

Writing & Society Research Centre Seminar Program
'Writing by the River'

Biology and the Two Cultures
Position Papers and Discussion
Jason Tuckwell, Marilyn Stendera and Timothy Jackson



C. P. Snow famously remarked that by the twentieth century a gulf had opened up between two cultures; the sciences and the humanities. This gulf seems cemented today in the institutional siloing of Arts from STEM. Perhaps what is less clear, is the reason for these persisting antagonisms: are they historical artefacts or do they still reflect irreconcilable differences within these disciplines? This is to enquire into the targets and terms of reference implied ('science', 'technology', and so on), and which are certainly contested, if not outdated and unhelpfully generic.

This seminar opens with the following problem: which sciences and which technologies are precisely opposed to the Humanities, and on what terms? Drawing on recent biological research and the biological and epistemological philosophies of Gaston Bachelard, George Canguilhem, and Gilbert Simondon, the panel will explore relations between biology, technology, and the arts. The format for this session will consist in three short position papers followed by a discussion and open forum with participants.

DATE: Friday 16 October

TIME: 11:00am - 12:30pm

VENUE: Western Sydney University, Parramatta South Campus, Whitlam Institute (Female Orphan School), Level 1, Geoffrey Robertson Boardroom, AND online on zoom.

RSVP: for F2F attendance [rsvp via Humanitix](#). For online attendance [register through zoom](#) and a link will be sent to you.

ALL WELCOME!

JASON TUCKWELL is Lecturer in English at Western Sydney University. His work studies creative functions in technology and aesthetics. His recent work focuses upon Gilbert Simondon and an organological account of computation. He is the author of *Creation and the Function of Art* (Bloomsbury 2018), editor of "SubStance Special Issue: In the Light of Simondon" (2025), and co-editor of a forthcoming "Angelaki Special Issue: Before French Theory" (2029).



MARILYN STENDERA is a lecturer in philosophy at the University of Wollongong. Her research focuses mainly on phenomenology, philosophies of mind and cognition, and the history of philosophy. She is the co-author, with Emily Hughes, of *Heidegger's Alternative History of Time* (Routledge, 2024), and is a Chief Investigator on the ARC Discovery Project DP260100985 'Grief at the Margins'. She is particularly interested in, and has published widely on, time – the temporal structures of cognition; the conceptualisation of lived temporality; and the relationship between time and power.



TIMOTHY JACKSON is a chemical ecologist, evolutionary biologist and philosopher. His empirical work has focussed particularly on the evolution and ecology of venomous animals, which encompasses everything from molecular evolution of genes that encode toxins, to pharmacology and behavioural ecology. Central to his teaching has been the use of concepts from chemical ecology to frame the human relationship with drugs, and associated questions in mental health. His philosophical work ranges from critical analysis of the usage of physical theory in biology to the development of "ontogenetic thought" – an approach to articulating the relationships between lived experience, science and mathematics, and story-telling and metaphysics.



Writing and Society Research Centre

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