



# EASLCE

Vol. 12.1. Summer 2017

*newsletter*

A Biannual Publication of the European Association for the Study of Literature, Culture and Environment

Dear EASLCE Members,

As President of EASLCE, I feel compelled to begin with the recent developments in world politics about climate change. The common cause of the Paris Agreement was to bring all nations together to combat climate change, to fight its effects in solidarity and to strengthen the global response to this threat. Even if the U.S. has withdrawn from the Paris climate accord, creating sadness and frustration around the world, we need to be even more resilient and courageous as humanists and social scientists to join the international scientific community in charting sustainable courses in the global climate effort. Spreading environmental awareness with our narratives and through our ecologically oriented discourses in classrooms, conferences, seminars, and workshops, our work is important to address the impacts of climate change in the cultural imaginary. Collaboration is the key to step up on environmental challenges.

As scholars who are committed to the environmental humanities research, environmental justice, ecologically sustainable systems of education, and art and literature, we need to disseminate, now more than ever, environmentally just stories and their subjects from entangled human and nonhuman perspectives. Stories are effective tools of resistance, and storying the world anew in environmentally just ways is as important as scientific efforts in finding solutions to the planetary threat that we are all facing no matter where we live and work. As I wrote in my first presidential address, there is much work to do for EASLCE. We can contribute to the global combat of climate change with European perspectives, which “represent a common and flexible platform to work together as a unified body to achieve desired ecological outcomes.”

I have much hope as I witnessed this already in Turin on May 30-31 at the Joint International Conference on “Anthroposcenarios: Ecologies, Landscapes, and Stories,” where I was invited as a keynote speaker. So I take this opportunity to thank the Environmental Humanities International Research Group and the organizers, Daniela Fargione, Serenella Iovino, and Antoine Acker for

bringing natural and social scientists and environmental humanities scholars together to discuss the ways in which environmental changes are affecting human and nonhuman communities and to explore viable solutions to the changing climate. Such events are indeed a catalyst for hope.

Although we live in ecological uncertainties and have become what Donna Haraway calls “messmates” in the planet’s geomorphological processes and natural cycles and have turned the current epoch into a human age - the Anthropocene - with detrimental global activities, the solutions lie with us. We can write a new geostory furnished with non-anthropocentric meanings, which can materialize with new forms of resistance, new narratives, new imaginative and lexical vocabularies that take into account the still unheard voices of the disrupted nonhuman entities. They do not necessarily have to remain mute.

*...to be continued on page 3*

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EASLCE Newsletter  
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<http://www.easlce.eu>

For further information contact:  
Alexa Weik von Mossner:

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Please note the **editorial dead-  
line** for the next issue:  
**December 15, 2017**

As EASLCE's scholarly task force, we can indeed communicate a message of revaluating what we may lose, generating the creativity to imagine new accountabilities, more sustainable solutions, and also ethical responses. That is why we are now preparing to meet at ASLE's Twelfth Biennial Conference on "Rust/ Resistance: Works of Recovery" on June 20-24 in Detroit. Our Annual General Membership

Meeting is on Thursday, June 22 from 5:30-6:30 pm at Student Center, Hilberry B. I am looking forward to meeting those of you who are attending the conference, and sending my Best Wishes to all of you.

**Serpil Oppermann**  
**EASLCE President**

## Call for Papers

Call for Papers:  
"Population, Ecology, and the Malthusian Imagination"  
Ecozon@ Spring 2018. Number 9.1

Overpopulation has become the 'third rail' of contemporary environmentalism: no major organization wants to touch the issue anymore. While it had been one of the driving concerns of early environmentalism up until the 1970s, exemplified by such seminal texts as Fairfield Osborn's *Our Plundered Planet* (1948), Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (1968), and the Club of Rome's *The Limits of Growth* (1972), concern with population control has since dropped off the list of popular environmentalist causes. One of the primary reasons for this is undoubtedly that the discourse of overpopulation was found to be freighted with unsavory political associations: in many cases, concern over population seemed like a threadbare cover for racist and classist resentments, or just plain misanthropy, as when James Lovelock famously diagnosed the planet with a case of "disseminated primatemia," likening humans to pathogenic microbes. Concern with overpopulation was impugned as the expression of a neocolonialist mindset, one that implicitly dehumanized the peoples whose population was said to be in need of control. Environmental problems, it was argued, were not an issue of overpopulation in the Third World, but rather of overconsumption in the First. Famine and poverty were not effects of resource scarcity, but of a failure to distribute properly what resources were available.

However, recent years have seen a quiet resurgence of Neo-Malthusian thinking, and of the apocalyptic scenarios with which it has been so often aligned, that makes it imperative to revisit these debates. Since the turn of the century, a growing choir of political and military analysts has been prophesying an imminent era of resource wars. Anxiety over economic competition from migrants has fueled nativist movements around the globe.

Stephen Emmott's incendiary pamphlet *10 Billion* (2013) closes with the response of one of his colleagues to the question how to best prepare for life on an overpopulated, ecologically degraded planet: "Teach my son how to use a gun." Such developments seem to bear out the dire warnings of historian Timothy Snyder: in *Black Earth* (2015), he argues that just as Malthusian fears were an important ideological driver of Nazi Germany's genocidal warfare in Eastern Europe, they might once again be used to justify the abrogation of basic human rights. Yet all of this only makes it more pressing to find responsible ways of addressing the issue. Even if one does not consider population growth as a primary cause of ecological degradation, there is hardly any environmental problem that is not compounded and aggravated by it. While it is true that overconsumption in the "global North," where populations are shrinking, must bear most of the blame for climate change and many other large-scale problems, it is also clear that rapidly expanding human numbers in poor countries produce problems of their own. Often, traditional methods of resource extraction and land cultivation which were sustainable while the human population was small have become ecologically destructive simply because more people are now practicing them.

The aim of this special section is not only to re-assess the long-standing debate on overpopulation in light of these developments, but more importantly to examine the cluster of tropes, narratives, and images which have become attached to this idea, and which we propose to designate as the "Malthusian Imagination." Even while the issue of overpopulation disappeared from mainstream environmentalist discourse, it continued to flourish in the realms of literature and popular culture.

The “mad environmentalist” hatching a secret plan to rid the world of surplus population became something of a stock character (e.g. in Lionel Shriver’s *Game Control*, 1994; Terry Gilliam’s *12 Monkeys*, 1995; Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake*, 2003; Dan Brown’s *Inferno*, 2013; or Dennis Kelly’s TV series *Utopia*, 2013-14). Many of these texts and films engage in complex balancing acts, acknowledging the legitimacy of the concern even while they disavow the violent means by which it is pursued.

Guest Editors:

**Hannes Bergthaller**

(National Chung-Hsing University, Taiwan),

**Margarita Carretero-González**

(University of Granada, Spain)

The questions we would like contributors to address include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How do particular works of literature, film, or visual art deal with the representational challenges posed by population growth? How do different representational strategies relate to the ethical and political stance these works take? How do they dramatize a Malthusian “lifeboat ethics” (Hardin 1974), and to what extent do they articulate alternative positions?
- How can a concern over population growth

be reconciled with an emancipatory politics? How do gender equality and female education figure within the discourse on overpopulation, or the pronatalist views advocated by many of the major religions? How do recent concerns over the “refugee crisis” intersect with the issue?

- What theoretical framework should we adopt in order to conceptualize the problem of population growth? How can, for example, theories of biopolitics, postcolonial theory, critical feminism, queer theory, actor network theory, object-oriented ontology, or social systems theory help us to get a better grasp of the issue?

Please direct any queries to Hannes Bergthaller (hannes.bergthaller@gmail.com) or Margarita Carretero González (carreter@ugr.es). Manuscripts of 6000-8000 words should be submitted via the journal platform no later than August 15, 2017. Authors must comply with the guidelines indicated on the platform, including the title, abstracts, and keywords (in the language of the article, English, and Spanish). MLA style should be used for citations. Permission must be obtained for any images used, and the images should be included in the text. Manuscripts will be accepted in English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish.

Although it is not essential, we encourage potential authors to make prior contact with the editors and submit an abstract (approximately 500 words).

### Call for Papers:

## “Food Transformations: Eating and Wasting in the Anthropocene”

### Forum Kritika

Food in the 21st century would be unrecognizable to our great grandparents. Canadian ecocritic Susie O’Brien has recently explained in an interview in *ARIEL* that “food is a rich site through which to think about a number of things: environment, colonialism, culture, affect, subjectivity, among others.” There is an urgency to theorizing about food, especially given the fact that hunger is seriously at odds with the promises of industrial agriculture. Indeed, according to Vandana Shiva, “industrial agriculture has not produced more food. It has destroyed diverse sources of food, and it has stolen food from other species to bring larger quantities of specific commodities to the market, using huge quantities of fossil fuels and water and toxic chemicals in the process.”

One of the four main impacts of contemporary industrial livestock that Tony Weis explores

in *The Ecological Hoofprint* (2013) is environmental. Within this category of environmental impacts are subcategories including climate change, water use and pollution, biodiversity loss, energy wastage, the increase of antibiotic resistance among bacteria (and the subsequent creation of “superbugs”), and genetic pollution. There is no question, as Greta Gaard has recently observed, that “the ecological and human toll of industrialized human agriculture is no longer debated.” Yet, debates do rage about what exactly constitutes the Anthropocene, when it began, how it is sustained, what its philosophical and ethical contours and implications are, what conceptual tools it enables or disables, what it means to “think scale in cultural theory” (to borrow a phrase from Derek Woods), and so on.

What the Forum Kritika on Food Transfor-

mations seeks are theoretical understandings of literary food within the context of 21st century topics surrounding food. In particular, this Forum Kritika is interested in addressing several questions:

— How can we discuss from literary works the ways in which the practices of corporate capitalism and the pursuit of profit in the American food industry are neither viable nor productive of sustainable food sources, and how do we gauge and discuss the impacts of these practices on the Global South?

— What are the relationship between ecophobia, food, and rampant nationalism, and how are the cultural and national identities that cohere in food systems under threat when those food systems are dismantled?

— How can we theorize about the waste associated with food production, and how do these theoretical understandings cohere within the context of current debates about the definitional reach of the term Anthropocene?

— How can we theorize about relationships between food justice and environmental justice? What are the impacts of transnational food systems on the Global South?

— How important are matters about artificial food-like substances, GMOs, and synthetic hormones? And why?

— What can we gain from literary investigations of food in novels including but not limited to Ruth Ozeki's *My Year of Meats* or *All Over Creation*; Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl*; Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, *The Edible Woman*, *Lady Oracle*, or *The Handmaid's Tale*; Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation*; and so on?

#### **Submission guidelines**

Please send essays in the form of a Word document attachment to Dr. Simon C. Estok (estok@skku.edu; cc: kk.soh@ateneo.edu; subject: Food Transformations) by Oct. 15, 2017. Submissions should contain 7,000 to 8,000 words; include an abstract (200 to 250 words) and keywords (5 to 7; should not be repeated in abstract and title). Kritika Kultura's anonymous peer-review process requires that the electronic version of the essay contain no information that would identify the author. An author bio (100 to 150 words) should be included as a separate electronic file with the submission.

Papers will undergo a double blind peer review by specialists in the field, and the results will be announced by mid-Jan. 2018. At this time, the authors will receive the complete transcripts of the anonymous readers' reports. Revisions of accepted essays will be due by May 15, 2018, with a final copy due date of June 15, 2018. The Forum Kritika on Food Transformations will be published in Aug. 2018.

#### **About Kritika Kultura**

Kritika Kultura is acknowledged by a host of Asian and Asian American Studies libraries and scholarly networks, and indexed in the MLA International Bibliography, Thomson Reuters (ISI), Scopus, EBSCO, and the Directory of Open Access Journals. For inquiries about submission guidelines and future events, visit

<http://journals.ateneo.edu/ojs/kk/> or email [kk.soh@ateneo.edu](mailto:kk.soh@ateneo.edu)

### Call for Papers

#### "Losing Nature: Narratives of Forests and Water Environmental Challenges in Brazil and India"

The natural environment has always played a significant role in the discourse of national identities in Brazil and India albeit in different levels and dimensions. Both countries have a multi-layered and chequered history of similarities as well as dissimilarities. However, in many ways, it is on the environmental front that both countries at present appear to have several commonalities. Colonial depredations and the impact of globalization on indigenous cultures, and on the dispossessed sections of society especially women and on the environment, denigration of forest areas are certainly common factors of significance. Drastically depleting potable water levels are definitely a serious cause for concern.

When we explore ecological history and narrative, the plight of an entire planet would be evidenced. Geographically and culturally the Indian subcontinent that virtually occurs on the opposite side of the globe from Brazil, has also undergone several changes over the centuries which certainly has left deep imprints.

Now, the inquiry that the present book attempts to seek is through narratives that reflect these transformations: hitherto unprecedented demographic expansions, over exploitation of natural resources, pollution and depletion of river and fresh water sources, uncontrollable demands on the energy front, waste and garbage disposal, issues related to drastic

reduction of biodiversity—all these are impact factors one needs to inquire into when one considers “losing nature.” In philosophical as well as theoretical terms the question of what is nature, what is gained and lost in human-nature interaction, what is the essential “balance” of nature, are all important queries on a similar scale. Societal reality in present day Brazil and India is reconstructed and deconstructed at will by the powerful memory of the past alongside those of globalization and technocratic market structures.

Thus, the proposed volume contemplates chapters related to the representation and interrogation of environmental issues in both subcontinents, Brazil and India. Submissions are welcome from scholars, academicians and activists. Each article should enclose a declaration stating that the article has never been previously published elsewhere and is not currently under consideration for publication elsewhere with a short biographical note indicating the author’s name, institutional affiliation,

brief career history, postal address and email address. The abstract and research paper should be submitted in MS Word 2016-2017. For reference and citations follow the Chicago Manual of Style [Please see:

[www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)] Pages should be of A4 size, the title should be centrally aligned and objective, using Times New Roman 12-point font size, double spacing in between lines and end notes.

Abstract of 400 words to be send to

aslebrasil@gmail.com; indianature@gmail.com

Important Dates:

Abstract Due: June 30th 2017

Complete Manuscript: October 31<sup>st</sup> 2017

**Zelia Bora**

(Universidade Federal da Paraíba)

**Murali Sivaramakrishnan**

(Pondicherry University)

## Workshop & Conference Reports

### International Conference “Anthroposceneries: Ecologies, Landscapes and Stories” 30-31 May 2017, University of Turin, Turin, Italy

How to communicate climate change? What links migrations with the environmental crisis? In which ways does ecology enter the contemporary global debate? These are just some of the questions addressed at the international conference “Anthroposceneries: Ecologies, Landscapes and Stories”, which took place at the University of Turin on May 30 and 31.

Organized by Prof. Daniela Fargione (project “Transnational Appetites,” Dept. of Humanities,) EASLCE former President Prof. Serenella Iovino (coordinator of the Environmental Humanities International Research Group, Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literatures and Modern Cultures), and Dr. Antoine Acker (H2020/ Train2Move). The conference hosted various international experts, who examined the relationship between humans and non-humans in a multidisciplinary way.

The conference consisted of four main sections. The first, “Cultural Ecologies”, opened with a keynote held by EASLCE-Advisory-Board- member Hubert Zapf (Universität Augsburg, Germany) who proposed literature as a preferential way to study the interrelation between culture and nature, underlying the role cultural ecology plays in textual analysis. The

presentations that followed showed some case studies taken from Russian literature (Nadia Caprioglio), German literature (Silvia Ulrich), Irish literature (Irene de Angelis) and contemporary Italian cinema (Alberto Baracco).

The second section, titled “Migrations and Resources,” started with a keynote lecture by historian Marco Armiero (KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Environmental Humanities Lab, Stockholm) on the specific connections between environmental justice and migration history. Widening the topic, other scholars presented the case of environmental migrants in Brazil (Antoine Acker and Nathalia Cappellini) and in the Pacific islands (Paola Della Valle), the “migrations” of grapes and wines (Emiliano Guaraldo), control of waters as an instrument of power in Piedmont (Pierpaolo Merlin and Alice Blythe Raviola) and finally the influence of the capitalism on the environment (Massimo Scalia) and the weakness of the political and social control on climate change (Aurelio Angelini).

EASLCE’s current President Serpil Oppermann (Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey) inaugurated the third section, “Narratives and Dis-

courses”, with a keynote lecture on the stories of the Anthropocene that ask for new human and nonhuman narrations of the world, as it is shown by some examples of (climate fiction). It was followed by a study of the role of memory in the writings of landscape (Antonella Tarpino) and two eco-linguistic analysis of the business discourse on sustainability (Alessandra Molino), especially in some French enterprises (Maria Margherita Mattioda).

In the final section, “Food in the Anthropocene”, Joni Adamson (Arizona State University, USA) recalled in her keynote the contribution of films and literary texts in address showing some good local practices, useful to increase people’s

awareness on environmental issues and suggest new ways of behaving. Food has been examined also from the perspective of migrations, thanks to the metaphor of the fridge (Carmen Concilio) and the stories written by migrant women for the Concorso Letterario Nazionale Lingua Madre (Daniela Finocchi and Paola De Marchi), with a last focus on the Expo2015 contradictory experience (Patricia Kottelat) and the peculiarity of the Anthropocene context (Mario Salomone). The meteorologist Luca Mercalli made the conclusions, by resuming the most updated data on the present condition of the planet and calling everyone for a prompt and collective action.

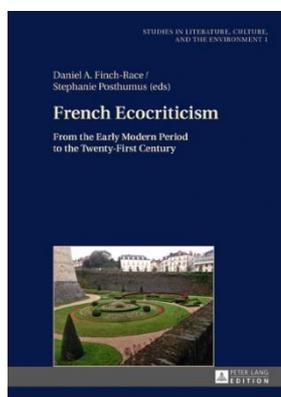
## International Prizes

### 2016 Book Prize of the American Association for Italian Studies (AAIS) Ecocriticism and Italy: Ecology, Resistance and Liberation by Serenella Iovino

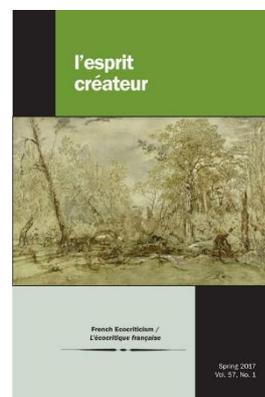
Last April in Columbus, Ohio, EASLCE’s past President Serenella Iovino was awarded the 2016 Book Prize of the American Association for Italian Studies (AAIS) for her last monograph *Ecocriticism and Italy: Ecology, Resistance, and Liberation* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic 2016). The book was the inaugural title of the series “Environmental Cultures” (eds. Greg Garrard and Richard Kerridge). *Ecocriticism and Italy* reads the diverse Italian landscapes in cultural imagination: from death in

Venice as a literary trope and petrochemical curse, through the volcanoes of Naples to wine, food and environmental violence in Piedmont. Examining cases where justice, society and politics interlace with stories of land and life, pollution and redemption, Iovino argues that literature, art and criticism are able to transform the unexpressed voices of these suffering worlds into stories of resistance and practices of liberation. Congratulations to Serenella Iovino on this great achievement!

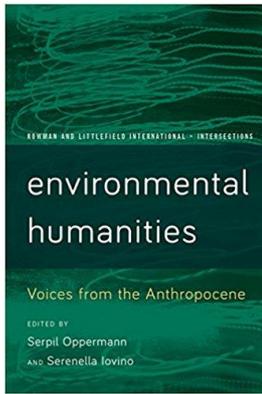
## New Publications



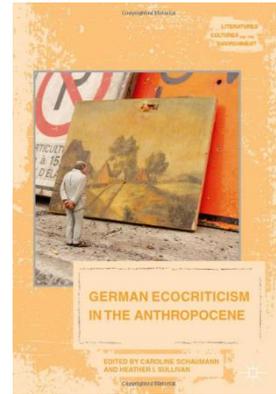
*French Ecocriticism: From the Early Modern Period to the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Daniel A. Finch-Race, and Stephanie Posthumus, Peter Lang, 2017



“French Ecocriticism/L’Écocritique française.” *L’Esprit créateur*, edited by Daniel A. Finch-Race and Julien Weber, vol. 57, no. 1, 2017.



*Environmental Humanities: Voices from the Anthropocene*, edited by Serpil Oppermann, and Serenella Iovino, Rowman & Littlefield, 2017.



*German Ecocriticism in the Anthropocene*, edited by Caroline Schaumann, and Heather I. Sullivan, Palgrave, 2017.