2007; 2010). In other words, spectacular environmentalisms are forms of mediated, visual media that work across affective registers to frame not just environmental issues but offer up pedagogical narratives about how we should go about caring for more-than-human nature. We see, but most vitally, *feel* the determination of activists sitting in trees, the green celebrity's anger that rapidly turns to tears and shouting as that last tree is cut down to make way for 'progress', the joy and hope in the announcer's over-dubbed voice commentating about a new elephant/tiger/orangutan sanctuary. Spectacular environmentalisms give us visualized, affective, para-social performances of anger, sadness, loss, hope, joy and many other emotions that attempt to frame our own affective responses to 'save the world'.

Relating to/through/with Environmental Spectacle

With environmental spectacles, affect and, indeed, mediation can only be formulated through the processes of relating. Mediation, affect and, indeed, framing denote relationships and relationalities amongst environmental media actants, media forms, technological platforms and audiences. Relating *to* spectacular environmentalisms is cognitive and affective, technological and 'natural', material, discursive and visual. Relating *through* and *with* spectacular environmentalisms is, very often, about the desire to put into affective, cognitive and material practice the new ecological ontologies of a more-than-human world. This is often ironic however, as spectacular environmentalisms by their very nature can also work to suggest and (re)enforce the very separation they can sometimes work to overcome. Environmental media—spectacular or otherwise—devoid of people and human's ecological impacts springs to mind here.

Contemporary relationships to, through and with environmental spectacles more often than not now include what Büscher (2013; 1) calls 'Nature 2.0': the digitization of ecologies and environmental politics that 'create new virtual forms and manifestations of nature and its conservation that intersect with material natures in complex new ways'. This has two important—and clearly relevant—implications for thinking about spectacular environments. First, Büscher argues that given the Web 2.0 technologies that animate Nature 2.0, i.e. the

abilities of internet-users to ‘co-create’ or ‘prosume’ (Buscher and Igoe, 2013) environmental content, conservation supporters, ‘greenies’ and environmentalists ‘in the audience’ ‘have a greater say in what these ideas and ideals [of nature] and potentially even co-create them within the limits set by the media platforms within which they act’ (1). Put another way, the re-imaginings of human-environment relationships through spectacular environments involve novel relationalities to media technologies such as Twitter, Facebook and blogs as much as they do to environments themselves. The critical question Büscher does not ask, though, is: What if we Tweet or post to Facebook about the environment and no one reads it or does anything about it? Does Nature 2.0 ‘matter’ in the ways he might argue it does? The questions in this context should perhaps be these: Why, how and in what ways does Nature 2.0 *come* to matter? More broadly, which spectacular environmentalisms matter, why and in what ways? Engaging with and researching these questions will only become more important as we continue to ‘app-ify’ environmental conservation and ecological politics.

The second implication for spectacular environmentalisms Büscher points to is the ways that Nature 2.0 works to both ‘encourage and complicate the commodification of nature and its conservation’ (1). New media, he argues has the potential to further commodify nature into spectacle by, for example, turning biodiversity, landscapes and ecosystems into forms of capital and so further deepen the processes of the monetary valuation of nature. This is, thus, the further deepening of the neoliberalisation of the ecologies of conservation that see our ways of relating to nature as merely a set of economic rationalities. Spectacular environmentalisms in this form begin to replicate the very foundations of consumer capitalism through campaigns for voluntary donations, conservation programmes and sustainable consumption. Indeed, green, sustainable and ‘conscious’ consumption figure large in spectacular environmentalisms: all we need is the right app to tell us which sustainable fish to buy, a barcode we can scan to find the most environmentally ‘just’ household cleaner, or, at a larger scale, which hybrid/electric car to buy. Here, spectacular environmentalisms are seemingly as much about novel commodity forms—i.e. ‘natural’ commodity fetishism—and economistic forms of relating as they are these ‘care-full’ digital spaces in Nature 2.0.

But, complications also abound: spectacular environmentalisms through Nature 2.0 can also make money in ways that support conservation on the ground as states continue to ‘roll back’ environmental regulations and social funding for conservations programmes. Indeed, the new digital economy is riddled with socially and environmentally conscious businesses and economic models that not only do something for nature, but further spectacularise the environment. These approaches also tend to ‘individualise’ our response at a time when a more collective social and sustainable response is warranted in the face of the structural imperatives of global environmental and climatic change. How the forms of relating embedded in Nature 2.0 and its spectacular environmentalisms might work along more collectivized means through the crowdfunding of, for example, conservation projects and radical environmental media is worthy of much greater consideration. This is why, we contend, it is important to pay attention to the political and cultural economies of different forms of mediated spectacle, their circulation, distribution and use in order to simultaneously track new forms of anti-environmental backlash and also those of ecologically-grounded progressive possibility.

Our Spectacular Environmentalisms Papers and Commentaries

We turn now to introduce the papers and commentaries in the issue. Each of the papers takes on, either explicitly or implicitly the concerns about spectacular environmentalisms we have raised above. Questions of the mediation, framing and ways of relating of spectacular environmentalisms thread throughout each of the papers, both within and across these

contributions. The commentaries look to pull out common themes and theoretical lineaments at the same time working to situate the contributions here across larger scholarly and social landscapes as well as raise novel but related issues in the context of spectacular environmentalisms.

To begin, Toby Miller (2016), Philip Drake and Angela Smith (2016) take on the unenviable task of tackling some of the key macho bastions of anti-environmentalism in the form of Formula 1, football and petrolheads (in Drake and Smith's case, the TV show *Top Gear*). These are important sites to study in the sheer reach and depth of their populism. The shifts of consciousnesss that would have to take place for these domains to be made even a little more environmentally friendly—and to be proud of that shift—would itself be seismic and would perhaps make pretty much anything seem more possible. Specifically, Drake and Smith examine how *Top Gear* maintains the hegemony of its prejudices, through a mixture of humour, denial and dismissal. *Top Gear* was, at the time of the writing of this paper, one of the jewels in the crown of the BBC, being seen in nearly 200 countries and hundreds of millions of viewers. This was despite, or indeed because of, content which was profoundly anti-environmental: chief presenter Jeremy Clarkson is renowned for his dismissal of 'eco-mentalists' in his writings. It took a personal assault by that presenter on a fellow BBC employee, rather than the anti-planetary diatribe (or homophobia or xenophobia), to render the programme undesirable to the BBC. The authors' particular concern is how humour is used to reinforce the presenter's world views and to promote an anti-authoritarian, libertarian stance. Stupidity, Drake and Smith observe, drawing on Ronnell, is an active force in world affairs. In *Top Gear,* stupidity, cathected by humour to rebellion, reinforces a message that 'cars are essential to a well-lived life, and denial of such pleasures is to cave in to establishment authoritarianism, or simply to accept a mundane existence.'

Miller's concern is less how the hegemony of football and Formula 1 are established and more how they could be more effectively challenged to become environmentally responsible entities by the environmental organisations (here, specifically Greenpeace) who seek to challenge them. His question is what is the nature of responsible citizenship required in a world beset with transnational environmental problems caused by global entities and networks seemingly able to absorb or bypass protest with ease. Football and Formula 1 are, he observes, the source of three problems. They are polluters, greenwashers and licensees (of other polluting firms). These are complex sophisticated opponents. Miller is sympathetic yet constructively critical of current efforts by Greenpeace which seem over-fond of secret plans for spectacular protest, in the case of Formula 1, and have failed to find purchase in the case of football. Here, Miller insists that the nature of civic engagement with environmental problems and protest requires both sophisticated, elite-level lobbying (not pranks) that speaks a language corporate representatives (especially sponsors), and governments can understand. He draws inspiration from grassroots movements empowering ragpickers in Colombia as potential models of engagement with grassroots fan activism. He notes that football's strong fan bases provide alternative sets of values and practices in which environmental alternatives could root themselves. Currently too much environmental protest speaks to its converts, not future constituencies.

Libby Lester's (2016) exploration of environmental protest around the Great Barrier Reef in Australia also tackles issue of transnational protest. Lester examines protests against plans to build a large coal mine and dredge routes for ships to travel through the reef. These were vitriolic battles between the Queensland State and Federal Australian governments against committed and powerful environmental groups. They are still not resolved, and Lester provides a rich account of their unfolding, setting them into the broader context of other environmental battles in Australia. The fights over the reef are particularly important because they help us to understand in what public sphere spectacular environmental protest takes

place and in what spheres it can prove effective. For just as environmental problems are transnational, so too are transnational protest groups (around shark fins, ivory, climate change etc). But—and this is the crucial insight—transnational protest becomes more powerful because it is feared and resented by governments. As Lester puts it: 'It is clear then that a transnationalized public sphere now appears as a spectre in the imaginary of industry and governments'. It follows that one of the research agendas for environmental communications research is to better understand how transnational public spheres are created. This means in practice that we 'follow . . . the generation, circulation and contestation of the symbolic and the spectacular (to reveal) at least some of the conditions under which meaning-making, attributing responsibility and collective decision-making are taking place transnationally.'

Like Lester, Elaine Jeffreys (2016) is concerned with the actual consequences of mediated environmentalism, here with respect to celebrity activism in China against the consumption of shark fin soup. Both papers emerge with fascinating conclusions about the politics of mediated environmental struggles. Jeffreys examines the role of celebrity activism in promoting environmental activism and behavioural change. She examines the work of Yao Ming, a former basketball player who was recruited by Wild Aid to combat the consumption of shark fin soup in China. Jeffreys is not persuaded that the communications this campaign presented were particularly effective. Her analysis of their content and framing finds a number of deficiencies that would make it hard for Chinese audiences to sympathise with the campaign's message. The result, she argues, was much more effective overseas, in Europe and North America, than in China. She is similarly sceptical about the communications of a series of highly prominent Chinese businessmen who also sought to advocate against shark fin soup. Although these men attracted high levels of attention to much of their work, this environmental lobbying did not appear to strike a chord with the general public.

However, there is a twist in the tale: there has been a reduction in consumption, and this Jeffreys attributes to the appeal of the celebrity for the consumer but the rather the appeal of the celebrity to political elites. The campaign by the businessmen was noticed by party authorities, who prevented party members from using shark fin soup in their official entertaining. Sales dropped by 70-90 percent. Shark fin soup consumption declined not because the public was responding to the call but because powerful political elites decided, because of this call, to constrain their own consumption of the soup. This was a victory of 'authoritarian environmentalism'. This conclusion is similar to Brockington's (2014) work on the role of celebrity in post-democratic politics. Publics may not be listening, but elites do notice what celebrity spokespeople say. China can hardly be called post-democratic, but the same principle is at work. In less democratic societies, or relatively closed societies, celebrity can provide a way in because it provides a means of accessing elites.

Finally, four papers examine what sorts of response and connection different forms of environmental communication can have on their audiences. Julie Doyle's (2016) focus is on veganism, which she chooses in part because of her own commitment to it and in part because it is one of the more radical and less popular environmentalist causes. This presents obvious challenges to the more populist content of the celebrities she is exploring (in this case the work of Alicia Silverstone, an actress, and Ellen DeGeneres, a comedian). Most especially, Doyle's particular concern is how the ethics of veganism, which are part of the prime motivations of most vegans, can be communicated in a highly commodified, consumption driven celebrity culture. This she explores through a detailed account of each celebrities' personal activism on behalf of veganism. Doyle's work is less concerned with the actual consequences of environmental activism (again in this case celebrity activism), but with a reading of the sorts of messages they promote. The result is a different sort of enquiry from Jeffreys: a close exploration of what celebrities are saying and why. For Doyle's purpose is to understand how the philosophy and ethics behind particular environmental

issues can be encoded and communicated by the celebrity medium.

There are differences in how each celebrity promotes their cause. For Silverstone it is part of her personal branding, for DeGeneres it is not as central to her life as a celebrity. Yet Doyle finds that DeGeneres rather than Silverstone is better able to highlight the inequality and injustices against which vegan's rail because of the connections she can draw between animal rights and forms of social inequality. There are, however, also important commonalities. Doyle finds that there is some dilution of language (for example veganism becomes 'kindness'), and the ethical commitment becomes reconfigured as a lifestyle choice, required for happiness, healthiness and personal fulfilment. This conclusion is consistent with Lillie Chouliaraki's (2013) analysis of celebrity humanitarianism. Chouliaraki also observes that celebrity humanitarianism is less driven now by the needs of the cause, the wrong of the injustices being inflicted, and more by the desires of humanitarians to lead meaningful, happy and fulfilled lives. Humanitarianism, like veganism, is a lifestyle choice. And this puts Doyle's conclusions in a slightly different perspective: these qualities become less those of the celebrity themselves, but rather of their imagined audience. In these terms, the lack of ethical imperative is part of the *zeitgeist* of the age, as much as of the beliefs of the messenger.

Alex Lockwood's (2016) starting point is his grief at the stark facts of biodiversity loss which he contrasts to the tears of joy that flowed when he watched the documentary film *Cowspiracy*. This leads to his enquiry into the role of affect and emotive responses in contemporary environmentalism. His review suggests a slightly schizoid approach to mobilizing affect in environmentalism. Environmental campaigns are clearly meant to make people upset and bothered, but the understanding of affect in the literature about them is plainly deficient, reducing concern to questions of knowledge deficits. There are, as his paper demonstrates, much richer resources if we are to understand how emotive responses can be mobilized and understood.

Empirically the paper explores how affect is mobilized with a detailed analysis of *Cowspiracy*. For Lockwood it is the film's identity-work which is crucial. It allows the audience to see how environmental activism can reinforce, and not threaten, the current formation of their own identity. This is an important contribution for it offers means to answer of some of the thornier problems which have beset studies of environmentalism. Kay Milton asked some time ago 'why is not everyone an environmentalist' for the damage caused demanded more response (Milton 2002). Her answer was that love of nature forged during childhood was forgotten, or failed to survive the passage to adulthood in western societies. Lockwood's work suggests ways in which we can understand how this love is kept alive or revived. Similarly, Cohen (2001) asked how concern for distant strangers was forged in environments where we are always hearing about causes which we could support, but do not. His answer was that we are all inevitably neglectful (in denial), for there is so much information available about deserving causes that we cannot respond to all. Instead people who are more effective in marshalling their efforts, in caring for distant strangers, are focused upon a few such causes. Again, Lockwood's work helps us to understand how concern is fostered, and could be fostered, for those causes which do motivate us.

Cheryl Lousley (2016) and Sian Sullivan (2016) provide two typically beautifully written and challenging pieces that take on the very premises of affect, connection and relationship with nature in worlds beset with alienation, isolation and separation. Lousley's concern is with the language scientists use to make biodiversity appealing to people and its loss alarming. With characteristic scholarship and rigour, she examines carefully the language used to promote connection between people and non-human nature by such greats as E.O. Wilson. Lousley's argument is that the portrayal of biodiversity in the popular science texts devoted to celebrating life on the planet and promoting its stewardship ends up

promoting commodified or abstract spectacles – life as a 'noun' rather than 'living as a verb'. She observes that the story-telling mode that Wilson uses to communicate his fascination for biodiversity means that '(l)ife is re-enchanted . . . through a succession of abstractions and substitutions.' His work serves to disembed biodiversity, and the biologist, from their environments and socio-economic contexts. Yet that context matters, for, as Lousley shows drawing on Lewis's work, the socio-political environments of these biologists are peculiarly American, and their work and impressions have been forged in particular (and peculiar) field locations.

The result of this is a distinctive deficiency of affective connection and, for Lousley (drawing on Butler's work) this leads to 'loss without grief'. We are not sufficiently invested in this strangely isolationist creation of 'biodiversity' to mourn it. Biodiversity becomes a souvenir, and biodiversity loss a marketable commodity in conservation's engagements with capitalism. Yet, there is an alternative. Lousley finds this in the work of Hugh Raffles who tells the biographies of insects and scientists and how they intertwine. These are stories which produce an affective politics that can create connection, for they are socially-embedded, not fetishized objects.

Sullivan uses similarly rich data, but of a different sort, to make a similar argument, namely that material (in this case natural history film) that is meant to connect people to nature, either does not do so, or is driven by logics which diminish that connection. Her work is derived from an event ethnography of the Wildscreen documentary film festival in Bristol in 2012. There she observed, in concert with others, film-makers commissioners, camera-operators, music writers and a host of other people talk about the process and dynamics behind good film-making. It was clearly an alarming experience as the industry is thoroughly commercialized with the constant search for 'the money shot' and dramatic exciting footage which, Sullivan, drawing on Lakoff and Taussig, argues creates 'significantly disconnective *affects*', because '(i)t seems to emphasise that 'real nature' is somewhere else. It is not to be found in the mundane and rather less dramatic natures amongst which 'we' live and share our lives daily. And it can make our embodied interactions with material nature, as opposed to the virtual natures made possible through digital technology, somewhat less exciting and energising as a result'. To ram the point home, she suggests that watching nature-films is to love of nature as watching pornography is to intimate sexual relationships. The result is that 'such framing may work against composition of a caring ecocultural ethics that entwines human with more-than-human natures and futures'.

In this aspect her critique of the production process and discourses surrounding the production and creation of film resonate with other critics of natural history film who observe that, in their content, these films fail to capture the stillness and peace of the non-human world (Bousé 2000; Mitman 1999). Both Bousé and Mitman report the incident of a montage of violent money-shots from a BBC production that was shown on US networks as an advert. This upset Sir David Attenborough, the series narrator because it reduced the series to just the 'money shots'. But both authors also note that this was simply an extension of the logic producing the films in the first place. The peace and stillness of nature are removed, the films are filled with the action, the pursuit of which Sullivan has described. However, Sullivan goes one step further and contrasts these productive logics, and the sorts of films and disassociations they produce with an entirely different sort of film – *Green* whose mixture of complex story (of commodity chains) is peaceful *and* alarming footage, the absence of narration (or indeed any music for the first part of the film), and the fact that it is freely available, makes this utterly unlike the run-of-the-mill natural history programme. Yet *Green* won the top prize of the festival. This, Sullivan argues, is a hopeful moment: '*Green* is an 'anti-capitalist' *activist film* in which skill and art is passionately deployed to convey critique with political content and thus to motivate for change.'

Both Lousley and Sullivan provide richly supported and careful arguments, but both prompt queries. *Green's* role and purpose in a gathering such as WildScreen might be taken as precisely to provide a palliative contrast to the rank commercialization and disconnect being created for diverse audiences. The fact that the industry can honour these different films (as it has previously, awarding Mike Pandey's radical films the same prize) satiates the industry's collective conscience, allowing business to carry on as normal. In that sense *Green* may not be an alternative, but functional to the continuation of the system. For Lousley the challenge is that these deadening logics do create connection for particular communities—and most especially for scientists who plainly look up to and venerate the authors of these problematic texts. The connections that Lousely fails to find emanating from these works inspire thousands of young scientists around the world, even in Lockwoods' own paper in this collection, which begins with his grief at the loss of biodiversity.

Finally, we are immensely happy to close the issue with three wonderful commentaries on this issue by Phaedra Pezzullo (2016), Graeme Turner (2016) and Gill Branston (2016). All three scholars were presented with the wide-ranging constellation of topics in the issue and have crafted their own distinctive and succinct responses to it. Phaedra Pezzullo argues that this collection takes on the task of trying to reinvigorate sometimes tired environmental causes and, better still, to understand what revives climate change activism. Gill Branston, analysing film, engages with the environmentalist dystopias and dilemmas that are apparent in recent blockbusters, observing both a darkening of moods, plots and sets as well as a return to magical and thus apolitical approaches. Graeme Turner, discussing celebrity, reflects on how the politically compromised nature of the 'celanthropist' and their role in environmental debates may necessitate a move away from the celebrity-commodity. That these ideas have an echo in Dan Brockington's writings on celebrity advocacy, which emerged from environment and development studies, is indicative of how we have attempted to make this issue—like the network it came out of—a transdisciplinary endeavour. We are very grateful to the commentators for drawing such imaginative and constructive connections between and beyond the network.

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