

RESCUE

Terra nova

Some trans-disciplinary notes

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“Giddens’s paradox”

“It states that, since the dangers posed by global warming aren’t tangible, immediate or visible in the course of day-to-day life, however awesome they appear, many will sit on their hands and do nothing of a concrete nature about them. Yet waiting until they become visible and acute before being stirred to action will, by definition, be too late”.

– A. Giddens: *The Politics of Climate Change*. 2009.

State of the art

- 1. The move from ecology to environment
- 2. Environmental history
- 3. Environmental anthropology,
- 4. Science studies
- 5. Beyond deconstruction and the postmodern
- 6. Readiness for trans-disciplinarity and practical engagement

Trans-disciplinarity

- *Given the growing recognition that boundaries are fleeting and the nature/society dualism doesn't make much sense, how should conceptions of the "environment" change?*
- *How might notions such as "naturecultures" and the "biosocial" open up new perspectives on environmental change and which new approaches can be developed from these perspectives?*
- *How can the humanities and the social sciences be realigned with the rest of the academe and the world of policy making and how can they help to inform the understanding and mitigation of major environmental problems?*

How do we know?

- The global environmental crisis present unprecedented challenges to human perception and discourse. How do we reconcile the real and the virtual?

“It is well worth remembering that some of the most dramatic environmental problems we appear to be facing ... exist mainly as simulated representations in complex computer models of natural systems. Our awareness of the ozone hole over the Antarctic, for instance, depends very much on the ability of machines to process large amounts of data to produce maps of atmospheric phenomena that we ourselves could never witness at first hand. No one has ever seen the ozone hole. However real the problem may be, our knowledge of it cannot help being virtual”

- William Cronon. *Uncommon Ground*. 1996.

The humanities and the social sciences

- One of the important roles the humanities and the social sciences can play is to engage in a dialogue with the people who experience the instability of the Earth directly on a day-to-day basis, at the grass roots level.
- Another challenge relates to researching institutions and organization. How do people organize themselves and act with respect to growing environmental problems?

Appropriate subjectivities

- The framework of *environmentality*, combining the notions of *environment* and *governmentality* to develop “an approach to studying environmental politics that takes seriously the conceptual building blocks of power/knowledges, institutions, and *subjectivities*”.
 - Arun Agrawal. *Environmentalism*. 2005.

Back to Giddens

- *Given the scale and hybrid nature of environmental problems, what kinds of actions and mediations are appropriate for their resolution?*
- *How do we deal with Giddens’s paradox?*

RESCUE

*A grand and timely experiment
in inter-disciplinarity.*