

# EASLCE NEWS LETTER

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

This issue of the EASLCE Newsletter comes at a time of changes. Major changes are the ones which will affect everyone's life on this planet: the starting of Barack Obama's administration and his proclamation of a "new deal" will likely determine a shift not only in American society but also in the international policies about our global environment.

Besides these, there are other changes, which might look minor, but that are nevertheless essential for the life of our Association. Our third biennial conference in Alcalá de Henares, held last October, has in fact meant for EASLCE the election of its third "administration." EASLCE has new executives and, as its third President, I want to express the gratitude of all of us to Sylvia Mayer and Christa Grewe-Volpp, respectively former President and Treasurer. Their work has been necessary to the reinforcement of our Association, and their continuing support as members of the Advisory Board will still be indispensable. The Committee is now composed of Carmen Flys Junquera, Americanist and pioneer of Ecocriticism in Spain (Vice-President), Catrin Gersdorf, Americanist and avant-garde representative of German ecocritical studies (Treasurer), and myself, Italian environmental ethicist and former EASLCE Vice-President. The advisory committee has also been renewed, and its list of members is available on our website.

The conference in Alcalá has brought also other novelties, which will contribute to EASLCE's vitality. The first is about our next biennial conference, which will take place at the University of Bath, England, on September 1 to 4, 2010. The conference topic will be: "Environmental Change—Cultural Change." Local hosts will be Axel Goodbody, Greg Garrard and a team of colleagues. This is a particularly important event, because it will be organized by EASLCE and ASLE UK, being the first joint-conference of the

two leading ecocritical associations in Europe and, hopefully, the first step toward tighter cooperation and mutual exchange.

A key-event is also the creation of *Ecozon@: European Journal of Literature, Culture and Environment*, an electronic journal intended to represent an interdisciplinary and multilingual forum for European Ecocriticism. *Ecozon@*, whose first issue is expected this fall, will be the outcome of a close cooperation between its founding core GIECO (the Spanish Grupo de investigación ecocrítica—Group for Research on Ecocriticism) and EASLCE. Carmen Flys Junquera will be both director of the journal and "interface" between GIECO and us.

EASLCE will also start an EASLCE listserve, managed by Diana Villanueva Romero (University of Extremadura, Spain, and member of GIECO). Purpose of the listserve is to promote a dialogue among the members of EASLCE and contribute to the visibility of the association on an international scholarly forum.

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## EASLCE Newsletter

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

EASLCE HOMEPAGE

<http://www.easlce.eu>

<http://www.thermaldegree.com/designs/easlce>

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Please note the **editorial deadline** for  
the next issue: **July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009**.  
Contact: Sylvia Mayer at  
[svlvia.maver\(a\)uni-bavreuth.de](mailto:svlvia.maver(a)uni-bavreuth.de)

(continued from page 1)

2009 is also the year of the Eight ASLE biennial conference, which will take place in June in Victoria, Canada (see cfp in the Newsletter). Several of us will be there on behalf of EASLCE. To strengthen our dialogue with our transatlantic colleagues will be one of our constant endeavours.

Finally, two more conferences are finally to be mentioned: the first Turkish ecocritical Conference (“The Future of Ecocriticism: New Horizons”, Antalya, November 4 to 6, 2009) and a symposium in the Netherlands (“Toward a European

Ecocriticism?”, Nijmegen, January 13 to 15, 2010). More information about both in the next issue of the Newsletter and on the EASLCE website.

All these initiatives increase EASLCE’s strength. This is, in my opinion, a good sign of our “ecological health,” which flourishes through diversity and interconnectedness. May the year 2009 bring all of us and our ideas the vitality of a shared venture.

Serenella Iovino  
EASLCE President

#### HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER OF EASLCE

Please, visit our web site at:

<http://www.easlce.eu>

or

<http://www.thermaldegree.com/designs/easlce>

For further information contact:

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### International Affiliates

ASLE (USA)

<http://www.asle.umn.edu/>

ASLE-ANZ (AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND)

<http://www.asle-anz.asn.au/>

ALECC-CANADA

<http://www.alecc.ca>

ASLE-INDIA

<http://www.geocities.com/asle-india/index.htm>

ASLE-JAPAN

<http://www.asle-japan.org/english/index.cgi./index.html>

ASLE-KOREA

<http://www.aslekorea.org>

ASLE-UK

<http://www.asle-anz.asn.au/>

OSLE-INDIA

<http://www.osle-india.tripod.com/id7.html>

## International Conferences / Call for Papers

### ASLE 8<sup>th</sup> BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

#### “ISLAND TIME: THE FATE OF PLACE IN A WIRED, WARMING WORLD”

University of Victoria, BC, Canada  
June 3-6, 2009

The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) invites proposals for its Eighth Biennial Conference, to be held June 3-6, 2009, at the University of Victoria, in British Columbia, Canada, on the theme of "Island Time: The Fate of Place in a Wired, Warming World." We seek proposals for papers, panels, roundtables, workshops, and other public presentations connecting language, nature, and culture. As always, we welcome interdisciplinary approaches; readings of environmentally inflected fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction; and proposals from outside the academic humanities, including submissions from artists, writers, practitioners, activists, and colleagues in the social and natural sciences.

This year's theme uses the conference's temporal and spatial location on Vancouver Island as a metaphor for the past and future of place generally. In particular, it reflects the fact that ASLE's first conference outside the U.S. is a fitting location to consider how the Internet and globalization now connect us all (linking our different identities, nations, and communities), as well as how the threat of climate change is affecting our interpretation of texts and cultures, not to mention the material world itself.

Building on the colloquial expression "you're now on island time," the theme suggests our interest in exploring intersecting questions of time and place, and of isolation and community, in a global era in which there are no longer any "islands" of nature outside of history and technology. Indeed, time appears to be running out as we seek ways to address ecological disasters that risk turning the planet as a whole into another "Easter Island." For this reason, we also urgently wish to consider the interconnected subjects of indigeneity, race, and social justice, in the Americas and globally, the engagement of which is crucial to achieving a sustainable society.

We are also interested in receiving proposals on the following related topics:

- **island literature and life**, including writing on metaphoric islands, such as protected areas, "sky islands," islands of urban and suburban nature, and environmental restorations
- **place-based writing in any genre or field**, including eco-poetics, eco-theater, environmental film, environmental history, landscape architecture, and cultural geography
- **environmental literature as world literature**, including comparative literature, cross-cultural approaches, borderlands writing, and travel writing
- **literature from rooted modes of life**, including forestry, fisheries, agriculture, viticulture, and apiculture
- **ecocriticism, literary theory, and ecophilosophy**, including post-structuralist approaches
- **scientific research and writing**, including the history of science
- **ideas of the human**, including meditations on animals and animality, the body, and disability studies
- **narratives of "greening the campus,"** including initiatives related to recycling, transportation, and energy
- **environmental rhetoric and ecocomposition**
- **ecopedagogy and the scholarship of teaching and learning**
- **undergraduate research and creative work**
- **the literature of environmental hope and joy.**

Registration will open on approximately February 15, 2009. Please see the conference website for details.

Conference Website: <http://asle.uvic.ca>

**NEXT BIENNIAL EASLCE CONFERENCE 2010**  
**► PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT ◀**

**University of Bath, England**  
**September 2010**

Please make a mental note, or an entry in your diary, if you have one which covers 2 years: The next biennial EASLCE conference will be a joint event with ASLE (UK). It will be held at the University of Bath, 1-4 September, 2010. The theme will be "Environmental Change - Cultural Change".

A Call For Papers will be circulated in the summer, and a conference website set up. Within the general framework of the thematic focus on cultural constructions of environmental change, papers will be sought on

- literary responses to climate change
- cultural reflections on / interpretations of other aspects of environmental change
- literary / filmic / artistic strategies for promoting environment-friendly behaviour.

Attention will be given to exploring different philosophical / ideological approaches, different modes, genres, narrative strategies and images, different cultures, historical periods, and questions of eco-didactics. It is intended that film (feature and documentary) and art / performance will be represented by events and papers, and a dialogue with environmental scientists and policy makers will be sought.

Accommodation is being reserved on campus, but will also be available nearby in Bath. A tour of the city, visit to the Roman Baths, field trips and an evening Ceilidh are planned.

Any **enquiries** at this stage please contact  
Professor Axel Goodbody  
mlsahg@bath.ac.uk

**Projects / Information**

**EASLCE LISTSERVE**  
**► NEW ◀**

**Dear EASLCE members,**

Since today's IT tools provide us with the means to rapid and effective communication, EASLCE's Executive Committee has agreed to have a listserve to facilitate contact among EASLCE members. This is to be hosted by RedIRIS, the Spanish NREN (National Research and Educational Network) in charge of providing advanced communication services to the scientific and academic community.

The aims of the EASLCE listserve can be defined as follows:

- promoting dialogue among members of EASLCE on the topics of interest of the association
- enhancing the professional development of all members
- contributing to the visibility of the association on a scholarly forum

since RedIris posts information about its listserves in an international database.

In order to subscribe, you need to send an e-mail to

LISTSERV@LISTSERV.REDIRIS.ES with the following text:

»subscribe EASLCE Name Last Name«

Example:

To: [LISTSERV@LISTSERV.REDIRIS.ES](mailto:LISTSERV@LISTSERV.REDIRIS.ES)  
Subject:

-----  
suscribe EASLCE Diana Villanueva

Once subscribed, messages must be sent to the following address:

EASLCE@listserv.rediris.es

Best regards,  
Diana Villanueva Romero

Diana Villanueva Romero  
dvillanv@unex.es  
University of Extremadura/GIECO  
Cáceres, Spain

## International Conferences / Reports

### EASLCE's Third Biennial Conference "Cultural Landscapes: Heritage and Conservation"

EASLCE Third Biennial Conference, Alcalá de Henares, Spain  
October 16<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008

EASLCE's third biennial conference took place in Alcalá de Henares (Spain), from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> October 2008, under the theme "Cultural Landscapes: Heritage and Conservation." Organized at the Research Institute for North American Studies of the University of Alcalá by Dr. Carmen Flys-Junquera and GIECO (Group for Research on Ecocriticism), the conference provided a space for debate regarding the development of landscape representation and perception in literature and other arts, as well as the role of these representations in education. More than 150 people attended the conference, with delegates from 20 different countries, addressing the issue from a variety of fields: ecology, architecture, geography, cultural and literary studies, thus evidencing the increasing interest on ecocriticism in Europe.

Native American poet Linda Hogan gave the opening plenary lecture, "The Great Without", in which she delighted the audience with readings of some of her poems. It was John O'Keefe's task to give the closing plenary lecture, "Presenting Landscape - History, Perception and Change - to Museum Audiences". O'Keefe illustrated his topic with the case study of the Harvard Forest Fisher Museum of Forestry in Petersham, Massachusetts, which he coordinates.

Under the title "Literature and the New European Landscape Policies", a side event, sponsored by the Council of Europe, the Spanish Ministry for Environmental Affairs and Friend of Thoreau, was celebrated in which prominent academic and political figures addressed such important issues as the cultural aspects of landscape policies in the framework of the European Landscape Convention, which included a case study of the role played by literature and the humanities in the planning of the historical orchard of Valencia.

One of the highlights of the EASLCE Annual Meeting, in addition to the election of a new board, was the presentation of the project for the association's electronic journal. *ECOZON@: European Journal of Culture, Literature and Environment* was presented as a joint venture of GIECO and EASLCE. The editorial

team hopes to see the journal's first issue published in Autumn 2009.

The first among the various cultural activities was the inauguration of the exhibit *Ruta "Viaje a la Alcarria: una visita naturalista"*, on the first day of the conference. On the evening of Friday 17<sup>th</sup>, the event "Dancing Landscapes", produced by *VistaPalabra*, was held at the theatre La Galera: Poets Linda Hogan and Julia Barella read their poems to the performance of dancers from the *Instituto Superior de Danza "Alicia Alonso"*. During the conference there was also a permanent digital presentation of photographs of cultural landscapes contributed by delegates. Adverse weather conditions prevented delegates from taking the guided walk around Aranjuez's historical groves on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>. Instead, they enjoyed a boat trip along the Tagus river together with a guided tour by train around the city of Aranjuez and its palace's gardens, followed by a wonderful lunch overlooking the river. The organizing committee would like to thank the *Fundación Aranjuez Paisaje Cultural* for organizing this cultural trip and for their efforts and success in saving the day.

The celebration of the conference in Spain has enabled scholars working on the relationships between nature and culture outside the English-speaking world to exchange views. In addition to the large number of Spanish scholars, there was a significant French participation as well as scholars from Latin America, Northern Africa and Portugal. Thus, we feel the conference has contributed to giving impulse to the field of ecocriticism in countries in which previously there was no tradition. For more information, details and photos, see the conference web page: [www.iuien-uah.net](http://www.iuien-uah.net) and click on "conferences/congresos" and then "congresos realizados".

Margarita Carretero  
(Universidad de Granada, Spain)

**In the Maine Woods: A Report on  
„Education for a Changing Climate: An Environmental Education Workshop“  
at Unity College ME**

Unity, Maine  
July 27<sup>th</sup> - August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008

Between July 27<sup>th</sup> and August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008, some 20 participants, 10 faculty and administrators convened in the charming city of Unity, Maine, to attend a workshop on environmental education and climate change. Participants came from a number of professional backgrounds such as university professors in the social sciences or humanities, museum curators, journalists and a manager-turned-teacher to name just few. They came to Maine for a week in order to learn, cooperate, and exchange: The intensive program was organized and co-sponsored by *The Orion Society* and Unity College, also known as “America’s Environmental College.”

What brought these people together was a shared desire to learn at the interface of disciplines and innovate their educational practices regarding the environment in general or climate change in particular. The program was an intricate weave of academic lectures, experiential, hands-on workshop sessions and a host of diverse framing activities. Furthermore, a challenge was introduced to instigate continual group work over the course of the week.

Next to local academics and organizers, the core faculty consisted of four experts. Each of them gave a lecture and, as a follow-up, led the participants in experiential workshops that gave them a chance to consolidate and apply the approaches to specific environmental or educational scenarios. The week started out with the plenary address “Our Environmental Challenge” by Nalini Nadkarni, who is a forest canopy ecologist at Evergreen State College in Olympia WA and founder of the International Canopy Network. Not only has she received a number of awards and media attention for her work, she is also known for her resourceful outreach ideas. Nadkarni has developed the ‘Treetop Barbie’ to raise awareness for the needed research in forest canopies as well as the professional opportunities that can be derived from this field. What is more, in her academic and community work she created a Canopy rap song as well as poetry and photo exhibitions. In her program talk “Canopy Case Studies: Science, Environment and Outreach”, she described the need and the interdisciplinary potential of studying forest canopy by using examples of the

changes and dangers that climate change brings for those oft-neglected habitats. By applying Maslow’s hierarchy of needs to the relationship between trees and mankind, she could demonstrate the benefits such an approach entails. Nadkarni’s workshop “Meeting Your Forest” was certainly one of the highlights in an outstandingly inspiring and academically productive week. It has been one of her missions to bring people from different walks of life into the tree tops and she has extended this to the workshop participants also. To put on climbing gear, go through the physical strains and, finally, see the surrounding world from a few feet up a sugar maple or hemlock was a defining, inspiring and perspective-changing moment for all participants.

The South Georgia writer and environmental activist Janisse Ray gave a talk on “What I Mean by Sustainable, Or, Revolution in the Classroom” in which she asked, how we were going to live so that we would not destroy ourselves or our communities. Environmental Education should allow for citizens to lead a life of responsibility, fully informed about what is important, what consequences their actions entail and why people hold themselves back at times to behave in ways other than their better knowledge would suggest. In her writing workshop “Where the Wild Things Are”, participants used pen on paper to approach chances and challenges with regards to just that question: What holds us back? Janisse Ray is best known for her acclaimed books *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood* (2000), *Wild Card Quilt* (2003) and *Pinhook* (2005).

In his lecture “Symbols Don’t Wiggle in Your Hand: High Technology’s Challenge to Environmental Education”, education professor Lowell Monke of Wittenberg University OH related the overexposure to technological gadgets to a loss of perceptual skills with regards to our environment. One result may be that technological possibilities are used to replace first-hand experience of the environment and, thereby, prevent the making of first-hand experiences out of doors. He calls for the development of a rich inner experience in learners as a prerequisite for exposure to the technological world. In his workshop “How Can the Made World Serve in Understanding

the Natural World?", Lowell Monke lead the participants in a reflection on lesson planning on one topic but for three utterly different learner groups.

Carey Stanton is the Senior Director of Education at the *National Wildlife Federation* and a principal advisor on Albert Gore Jr.'s climate change project. Furthermore, she is the founder of "Earth Tomorrow", an initiative to bring urban youth into nature. She reported generously on experiences and the development of nationwide outreach strategies as well as challenges in the removing of barriers for certain groups to be addressed. In her workshop on "Getting Real about Climate Change Education", participants could profit from her expertise in designing environmental campaigns.

The Executive Director of *The Orion Society* and editor of *Orion Magazine*, H. Emerson Blake offered a special discussion about the question of how to engage people

with the natural world. Further discussions were spurred

by Mitch Thomashow, president of Unity College, and Cindy Thomashow, director of the *Center for Environmental Education*. The lectures, workshops and extra-sessions were framed by a number of quite different yet engaging activities such as an interpretive tour of the college grounds, an early morning nature walk with local resident naturalist Dave Potter, a choice of four field trips, a premiere film screening of the award-winning movie "Between the Tides" and a final lobster bake banquet with an organic bonfire. The success of the 2008 workshop inspired Unity College and *The Orion Society* to offer those summer programs on a regular basis.

Uwe Kuchler  
(Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Germany)

## **"Beyond Thoreau: American and International Responses to Nature"**

International Conference  
Tsinghua University, Beijing, China  
October 9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Founded and promoted by Tsinghua University, China, and United States-China J. William Fulbright Program, U.S.A. and hosted by the Foreign Languages Department, Tsinghua University and the Center for Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies, Tsinghua University, in particular by Professor Wang Ning and W. J. T. Mitchell, this 2008 International Conference had its focus on "Beyond Thoreau: American and International Response to Nature." This year's keynote speakers were Scott Slovic (University of Nevada, Reno, "A Place in Space: Taking to Heart the Literature of Sustainable Architecture") and Wang Ning (Foreign Languages Department, Tsinghua University, "Toward a Literary and Environmental Ethics: A Reflection on Ecocriticism") on October 9; Elizabeth Schultz (Foreign Languages Department, Tsinghua University, "From the Egocentric to Ecocentric Odyssey: The Evolving Journey Narrative"), Greta Gaard (Fairhaven College at Western Washington University, "Take Me to the River, Drop Me in the Water's Environmental Narratives beyond the Mainstream"), and Serenella Iovino (Vice President of EASLCE, "Naples 2008, Or, The Waste Land: Trash, Citizenship, and the Power of Narrations") were on October 10<sup>th</sup>.

In order to demonstrate the connection between art and ecology, the conference led to visit the exhibition of environmental dancers, namely, Muriel Cohan and Patrick Suzeau ("Sacred Geography" at One Moon Contemporary Beijing) and Joan Stone ("Dancing Thoreau and Ives").

Over seventy scholars with various nationalities were hosted by Tsinghua University, China, on October 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> on both the beautiful Tsinghua University campus and in the conference hall in Beijing Xijiao Hotel, whose cordiality and hospitality allowed scholars to strengthen their affiliation inside and outside the conference. Topics of the conference were diverse: from Thoreau, nature writing and the comparative study of Thoreau and Chinese literature/philosophy to criticism beyond Thoreau and environmental ethics. The conference anticipates that the Center for Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies may include more comparative studies of ecological / environmental literature and Chinese literature and philosophy in the future.

Yalan Chang

## Publications by EASLCE Members

Terry Gifford.  
*Ted Hughes*.  
London: Routledge, 2009.  
ISBN 978-0-415-31189-2

Ursula K. Heise.  
*Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global..*  
New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.  
ISBN 978-0-195-33564-4

This section provides information about recent book publications by EASLCE members. If you would like to have your publication included, please send bibliographical information (including ISBN) to Sylvia Mayer at [sylvia.mayer\(a\)uni-bayreuth.de](mailto:sylvia.mayer(a)uni-bayreuth.de)