



Dear EASLCE Members,

In the summer of this year (2017), we had many famous inhuman visitors who came howling from the Atlantic and occupied some North American landscapes. Their visits were relatively short but extremely intense. First came Harvey, Irma, and Maria. Harvey was forcefully present in Houston in August 2017, while the next month Irma made a catastrophic landfall on Barbuda, and Maria on Dominica at category 5 intensity. Forming in the Atlantic Ocean outside the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea, Irma was the strongest of them all. But, when Maria arrived in Puerto Rico as a category 4, the devastation it caused was heart-breaking. There were also Jose and Irwin not waiting too long in line. While Europe was only an observing party as this phenomena unfolded, suddenly an unexpected visitor arrived in Ireland: Ophelia, the strongest and most damaging storm on record in Great Britain.

Calamities were not unique to the Atlantic region this year. In South Asia, while India and Bangladesh suffered from extreme floods that took thousands of lives (and not only human) and forced millions of people to abandon their homes, China witnessed a deadly overflow of Yangtze river's tributary, and Sierra Leone terrifying mudslides. And in Europe, temperatures continue to hit peaks, which many scientists say has not been seen since the birth of meteorology

The amount of carbon dioxide in the air is unprecedented in our era, the famed Anthropocene that we address in heated debates. But the real heat came with wild forest fires raging across southern Europe affecting Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, and Croatia. *Euronews* reported in October that there were 1,671 blazes so far, and that due to climate change Europe's forest fires will rage more often in the future.

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We all know that human impact on climate is undeniable, hence the dominant visions and epistemologies imposed by a mélange of capitalist-consumerist and colonialist ideologies—the major culprits here—must be immediately abandoned for the ecological health of the planet. No species can survive if it turns into *terra ignota*. Earth system scientists warn us that there is a high probability we are heading “to a very different state of the Earth System, one that is likely to be much less hospitable to the development of human societies” (Steffen et al. 2015: 737).

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<https://www.easlce.eu>

As marine anthropologist Stefan Helmreich warns in *Alien Ocean*, “the oceans will not wash away our sins but rather drown us in them” (2009:14), which reminds me of the common ship metaphor: “we are all in the same boat.” Even if this metaphor is likely to raise some eyebrows in the ecocritical communities (who are *we*? specify, how can victims and oppressors equally occupy an all-encompassing category as *we*?), it still influences human cultures. You know the argument: everyone will drown eventually when the ship sinks, but those holding first class tickets get a better ride longer. The rich exploit natural resources, destabilize earth systems, and capitalize on technologies *and* ironically then escape the worst horrors of the world they destroy. They may secure a place for themselves in the lifeboat, but, even in that lifeboat, they will find it hard to survive if Earth transforms into *terra ignota*.

EASLCE takes an influential role in contesting anthropocentric positions, spreading environmental awareness, developing ethical ways of addressing social and environmental complexities, and investing in ecologically oriented cultural discourses, among other tasks, through biennial international conferences, and webinars, through effective publications of its members that find an audience worldwide, and through education. What transpires in European universities and academic circles in this regard is certainly not confined within their borders. If ecological threats know no borders or divisions and travel freely without any restrictions, so do our projects and ideas at EASLCE. Graduate students, for example, from Asian countries (India and China particularly) this year were so excited to discover rewarding sources and new paths in ecocriticism and the Environmental Humanities through EASLCE that helped open new horizons for them.

Our webinars are particularly affective in this regard attracting international participants and involving many young people from Europe and Turkey to Asia, who will be the future voices when they carry the torch of ecocriticism and spread the light in their own

institutions. I thank Molina Klinger (Germany) and Harri Salovaara (Finland) here for successfully organizing and facilitating webinars, most recently with Simon C. Estok (“**The Ecophobia Hypothesis**,” May 20, 2017) and Ursula K. Heise (“**Narrative, Biodiversity, and Multispecies**,” September 23, 2017) as hosts.

Another means of reaching out for EASLCE is the effective use of social media. As you all know, we did have a Facebook page, but to make it a more active platform to share the latest news of EASLCE, we decided to update this page (actually “transform” would be a better word here). This transformation was accomplished by Judith Rauscher from Bamberg University who gathered a wonderful Facebook page team, consisting of Maria Pia Arpioni from the Università di Venezia “Ca’ Foscari” and Sara Buekens from the University Ghent. They were at the forefront, while Michaela Castellanos and Hanna Strass-Sénol labored in the background. I call them the EASLCE Wonder Team and thank them wholeheartedly. You can find many relevant online materials here, but our major platform for information is our EASLCE website, which is being renewed by our webmaster, Michael Markwick (who is also a distinguished painter). Michael’s technical support for the new Facebook page is, of course, very important, but surely his major canvas is the EASLCE webpage. You will see that the new theme he crafted with high quality images gives the website a totally fresh look.

Michael added a lovely slider on the main page that displays the EASLCE mission and everything it offers to draw in new members, and he highlighted the link to our flagship journal *Ecozon@*. There is now on the website another info stream of news media that makes more visible new publications by members. Michael was also keen on designing a new “Community Page” so EASLCE members and nonmembers can meet here and collaborate. Members will also see the link to the new official EASLCE Facebook page there.

<http://www.facebook.com/EASLCE/>

Most importantly, we can now post our teaching material, syllabi, reading lists, course descriptions, and notes in “Teaching Resources,” which will be particularly beneficial for students and scholars of ecocriticism.

My soliloquy about our resources to make a difference would be incomplete if I didn’t mention our Newsletter, which is so meticulously prepared by the Vice-President Uwe K uchler (and his team) and to whom I extend my sincere thanks. I must also bring attention to the “Postgraduate Forum Environment, Literature, Culture,” whose mission is to bring “together young researchers from the EASLCE membership countries to share and discuss their research with other young scholars in the environmental humanities.” The 5th annual workshop this year was held in Venice in November.

[\(https://docforumelc.wordpress.com/postgraduate-workshop-2017/\)](https://docforumelc.wordpress.com/postgraduate-workshop-2017/).

Finally, let me recapitulate what I had announced in the previous Newsletter: the 8th Biennial EASLCE conference on “The Garden: Ecological Paradigms of Space, History, and Community,” organized by Catrin Gersdorf and her colleague Roland Borgards, which will be held at JMU, W urzburg, Germany on September, 24-28, 2018. The good news is that the conference will coincide with the 2018 National Horticultural Show (*Landesgartenschau*) in W urzburg, itself a city of gardens. I hope to see you all there.

In conclusion, let’s remember that 2018 is almost here with promises and hopes; but make no mistake, dire conditions will not dissolve. Hurricanes and storms, droughts and floods, heat waves and wild fires will not unexpectedly vanish, nor will the political leaders and economic decision makers suddenly become more eco-conscious. But our work at EASLCE will be continual, our resilience enduring, and our connections perpetual. For as long as we continue to give voice to all that is agentic and that suffers the consequences of environmental transformations, visitors like Harvey, Maria, Irma, or Jose may have less catastrophic effects. It is unlikely that the storms will weaken; rather, we will have to strengthen. Like Beckett’s unnamable character, “we must go on.”

On behalf of EASLCE, I extend my Best Wishes for a Happy New Year to all the members.

Serpil Oppermann, EASLCE President

How to become a member of EASLCE?

Visit our web site at: <http://www.easlce.eu>

For further information contact Alexa Weik von Mossner: treasurer@easlce.eu

Call for Papers

Call for Papers

2017 ASLE Translation Grants Submission Instructions and Community

In order to support work in ecocriticism from international scholars and to expand exchanges across cultures and continents, the ASLE Committee for Translations seeks proposals for books or other substantial projects (such as longer articles) to be translated into English. This is the third and final year that such grants have been offered.

Proposed works should be ecocriticism or fiction/non-fiction with a clear relationship to environmental issues, and must already have been published in a language other than English. For accepted projects, we provide funding to support the translation of these books. We also encourage authors to seek English-language publishers, particularly in the U.S., Canada, or Great Britain.

Funding for accepted books to be translated will be up to a possible maximum of \$1,000 each. We will award up to three translation grants this year.

Materials (and any questions) should be submitted electronically by December 31, 2017 to Heather Sullivan at hsullivan@trinity.edu. Criteria for submission and required information include:

1. Membership in ASLE or any international affiliate (ASLE-Japan, ASLE-UKI, etc.).
2. Author name and university association, if affiliated with an institution; include full contact information (email, mailing address, and phone numbers) and a curriculum vitae. In the case of a translator

applying to translate the scholarly work of someone else, provide full information, if possible, for both author and translator(s).

3. Information on original place and year of publication and note any relevant copyright issues related to the original press.
4. A summary in English of the project. This should include a brief overview of the book itself and a short summary of each chapter. The total summary should not exceed 3 single-spaced pages.
5. A rationale for why it would be beneficial if this work were translated into English, including comments on possible audience(s) and relationship to other works in the field. The rationale should also not exceed 3 pages.
6. A schedule for proposed translation work that includes a likely date of completion or a specific time frame for the process.
7. List of possible publishers or presses that might be interested in the translation. Applicant should briefly address feasibility of finding an English-language press.

For successful grantees: once the translation is complete, a copy should be sent to the Managing Director of ASLE, at info@asle.org, with information on the press(es) to which it has been submitted.

Call for Papers

The Garden: Ecological Paradigms of Space, History, and
8th Biennial Conference of the European Association for the Study of
Literature, Culture and Environment (EASLCE)
University of Würzburg, Germany, September 26 -29, 2018



Arguably one of the most alluring environmental images, the garden enjoys a poetic, aesthetic, and mythological presence across many cultures and throughout all ages. At the same time, gardens have always been real, material spaces that served a variety of social, economic, and scientific purposes and continue to do so. Whether as poetic image or as real space, gardens always represent historically contingent and culturally variegated environmental practices. They emerge from the real and imagined interactions between human and non-human agents.

Etymologically, the word garden derives from Old High German, *garte*, meaning that which is enclosed or protected by a fence or border. In this tradition, gardens emphasize the dialectics of inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion, discipline and spontaneity, the domestic and the wild, the useful and the useless. But gardens also blur those distinctions; they represent a space that joins the utilitarian and the ornamental. More modern concepts emphasize the garden's all-encompassing character. In *Greater Perfection: The Practice of Garden Theory* (2000) John Dixon Hunt observed that "one aspect of a garden's representational ambitions was to epitomize the whole world within its own limited space" (198). He calls that the "raison d'être of the early botanical gardens," an idea that "sustained many other garden designs" (*ibid.*) throughout

history. But it also suggests the garden's emblematic nature: to the extent that the garden depends for its existence on an assemblage of organic materials within a specific framework of time and space, it allegorizes the ecological, spatial, and historical conditions of human existence on this planet.

With this conference, the organizers seek to address the following questions: What would it mean to think modern human existence in terms of a garden ecology rather than a market economy? What would it mean to replace the agora with the *kipos* as the public place in which citizens negotiate the way they want to live in society with other humans and, more generally, with other living beings? At this point in history, can we shift the focus of modern human economic interests and activities from extraction (the violent removal of organic and non-organic substances from their environment), production (of that which sells), and consumption (of the things produced from the extracted substances) to design (of spaces that support life), production (of the things and substances necessary to sustain life), and maintenance (of the material and cultural foundations of life)? If cycles of (seasonal) growth define life in the garden, will recycling of that which has already been extracted and transformed into the things we live with define the future of existence on planet Earth?

French gardener, botanist, and writer Gilles Clément raises similar questions, offering, producing, sharing, and recycling as activities inspired by the garden. He has recently been joined by a number of scholars and writers drawing our attention to the garden as a subject of historical and critical inquiry, perhaps most prominently among them Andrea Wulf and Emma Marris.

The overarching question for this conference is this: To what extent does the garden, a historically, politically, and socially loaded as well as culturally variegated space, provide us with new paradigms for thinking and living in an ecologically challenged world?

Topic suggestions:

- Types of gardens and their social, political, ethical, anthropological, alimentary, etc. uses (flower garden, vegetable garden, botanical garden, zoological garden, urban garden, beer garden, kindergarden, cybergarden, etc.).
- Conceptual, aesthetic, historical, and material relations between garden and landscape and national park.
- The garden's allegorical, mythological, and utopian/ecotopian potentials.
- The garden as social space/heterotopia and the question of the boundary.
- The garden's affective ecologies.
- Gardens across cultures: diachronic and synchronic perspectives.
- Gardens in science and education (zoological and botanical gardens).
- Gardens in literature, art, film, and visual culture (their poetic, narratological, cinematic, and iconographic functions).
- Garden, eros, sexuality, and knowledge.
- The garden as linguistic, cultural, and educational resource.
- Political rhetoric and horticultural metaphors.
- Biosemiotics & the language of plants.
- Animals in the garden/ animals as gardeners.

- The garden in Ecocriticism, the Environmental Humanities, and Education.
- The pastoral and the horticultural in literature, art, film, philosophy, and political theory.
- Horticulture, agriculture and the future of modernity.

Coinciding with the 2018 State Horticultural Show (Landesgartenschau) in Würzburg, itself a city of gardens—the baroque Hofgarten at the Residenz, the Fürstengarten at the Festung Marienburg, the 1990 Landesgartenschau-park, the Ringpark, the Botanic garden of the University, and the Lusamgärtlein with the memorial grave of Walther von der Vogelweide— this conference seeks to investigate the human experience of gardens and gardening as a paradigm for reconceptualizing space, history, and community in the 21st century.

The primary conference languages will be English and German. We welcome both scholarly and creative proposals. The submission formats are either for individual scholarly papers of 20 minutes, or individual creative contributions/performances of 20minutes, or for pre-formed panels of 3-4 20-minute scholarly papers/creative contributions.

The format:

- individual proposals: title + abstract (c. 300 words) + biosketch (5-10 lines) + IT requirement + full contact details.
- preformed panels: 500 word abstract for the panel comprising general topic and format outline + participants' biosketches and full contact details + IT requirements, supplemented by individual 300 word abstract for each contribution on the panel.

All proposals to Prof. Dr. Catrin Gersdorf, and her team:

easlce2018@uni-wuerzburg.de

Submission deadline: **January 15, 2018.**

Call for Papers

PETROCULTURES 2018: *TRANSITIONS*

University of Glasgow, Scotland, UK, August 29-September 1, 2018

The 2016 Paris Climate Agreement heralded unprecedented international consensus on the need to transition from fossil fuels within the next few decades. The uneven responses from state, corporate, and civil actors across the world clearly signify the challenges – and opportunities – that lie ahead. On the one hand, they demonstrate the enduring power of oil and gas. On the other, a range of efforts to break free from the ‘lock-in’ of the fossil-fuel system and realize a host of potential alternative scenarios.

[Petrocultures](#) is motivated by the core notion that the humanities and social sciences have significant input for both knowledge of oil and energy and the necessary process of transformation. The international field has expanded since the inaugural conference in Edmonton, Canada in 2012, producing scholarly and creative work across numerous platforms, genres, and disciplines. While much work has been done to highlight the social and cultural significance of fossil fuels, the ecological unfeasibility of high-carbon life urgently compels us to think, imagine and realize a world ‘after oil’. The organising theme of Petrocultures 2018 is Transition. We anticipate its cultural interpretation in a variety of ways. The conference will provide an important forum for examining and extending existent framings and sitings of oil and petroculture, while also striving to consider the social, cultural, and aesthetic life of alternative forms of energy, such as wind, solar, and hydro power. This is the first Petrocultures conference to be

held outside North America. Scotland’s relationship with its offshore oil industry offers a rich backdrop for examining all the contradictions and controversies, opportunities and challenges oil has presented to modern petroculture and the world-ecological condition it has fostered. The country has always been acutely perceptive of the inevitable ‘ends’ of oil. Much recent focus has been on the reality of decommissioning its petro-infrastructure, in tandem with attempts to become a leading site of renewable energy, accompanied by bold climate policy initiatives. Illuminating parallels can be drawn, therefore, between Scotland’s experience and that of other key oil-sites across Europe and the world.

Petrocultures 2018 will bring together scholars, artists, policy-makers, energy/environmental groups, and representatives from industry from across Europe, North America, and beyond. Confirmed Keynote Speakers include: [Dominic Boyer](#) (Professor of Anthropology and Director, CENHS, Rice University); [Sharae Deckard](#) (School of English, Drama and Film, University College Dublin); [Jeff Diamanti](#) (Faculty of Humanities, University of Amsterdam); [Cymene Howe](#) (Dept. of Anthropology and Director, CSWGS, Rice University); [Andreas Malm](#) (Human Geography, Lund University); [Miranda Pennell](#) (Artist and Filmmaker); [Renata Tyszczyk](#) (School of Architecture, University of Sheffield); [Laura Watts](#) (Science and Technology Studies, IT University of Copenhagen)

Topics this conference will explore include, **but are not limited to:**

- oil / energy's cultural imaginaries
- transition culture / cultural registrations of energy transition and decarbonisation
- histories / futures of transition
- the end(s) of oil / representing petrofutures/ low-carbon imaginaries
- oil's cultural geographies / spaces and sites of extraction, production, extractivism
- imagining and representing alternative energy: the narratives/poetics/aesthetics of wind/tidal/solar/hydro/bio-/thermal/
- oil / energy and the anthropocene / capitalocene
- infrastructure
- activist interventions
- energypower / the culture, politics, and economics of oil/energy in an age of transition
- material / immaterial oil – financial / environmental / embodied / psychic /affective cultures of oil / energy
- waste / plastic / lubricity
- energy and climate – history, realism, speculation, apocalypse
- theorising 'renewable culture' / cultural renewal
- oil / energy utopias / dystopias
- documenting / curating / archiving / modelling / philosophising / designing petroculture / transition
- creative resources – producing energy art / theatre / literature / film
- digital resources
- the energy commons / energy and environmental law / justice
- oil / energy and world-ecology
- representing mobility

- oil / energy and the state / industry
- oil / energy and labour / work in transition / energy and social reproduction
- oil / energy and gender / sexuality
- community responses / creative initiatives to energy transition
- UK / European / Scottish histories / registrations of petroculture

Please send proposals and biographical info as soon as possible, but no later than

February 2, 2018 to

petrocultures2018@gmail.com

Organising Committee: [Dr Graeme Macdonald](#) (University of Warwick);

[Professor Janet Stewart](#) (Durham University); [Dr Rhys Williams](#) (University of Glasgow)

Website:

<https://petrocultures2018.wixsite.com/transition>

Facebook: @Petrocultures2018

We seek proposals for papers, workshops, and special panels that address themes related to transition and/or petrocultures more generally. Papers and panels can be academic, creative, or any combination of the two. We are open to suggestions for other formats. We ask that paper proposals be no more than 200 words in length, and that panel proposals have a 200-word description of the topic along with a list of paper titles. All submissions must include a 100-word biographical statement for each presenter. Please send proposals as soon as possible, but no later than **February 2, 2018**.

Project

Narrating the Mesh:

Ecology and the Non-Human in Contemporary Fiction and Oral Storytelling

A project funded by the European Research Council, grant number 714166 (NARMESH)

Ghent University, Department of Literary Studies, 2017-2022

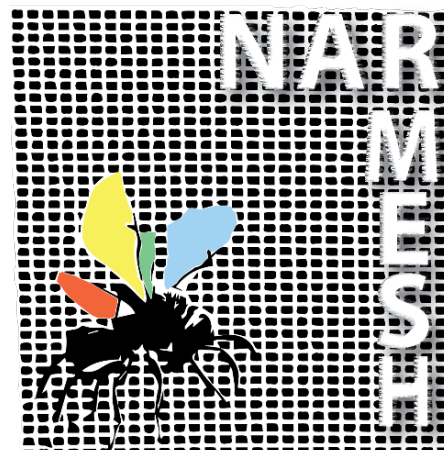
<http://www.narmesh.ugent.be/>

narmesh@ugent.be

A character in Ian McEwan's novel *Solar* remarks: "I'm interested in the forms of narrative that climate science has generated. It's an epic story, of course, with a million authors" (2010, 169). This five-year project aims to contribute to our understanding of these narrative forms. The project is based at Ghent University in Belgium and is funded by a Starting Grant from the European Research Council. It makes an intervention in contemporary discussions in ecocriticism and narrative theory, two fields that are well-represented in European universities but are yet to be brought into systematic conversation.

The premise is that, as scholars in ecocriticism and related fields have pointed out, today's ecological crisis prompts us to rethink our attitude towards physical and natural realities that have traditionally been seen as opposed to human subjectivity and agency. What emerges from this "non-human turn" is a sense of our interdependence with entities like the bacteria in our intestines or the carbon atoms supporting life on Earth. Ecological theorist Timothy Morton uses the metaphor of the "mesh" to express this idea of human/non-human interconnectedness. This project maps the formal strategies through which

contemporary narrative practices engage with the non-human and envisage this interconnectedness.



Comparing fictional narratives in print (novels and short stories) and conversational storytelling, the project explores the ways in which narrative can forge connections across levels of reality, weaving together the human and the non-human. The assumption is that narrative is a field where fictional practices are in constant dialogue with stories told in everyday conversation—and with the culture-wide beliefs and concerns these stories reflect.

Our team has four core members. Three literary scholars—the PI, Marco Caracciolo, and two PhD students, Gry Ulstein and Shannon Lambert—will work on contemporary narrative engagements with the non-human in genres such as post-apocalyptic fiction and “lab lit” (which centers on scientists in a realistic context). In parallel, anthropologist Susannah Crockford will elicit conversational narratives from both individuals affected by a natural catastrophe and scientists, analyzing the ways in which these stories also negotiate the ideologically fraught boundary between the human and the non-human. The project thus builds on a combination

of methods (close reading and formal analysis of novels, qualitative research); it aims to open up a new field of study at the intersection of literary scholarship and the social sciences—with narrative theory serving as a catalyst for the interdisciplinary exchange.

The goal is to deepen our understanding of narrative transactions at the intersection of fiction and everyday life. We are especially interested in how exposure to the formally sophisticated narratives of contemporary fiction can affect the ways in which people conceptualize and narrativize their attitudes towards the non-human.

Call for Papers

International Conference on Environmental Humanities

Stories, Myths, and Arts to Envision a Change

Alcalá de Henares, July 3-6, 2018

Environmental humanities entail a transdisciplinary and transnational critical framework that is rapidly emerging in the last decade. This framework challenges traditional divisions among human, social, and environmental sciences, since they have proven to be obsolete in confronting, understanding, and articulating the most pressing social, cultural, and environmental challenges of the 21st century, as well as their multiple scales, risks, and representational difficulties. Environmental humanities emerge out of the convergence among environmental history and philosophy, ecocriticism, art and ecology, de-/post-colonial environmental thinking, earth

systems science, philosophy of science, environmental ethics, social and political ecology, ecofeminism, and so on. This international conference, co-organized by the Instituto Franklin and the Department of Modern Philology, attempts to contribute to this fascinating debate while introducing it in Spain, where it has not yet been established. In particular, we are interested in highlighting the role of the humanities to establish the relationship between empirical environmental knowledge and the necessary change of moral values, creating empathetic spaces where the imagination can be developed in order to carry out an eco-social transition.

Our objective is to promote dialogue and contacts among researchers in different areas. Thus, the structure that is somewhat different from the usual and active participation during the whole conference, will be a central factor. In addition to traditional panels, this conference will feature several plenary speakers, thematic workshops (debates, creative writing or projects), and artistic performances. All panelists must participate in one of the afternoon thematic workshops in order to ensure the emergence of creative synergy and foster active involvement. Workshops will be facilitated by invited experts. Panelists will be able to choose a workshop and add their name when registering for the conference. A published volume of selected papers is planned.

We accept submissions of individual papers (15 min) but prefer organized panels composed of 3 or 4 panelists. Individual proposals should include 300 words abstracts in Spanish or English and a brief bio (50 words). Organized panel proposals could be in any European language (but the proposal should be in English or Spanish) and should include a panel description of 500 words, plus the 300 words abstract for each panelist, as well as the brief bios, and a moderator, if desired. Please send your proposal (template provided in the web) by email to the conference email: cha2018@institutofranklin.net before **January 14, 2018**. Shortly the conference web will be found within the Franklin Institute <http://www.institutofranklin.net/>),

under “Events.”

Some possible topics include:

- The role of the humanities in the environmental crisis.
- How to effectively communicate the ecological crisis.
- Literary and visual narratives about alternative, more ecological, cosmovisions.
- Alternative ecological visions and the arts. The arts and the transition to more sustainable societies.
- Indigenous cosmovisions and cosmoexperiences.
- Resilience and low ecosystemic lifestyles.
- Revisiting classic and modern myths in relation to environmental issues.
- Ecological pedagogy and environmental education from a humanities perspective.
- Ecofeminist ethics.
- Environmental ethics.
- The aesthetic appreciation of nature and its relationship to environmental ethics.
- New sustainable concepts of beauty and aesthetics.
- New sustainable definitions of progress and/or culture.
- Posthumanism and new definitions of what being human means.
- Culture and Ecology. Citizen humanities.

This conference is part of the funded research projects: “Strategies for Ecological Empathy and the Transition to Sustainable Societies”: Ref: HAR2015-67472-C2-2-R (MINECO/FEDER) and “Research Activities in Cultural Mythcriticis.

Conference Reports

International Conferences / Report

XII ASLE Biennial Conference “Rust/Resistance: Works of Recovery”

Wayne State University, Detroit, USA, 20-24 June 2017

The twelfth ASLE Biennial Conference “Rust/Resistance: Works of Recovery,” took place from June 20 to June 24, 2017 at Wayne State University, Detroit. The site host committee was headed by Elena Past. Following the high attendance rates of previous editions, this year there were approximately 900 participants representing 22 countries, and about 800 presenters distributed among 187 concurrent sessions, including a “Detroit Waters Wars” special session. There were five plenary talks (six plenary speakers in total): the open plenary was shared by Laura Dassow Walls and Michael Branch; the following keynote speakers were Tiya Miles, Ross Gay, Siobhan Senior and Kyle Powys Whyte.

Laura Dassow Walls (University of Notre Dame), in her presentation “Counter Frictions: Thoreau and the Machine,” revisited Henry David Thoreau’s life and work presenting him as a thinker who by promoting place consciousness countered global technological determinism.

Michael Branch (University of Nevada, Reno) argued for the relevance of humor in ecocritical work and nature writing in his presentation “Laughing Matters: Humor in an Age of Resistance and Resilience.” The talk itself included a joke about the number of ecocritics necessary to screw in a lightbulb—for those of you who are wondering, the short answer is ten. Tiya Miles (University of Michigan), in “Recovering Rivers in the Midwest: Community, Narrative,

Scholarship,” described her project Eco Girls, an environmental initiative taking place in urban southeast Michigan that combines gender empowerment, environmental education, and storytelling *in situ*. The project attempts to, among other things, recover rivers and riverine spaces symbolically, mythologically, and ecologically. Poet Ross Gay (Indiana University Bloomington) read some of his poetry during his engaging presentation “Reading the Trees.” Siobhan Senior (University of New Hampshire-Durham) talked about a project aimed at recovering Northeastern indigenous literary works, both in digital format and in print in a presentation entitled “Dawnland Voices: Sovereignty, Sustainability, and Digitizing Indigenous Literature of the Northeast.” Senior argued that such literary works enact a resistance to settler-colonial ways of thinking about land and sustainability, enabling in turn the ecological and cultural survival of the affected communities. Finally, Kyle Powys Whyte (Michigan State University), in “Resurgence from within the rust: Indigenous Science (Fiction) for the Anthropocene,” argued that climate change is perceived by numerous indigenous communities around the world as a cyclical, though highly intensified version of colonially induced environmental change.

Whyte also elucidated how Anishinabe peoples counter seasonal and environmental changes through their cultural notions of responsibility and relationality.

Before and during the conference two seminars and six workshops were conducted. The seminars were on the intersections of environmental humanities and indigenous studies, and on ecocinema (with a focus on transnational and transcultural studies). Three of the workshops had a focus on teaching and/or education; while there was also a workshop on reading water and water issues reparatively, another on the art and science of environmental writing, and a sixth on the practice of peer review, addressed to graduate students. The general membership meetings of ASLE and EASLCE also took place during the conference, as well as the meetings of ASLE's group interests, working groups, and caucuses. Summaries for some of these meetings can be found on ASLE's website: <https://www.asle.org/stay-informed/asle-conference-reports/>.

The social and cultural activities of the conference started with an opening reception on the evening of the first day, accompanied by a cake to celebrate ASLE's 25 years as an association. The following evening there was an authors' reception, and midway through the conference, the cultural crawl invited the participants to attend different activities and events taking

place in several cafes and museums of Detroit, enlivening the evening in spite of the pouring rain. The field trips took place on Friday afternoon and offered a set of activities, that ranged from guided tours around the city (by bus, bike, running, or walking), to tours to specific places related to sustainability actions, water management, and cultural heritage.

Parallel to these activities the new film by Juan Carlos Galeano, *El Río (The River)*, was also screened at an event were the Latin American Observatory (from the Humanities for the Environment project) was launched, and the Seres Puentes Award was presented to the Universidad de Amazonia (Colombia). That evening, the film *Watermark* was also screened at the splendid Detroit Film Theater (Detroit Institute of Arts). The closing banquet and dance took place on the last evening at the Charles White Museum of African American History. After dinner attendants could visit all the exhibits and join free tours of the museum.

M^a Isabel Pérez-Ramos

24th Biennial Conference of the Italian Association for North American Studies (AISNA)

The US and the World We Inhabit

September 28th to September 30th 2017, University of Milan.

From September 28th to September 30th 2017, the University of Milan, in collaboration with the United States Mission to Italy, hosted the 24th Biennial Conference of the Italian Association for North American Studies (AISNA) *The US and the World We Inhabit*. The Conference main theme was the study of American literature, history and culture in a global and environmental perspective exploring the relations between the United States and the world, and between humankind and its habitat.

The three keynote speakers – Scott Slovic, Greta Gaard, and Peter Bardaglio – addressed the conference theme from ecocritical, ecofeminist, and historical points of view, all underlying the necessity to weave a stronger network of resistance and to build new narratives of hope. Their message – which was echoed in a number of workshops – conveyed discourses of climate change and clarified the cultural and countercultural productions that may provide alternatives to the political and cultural mainstream. A fourth plenary session, a roundtable on *US ecopoetics and ecopolitics*, featured Christa Grewe-Volpp, Marcus Hall and Grammenos Mastrojeni discussing mobility and migration, Robert Smithson's Spiral Jetty on the shores of the Great Salt Lake, and conflicting pulls within US politics in relation to environmental issues and their economic implications.

Twenty panels and over a hundred speakers brought about discussions that focused on four main

issues. The ideas of identity and belonging were investigated in order to reconceptualize the structure of relations.

The porous borders that tie human and non-human domains were analyzed in a dialogue between scientific and non-scientific knowledge. Moreover, the role of poetry and literary expression was examined as a means to shift common perceptions of such borders. Finally, the discovery of a new sense of belonging in a global perspective led to explorations on how transnational mobility affects linguistic expression and identity.

The second and third issues were generated from the first one, and explored forms of encounter with the other and with the self. Multilingualism was recognized as a key for the opening of channels between identities and clusters of meaning, and translation as a pivotal tool in the process of interpretation, understanding, and knowledge. The role of English, especially when used as an American imperialistic tool, was also questioned in the context of a deterioration of language ecology worldwide. The heterogeneity of American culture itself was addressed from a geographical point of view, interpreting physical space as a culturally and politically connoted web, whose main knots are ethnicity, religion, and wilderness. Finally, a major issue was identified in the necessity to build and inhabit new spaces of protest.

Adele Tiengo

Publications



Transatlantic Landscapes: Environmental Awareness, Literature and the Arts, edited by José Manuel Marrero Henríquez, Franklin Institute-UAH, 2016.



Climate Crisis and the 21st-Century British Novel, edited by Astrid Bracke, Bloomsbury Academic, 2017.

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