

EASLCE NEWS LETTER

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

While I am writing this editorial note, thousands of hectares of Mediterranean forests are burning all over southern Europe. Italy, France, Spain and Greece are the countries which more than others suffer under this terrible calamity: a disaster which punctually returns with every summer, and whose victims can be indifferently human (sometimes), and non-human (always). The causes for wildfires are diverse: hot weather, strong winds, dry vegetation. But crucial is human responsibility. Especially (but not exclusively) in Italy, the destroyed spots are in fact converted into building development areas, mostly controlled by the so-called “ecomafia”.

In this panorama the title of our last conference in Alcalá (*Cultural Landscape: Heritage and Conservation*) comes back to my mind, sounding constructively provocative. As never before the need is felt to preserve, to protect, and to *know* our endangered landscapes, both cultural and natural. Therefore, the need to implement a culture of the environment by way of literature and art must be taken seriously, particularly here in Mediterranean Europe, a place where more than elsewhere the presence of “ecomafia”—in all its forms, criminal and political—is the real hampering factor for environmental protection. To my mind, ecocriticism is our cultural weapon, and EASLCE uses it as an instrument of creating awareness and of participation in environmental struggles, giving our activities the meaning of a shared ethical commitment for our shared world. This must characterize our initiatives and our identity. By definition, in fact, EASLCE is not associated to a single country: this makes our identity a necessarily multiple one, enriched by the diversity of languages and places to which our members belong. In this perspective, imagining ethical and educational strategies for a sustainable future through cultural diversity and interrelationship is the real power of the ecological culture we have in mind: a culture which, starting from the academia, would influence the way in which different people, from different cultures, languages and countries, can envision a culture of sustainability.

The special character of ecocriticism in Europe and in the Mediterranean will be addressed at two important, upcoming conferences: *The Future of Ecocriticism: New Horizons: An International Conference* (Antalya, Turkey: November 4-6, 2009), and *New Grounds: Ecocriticism, Globalization and Cultural Memory* (Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands: January 13-15, 2010, featuring a plenary panel devoted to *The State of Ecocriticism in Europe*). In both cases, EASLCE will have a pivotal role in the organization as well as the discussion: the scientific committees of both conferences include members of EASLCE (Axel Goodbody for the conference in the Netherlands, and myself for the conference in Turkey). And in both cases representatives of EASLCE will hold plenary lectures (Catrin Gersdorf, Axel Goodbody, and myself; other plenary speakers will be major international ecocritics and environmental writers such as Scott Slovic, Linda Hogan, Greta Gaard, Elizabeth Schultz, and Greg Garrard). In Antalya will also take place our General Assembly, namely, the annual meeting of EASLCE members. Everyone of you is warmly invited. (You will receive the details of the meeting and the Agenda in October.)

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EASLCE Newsletter

Vol. 4.1 (Summer 2009)

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

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<http://www.bath.ac.uk/esml/easlce>

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Please note the **editorial deadline** for
the next issue: **December 15, 2009.**
Contact: Sylvia Mayer at
[sylvia.mayer\(a\)uni-bayreuth.de](mailto:sylvia.mayer(a)uni-bayreuth.de)

(continued from page 1)

A sustainable future requires a cultural change. This is, in my opinion, what will make our next conference, co-organized with ASLE-UK, an important moment of debate, intellectual exchange and eco-cultural visions. The topic of the conference – *Environmental Change, Cultural Change*—apparently so distant from the one in Alcalá, can, in fact, be seen as a continuation: environmental change being an essential change in landscape, also determines changing attitudes toward the natural world, its historical dialectics, and the values transmitted by tradition and cultural images. The conference, which will be held at the University of Bath, England, September 1-4, 2010, is announced in this issue of the Newsletter.

Summer can be a time for relaxing and a time for working. In any case, it is usually a time for planning. I close my editorial with the wish of a refreshing time for our ideas and intellectual energies. Forests and woods are good places to find refreshment.

Therefore, in anticipation of an ecological shift in our cultural panorama, I greet all of you with the hope of more sustainable, possibly fireless, and greener future summers. Everyone's contribution will definitely help.

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>

Bath Conference 2010 / Call for Papers

“ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE – CULTURAL CHANGE”

University of Bath,
September 1-4, 2010

Contributions are invited for an international conference on "Environmental Change - Cultural Change" organised on behalf of ASLE-UK and EASLCE, the British and European affiliates of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment. The event is supported by the University of Bath's Institute for Sustainable Energy and Environment (I-SEE) and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and hosted by the Department of European Studies and Modern Languages. Publication of essays based on selected contributions is intended.

Attention will focus on two aspects of the relationship between environmental change and cultural change:

- the cultural, social and historical framing of environmental communication, and in particular of discourses of climate change and loss of biodiversity
- the challenge to contemporary environmental literature and film, and their potential contribution to ecological consciousness and education.

Public understandings of and attitudes towards GM foods, nuclear power, hunting, the extinction of species, the health risks from smoking, wilderness preservation, global warming and other environment-related issues vary in sometimes surprising ways from one country to the next. They also change over time. Apocalypticism, the environmentalist master narrative of the 1960s and 1970s, has given way, as Frederick Buell has written, to acceptance of environmental crisis as a way of life. We have learned to live with a multitude of daily ecological risk scenarios, preventing, mitigating or simply accommodating to them. The assumption that sustainability demands cultural change has been challenged by powerful resistance to radical lifestyle change: in practice, environmental perceptions and problems are instead being subjected to progressive reframings. Key questions will be how physical circumstances, historical experience and imaginative construction combine in the cultural framing of individual issues, how norms and expectations change, what cultural understandings of 'nature' and the human subject have stood or may stand in the way of constructive engagement with environmental change, what alternatives the reservoir of contemporary and historical images and narratives of nature and culture has

to offer, and what rhetorics and art forms might be adopted as strategies in facing environmental change today. The conference will seek on the one hand to develop interdisciplinary dialogue on environmental communication, and on the other to gain new insights into the potential role of environmental literature in generating environmental knowledge (Peter Swirski).

Provisional acceptance has been received from the following invited speakers:

Prof Sidney Dobrin (University of Florida, Dept of English; a specialist in ecocomposition)

Dr Georgina Endfield (University of Nottingham, Dept of Geography; a leading researcher in the historical conceptualisation of climate change, social responses and adaptation)

Dr Robert Macfarlane (University of Cambridge, Dept of English; critic and nature writer, author of *Mountains of the Mind*)

Dr Timo Maran (University of Tartu, Institute of Semiotics; a leading writer on biosemiotics and Estonian nature writing)

Prof Robert Watson (UCLA, Dept of English; author of *The Green and the Real in Early Modern Literature*)

Proposals for papers (20 minutes presentation time) and panels (3 or 4 papers) are now invited. Topics will include but not be restricted to:

- myths, lead metaphors and rhetorical tropes in historical conceptualisations of environmental change, and their role in contemporary media communication or political/ scientific discourse on the environment
- literary and filmic representations of environmental change in different cultures/ media/ historical periods, and comparisons between them
- theoretical approaches, especially posthumanism/ postsubjectivism and biosemiotics
- the aesthetics of cultural responses to climate change: genres (especially varieties of Nature Writing), narrative strategies, images
- environmental citizenship
- environmental activism between modernisation and resistance to modernisation

- cognitive, emotional and cultural drivers of environmental behaviour, and materialist and aesthetic, secular and religious motivations
- the global and the local in theorisations and representations of environmental change
- the contribution of environmental literature, film and art to environmental literacy

One session will, it is hoped, be devoted to *practical demonstrations of the use of literary texts* to develop environmental consciousness and promote environmental behaviour. An interdisciplinary panel discussion on environmental communication is also planned. We are open to creative papers and alternative formats.

The lingua franca of the conference will be English, but proposals for panels in other languages are welcome, and individual papers in languages other than English will be considered if they can be grouped together in panels sharing a language.

A dedicated conference website with automated booking form will be set up in September 2009 with links to the ASLE (UK) and EASLCE sites. Accommodation has been reserved on the University of Bath's attractive campus, which is about a mile from the centre of Bath, a World Heritage City. A tour of the city including its famous Georgian crescents and a visit to the Roman Baths, an evening event and a field trip at the end of the conference are planned. Funding is currently being sought for bursaries to support postgraduate/ unwaged attendance.

Please send initial expressions of interest to Professor Axel Goodbody <mlsahg@bath.ac.uk> by 18 September 2009, indicating the approximate subject of your paper or panel, so as to inform funding applications.

Detailed proposals for papers etc. (title plus 250 words) indicating your IT requirements should be emailed by 1 December, 2009.

International Conferences / Call for Papers

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

COUNTER NATURE(S): REVISING NATURE IN AN ERA OF ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

**Uppsala University, Sweden
20-22 November 2009**

The Nordic Network for Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies (NIES) in partnership with the Department of English and the Centre for Environment and Development Studies (CEMUS) at Uppsala University are pleased to sponsor a major interdisciplinary research symposium in Uppsala featuring 30 researchers from 10 countries collectively representing more than a dozen academic disciplines.

Titled *Counter Nature(s): Revising Nature in an Era of Environmental Crisis*, this international symposium has been made possible in large measure through the generous support of The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation (*Riksbankens Jubileumsfond*), as well as through the local support of Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskaps-Samfundet i Uppsala, the Forum for Advanced Studies in Arts, Languages and Theology (SALT), the CEMUS Research Forum (CEFO) and the American Literature Research Section of the Department of English at Uppsala University.

By design the title *Counter Nature(s)* is at one and the same time suggestive and elusive, expressive in no small degree of the present moment of environmental crisis and revaluation. The focuses of research papers to be delivered at the symposium range from alternative conceptions of nature and the natural that have emerged in response to environmental crisis and/or modernity to contested/oppositional environmental spaces; indeed, the latter may include anything from physical landscapes to discursive/imaginative spaces in which challenges to prevalent understandings of nature have begun to emerge. The *Counter Nature(s)* theme can thus extend to include virtual nature, engineered nature or urban/suburban/industrialized landscapes (e.g. the ecosystems of cities, parks, residential developments, industrial areas, even toxic environments). Together these examples express in some measure the multivalent potential of *Counter Nature(s)* as a productive research theme. Among other things the symposium seeks to initiate a fruitful series of cross-disciplinary conversations that may help to suggest renewed or

innovative theorizations of nature, perhaps the most abiding motif of art and literature, and the most fundamental of scientific and philosophical concepts.

Confirmed keynote speakers (and the lectures they are scheduled to deliver) include:

- **Lawrence Buell**, Powell M. Cabot Professor of American Literature, Harvard University, USA: "The Uses and Abuses of Environmental Memory"
- **Ursula Heise**, Professor of American and European Literature and Director of the Program in Modern Thought and Literature, Stanford University, USA: "After Nature: Contemporary Cultures and the Challenge of Species Extinction"
- **David Nye**, Professor of History, Center for American Studies, University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark: "Anti-Landscapes: The Discovery and Recognition of Unlivable Spaces"
- **Sverker Sörlin**, Professor of Environmental History, KTH: The Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden: "Reversing the Reserves: Reinterpretations of Protected Nature from the Wild to the Urban"

Other researchers recruited to participate in the *Counter Nature(s)* symposium represent a wide range of disciplines and fields in the humanities and social sciences, including: American History, American Literature, Animal Studies, Communication Studies, Comparative Literature, Curriculum Studies, English Literature, Environmental Ethics, Environmental History, Environmental Policy Studies, Ethnology, European History, History of Ideas, History of Technology, Landscape Architecture, Landscape Studies, Linguistics, Religious Studies, Social Anthropology, Sociology, Swedish Literature and Swedish History.

The conference program will begin at approximately 9 AM on Friday 20 November and end at 5 PM on Sunday 22 November; in between these time frames the event will offer three full days of stimulating discourse, as well as two evenings of cultural events and social activities. In the aggregate three to four hours of breaks

in the program will be scheduled each day for lunch, coffee, light snacks and refreshments, or for excursions

into town or around the university's environs (not counting the more relaxed social activities planned for the evenings).

The organizers are pleased to welcome auditing participants to the symposium. A downloadable registration form will be accessible here on the *Counter Nature(s)* website from the last week of August 2009.

Advance registration is required for both active participants and auditing participants.

- The advance registration period begins 31 August and closes 2 October 2009 (registration fee 900 KR).
- The late registration period begins 3 October and closes 15 November 2009 (late registration fee 1200 KR).

Both the conference venues and the hotel where conference speakers will lodge (*Akademihotellet* of Uppsala University) are located within a 15-minute walk of Uppsala Central Railway Station, which is itself only a 15-minute ride on the airport express shuttle from Stockholm Arlanda International Airport (this shuttle runs several times an hour). The regional train between Stockholm Central Railway Station and Uppsala Central Railway Station takes roughly 40 minutes and also runs typically several times an hour.

Please revisit this website throughout the late summer and early autumn for updates on the upcoming symposium, including information on hotels, local transportation alternatives and how to find the symposium venues.

A preliminary version of the *Counter Nature(s)* program as well as further information for confirmed active participants can be accessed on this webpage.

**Queries concerning the *Counter Nature(s)* event should be directed to the symposium's principal organizer and convener,
Steven Hartman (steven.harman@engelska.uu.se)**

Publications / Call for Contributions

Ecozon@

Call for Book Reviews

Ecozon@

Ecozon@ is a new ecocritical on-line journal, published biannually in cooperation with EASLCE and GIECO (Ecocritical Research Group of the University of Alcalá). The first issue is scheduled for Spring 2010.

Book review section

The aim of *Ecozon@*'s book review section is to inform readers about current publications relevant to ecocritical research, with a special emphasis on ecocriticism in Europe.

Language Diversity

We strongly encourage reviews of works from non-English speaking countries so as to facilitate the flow of ideas across language barriers.

Information and contact

Further information for reviewers will soon be available on *Ecozon@*'s website.

If you are interested in reviewing a particular work, **please send an email** with the title, as well as a short CV, **to the book review editor Hannes Bergthaller** (hbergtlr@ntut.edu.tw).

We will then obtain a **free review copy** for you.

Women in Transit: Negotiating Public / Private Environments

Contributions are sought for a book on women in spaces of transit in Anglo-American literature between 1860 and the beginning of World War II. The projected edited book sets out to explore representations in literature of the presence of women in spaces of transit such as trains, hotels, bedsits, cafés, parks, baths, trails, rivers, seas etc. in which the familiar distinction between public and private space is eroded or suspended.

Among the questions we would like to address are the following:

- the significance that spaces of transit have had in shaping women's identities and ways of expression;
- the ways in which women have negotiated their presence in spaces of transit, with the opportunities, surprises and dangers these spaces may entail;
- the currency of the public/ private dichotomy and the equation public/ male: private/ female implicit in the ideology of 'separate spheres', a framework

which has proved to be useful but limiting in the understanding of gender relations.

The book is intended as a follow-on to *Inside Out: Women negotiating subverting, and appropriating public and private space*, eds. Teresa Gómez Reus and Aránzazu Usanizaga (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008).

If you are interested in contributing a chapter of 7000 words, please send an extended abstract (800-1000 words) of your proposed essay, together with a brief CV, to Teresa Gomez, University of Alicante, Spain. Deadline for submissions: 15 January 2010.

Teresa Gomez

University of Alicante, Spain

mt.gomez@ua.es

Projects and Reports

Journal of Ecocriticism

The *Journal of Ecocriticism* is an electronic review of ecocriticism and ecoliterature published and sponsored by the Canadian Association for the Study of Humanities and the Environment (CASHE). The journal aims to stimulate the further intellectual development of ecocriticism within the international community of scholars in the field. Two regular issues per year are published in June and December. Special issues are also published from time to time, the most recent being the **Special Issue on Poetic Ecologies**, now available at <http://www.ecocriticism.ca>.

The *Journal of Ecocriticism* provides immediate open access to its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge. Readers are encouraged to sign up for the publishing notification service for the *JoE*. This registration will result in the reader receiving

the Table of Contents by email for each new issue of the journal.

Authors interested in submitting manuscripts may do so through the journal's webpage. The *Journal of Ecocriticism* is a double-blind peer-reviewed journal. Anonymized manuscripts are circulated to reviewers for comment and anonymized comments from reviewers are circulated to authors to guide revisions, prior to acceptance of any manuscript.

Please visit for further information

<http://www.ecocriticism.ca>.

Principal Contact: Dr. Rebecca Raglon

igs@sfu.ca

Conference Report

ASLE Conference "Island Time" University of Victoria, June 2 to 4, 2009

The ASLE conference, "Island Time" was held in Victoria, BC, June 2-6, 2009. Victoria is a lovely city and the whole area is beautiful. The conference site at the University of Victoria was also lovely. The university residences were actually quite comfortable and better than what most expected, despite the shared bathroom facilities. The conference had a large number of receptions on most nights (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday) so a general meeting/gathering place was always there and made conversation and exchange easy and pleasant. The only annoying aspect, especially for Europeans, was that at every reception there was a cash bar. Receptions were sponsored by publishing houses (Oxford with *ISLE*, *Orion* and Milkweed Publications, *Green Letters*) and the International reception with 3 hosts Wilfrid Laurier University Press, U. of Victoria International Affairs and EASLCE). At each reception sponsors addressed the audience for a brief 5-10 min. There was also a reception for graduate students.

The number of papers was staggering, some 600 which implied 15 parallel sessions, making it difficult to attend those one wanted. The format of the plenaries was innovative: usually two somewhat related lecturers who

were supposed to engage in a dialog/discussion: 30 min. each and then 30 min. for debate with audience and both speakers. It didn't always work that way, but the one on the Challenges of Ecocriticism with Greg Garrard and Cate Mortimer-Sandilands resulted very lively and interesting. Plenaries seemed to emphasize traditional nature writing, natural observation, personal experience and science, rather than other genres or aspects. The First Nations plenary session had one excellent speaker but other aspects were somewhat stereotyped and disappointing. However, writer Ruth Ozeki was wonderful. Another innovative approach was that of the paper jams. Sessions had up to seven participants, each with 5-8 minutes to speak on related issues. Despite the time constraint, they were very lively and some of the best panels of the conference. Another effective element of the organization was allowing 30 min between each parallel session. That allowed time for coffee, bathrooms, moving from one building to another (sessions were held in 4 different buildings at some distance) and talking with colleagues. Days turned out to be very long and exhausting, but the objective of providing time and occasions to talk was effectively met. The International reception, jointly sponsored by EASLCE was largely attended and significantly more

visible than in previous ASLE conferences. However, there were very few Europeans at the conference (other than British) and a large number of Asians, so the European “presence” at the reception was not very prominent. ASLE is intent on becoming increasingly international, as this first conference held outside the U.S. shows—Scott Slovic suggested an “ASLE-World,” but the issue of languages is not really being addressed except by a few. All seem to take for granted the use of English. The issue of language diversity is one that EASLCE should push forward, and hopefully the journal *Ecozon@*, which was announced, might help in this direction.

All in all, the conference was very rewarding and well organized. Minor problems arose with some of the field trips, although the organizers did their best: they just weren’t able to “tie down” the whales so we could see them! The weather was surprisingly sunny and warm, knocking 30°C the whole time so walking about campus—among the thousands of rabbits!—was a pleasure.

Carmen Flys Junquera

Publications by EASLCE Members

José Manuel Marrero Henríquez.

El Paisaje Literario. Antología.

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 2008.

ISBN 978-84-96971-62-2

José Manuel Marrero Henríquez.

Lecturas Del Paisaje.

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 2009.

ISBN 978-84-92777-05-1

Rosemarie Rowley / website

www.rosemarierowley.ie/category/green-essays

“The Tragedy of Commons – Public and Private and the Culture of Waste.” (2008)

“Yeats and Environmental Ethics in a Time of Apocalypse.” (2009)

This section provides information about recent **book publications** by EASLCE members. In addition, **members’ websites** which provide regular contributions to ecocriticism are given once.

If you would like to have your publication or website address included, please send bibliographical information (including ISBN) to Sylvia Mayer at [sylvia.mayer\(a\)uni-bayreuth.de](mailto:sylvia.mayer(a)uni-bayreuth.de)