



EASLCE

Vol. 7.1 Summer 2012

*news
letter*

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

Dear EASLCE members,
before everything else, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the membership of EASLCE, to the past and present members of its advisory board and executive committee, as well as to the many other people (keepers of minutes, student assistants, not to mention supportive scholars from around the world) who have devoted much time and effort in order to make our organization what it is today. I have been involved with EASLCE from the earliest beginning. Looking back at those years, I find it difficult to disentangle its growth from my own development as a scholar: I came to know many of my dearest colleagues through this organization, and its academic community is the implicit audience for much that I have written. I therefore feel particularly honored to have been entrusted with EASLCE's presidency for the coming two years. Our newly elected vice-president Juan Ignacio Oliva, our new treasurer Alexa Weik von Mossner, and myself are eager to put our shoulders to the wheel.

I also hope to be excused for confessing that I take some sentimental pleasure in the knowledge that the end of my term will coincide with the tenth anniversary of our organization's official formation at the Münster conference in 2004. EASLCE has come a long way since then. I remember the preparatory meeting in 2003, which had originally been called in order to create a German branch of ASLE. It turned out that about half of the small group in attendance were not from Germany, at all, but rather scholars of Germanic studies from other European countries, while the other half consisted mostly of German Americanists with an interest in ecocriticism – a rather heterogeneous bunch, in other words, which made the label "ASLE Germany" seem patently inappropriate. I distinctly recall my own uneasiness at our solution to the naming problem: I feared that the goal implicit in

the new organization's name might be overly ambitious, if not ridiculously presumptuous. Also, by including the "C", we had rendered almost unpronounceable what could have been a pretty snazzy acronym.

Our recent biannual conference in La Laguna has confirmed me in the conviction that these fears were, after all, unfounded. Nobody seems to have a problem saying "eezlee-see," and even though the bulk of our membership today comes from Germany and Spain, EASLCE has members from most European countries, as well as from several other regions of the globe. While scholars from Anglophone literary studies still hold a bare majority, many of the continent's other national philologies have a distinct presence, as well. Our e-journal *Ecozon@* (whose sixth issue, devoted to the topic of ecocriticism and science fiction and edited by Ursula Heise, is about to appear this fall) is currently the only truly multilingual publication in the field, and it is flourishing.

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EASLCE Newsletter
Vol. 7.1 (Summer 2012)

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

EASLCE Homepage:

<http://www.easlce.eu>

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International Affiliates

ASLE (USA)

<http://www.asle.org>

ASLEC-ANZ (AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND)

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

ALECC-CANADA

<http://www.alecc.ca>

ASLE-INDIA

<http://www.asleindia.webs.com>

ASLE-JAPAN

<http://www.asle-japan.org/>

ASLE-KOREA

<http://www.aslekorea.org>

ASLE-UKI

<http://www.asle.org.uk>

OSLE-INDIA

<http://www.osle-india.org>

How to become a member of
EASLCE

Please, visit our web site at:

<http://www.easlce.eu>

For further information contact:
Alexa Weik von Mossner

alexa.weik@unifr.ch

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

December 15, 2012

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

Many of our recent efforts at EASLCE were directed at this goal – the two webinars hosted in the Spring of this year (the first by Scott Slovic, the second by Kate Rigby), the graduate student essay prize (deadline for the 2013 award is October 1st – see page 4 of this newsletter), and the ambitious makeover of our website are all activities that will be continued and, I hope, expanded on over the coming months. So please remember to visit our website from time to time and keep your eyes open for respective announcements.

But these concrete projects do not dispense us from reflecting on the general direction in which we wish to take our organization and the larger purposes which it should serve. This also requires that we think more about our own profile in relationship to adjacent academic organizations – not only ASLE but also, closer to home, ASLE-UKI and the Nordic Network for Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies (NIES). Having had the privilege of participating in two NIES conferences during the past year, I was greatly impressed by their success at fostering a kind of interdisciplinary work that makes actual sense of the appellation “environmental humanities.” To my mind, this is a model that EASLCE can derive much inspiration from, and it will thus be one of my priorities in the coming two years to strengthen our organization’s ties to the aforementioned organizations, to kindred institutions like the Rachel Carson Center in Munich or the Environmental Humanities Lab in Stockholm, and to related disciplines such as environmental history, religious studies, anthropology, and sociology. This is a goal that we will also keep in mind as we start preparing for our next biannual conference, which Timo Maran has graciously offered to host at the University of Tartu, Estonia, in 2014.

At the same time, we must be mindful that EASLCE will always lack what is undoubtedly a key ingredient in the success of organizations such as NIES and ASLE-UKI –

namely, a shared academic tradition underpinned by close cultural affinities. Communicating effectively across disciplinary boundaries is not easy; doing so while also straddling linguistic and cultural differences is very difficult, indeed. This harder kind of work is probably more representative for what it takes to facilitate the emergence of a shared conceptual vocabulary for explicating the ecological problems of a planetary society (as I would define the principal goal of our efforts, as well as those of the environmental humanities more generally); one does not need to give credit to the ecological commonplace that strength lies in diversity, then, in order to see the unique value of an organization such as ours. Still, it is sometimes more effective to work within geographically circumscribed, culturally homogenous frameworks, not least because they are more readily able to address the specific needs of those involved and to tap into local resources. In order to best serve its membership and continue growing, EASLCE will need to explore the potential synergies between different levels and types of organization. For this reason, I believe that it is in our immediate interest to extend as much support as we can to existing research networks such as GIECO in Spain or the newly launched BASCE group in the Benelux countries. I would therefore like to encourage our members to consider the possibility of forming similar national or regional platforms (working from within EASLCE), and to share your thoughts in this regard with the executive committee so that we can provide organizational support.

There is much work to do, then, and I look forward to tackling it together with you over the coming two years. I hope you all enjoy the remainder of your respective summer breaks, I wish you much energy and good spirits for the new academic term, and look forward to seeing you at the next conference, whichever one that may be!

Hannes Bergthaller

EASLCE Graduate Essay Prize

The European Association for the Study of Literature, Culture, and the Environment (EASLCE) sponsors a prize for the Best Graduate Student Essay in European Ecocriticism. The prize will be awarded every year. It consists in a bursary of 400 Euro to help cover the costs of attending the next EASLCE conference, as well as publication of the prize-winning essay in the EASLCE-affiliated journal *Ecozon@*.

All students currently enrolled in an M.A. or Ph.D. program are eligible. The essay must be previously unpublished. Unless the author is enrolled at a European university, the essay must engage explicitly with European literature

or ecocritical theory. It must be written in English, following the author guidelines of *Ecozon@* (available at www.ecozona.eu). Deadline for submission is November 1st, 2012. The winner will be announced on the EASLCE webpage by the end of that month, and the essay will be included in the Spring 2013 issue of *Ecozon@*.

Please email submissions by November 1st, 2012 to Hannes Bergthaller at:

[hannes.bergthaller\(at\)gmx.de](mailto:hannes.bergthaller(at)gmx.de)

Publications / Call for Contributions

Environmental Crisis and Human Costs

CLYMA Series, University of Alcalá, Spain
Benjamin Franklin American Studies
Research Institute

Editors:

Ufuk Ozdag, Hacettepe University, Turkey;
François Gavillon, Université de Bretagne
Occidentale, France

The link between environmental devastation and health disruption is finally on the public health agenda. Nuclear catastrophes, the use of pesticides, air pollution, toxic waste, synthetic chemicals, GMOs, are all connected to the escalating rates of deadly diseases. Widespread public awareness owes much to Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (2012 marks the 50th anniversary)—the book that launched the environmental movement with its deep documentation of pesticide damage to human health and to the natural environment. Writers/scientists following in Carson's footsteps, have currently made human health issues one

central focus of mainstream environmentalism in the West. Sandra Steingraber (*Living Downstream: A Scientist's Personal Investigation of Cancer and the Environment*, 1997), Theo Colborn, Dianne Dumanoski, and John Peterson Myers (*Our Stolen Future: How We Are Threatening Our Fertility, Intelligence and Survival*, 1997), and Devra Davis (*When Smoke Ran Like Water: Tales of Environmental Deception and the Battle against Pollution*, 2002) have furthered Carson's legacy into the new millennium. In these works, the intertwined ecologies of the human body and the earth body define the health of the ecosystems. Likewise, both non-fiction and fiction writers have explored the connection between the environment and human health issues. Among major works are Terry Tempest Williams's *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place* (1991), Ana Castillo's *So Far from God* (1993), Helena Maria Viramontes's *Under the Feet of Jesus* (1995), and Ann Pancake's *Strange As This Weather Has Been* (2007).

We invite papers addressing the impact of environmental derangement on human health in literature, film studies or other cultural expressions in the United States. Possible focuses include:

- Environmental issues affecting human health;
- Denunciations of environmental racism and its disproportionate effects on minority and poor populations;
- Parallel effects of environmental, physical and mental health derangement;

- Intertwined ecologies of the human body and the earth body;
- Cultural diversity and biodiversity: health and wealth.

Manuscripts (5000-7000 words) should be sent to both ozdag@hacettepe.edu.tr and fgavillon@gmail.com by **December 31, 2012**. A brief abstract should be sent to both editors by **September 5th**. To receive a copy of the submission guidelines, please contact Ufuk or François.

International Conferences / Call for Papers

ASLE 10TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE – Changing Nature: Migrations, Energies, Limits – University of Kansas, Lawrence, May 28 - June 1, 2013

The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) invites proposals for its Tenth Biennial Conference, to be held May 28th through June 1st, 2013, at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. The decennial conference theme is intended to reflect some of the most engaging current conversations within the environmental humanities and across disciplines, and to link those discussions to the transnational nexus of energy, labor, borders, and human and nonhuman environments that are so fundamentally "changing nature," and with it the widely varied kinds of environmental critique we practice, art we make, and politics we advocate. **Migrations**--of humans, of non-human creatures, of "invasive species," of industrial toxins across aquifers and cellular membranes, of disease across species and nations, of transgenic pollen and GM fish--have changed the meanings of place, bodies, nations, and have lent new urgency to the old adage that "everything is connected to everything." **Energies**--fossil, renewable, human, spiritual, aesthetic, organic--radically empower our species for good and for ill, and

make our individual and collective choices into the Anthropocene. And those choices are profoundly about **Limits** on resources, climate, soil, and water; about voluntary and involuntary curbs on individual and collective consumption and waste; about the often porous and often violently marked borders of empire, class, race, and gender.

We seek proposals for papers, panels, roundtables, workshops, and other public presentations that address the intersections between representation, nature, and culture, and that are connected to the conference's deliberately broad and, we hope, provocative theme. As always, we emphatically welcome interdisciplinary approaches; readings of environmentally inflected fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and film; and proposals from outside the academic humanities, including submissions from artists, writers, practitioners, activists, and colleagues in the social and natural sciences. An incomplete list of possible topics might include, combine, and are certainly not limited to:

- Petro-culture and the Energies of Modernity: the Keystone pipeline, hydrofracking, tar sands, global capital and resource wars, the possibility of change
- Aesthetics and the Futures of Environmental Representation
- Climate Change: mitigation, adaptation, costs, and the concept of place
- Empire, Race and Environment: postcolonial ecocriticism
- The Futures of Ecofeminism
- Indigenous Environmentalisms
- "Natural" Histories of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Class, Sexualities...
- Ecomposition, environmentalism and rhetoric, sustainable pedagogies/the pedagogies of sustainability
- Environmental Justice: toxins, food, climate, sovereignty
- Postnatural Nature, Posthuman Humanism
- Digital Representation and Natural Experience
- Biotechnology: prostheses, genetic modification, synthetic life
- Waste: from adopt-a-highway to the pacific garbage patch
- Animals, Animality: us and us
- Evolution, Epigenetic Change, Politics
- Affect and Environmentalism: love, despair, postdespair

More detailed information at:

<http://asle.ku.edu/>

Deadline for submission of proposals:

November 15, 2012

International Conferences / Announcements

8TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF ASLE-UKI – Composting Culture: Literature, Nature, Popular Culture, Science – University of Worcester, September 5 - 7, 2012

This conference will be the 8th biennial conference of ASLE-UKI, the UK-Ireland branch of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment. It is hosted by the University of Worcester, and supported by the University's Institute of Humanities and Creative Arts.

Recent work in ecocriticism largely recognises the complexity of ecological science and philosophy and its social and political dimensions. This has resulted in an increased emphasis on paradigms and perspectives that embrace that complexity: posthumanism; biosemiotics; discordance; consilience etc. Consequently, with regard to

its objects of study, ecocriticism might increasingly be characterised as a multidisciplinary act of ecological intervention that has fermented an array of possible reference points – globalisation, science, neuroscience, spirituality etc – into an expanding range of cultural texts, stretching far beyond the literary canon of romantic nature writing that shaped ecocriticism in its early years.

This conference will explore the extent to which correspondences between more complex ecological understanding and cultural forms might be evident, most particularly, in non-canonical texts, or previously unexplored

or in the upcycling of established literary or cultural forms, movements, writers etc. Conceptualised by Jed Rasula as a process of composting where 'interanimating tendencies' converge into the possible emergence 'of newness, of the unpredicted', this 'nutritive sensibility' has recently traversed cultural theory and practice: in Harriet Tarlo's identification of a conjunction between experimental poetics and radical landscape poetry; in the 'new nature writing' of 'Edgelands' (Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts), or places like Essex, which acknowledges the blurring of human-nonhuman, rural and urban; even in popular culture, for example in a recognition of technology's perhaps paradoxical ability to inculcate both deep ecological awareness and a scientific sense of nature as process (as aspired to in Bjork's recent Biophilia project).

There will be, at the conference, approximately 80 papers, on a diversity of topics. These will include papers or sessions

on: animals, biosemiotics, capitalism, carbon, composting, dirt, ecopoetry, gardens, land and landscape, posthumanism, recycling, ruins, translation, science fiction, waste, and the future of ecocriticism.

Keynote speakers include:

Thierry Bardini, Université de Montréal, author of *Junkware*, examining 'junk' in nature (DNA) and culture (science fiction) alike.

Jed Rasula, Helen S. Lanier Distinguished Professor at the University of Georgia, author of *This Compost: Ecological Imperatives in American Poetry*.

Molly Scott-Cato, University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, Green Party UK Speaker on Economics, author of *Green Economics*.

For more details, including the draft conference programme, e-mail composting@worc.ac.uk

4TH ASLEC-ANZ BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

**– Regarding the Earth: Ecological Vision in Word and Image –
RMIT and Monash Universities, August 31 - September 2, 2012**

Following on from 'Sounding the Earth: Music, Language, and Acoustic Ecology' (Launceston, 2010), the 2012 ASLEC-ANZ conference, co-hosted by RMIT and Monash Universities, continues an ecological exploration of the senses with a focus on vision. Papers will consider the ecological implications of different ways of perceiving, imagining, valuing and representing Earth, whether understood as planet, place or collective, comprising a multiplicity of more-than-human entities, agencies and processes. The Association for the Study of Literature, Environment and

Culture (Australia-New Zealand) is a multi-disciplinary organisation, and the conference will include contributions from a wide range of research fields, including ecophilosophy, environmental history, cultural geography, religion and ecology, science studies and art history, as well as ecocritical literary and cultural studies.

The conference will open with a public forum at RMIT on 'Re-Imagining the Global: Culture and Climate Change' on Friday evening, 31st August, at which Ursula Heise and Tim Morton will also be speaking. The Call for Papers has now closed, but enquires can be directed to Aslec.Conference@monash.edu

Selected papers will be published in a special edition of the new journal AJE (Australasian Journal of Ecocriticism and Cultural Ecology)

Keynote Speakers

- Professor Ursula Heise (UC Stanford)
- Professor Timothy Morton (UC Davis)

Plenary Speakers

- Darryn McEvoy (RMIT U)
- Harry Nankin (RMIT U)
- Clive Hamilton (Australia Institute)
- Adeline Johns-Putra (U of Exeter)
- Freya Mathews (La Trobe U)
- Linda Williams (RMIT U)

WORKSHOP

– Energy Resources: Europe and Its Former Colonies –
Deutsches Museum, Munich, October 4 - 6, 2012

The Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society in Munich, Germany, and the Center for Public History at the University of Houston, Houston, Texas, will jointly convene a workshop entitled “Energy Resources: Europe and Its Former Colonies” at the Deutsches Museum, Munich.

The meeting follows on the successful workshop, “Energy Capitals: Local Impact, Global Influence” held in May 2001 at the University of Houston, Houston, Texas.

The purpose of this workshop is to bring together ten to twelve presenters to discuss historical perspectives on the relationship between European nations and their former colonies with

respect to: the exploitation of energy resources, European influences on the development of energy industries in the former colonies, the environmental implications of energy resource development, questions of technology transfer and the transformation of knowledge vis-à-vis energy development, and the postcolonial dimensions of energy resources in a global perspective:

Conveners: Martin Melosi (University of Houston), Helmuth Trischler (Rachel Carson Center / Deutsches Museum)

Contact: Helmut Trischler at
h.trischler@deutsches-museum.de

WORKSHOP

– Imperialism, Narrative and the Environment –
October 11 - 14, 2012

This workshop is situated in relation to the RCC’s core research theme of ecological imperialism, and brings together a group of twenty leading international and interdisciplinary researchers concerned with the role narrative can play in our understanding of imperialism’s influence on environmental problems, such as climate change, deforestation, toxicity, the food crisis, and water and agricultural resource

management. While the field of literary studies is sometimes seen as distant from empirical and scientific concerns about global climate change and other ecological crises, the workshop will emphasize the profound ways in which our understandings of the history of imperialism and the environment are embedded in language, narrative, media, and the cultural imagination. Working in diverse areas such as African, Caribbean, Latin

American, South Asian, and Pacific Island Studies, participants will examine points of overlap and divergence in the narrative forms of imperial history and ecocriticism, and will workshop pre-circulated essays that focus specifically on defining and highlighting the importance of a global and humanities-based approach to environmental thought.

Conveners: Anthony Carrigan (Keele University), Christof Mauch (RCC/LMU Munich)

Location: To be announced

Keynote Speaker: David Arnold (University of Warwick)

Contact: Anthony Carrigan at a.j.carrigan@engl.keele.ac.uk or Christof Mauch at mauch@lmu.de

International Conferences / Reports

Tenerife / *Natura Loquens*: Eruptive Dialogues, Disruptive Discourses

5TH Biennial EASLCE Conference
University of La Laguna, Tenerife
June 27- 30, 2012

EASLCE's fifth biennial conference was held from June 27th to 30th at the University of La Laguna, Tenerife, on the Canary Islands. As many will remember, the original plan had been to convene this conference in Norway, but due to unforeseen circumstances, we were forced to look for a new venue on relatively short notice. To our great relief, Juan Ignacio Oliva stepped up and offered to host the conference at his home institution. In retrospect, I am sure that only the most literal-minded agnostics will wish to disagree when I say: the Gods meant it well with us. I find it difficult to imagine a more inspiring setting for an ecocritical conference than the island of Tenerife, with its awesome volcanic landscapes and spectacular biodiversity, or the town of La Laguna itself, whose quaint alleys are interspersed with just the right number of restaurants and pubs to ensure that all conference participants could enjoy their *papas arrugadas* with *mojo* and an occasional *gofio* ice cream in good company. The conference took place while the students of La Laguna were on strike, protesting steep cuts in

public education announced by the current Spanish government. While this imposed some constraints on the number of rooms available to us, it was a welcome reminder that sustainability is not just a matter of academic debates, and that our students have interests that go beyond "graduating with employable skills." Among the more serious adversities one must count the haze from a Saharan dust storm, which, however, cleared just in time for Saturday's concluding bus trip around the island, disclosing grandiose vistas of Teide and the neighbouring islands which had been obscured for much of the conference.

The conference itself was a great success and bore ample testimony that ociation lives up to its name. There were 27 panels, four of them in Spanish, with a total of 82 papers covering the whole spectrum of contemporary ecocritical scholarship and most of Europe's literary traditions. Some of the panels were focussed thematically (e.g. the three panels each on "Animal Literature" and on landscape – "Climate Change & Landscape Aesthetics", "Perspectivas humanísticas del paisaje", "Natural Landscapes & Contracts"), many by cultural region or national tradition (e.g. "Asiatic Examples of Literature & Environment", "Ecological Concerns in British

Literature”, “Ecocriticism & Germanic Traditions”, “Space and Environmental Imagination: Latin American Artworks of the Turn of the Centuries”, “American Selves, Sites & Spaces”, “The Voice of Nature in Contemporary Western American Literature”, “The Dialogue Between Nature and Man: A Native American Perspective”), others by genre (e.g. the panel “Eco Sci-Fi” and two panels on poetry, titled “Ecopoetry & Ecopoetics” and “Poetry & Nature: Eruptive Sensitivities”) or theoretical orientation (e.g. “Postcolonial literature and Ecocriticism”, “Queering Ecocriticism”, “*Materia Loquens*: Conversations on Material Ecocriticism”, “Other Worlds, Other Signs”, “Folk, Pop and Didacticism”, “Dicotomías discursivas entre la naturaleza y el hombre”, “Natural Uncertainties in Second Modernity: Crises of Agency”, “Naturaleza y escritura de la otredad literaria”, “Turns in the Study of Environmental Culture”, “Environmental Approaches to Literature”). Due to the large number of contributions, there were often as many as four concurrent panels; as a result, I found myself unable to confirm the rumour that there had also been a contribution by a mathematician who, having taken the Latin motto of the conference at its word, gave a presentation about his parrot which, through long and arduous training, had acquired a vocabulary of several hundred English words.

As at previous EASLCE conferences, there were four plenary talks. This time, two of the plenaries were given by current or former presidents of ASLE, underscoring EASLCE’s close ties to its sister organization: the first lecture by Joni Adamson (Arizona State University) was titled “A Tree Falls in the Forest: Biosemiotics, Material Ecocriticism and Rethinking Old Questions,” while Ursula Heise (Stanford University), who is also a former member of EASLCE’s advisory board,

concluded the conference with her talk on “Plasmatic Nature: Environmentalism and Animation.” As in the past, one of the plenaries was devoted to familiarizing participants with ecological conditions in the region of the hosting institution. Israel Pérez Vargas, biologist at La Laguna University, did so with much charm and spirit in his lecture “Life, Landscape and Vegetation in the Canary Islands.” In the third plenary talk, titled “The End of the End of Nature: The Anthropocene and the Fate of the Human,” renowned sociologist Bronislaw Szerszynski (Lancaster University) invited the audience to consider the conference topic from the broadest temporal vantage point.

Finally, there was, of course, our association’s Annual General Membership meeting. The most important results of this year’s AGM were the election of five new members to EASLCE’s advisory board (Isabel Fernandez Alves of the University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, Portugal; Franca Bellarsi of the Free University of Brussels, Belgium; Peter Mortensen of Aarhus University, Denmark; Isabel Hoving of the University of Leiden, Netherlands; and Diana Villanueva of the University of Extremadura, Spain), the election to the vice-presidency of Juan Ignacio Oliva, who had already won the trust of our membership through his skilful handling of the conference’s organization, of Alexa Weik von Mossner, who agreed to shoulder the burdensome task of the treasurer, and of myself. Timo Maran graciously offered to host the next biannual EASLCE conference at the University of Tartu, Estonia. I have no doubts that the spirited intellectual exchanges and the good fellowship at La Laguna will entice many of this year’s participants to return in 2014.

Hannes Bergthaller

Milan / Ecocritical Routes: Food, Animals, Literature & Ideas

Conference

Università degli Studi di Milano, Milan
May 3, 2012

On May, 3rd 2012, the University of Milan hosted the conference Ecocritical Routes: Food, Animals, Literature & Ideas. The conference was organized and chaired by Paola Loreto, professor of Anglo-American Literature, on behalf of the Department of Linguistic Sciences and Comparative Literatures.

The invited speakers were Greg Garrard (Reader in Literature and the Environment at the Bath Spa University and Immediate Past Chair of the ASLE UKI), Serenella Iovino (Senior Researcher and Professor of Ethics at the University of Turin and a Former President of EASLCE), Daniel Philippon (Associate Professor of English at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, and a Former President of ASLE), and Anna Re (researcher at the IULM Free University of Languages and Communication, Milan).

Anna Re's talk, "Americana Verde: Contemporary Nature Writing in the US", acted as an introductory overview to the conference's general topic. Her presentation was followed by Greg Garrard's "Ferality

Tales", in which the interpretation of ferality as a condition of co-evolutionary hybridity for the human and the nonhuman, provided fertile conceptual tools to discuss the relationship between ecocriticism, animal studies, and ethology. Afterwards, Serenella Iovino gave a speech titled "Ecocriticism: When Literature Talks About (the) Other", discussing the ethical and theoretical basis for ecocriticism and, in an interpretation of Anna Maria Ortese's novel *The Iguana*, proceeding with an example of ecocritical practice. Lastly, Daniel Philippon presented "Ideal Meals: Ecology, Morality, and Pleasure in the Sustainable Food Movement", a talk presenting his current researches conducted as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Turin and the University of Gastronomic Sciences, Bra.

The University of Milan thus welcomed the debate between international views on ecocriticism, which is seldom tackled in regular courses. The conference concluded with several questions and comments from the students, especially on the topics of food: the interest of the audience surely exceeded the amount of time on hand.

Adele Tiengo

Bayreuth / The Shaping Power of Risk: Literature, Culture, Environment

International Conference

Bayreuth Institute for American Studies
University of Bayreuth, Germany
February 24-26, 2012

The conference "The Shaping Power of Risk: Literature, Culture, Environment", organized by the Bayreuth Institute for American Studies

(BIFAS), marked one of the institute's current central research interests: the investigation of risk cultures from the perspective of literary and cultural studies. At the center of the conference were cultural discourses of environmental risks, both anthropogenic (for instance, the risk of climate change or the nuclear risk) and non-anthropogenic (for

instance natural catastrophes such as earthquakes). Following a transdisciplinary trajectory, the conference brought together scholars from the U.S., the UK, Switzerland, and Germany whose presentations covered the fields of American Studies, English Literary Studies, Film Studies, German Literary Studies, Media Studies and sociology. Keynote lectures were delivered by Ursula Heise (Stanford University) who spoke about "Species at Risk: Narrative, Red Lists, and the Biodiversity Crisis," by Colin Milburn (University of California, Davis) who spoke about "Green Gaming: Video Games and the Affect of Environmental Risk," and by Bronislaw Szerszynski (Lancaster University) who spoke about "Recasting Forecasting: Climate Change, Ethics and the Future." The topic areas addressed by the panelists were (a) "Environmental Risk and Genre," (b) "Environmental Risks and the Affective / Emotional Power of Texts," and (c) "Environmental Risk and the Moral Power of Texts." The conference closed with a roundtable discussion on the topic "Literary and Cultural Studies and the Shaping Power

of Risk." As the presentations and the keynote lectures revealed, the analytical category of "risk" provides ecocritics with an important lens on current socio-environmental questions and problems. They also revealed that, ultimately, literary and cultural studies risk research is a field we have only begun to move into.

BIFAS will host a second international and transdisciplinary conference in November 2012 which targets issues of technological risks (which more often than not have strong environmental implications). The conference "Risk – Effects and Affect: Technology and Narrative in the 21st Century" is organized by American Studies professor Jeanne Cortiel, and it will take place November 23 to 25, at the University of Bayreuth.

For further information see:

<http://www.amerikanistik.uni-bayreuth.de/de/conference/index.html>

Sylvia Mayer