



Dear EASLCE members,

I hope that all of you have passed pleasant holidays, found some time to spend with your family and friends, and have started this new year with fresh vigor and inspiration. Naturally – after all, I am writing here in my function as our organization’s acting president! – these well wishes are not entirely altruistic, but contain the inevitable dose of institutional selfishness: Over the next couple of weeks, the members’ area of our website will finally become fully functional. Very soon, we will therefore ask you to funnel some of that fresh vigor into updating your personal profile, including a list of recent publications. On the basis of this information, the website will generate not only the membership directory, but also a dynamic bibliography of our members’ ecocritical publications – a feature which, we are confident, will do a lot to strengthen a sense of shared purpose and to increase awareness of the scholarly work going on in our field. The personal profile will also keep track of your membership status, and on that basis send out automatic reminders when membership fees become due. These will be only the most visible changes in our website, which we are seeking to continually improve as a platform for ecocritical scholarship.

I am also very pleased to announce that we have a winner for the EASLCE’s 2012 graduate student essay prize: The prize goes to Christopher Schliephake of the University of Augsburg, Germany, for his essay “The Materiality of History and the Shifting Shapes of Memory in John Hersey’s Hiroshima and Alain Resnais’s Hiroshima Mon Amour.” The piece will be published in an upcoming issue of Ecozon@.

Schliephake’s essay approaches its topic from the perspective of material ecocriticism, and this is

also the focus of the upcoming webinar “Telling Bodies: Applications of Material Ecocriticism.” The webinar takes place on February 22<sup>nd</sup> and will be hosted by Serenella Iovino, one of the protagonists of this burgeoning new area of ecocritical theory. A second webinar with Joni Adamson, in which she will discuss her ongoing project on ecocritical keywords, is scheduled for late April. The webinars are intended to provide graduate students and scholars new to the field with an opportunity to discuss current trends in ecocriticism with prominent scholars. To register for these events, and for further details, please visit our website.

Furthermore, I need to announce the venue for this year’s annual general membership meeting. After some discussion, the advisory board has decided to hold the AGM at ASLE-UKI’s biennial conference on “Ecological Encounters,” which will be held at the University of Surrey (conveniently close to London) on August 29-31, 2013.

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EASLCE Newsletter  
Vol. 7.2 (Winter 2013)

A Biannual Publication of the  
**EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE  
STUDY OF LITERATURE, CULTURE  
AND ENVIRONMENT**

EASLCE Homepage:

<http://www.easlce.eu>

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EASLCE

Please, visit our web site at:

<http://www.easlce.eu>

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Please note the **editorial  
deadline** for the next issue:

**June 15, 2013**

Contact: Sylvia Mayer at  
[sylvia.mayer\(at\)uni-bayreuth.de](mailto:sylvia.mayer(at)uni-bayreuth.de)

The call for papers is posted on our website, and the deadline for paper proposals is March 31st. We hope that many of you will be able to attend. Among the topics on our agenda for this AGM will be a proposal to sponsor conferences organized by EASLCE members for the specific purpose of hosting the AGM during off-years.

Meanwhile, preparations for our organization's next biennial conference at the University of Tartu are proceeding apace. The date is already set, so you may want to mark this in your calendar: April 22-27, 2014. We have reached an agreement with the Nordic Network for Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies (NIES) to host this conference together – so after the 2010 conference in Bath, which was co-organized with

ASLE-UKI, this will be our second joint conference. I am particularly pleased about this development because it promises to bring greater diversity not only with regard to nationality, but also in terms of the disciplines that will be represented at the conference. We expect to be able to post the call for papers well before the summer.

Given how the past year has played out for our planet (and I recommend George Monbiot's year-end editorial in the Guardian for a depressingly clear-eyed summary), it may sound almost like mockery to say that everything is aligned to make 2013 a good year for our organization – but there you have it.

**Hannes Bergthaller**

## Publications / Call for Contributions

### ***Transatlantic Landscapes. Environmental Awareness, Literature and the Arts***

#### CALL FOR PAPERS

Editor: José Manuel Marrero Henríquez

GIECO-Franklin Institute-UAH

Following the 5th EASLCE conference on “*Natura Loquens: Eruptive Dialogues, Disruptive Discourses*” held in Tenerife last June, the conference organizers plan to edit a second volume consisting of a selection of the presented papers and further contributions. *Transatlantic Landscapes. Environmental Awareness, Literature and the Arts* is intended to be a volume of the new CLYMA Series, published by the Franklin Institute-UAH.

The basic agenda of *Transatlantic Landscapes. Environmental Awareness, Literature and the Arts* is to contribute to the growth of environmental awareness by challenging the epic values of conquering and dominating nature and by responding to the culture of modeling spaces --- and the literary and artistic landscapes projected

on them--- at the exclusive service of humankind. Euro-American culture has envisaged humans sitting on the throne of Creation, and anthropocentrism has greatly contributed to the overexploitation of natural resources. Nevertheless, the same literary, artistic, ideological, scientific, and technical devices at the service of devastation allow us to measure in great detail the dimension of the ecological crisis, as well as to study their contribution in spreading the general feeling of earthliness and environmental awareness that has been growing since the publication of the first global study of the perils accompanying Western economic ideas of progress (*The Limits to Growth*, 1972). Anthropocentrism has proved to be a powerful tool to unveil human hubris, increase humankind's sense of responsibility with regards to Nature, and impel a revision of its own conceptions of inhabiting the world. There is no doubt that Nature lies at the bottom of these possibilities for the redemption of Western culture, for it is Nature's voice that has inspired the changed relationship between Nature and humankind in what has been called the Anthropocene Era. This Era prompts us

to consider the biosemiotic suggestion that life itself is a process of signification, the new understandings of the agency of Nature, and the attention of ecological economics to the interdependence and co-evolution of human economies and natural ecosystems. Although the perception of the world “is everywhere filtered and transformed by technology, altered by the countless tools that interpose themselves between our senses and the earthly sensuous [David Abrams perceives that...] there’s a wildness that still reigns underneath all these mediations ---that our animal senses, coevolved with the animate landscape, are still tuned to the many-voiced earth”. Abrams’s appreciations highlight the instinct for survival at work in the arts and sciences. This idea also abounds in the work of Jorge Wagensberg who extensively has detailed the fact that Nature, beauty, and knowledge are intimately interwoven: Nature rewards those who are able to notice its beauty because those will precisely be the ones capable of learning from its regularities in space and time, that is, from its harmonies and rhythms.

Culture as an outcome of Nature impels *Transatlantic Landscapes. Environmental Awareness, Literature and the Arts* to seek essays searching for environmental potential not only in literary and artistic landscapes inspired by the oral cultures of the indigenous cosmogonies from the Americas, or by animist conceptions of beings and things in Nature, biocentrism, or ecopoetics, but also in the potential ecological wisdom hidden in those literary and artistic landscapes inspired by Western anthropocentric ideas of progress. An ecologically sustainable criticism can transform literary and artistic formulations of landscape averse to ecocentrism into readings of ecological content if they appeal to Nature’s drive to beauty and intelligibility; for example, the displacement of the wild from the East to the American West by intensive agriculture, exhaustive farming, and industrial development reveals beautiful national parks and indigenous reserves as confinement loafs for tourist consumption; the Colombian Amazonia, although called “the green hell” in “La

novella de la tierra,” shows a landscape fighting for survival against brutal usury; the Argentinean Pampa as a place incarnating barbarism before the civilized urban settings of La Plata ends up emphasizing the barbarism of a “civilized” racism ---to allude to Sarmiento’s famous dichotomy. The understanding of Nature as wild, hellish, barbaric, and opposed to civilization offers an enormous potential to draw Western culture back to its natural roots in the land and oral culture of its origin. There is a sign of holism in modernist correspondences inspired by the complexity of urban life, and there is a sense of unity of biosphere and humanity that binds all creatures in the common beauty deriving from God. *Transatlantic Landscapes. Environmental Awareness, Literature and the Arts* aims at avoiding dual cogitation and Aristotelian logic in order to give priority to comparative studies of artistic and literary landscapes that succeed in the use of conceptual frames (blending theory, homeostasis, Latour’s actor-network theory, Deleuze’s rhizomes, Kosko’s fuzzy thinking, Böhme’s atmosphere, Felber’s community welfare economics, Martínez Alier’s ecological politics) that promote perspectives of accordance and collaboration among a wide range of different cultural traditions, even if their concomitant views of, and approaches to, Nature and environmental issues, have been considered as contending opposites.

Those interested should send a **title and detailed abstract of 300 words** by **March 31, 2013**, showing a clear relationship with the goals of priority set forth by *Transatlantic Landscapes*. Answers to the received proposals will be sent **during April, 2013**. Articles, which will be double-blind peer reviewed, should be in English, between 6000 and 8000 words, in MLA format, and submitted by **December 31, 2013**. All correspondence should be sent simultaneously to

[jmarrero@dfc.ulpgc.es](mailto:jmarrero@dfc.ulpgc.es) and

[transatlanticlandscapes@hotmail.com](mailto:transatlanticlandscapes@hotmail.com)

**From Instants to Eons:  
- Time in Environment and Environmental History –  
Center for Environmental History in Estonia (KAJAK), Tallinn, 25 - 26 March, 2013**

Environment and environmental history feature countless diverse and often hardly reconcilable time scales. While “time” is probably one of the least questioned concepts in experimental science, being the basis of objectivity in measurements, it becomes infinitely diversified in the phenomenal world. Evolutionary, ecological, geological, cyclic, perennial, organismic, human (that is, specifically cultural) times are all indispensable elements of every environment and environmental historical treatment. At any given moment, the environment is shaped by the mostly short lived organisms acting here and now and long-term processes like evolution, ecological and climatic cycles or the birth and disappearance of human civilizations.

This diversity in times in environment and history poses also several methodological challenges, especially concerning the research material and metalanguage. The understanding of time and the choice of time scales is one the most fundamental components of environmental historical narratives and analysis. Without implicit temporal scales, we could not speak about changes and breaks, processes of (co-)evolution, revolution, pollution, industrialisation, migration or transformation, nor assess the importance of those phenomena for certain environments or cultures. In the past decades the question of human vs non-human time scales has further escalated together with the intensification of debates over human induced environmental change.

The conference invites contributions that delve into all these different times, their different scales, different perceptions of time or the lack of it, and last but not least, their methodological challenges for the environmental history. Especially welcome are contributions that try to look for time frames

and patterns typical or necessary for studying the environmental history of the Baltic region.

The conference encompasses the following sub-topics, but is not restricted to them:

- Concepts and narratives: What are the important temporal concepts that we work with in environmental history (e.g. global warming, catastrophes, invasions, domestication, origin, narratives of decline, progress etc.)?
- Scopes: Temporal scope of the environmental impact on human cultures, esp. in the Baltic region: How were the natural and cultural floras and faunas formed in the countries of the region? How and to what degree were natural and cultural developments interdependent, observed in different scales of time and space? To what degree environment has determined or restricted our past and present cultural features and developments?
- Perception and priorities: Linear *versus* cyclic or even cataclysmic *versus* cyclic time. What social and cultural processes and natural events guide the prioritization of some manifestations of time over others? For example, cataclysmic events of abrupt change that in short time scale have a devastating effect (forest fires, climate change, global warming) can be at the same time normal and necessary events in a larger cycle.
- Sustainability and protection: Does prolonging the temporal scope to the past also help us to

have an obsession with time and an unprecedented urge to make it stop. That has taken to flourishing protection activities (e.g. museums, zoos, national parks), where the preference for time frame or time type is never self-evident. Which of the many times we should prioritize? What about methodological implications (creation of knowledge as destruction)?

- Methodology: how to match the different time scales and methodologies, featured by different branches of environmental historical research? The same event, seen from a geological, evolutionary or human time scale may be highlighted or concealed, furnished with different meanings and characteristics. What are the revolutions, innovations, breaks we are talking about?
- Constructions: how to unroll a long-term historical process based on an archaeological

finding, chemical analysis of remains, series of measurements or a few extinct document fragments? How to guarantee the representativeness of your material? How to erase time between us and our research objectives?

You have 20 minutes for your presentation and 10 minutes for discussion. The working language of the conference will be English. Please send an abstract (300 words) and your CV to [sillasoo@tlu.ee](mailto:sillasoo@tlu.ee). Deadline for application is **December 20th**. We will inform you about the acceptance of your presentation by **January 10th**. There is no conference fee, but participants are expected to cover their accommodation and travel costs.

Right after the conference we also organize a thematically related doctoral seminar. You will find the information about that in a separate Call soon.

**ASLE-UKI One-day Symposium:  
– Literature and Sustainability –  
University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Lampeter Campus, March 15, 2013**

Arranged in collaboration with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's Institute of Sustainable Practice and Resource Effectiveness (INSPIRE) and part-financed by TSD's International Office, this ASLE-UKI (Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, UK & Ireland) symposium seeks to energise scholarly discussions about how literary criticism may fruitfully engage with the sustainability debate. Following an excellent response to the call for papers, the symposium is now open for registration and we very much hope you will come and join us for what promises to be a lively day of presentations and discussion.

For registration and booking details please visit the symposium website:

<http://www.trinitysaintdavid.ac.uk/en/inspire/asle-ukisymposium/>

We would also like to draw your attention to a parallel event, a public lecture competition, the prize for which is the opportunity to present your paper at the 2013 Hay Festival of Literature and the Arts.

<http://www.trinitysaintdavid.ac.uk/en/inspire/publiclecturecompetition/>

## Seattle / Transatlantic Dialogues on the Environment

**First Conference of the Transatlantic Research Network in the Environmental Humanities**

University of Washington, Seattle  
September 28-29, 2012

This conference organised jointly by Sabine Wilke (Professor of Germanics) and Gary Handwerk (Professor of English) at the University of Washington was sponsored by the University's Simpson Center for the Humanities and the Berlin-based Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. Sabine Wilke was awarded a Humboldt Foundation Alumni Prize in 2011, with the remit to establish a network of American and European scholars working in Ecocriticism and Environmental History. Key objectives of the network are to draw together Anglo-American ecocritical models of thought with the German tradition of thinking on the environment in a transatlantic conversation, and to explore ways in which the humanities can contribute to civil society debates about environmental change, in particular through cross-cultural and historical studies, with the ultimate aim of fostering social awareness and informing decision-making. (Further information is available at <http://environmental-humanities-network.org/>.)

At the conference, the fields of American, British and German history, philosophy, literature, film, and art were represented. Participants included members of EASLCE based in the USA (Bernhard Malkmus, Heather Sullivan) and Europe (Gabriele Dürbeck, Axel Goodbody). Bernhard Malkmus gave a keynote lecture on 'Geography and Landscape *Stimmung*' which explored the ecological significance of the spatial turn in cultural studies and of the element of human interaction and psychic attunement to nature contained in the idea of 'landscape'. Other papers addressed the influence of Alexander von Humboldt on the

American explorer Clarence King, analysed the environmental politics of the German-American geographer Karl Wittfogel, compared the environmental ethics of Hans Jonas and Aldo Leopold, regretted the insidious influence of *Robinson Crusoe* on popular understandings of our relationship with nature, and discussed writing and film on environmental catastrophe by T.C. Boyle, Hans Christoph Buch, Dirk Fleck, Dave Foreman, Max Frisch, Bernhard and Michael Grzimek, Werner Herzog, Wolfgang Hilbig, Elfriede Jelinek, Ian McEwan, Inka Parei, W.G. Sebald and Iliya Trojanow. Issues concerning the cultural and historical background to contemporary environmental attitudes, the interpretation of climate change and nuclear accidents in literary narrative, the pictorial representation of ecological relations, the literary depiction of ecologists, ecocentric identity, postcolonial environmentalism and ecological posthumanism were among those debated.

Publication of these papers is not intended, but the interdisciplinary and (essentially German-American) cross-cultural exchange of ideas will be developed further at a conference focused on the theme of the anthropocene at the Rachel Carson Center in Munich in June 2013. Professor Wilke, who edited a special issue of the Journal Pacific Coast Philology on 'Literature, Culture, and the Environment' in 2011 and has recently completed the manuscript of a monograph on 'German Culture and the Modern Environmental Imagination: Narrating and Depicting Nature', is taking up a Fellowship at the Rachel Carson Center in Munich in the first half of 2013.

**Axel Goodbody**

### The Rachel Carson Center, Munich, Germany /

#### Call for Applications 2013-14

The Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society invites applications for its [2013-2014 class of postdoctoral and senior fellows](#). The fellowship program, directed by Christof Mauch (LMU Munich/Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität) and Helmuth Trischler (Deutsches Museum) is designed to bring to Munich a cohort of excellent scholars who are working in the environmental humanities and related disciplines.

The Center will award fellowships to scholars from around the globe and from a variety of disciplines. Research and writing of applicants should preferably pertain to one (or more) of the topics that will be at the core of the Center's 2013-2014 research agenda:

- Ecological Imperialism
- Environmental Ethics, Politics, and Movements
- Natural Disasters and Cultures of Risk
- Environmental Knowledge and Knowledge Societies

Applications that deal with past topics of the Center will also be considered. These include:

- Transformation of Landscapes
- Resource Use and Conservation

The program is a writing fellowship program; the Carson Center does not sponsor field trips or archival research. Fellowships will usually be granted for periods of 6, 9, or 12 months but they can also be granted for 3 months or be broken up into individual 3 month periods. Fellows are expected to spend their fellowship in residence, to work on a major research project, to attend the weekly lunchtime colloquium, and to present their research at the Center.

The Carson Center will pay for a replacement of the successful candidate at his or her home institution; alternatively it will pay a fellowship that is commensurate with experience and current employment.

The deadline for applications is **31 January 2013**. Applications should include a cover letter, an abridged curriculum vitae (5 pages maximum), project description (3,000 words maximum), research schedule for the fellowship period, and the names of three scholars who might serve as references. While applicants may write in either English or German, we recommend that they use the language in which they are most proficient. They will be notified about the outcome of their application within approximately two months of the deadline given above. Please send applications (electronically only) in PDF or Word format via e-mail to [carsoncenter@lmu.de](mailto:carsoncenter@lmu.de)

## Publications by Members

Axel Goodbody and Kate Rigby, eds. *Ecocritical Theory: New European Approaches*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2011.