

# EASLCE NEWS LETTER

Vol. 6.2 Winter 2011/12

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

Dear EASLCE members,

The year 2011 has not brought good news for most of Europe. The financial crisis, the European sovereign debt crisis, and the crisis of the Euro have dominated the news reports and probably affected us all with an endless stream of cutbacks, very often affecting education and research very heavily. To make matters worse, the UN conference in Durban to extend the Kyoto Protocol has been a total failure. True, the EU was one of the most willing to continue, but it alone does not have much effect. Cutting CO2 emissions implies changing our lifestyles and industries, and in times of economic recession, no government is going to commit to increasing costs for a long term project. But amid all the bad news, there is always good. And we need to prioritize. Writing this letter on the first day of the new year, waking up to the chirping of birds and to a bright sun, reminded me that life, all life, is full of beauty and wonder.

Moreover, all is not negative. The interest and commitment to environmental issues is alive among the public and growing. More and more people recognize the need for some type of environmental awareness and action, and “green” political parties are gaining strength in many countries. Perhaps, and this might be wishful thinking, as a result of this overall crisis, a shift of values may begin. Coming closer to home, the growth of ecocriticism is spectacular. This year’s ASLE conference was the largest ever and EASLCE is also growing. There are increasing numbers of ecocritical conferences held around the world, many of which are not linked to any ecocritical association, but stem from the growing interest perceived in many sectors. The number of graduate students, dissertations and established scholars who are expressing an interest in ecocriticism is certainly promising. So, although we haven’t reached governments and the rulers of capital yet, our work is reaching students and the academy.

Among EASLCE’s projects many are flourishing. The website, although delayed due to unforeseen circumstances, is finally up. EASLCE thus has a much improved image and we hope to add lots of new features. *Ecozon@* is growing. The Autumn issue, Issue 2.2, is the largest yet, with a wonderful in-depth special focus on “Ecospirit.” We will shortly begin our new project, “EASLCE webinars,” enabling small groups of EASLCE members to discuss specific topics in depth (see the announcement in this Newsletter). In this Newsletter you will also find a reminder of the June 2012 EASLCE conference to take place in Tenerife, Canary Islands, as well as other CFP and ecocritical projects.

This is probably the last time I will be addressing members as President in the Newsletter. As you all know, at the next conference, the current executive committee’s term ends and we will be renewing our officers. I feel honored to have served EASLCE and worked with such an excellent team of executive officers and advisory board, many of whom contribute very actively to help EASLCE be the association we all want. See you all in Tenerife next June!

Carmen Flys-Junquera

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## **EASLCE Newsletter**

Vol. 6.2 (Winter 2011/ 12)

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

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### **EASLCE HOMEPAGE**

<http://www.easlce.eu>

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

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Please note the **editorial deadline** for the  
next issue: **July 15, 2012**

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

## HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER OF EASLCE

Please, visit our web site at: <http://www.easlce.eu>

For further information contact: Catrin Gersdorf  
[cgers@zedat.fu-berlin.de](mailto:cgers@zedat.fu-berlin.de)

## International Affiliates

ASLE (USA)	<a href="http://www.asle.org">http://www.asle.org</a>
ASLEC-ANZ (AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND)	<a href="http://www.aslec-anz.asn.au/">http://www.aslec-anz.asn.au/</a>
ALECC-CANADA	<a href="http://www.alecc.ca">http://www.alecc.ca</a>
ASLE-INDIA	<a href="http://asleindia.webs.com">http://asleindia.webs.com</a>
ASLE-JAPAN	<a href="http://www.asle-japan.org/english">http://www.asle-japan.org/english</a>
ASLE-KOREA	<a href="http://www.aslekorea.org">http://www.aslekorea.org</a>
ASLE-UK	<a href="http://www.asle.org.uk">http://www.asle.org.uk</a>
OSLE-INDIA	<a href="http://www.osle-india.org">http://www.osle-india.org</a>

## EASLCE Conference Tenerife / Call for Papers

### “NATURA LOQUENS:” ERUPTIVE DIALOGUES, DISRUPTIVE DISCOURSES

The 5<sup>th</sup> EASLCE International Conference on “*Natura Loquens: Eruptive Dialogues, Disruptive Discourses*,” will be held in Tenerife, Canaries, SPAIN, 27-30 June 2012. The event is organised on behalf of EASLCE (the European Association for the Study of Literature, Culture and Environment) by the University of La Laguna, Faculty of Philology, and the Department of English and German Studies, in the island of Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain.

There is an ongoing debate nowadays over the agency of Nature and the necessity of reopening the definition of what counts as speech. One would need to differentiate between new insights about

animal communication and the idea that non-animal and inanimate nature “signify,” or the suggestion of biosemiotics that life itself is a process of signification. Thus, Nature often presents articulated reactions which can be both eruptive and disruptive. We expect to bring to the arena of this academic meeting, placed at the very foot of Mount Teide (Spain’s highest volcanic peak, with an altitude of 3718 m.), as manifold eruptive dialogues as possible. Attention will focus on the contrasting relationship between Nature and humankind, ever in perpetual and delicate interrelationship since the history of humankind and especially after the emergence of the so-called Anthropocene Era (P.

Crutzen). In effect, the ability to speak and communicate made it possible to detach this *Homo sapiens* genus from other animal

species, establishing thus a hierarchy that has been working until present day. Such Aristotelian human “loquacity” is based on a “great chain of being” (A.O. Lovejoy) that places this *Homo loquens* in a superior position, being able to structure and articulate the universe. If we were able to deconstruct and reverse this idea in order to acknowledge Nature’s ability to speak out (Christopher Manes, David Abrams), then multiple and creative conversations could be established, so as to reconstruct the natural order of things. While environmental concerns grow louder and more frequently today, traditional disruptive discourses that posit the idea of nature as an impediment to human progress do continue to emerge and spread out. The main purpose of this conference is then to reenact, rethink and fluidize the dialogic balance between Nature and human knowledge, engaging in an intellectually fairer and more empathetic communication.

Proposals for papers (EITHER standard papers 2500 words/20 minutes OR contributions to paper jam sessions 1250 words/12 minutes) and panels (3 papers OR 5 jam session papers) are now invited. Topics will include but not be restricted to:

- Ideological, philosophical, political and cultural uses and/or misuses of the concept of Nature as the material reality of the sum of all organic and inorganic phenomena, including human beings.
- Description of Nature’s “agency” in cultural, artistic, literary and filmic representations of the anthropocentric canon in diachronic and synchronic historical periods.
- Dialogues and discourses regarding either subalternity or supremacy of Nature in

historical, sociological, economic and artistic documents and other media.

- The interaction of Nature and Humankind in the creation/destruction of the world, as depicted in sci-fi, catastrophe literature, and trans- and post-human utopias/dystopias.
- Lead metaphors and metonymies, and other semantic tropes, structuring our perception and comprehension of the natural world, and the human capacity to transform the environment.
- Material/spiritual approaches to the natural world and their political and ethical contestations.
- The “retaliation” of Nature, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: climate change, the ozone hole, “nukes” and quakes, eruptive ash clouds and other “apocalyptic” signs.
- The mirage/miracle of Nature: biodiversity & homogenization, global and local phenomena, human-made/destroyed landscapes, eruptions and erosions...
- The seemingly “pathetic fallacy”: Speaking animals, plants or inanimate objects in literature and the arts.
- Theoretical & critical approaches to Nature, and discussion of their frailties and strengths in contemporary debate: postcolonialism, environmentalism, ecological feminism, material ecocriticism, toxicity and discourse, biosemiotics, ecopedagogy, eco-translatology, and others.

The primary conference languages will be English and Spanish, but (following our practice at previous EASLCE conferences) proposals for panels in other European languages are also welcome.

**Please submit proposals for panels or individual papers (title plus 250 words), together with a brief bionote (4-5 lines), and complete contact data, to Professor Juan Ignacio Oliva <jioliva@ull.es> by 31 January 2012, indicating your IT requirements.**

**Ecozon@ / Information**

**ECOZON@**  
**EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF LITERATURE, CULTURE, AND ENVIRONMENT**  
**HTTP://WWW.ECOZONA.EU**

**Volume 2, Number 2**  
**“Ecospirit: Religion and the Environment”**

Volume 2.2 (2011) of *Ecozon@* has just been published and presents the special focus section “Ecospirit: Religion and the Environment,” edited and introduced by Franca Bellarsi. Following the guest editor’s introduction, nine essays by Whitney Bauman, Anthony Lioi, Stephen Brain, Peter Jeffrey Collins, Jonathan Butler, Éric Baratay, Hester Jones, Gillian Parrish, Christopher Hrynkow, and Dennis Patrick O’Hara explore past and present forms of ecospirituality.

In addition to the special focus section, *Ecozon@* 2.2 also features the General Section, a section on

Creative Writing, a section on Visual Arts – presenting photographs by Ali Young –, and a number of book reviews.

**Future numbers**

The next numbers will present special focus sections on the topics “Writing catastrophes: Cross-disciplinary Perspectives on the Semantics of Natural and Anthropogenic Disasters,” guest editor Gabriele Dürbeck (spring 2012), and “The Invention of Eco-Futures: Ecocriticism and Science Fiction”, guest editor Ursula K. Heise (autumn 2012).

**EASLCE Virtual Seminars / WEBINARS**

**EASLCE WEBINARS**

**– Virtual Seminars via Skype –**

EASLCE wishes to offer members a new opportunity for discussion of various aspects of ecocriticism. With this in mind, we are initiating a pilot program of virtual seminars, via Skype. We have contacted a number of renowned experts who are willing to lead a seminar with 4-6 EASLCE members on specific topics, and we thank them for their generosity. We also plan to start seminars for students (either final-year undergraduates or beginning graduate students) who are beginning to work in the ecocritical field and wish to engage in conversations with senior professors outside of their home universities or countries. These seminars can also be requested for research groups of EASLCE members that span several countries.

The new website will announce upcoming seminars, and EASLCE members will be able to sign up for them. Each seminar will be led by the

guest expert and moderated by an EASLCE member. The seminar leader will suggest beforehand a set of readings for all participants and a set of questions to be addressed. During the seminar, the leader will make an initial statement (about 15 minutes) and then the discussion will begin. The moderator will forward the readings and also instructions to participants as to technical requirements, as well as moderate the session, as needed. As members know, conference video calls on Skype require a small fee, which EASLCE will cover for these seminars. Seminars are expected to last approximately 60-90 minutes. It is also our intention to tape the sessions and eventually make them available to all EASLCE members in the “members’ area” of the website.

This is a pilot experience, and we hope that the technical aspects do not interfere (allowing for the

normal delay in sound). If the experience is positive, we hope to make these a regular offering for EASLCE members.

**FIRST SEMINAR:** Thursday, January 26<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm (Central European Time Zone, GMT+1).

**Topic:** "Interdisciplinarity in Ecocriticism: A Workshop," led by **Scott Slovic**

Moderator: Hannes Bergthaller

One of the hallmarks and controversial aspects of ecocriticism is its effort to incorporate

language, concepts, and sometimes even methodologies from various disciplines, ranging from evolutionary theory to the anthropological interview strategies. In this inaugural EASLCE "webinar," Professor Scott Slovic from the University of Nevada, Reno, in the United States, the founding president of ASLE-US and a prolific ecocritic, will lead a conversation about interdisciplinary ecocriticism, exploring its pros and cons with several specific examples.

Sign up by sending an email to Carmen Flys ([Carmen.flys@uah.es](mailto:Carmen.flys@uah.es)).

## Fellowships / Competitions / Call for Collaborators

### SUSAN FENIMORE COOPER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

Franklin Institute for American Studies  
University of Alcalá, Spain

The Franklin Institute for American Studies of the University of Alcalá offers brief ecocritical research stays at the Institute. The next Call will be in February 2012. See the Institute Website for details:

<http://www.institutofranklin.net/en/research/research-projects-and-scholarships/scholarships/susan-fenimore-cooper>

### SILENT SPRING ESSAY COMPETITION

Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society

Fifty years ago, the world was rocked by the publication of a quiet tirade against the chemical industry. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* exposed the dangers and risks of everyday chemicals and commonplace practices; it launched the modern American environmental movements and also influenced similar movements all over the globe.

In commemoration of fifty years of *Silent Spring*, the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society is soliciting essays from junior and senior scholars which analyze the impact and reception of *Silent Spring* as well as the legacy of Rachel Carson. Essays might address one or more of the **following questions:**

- How has *Silent Spring* shaped environmentalism or environmental thought in various countries? How is it a global phenomenon?
- What elements of *Silent Spring* have had the greatest impact on environmental leaders? Policy makers? Anti-environmentalists?
- How is *Silent Spring* still relevant to current environmental debates?
- How has the relevance of Rachel Carson's writing changed over the decades since *Silent Spring* was published?
- If Rachel Carson were alive today, what would she be writing about?

In the spirit of Carson's own writing, submissions are encouraged to address an interested public with an approachable and provocative style.

The RCC will be awarding both a junior and senior prize for the most outstanding essays:

- Junior Prize: \$1,000 for 1,000 words (or less); Open to students aged 13-18
- Senior Prize: \$2,000 for 2,000 words (or less); Open to anyone aged 19 and above

In addition, the winning essays, as well as those which receive an honorable mention, will be

published in a commemorative edition of the *RCC Perspectives* series, an occasional papers series available both in print and online.

Submissions are due via email [perspectives@carsoncenter.lmu.de](mailto:perspectives@carsoncenter.lmu.de) by **15 March 2012**.

Please also include a short biographical profile and indicate whether the essay is to be considered for the junior or senior prize. The essays will be reviewed by an international committee of scholars and writers.

Sponsored by the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society in collaboration with the British Council, International Consortium of Environmental History Organizations, and the Consulate General of the United States, Munich, Germany.

For questions, please submit queries to [perspectives@carsoncenter.lmu.de](mailto:perspectives@carsoncenter.lmu.de)

## ENVIRONMENTAL WRITING COMPETITION

### CALL FOR ESSAYS AND FICTION

The recently formed Web of Life Foundation – ([www.WOLFoundation.org](http://www.WOLFoundation.org)) - runs an annual competition looking for the best non-technical, English language writing on any subject related to environmental issues. Factual commentary, polemical essays and fiction are all welcome. For further details see:

See: <http://www.wolfoundation.org/home/Competition.html>

**The winning entry will receive a cash prize of \$1,500.** A further \$500 will be awarded to the second placed entry.

The top 20 entries will be published as a book of collected essays.

To enter visit our [Guidelines](http://www.wolfoundation.org/home/Guidelines.html) page (<http://www.wolfoundation.org/home/Guidelines.html>). Closing date for entries to 2012 competition is September 30th, 2012.

The competition is open to all and the judges are looking for *'fresh ideas, freshly presented'* on any topic relating to environmental or conservation issues. Manuscripts must be written in English, double spaced, no longer than 3,000 words and contain no abstract, list of references or footnotes. Images are allowed as part of the manuscript.

Entries will be judged by an [Advisory Board](http://www.wolfoundation.org/home/Advisory Board.html) (<http://www.wolfoundation.org/home/Advisory Board.html>) consisting of individuals from various backgrounds who have achieved eminent positions in their respective fields of endeavour.

**KEYWORDS IN THE STUDY OF ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE: TRANSLATION PROJECT**

**CALL FOR COLLABORATORS**

A volume on ecocritical keywords, coordinated by Joni Adamson, William Gleason and David Pellow will be published by New York University Press. This volume will provide an accessible and readable introduction to the central terms and debates that shape the study of environment and

culture. It hopes to synthesize and interpret a cross-disciplinary breadth of information about the historical and contemporary meanings—both settled and contested—of 60 keywords that structure the most exciting research in and across the environmental humanities, environmental

studies and the sciences of nature. Each entry will contribute to the broader critical conversations surrounding the interplay of environmentalisms that have gone by the names of deep ecology, environmental justice, ecofeminism, queer ecology, sustainability, and climate justice, among many others.

While establishing a terminology is a major aspect of any discipline, given the rapid extension and internationalization of studies of environment and culture, the discussion of the conceptual field of the object of study and its linguistic aspects (usage, precision, nuances, etc) are essential since each culture and language represents reality in different ways. As an illustrative example, Yi-Fu Tuan's 4 page chapter on "wilderness" in *Topophilia* uses the term "wilderness" 34 times. The Spanish translation of the chapter uses 13 different terms to translate "wilderness," indicating the lack of a clear translation into Spanish, because the concept does not exist as such. Why did the translator choose to use 13 different terms? What does each one of these terms add, modify or subtract to the meaning?

This example highlights the importance of a scientific approach to the translation of these terms and given EASLCE's unique position to offer both understanding in terminology involving the environment and culture and its ability to embrace a wide variety of languages, we hope to draw on

EASLCE members (and others) to develop alongside the volume an annex addressing the translations of these keywords (and possibly other terms which pose significant challenges) to multiple languages, primarily European languages. Since the keywords project will be linked to a website, we plan to develop a section on translations to different languages with comments on the difficulties or inadequacies of the translations.

For this project, we need to establish a team for each language. Each language will need at least 2 ecocritics (with dominion over English and another language) and 2 linguists/translators of the same languages. One pair of specialists will undertake the translation of the 60 keywords while the other pair will serve as readers/revisers of these terms. The teams will have access to the entry of each term in English and will be able to write a brief comment about the nuances or difficulties found. The website will also allow for a discussion with proposals of other translations and so forth. It is hoped that this project will contribute to the internationalization of the field. The Keywords Translation Project will be coordinated by Carmen Flys Junquera and Carmen Valero Garcés (specialist in translation studies), together with the editors of the *Keywords* volume.

**For more information and those interested in participating in the project should write Carmen Flys ([carmen.flys@uah.es](mailto:carmen.flys@uah.es)) with their name and language by Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012.**

**International Conferences / Announcements and Reports**

**CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT**

**“The Shaping Power of Risk: Literature – Culture – Environment”**

**International Conference**

**Bayreuth Institute for American Studies (BIFAS) / University of Bayreuth, Germany**

**24-26 February, 2012**

The Bayreuth Institute for American Studies (BIFAS) will host an international conference on the topic “The Shaping Power of Risk: Literature – Culture – Environment.” The conference topic reflects the recent trend in environmentally oriented literary and cultural studies to enter the field of risk research and thus complement the work of scholars in the field of sociology, psychology, and cultural anthropology.

Based on the premise that due to their imaginative and formal/aesthetic range cultural artefacts such as literary texts, films, or video games participate in processes of risk communication in very specific ways, the conference intends to broaden our understanding of the culturally shaping power of risk by featuring keynote lectures and papers that investigate the participation of a variety of texts – texts coming in different media, but also texts emerging from different cultures – in the processes of environmental risk communication.

The conference will focus on three topic areas:

- A Environmental risks and genre
- B Environmental risks and the affective/emotional power of texts
- C Environmental risks and the moral function of texts

Keynote speakers will be Ursula K. Heise (Stanford University), Colin Milburn (University of California, Davis), and Bronislaw Szerszynski (Lancaster University).

Conference organizer: Prof. Dr. Sylvia Mayer / BIFAS

The program of the conference will be online by mid-January. The conference is open to the public.

**Conference website:**

<http://www.bifas.uni-bayreuth.de/de/news/litcultenv/index.html>

**CONFERENCE REPORT**

**International Conference “Reading Nature”**

**14-16 Dec, 2011, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain**

The International Conference “*Reading Nature: Cultural Perspectives on Environmental Imagery*” was held at the University Complutense de Madrid (Spain) from December 14<sup>th</sup> to December 16<sup>th</sup>. This is the first conference on ecocriticism and on cultural representations of the environment that is held in Spain without being organized by EASLCE or the Spanish research group GIECO. Organized by the Department of English Philology II of the University Complutense and by the program “Friends of Thoreau,” with the support of the British Council, this conference offered an opportunity for young scholars to work with

international experts on exploring how the environment is represented in the arts, and how these cultural representations may contribute to promote environmental awareness. More than eighty people attended the conference with presentations on a variety of issues such as environmental readings of literary works from different genres and periods, and the analysis of images of nature in films and works of art. The Conference started with a plenary by José B. Ruiz, a Spanish wildlife photographer. Other plenary speakers were: Paul Waldau, with a talk about animal studies from an interdisciplinary

perspectives; Carmen Flys Junquera, current EASLCE president, with a presentation on the role of fiction in environmental awareness; Philip Terrie, from Bowling Green State University on the constructions of wilderness in the US; Bill McKibben, who participated in a videoconference; and María Novo with a presentation on scientific and artistic perceptions of the environment. The

conference closed with a plenary delivered by the British artist and poet Mario Petrucci that invited attendants to use literature and artistic production to promote environmentalism.

Irene Sanz Alonso

## Publications by Members

**Marrero Henríquez**, José Manuel. ed. *Literatura y sostenibilidad en la era del antropoceno*. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Fundación MAPFRE Guanarteme, 2011. (ISBN 978-84-92532-65-0)

**Fjørtoft**, Henning. *Jordsanger. Økokritiske analyser av Inger Christensens lange dikt*, Trondheim: NTNU, 2011 [Earthsongs. Ecocritical analyses of Inger Christensen's long poems.]

Danish poet Inger Christensen (1935-2009) wrote several long poems portraying the tensions between human subjectivity and the non-human world. Drawing on studies in the modern long poem as well as recent ecocriticism, the thesis argues that Christensen's long poems capture the diversity of the planet Earth across spatial scales from microbes to tectonic plates. This is the first ecocritical thesis written in Norwegian.

**Oppermann**, Serpil, Ufuk Özdağ, Nevin Özkan, and Scott Slovic. Eds. *The Future of Ecocriticism: New Horizons*. New Castle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011. ISBN (10): 1-4438-2983-8, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-2983-0

**Goodbody**, Axel and Kate **Rigby**. Eds. *Ecocritical Theory: New European Approaches*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011. ISBN (10): 0813931487, ISBN (13): 978-0813931487.