

## **Abstract**

The beach is a fascinating and heterogenous space; while it is a paradisiacal place of tourism and vacation, it is also where the disastrous effects of climate change, waste and pollution become most visible. These contradictory and contested meanings and interpretations, as well as its “in-betweenness”, make it all the more surprising that neither the field of ecocriticism nor the field of disaster studies have given the beach systematic and explicit attention.

Following an interdisciplinary path paved by scholars such as Kate Rigby and Anthony Carrigan, this project is situated within the dynamic academic fields of material ecocriticism and disaster studies. Drawing on methodology and terms from postcolonial studies, disaster studies, material ecocriticism and littoral studies, it asks the questions: How do literary representations of disaster on beaches highlight or contradict the dichotomy between culture and nature? How does the beach as a setting make discourses about the agency of nature visible? Most importantly, though, this project links literary representations of disaster to discourses surrounding the current environmental crisis and aims to highlight the capacity of literature to influence and change conceptions of disaster.

Thus, this PhD project is situated within several emergent, dynamic as well as established fields. Its examination of littoral space and the linking of disaster studies with ecocritical questions further the interdisciplinary dialogue between fields of “natural” and “human” sciences.

**Key Words:** disaster studies, material ecocriticism, postcolonial ecocriticism, slow violence, littoral studies, blue humanities, literary studies, materiality, agency