



asle-anz



Association for the Study of Literature & Environment - Australia & New Zealand

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT, August 2008

Dear ASLE-ANZ Members,

On the morning of March 3, the day that I was scheduled to participate in a roundtable discussion on climate change adaptation at Old Parliament House under the auspices of the Garnaut Review, I was shocked and saddened to learn of the untimely demise of my friend, **Val Plumwood**. Continuing the series of valedictions that we have run in the last two newsletters, I am including another for Val below. Although she was not officially one of our 'elders', she was a leading figure in the ecological humanities, both nationally and internationally, whose radical reconceptualisations of 'nature', 'culture' and human identity have a crucial bearing on our concern in ASLE with writing, representation and the more-than-human world (and on much else besides). I was initially so floored by the ghastly news of her death, especially as the circumstances were still unclear, that I briefly considered giving my apologies

ASLE-ANZ Symposium

'Cultures of Sustainability'

Saturday 27 September 2008

Storey Hall, RMIT University
Melbourne

In conjunction with RMIT Gallery exhibition 'Heat—Art & Climate Chance' this symposium will examine how global environmental change is being addressed in the fields of Contemporary Art, Design, Literature, Ecocriticism & Cultural Theory, Media & Communications, and Philosophy. The symposium will be preceded on the Friday night by a poetry reading and the ASLE-ANZ AGM. Keynote speaker: Dr **Wendy Wheeler** Reader in English, Department of Humanities Arts and Languages, London Metropolitan University, who will speak on biosemiotics. Wendy Wheeler's latest book *The Whole Creature: Complexity, Biosemiotics and the Evolution of Culture* (2006) is published by Lawrence & Wishart, London.

Conference website:

<http://www.rmit.edu.au/art/culturesofsustainability>

Selected papers will be published in themed issues of two peer-reviewed Journals *Communication, Politics & Culture* & *PAN: Philosophy, Activism, Nature*.

to **Ross Garnaut**. However, it struck me that Val would not have wanted me to miss an opportunity to insert a bit of eco-critique into policy discussions around so crucial an issue, so I pulled myself

together and fronted up for what turned out to be a pleasingly wide-open discussion of a whole range of matters relating to climate change adaptation, with contributions from sociologists and climatologists, local government and concerned youth, OXFAM and WWF, among others. My main objective was to draw attention to the role of cultural attitudes, assumptions and values in shaping the ways in which we prepare to face the multi-dimensional challenges of a changing and increasing chaotic climate. It remains to be seen whether and how these kinds of arguments might end up informing government policy. The interim report, which was released on 4 July, focuses exclusively on mitigation (<http://www.garnautreview.org.au/CA25734E0016A131/pages/draft-report->), but in his subsidiary ‘Submissions Report’, Garnaut does at least acknowledge the necessity of assigning value to “non-market goods” in his brief comments on climate change adaptation.

Having endeavoured to do my wee bit to champion the work of the humanities in the context of climate change policy-formation, my next public engagement this year saw me championing the earth among poets. On April 24, I had the pleasure of addressing a meeting of the Melbourne Poets’ Union on the topic, ‘What is Eco-Poetry?’ This was one of a series of ecologically-oriented events that the MPU is currently running to mark the **International Year of Planet Earth**, and I was delighted to find that I was sharing the evening with two poets, Melbourne-based **Connie Barber** and the Caribbean reggae singer and writer, **Yasus Afari**, who, in their very different ways, joined in calling our attention to the plight of the more-than-human world. **Kris Hemensley** of Collected Works (my all-time favourite Melbourne bookshop) put the text of my talk up on his blog, if anybody wants to check on

what your ASLE-ANZ President has been saying out of school: (<http://collectedworks-poetryideas.blogspot.com/2008/05/merri-creek-poems-pieces-2-mayjune-2008.html>).

A couple of years ago I decided to put myself on a diet of only one overseas trip a year, but having been invited to give keynotes at conferences in two very different parts of the world, I found myself unable to turn down either opportunity. So, attempting vainly to assuage my carbon conscience with some meagre off-sets, I flew first-up to Taipei for the fabulous Fourth Tamkang International Conference on Ecological Discourse (May 23-24). This was my first visit to Taiwan, and I enjoyed it immensely, not least on account of the great generosity and kindness of our host, the affable **Peter I-min Huang**, and his wonderful team at Tamkang University. This was to have been the occasion at which Taiwanese ASLE was launched, but owing to the momentous change of government that had recently taken place there, promising better relations between the two Chinese states, official approval had not yet come through. As representatives of scholarship in this field from Europe, North America, several Asian nations (Malaysia, Japan, South Korea and the Peoples’ Republic of China), and Australia, we were nonetheless invited to celebrate the gestation and, it is hoped, immanent birth of ASLE-Taiwan, and given the strength of Taiwanese participation in the conference, I am confident that this will be a lively locus for studies in literature and environment in the Asian region.

Entitled ‘Criss-crossing Word and World: Ecocriticism, Crisis, and Representation’, this event continued the Tamkang tradition of bringing different kinds of ecocritics into conversation with

one another and with scholars in other areas of the ecological humanities. The plenary line-up included, in addition to yours truly speaking on the hermeneutics of environmental catastrophe, **Patrick Murphy** on ‘terraculturation’, political dissolution, and science fiction, and **Scott Slovic** on the importance of the affective dimension of the ‘literature of sustainability’, alongside the eminent ecophilosopher **Michael Zimmerman** on the eschatological discourse of technoscientific ‘posthumanism’. The parallel sessions, which included some excellent presentations by local postgraduate students as well as a session in Chinese on indigenous Taiwanese ecopolitics and literature, were similarly diverse. The final roundtable discussion, unconventionally, had not been assigned a theme, and it was only a few minutes before we were to begin that we decided to take up **Joni Adamson**’s challenge of talking, off the cuff, about why we are doing this kind of work. I can’t begin to recount what we all said, but I’m sure that I was not the only one who surprised themselves: in the context of deep crisis that Patrick had outlined for us in his opening keynote address, we were drawn to broach, however briefly, some of the really big questions, at once intensely personal and profoundly political, that motivate the ecological humanities, but which are rarely addressed explicitly.

My next somewhat guilt-ridden international flight took me to London, whence I proceeded with great pleasure across country by train to Edinburgh, for the biennial ASLE-UK conference on ‘Activism, Apocalypse, and the Avant-Garde’ (July 10-13). I had the honour of presenting the opening keynote address there, and, in keeping with the ambition of the conference organisers to make a place for the avant-garde within current discussions of ecological aesthetics, I was encouraged to revisit my theory of

‘negative ecopoetics’, which I was more than happy to do, not least in response to some helpful questions and criticisms that my earlier musings on this had evoked. However, I also took this opportunity to broach my new preoccupation with ‘the prophetic imagination’: you’ll hear more from me on this in due course! Having got this behind me, I was able to sit back and enjoy the reception and poetry reading that evening, as well as the varied presentations of the following days, during which the unflappable **Tom Bristow** seemed always to be hovering near, keeping us more or less to schedule, as well as in amazingly good cheer. The second plenary featured **Tim Morton** and was presented, virtuously, in video-conferencing mode. Although Tim’s important and challenging work has an anti-eschatological edge, the occasion acquired a somewhat apocalyptic air by virtue of the fact that he had his face mask to hand, as the air in his part of California had become so thick with the smoke of a hundred odd wildfires then burning pretty much out of control that he could barely breathe outside. For those of us who had read his most recent book, *Ecology Without Nature*, with fascination, but also some puzzlement in parts, Tim’s talk, and the ensuing conversation, was extremely helpful: I just wish that we could have had the benefit of his participation in the rest of the conference (not to mention his company in one or more of Edinburgh’s lovely pubs in the evenings). I have no doubt that our discussions will need to become increasingly technologically mediated: but there really is no substitute for embodied co-presence, no matter how incomplete, as Tim would insist, that ‘presence’ ever is. Tim’s presentation was preceded by a brief tribute to the work of **Val Plumwood** by **Patrick Curry**, who spoke in particular of her recent espousal of ‘philosophical animism’. Interestingly, the next plenary,

presented by the theologian **Michael Northcott**, was also prefaced by a tribute to Val, while nonetheless offering a counter-argument to her critique of Judaeo-Christian constructions of 'nature' by demonstrating the possibility of deriving a strong ethic of care for creation from some biblical texts and traditions, prompting what was undoubtedly the most heated discussion that I witnessed at this gathering. The final plenary was to have been presented by **Rebecca Solnit**, but when she was unable to attend at the last minute, the ever-eloquent **Greg Garrard** manfully stepped into the breach. Regrettably, I had to head off to another conference at Oxford on the last day, so I missed Greg's lecture, but it was by all accounts a brilliant defence of a scientifically-grounded approach to ecocriticism and environmental literature, which also acknowledged some of the other perspectives presented during the course of this really excellent conference.

In between these two trips, I relished the chance to speak at a symposium on Climate Change and the Crisis of Reason (June 20), ably organised by **Debbie Rose** at the ANU's new Fenner School of Environment and Society in honour of the life and work of **Val Plumwood**, who was at the time of her death an Honorary Research Associate there. This significant event combined personal tributes to Val with a range of more academic responses to the question of how the ecological humanities can contribute to addressing the multi-dimensional challenge of climate change. The current Head of the Fenner School, **Will Steffen**, soon to take charge of the ANU's new Climate Change Institute, kicked off by filling us in, chillingly, on the latest assessments on the pace of global warming and current predictions of climate change for the coming decades. According to him, although it might still be technically

feasible, it now seems extremely unlikely that the global average temperature rise will be kept below 2 degrees C, implying that we need to begin preparing for the incredibly grim scenario of increases of up to 4 to 6 degrees, potentially by the end of the century. Of the many graphs that Will shared with us, the one that I found most fascinating compared the world's nations on the basis of measuring the fulfilment of basic human needs against per capita resource consumption: according to this study, the one country that has succeeded in guaranteeing that its citizens' basic needs are met at a level that is compatible with the earth's carrying capacity (that is to say, if everybody were to consume at that modest level) is Cuba. It seems that Communism, Castro-style, really does have something going for it: what a shame, from this perspective at any rate, that it's almost certainly on the wane! Needless to say, this whole event was at once intellectually engaging, politically inspiring, and emotionally moving, with the participation of the powerful 'Chorus of Women' adding significantly to the affective dimension of the occasion. The day concluded on a high note with the launch of the new Ecological Humanities Website, a wonderful work-in-progress, where you can already download audio-recordings of several of the presentations at the symposium:

<http://ecologicalhumanities.org/>

A further event that I would like to mention here, but which I sadly was unable to attend, was the series of lectures on the topic of 'Rethinking Our Place in Nature' that the Australian Catholic University ran during June in Melbourne, of which fully half were presented by ASLE-ANZ members: **Martin Harrison**, **Freya Mathews** and **Deborah Bird Rose**. Audio-recordings of this series are also available on line:

http://www.acu.edu.au/acu_national/Schools/philosophy/the_wednesday_lectures/the_2008_wednesday_lectures/

So, all in all, it's been an extremely active six months or so since the last newsletter, and the fun is going to continue next month with the long-awaited ASLE-ANZ symposium, 'Cultures of Sustainability' (September 27), which is being co-hosted by the Art and Sustainability Research Cluster, led by new member **Linda Williams**, at RMIT. Information is available on line: <http://www.rmit.edu.au/art/culturesofsustainability>. In conjunction with this event, RMIT Gallery is holding an exhibition on art and climate change, entitled 'Heat', which will be opened by Greens Senator **Bob Brown** on September 11. Please note also that on the afternoon of the 26th, also in downtown Melbourne, we will hold our AGM, followed by a poetry reading: look out for more details on both of these via email. Among the important matters to be discussed at the AGM are a changing of the guard in the ASLE-ANZ Executive team, and we will also revisit the question of amending our name to better reflect our more-than-literary field of ecocritical engagement, so do please do your best to come along, if you are able to be in Melbourne at that time.

Kate Rigby Monash University

Vale Val Plumwood

Vale Val!

Having agreed to write a few words in memory of Val Plumwood for this newsletter, I find myself once again struck dumb by the enormity of her loss. Where are we to find the fine-grained lucidity of ecophilosophical reflection that we need more than ever at this grim juncture in humanity's relationship with

the earth, now that one of the world's greatest thinkers of 'nature' and 'culture' is gone? Someone whose intellectual rigour was second to none, but who also held open the door to matters beyond human ken, ever alive to what Wordsworth once called the mysterious 'light of things'. And where am I to find the friend with whom I could argue hard-edged left-wing ecopolitics one moment and make a cicada shell necklace in a fit of whimsy the next? Someone who had a sense of the limbo dancing shapeliness of slow-falling tree-ferns as well as a head for all the Latin names of every plant that grew around her forested home? And where are our Earth others, the exploited, oppressed, marginalised and backgrounded ones, human and otherwise, to find another champion such as this? Someone who was prepared to put herself out for their sake, not only on the front-line of political protest, but also in the everyday, in response to the suffering and injustice that she encountered in her immediate vicinity?

OK, you're right. Val was no saint. But that does not make her loss any less grievous. And it seems that I nonetheless found a few words after all, inadequate as they are. Here, then, are a few more.

Val Plumwood (b. August 11, 1938), one of the most eminent ecophilosophers in the world today, died suddenly of a stroke at her home near Braidwood at the end of February this year. The author of four books, several encyclopaedia entries and around 100 articles, Val brought both modern and ancient philosophy and feminist theory to her work of profoundly reconceptualising human identity and interspecies relations. In her most recent book, *Environmental Culture: the Ecological Crisis of Reason* (Routledge 2002), Val challenged the 'hyperseparation' of 'man' and 'nature' which is entrenched in the dominant

traditions of the west and argues that tackling the environmental crisis requires deep change in the dominant culture. Although she shared the philosophers' long-standing suspicion of 'fine writing' when it serves as a mask for sloppy thinking, she had become increasingly interested in the capacity of poetic language to disclose the liveliness and significance of the more-than-human world. A former friend of **Judith Wright**, without doubt one of Australia's all-time greatest ecopoets, Val was a plenary speaker at the 2002 ASLE-UK conference, held in Leeds, and contributed a chapter, entitled 'Journey to the Heart of Stone', to the volume that grew out of this event (*Culture, Creativity and Environment: New Environmental Criticism*, eds. Fiona Becket and Terry Gifford, Rodopi, 2007). When she died, she was working on the manuscript for a book that interweaves life-writing and philosophy, the provisional title of which is 'The Eye of the Crocodile'. Freya Mathews, Debbie Rose and I have been charged with the responsibility of seeing this into print in some form.

After some wrangling with the local council on the part of her close friend Anne Edwards, Val was finally given the ecological burial that she had hoped for (and about which she writes in the most recent issue of PAN!) on March 30, at her beloved Plumwood Mountain. As it turned out, it was an utterly magical occasion, friendly and informal, with much laughter as well as tears, grieving but also feasting, and graced by the wondrously unbiddable presence of a large orchard butterfly, which fluttered among the mourners, alighting on a shoulder here, a shoulder there, and finally on the deep pink flower placed over Val's heart as she lay in the cardboard coffin that many of us had adorned with drawings and the odd political slogan, before it suddenly

soared straight up and away into the peerless azure sky, giving the signal, so it seemed, for the lid to be secured and the coffin lowered into the cool ground, allowing our dear friend to give herself up, at the last, to be food for others: a fitting farewell, we all felt, for someone who had come to espouse a philosophical form of animism, and strangely comforting for those left to tend her grave. (You can see how others are remembering Val at: <http://valplumwood.com/>)

Kate Rigby ASLE-ANZ President

TENA KOUTOU KATOA KI NGA MEMA O ASLE-ANZ!

Charles Dawson ASLE-ANZ Vice-President (New Zealand)

After the drought: the torrents. Even as I type the thunder and [rain](#) are spangling Wellington's hills. While last newsletter saw New Zealand in the grip of a dry spell that tipped the nation towards a hydro-[power](#) crisis and knocked \$1bn off dairy earnings, recent months have seen the islands lashed with rain. Water sheeting into parched riverbeds, washing agricultural fertiliser and cow [effluent](#) into the waterways, the price of a dairy boom that has seen the family [block of cheddar](#) tossed around as a pre-election campaign icon and symbol of rising food costs. With half a month's rain dropping in single weekends, the nation returns, briefly, to its natural state: a [wetland](#).

Wetlands were a feature of the national [literary awards](#) night, with **Janet Hunt**'s *Wetlands of New Zealand: a bittersweet story taking out the non-fiction prize in a non-fiction field judges' noted was of great depth and variety (see the striking book on [Mau Moko](#) on Māori tattoo for example).*

The national [children's book awards](#) have also been held, and several kids' books feature the story of [Matariki](#), or the Māori 'new year', a time that coincides with the rising of the constellation Matariki (Pleiades) in the eastern pre-dawn sky. Traditionally a time for crop planning and storage, the event is often a time where public libraries [share](#) storybooks about the [traditions](#), or families gather for music and kai (food). Matariki is one more marker of the ways Māori culture is wending its way into national consciousness (and [Google](#)) in an assured and —I trust— welcome way. Until the next newsletter: may the blessings of rain be upon us, the passage of storms leave us cleansed—and in one piece.

PAN no. 5
is on-line at:

<http://search.informit.com.au/browseJournalTitle.res=E-LIBRARY;issn=1443-6124>

With contributions by **Val Plumwood**, **Deborah Rose**, **David Rothenberg**, **Mark Tredinnick** and many more.

Colloquy
is now online

<http://www.colloquy.monash.edu.au>

Colloquy is also seeking submissions for Issue 17. See Issue 15 for information about forthcoming issues.

'Ecological Humanities'

in *Australian Humanities Review*

Issue 44 2008

Emily Potter and **Paul Starr**: 'Australia and the New Geographies of Climate Change'; and **Val Plumwood** 'Shadow Places and the Politics of Dwelling'

<http://epress.anu.edu.au/ahr/O44>



WINNER OF THE WATERMARK
FELLOWSHIP 2008

The Watermark Literary Society received 21 applications for the 2008 Watermark Fellowship. The successful applicant, **Grace Pundyk**, was in residence in the Camden Haven during June and July. After an absence of 20 years, Grace returned to Tasmania in 2007 to write *The Honey Spinner* (Murdoch Books, May 2008), about 'a world of honey and bees, a world that was not always sweet and was quite often corrupt'. During her residency, Grace worked on a series of short stories in which 'trees are integral in determining our sense of place...'



Martin Harrison, the widely published poet and critic who directs the program in Writing and Cultural studies at the University of Technology Sydney, was Grace's Mentor for the Fellowship. On 19 July, Harrison spoke at the **Henry Kendall Oration and Luncheon**, on the impact of Kendall's work on contemporary ideas.

2009 **WATERMARK LITERARY
MUSTER**

19June - 22June

Moved from October to June, the muster will be dedicated to **Eric Rolls** who was the inspiration for the Watermark Literary Society and Patron from its inception in 2003 until his death in October 2007. It will also honour English writer, **Roger Deakin** whose book, *Wildwood* was published posthumously in 2006. The Muster will



Focus on 'Wood'. The roundup of writers includes ASLE-ANZ members **Tom Griffiths**, **Ashley Hay**, and **Pete Hay**. Numbers are limited to 150 people. For info about Watermark Musters see www.watermarkliterarysociety.asn.au

'The Eco-humanities as literature: a new genre?' (Extract)

Full version (including references) in *Australian Literary Studies* 23(3) 2008: 290-304

We have recently entered a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene. There is now considerable evidence that humanity has altered the biophysical systems of Earth, not just the carbon cycle which has been the focus of much recent politics, but also the nitrogen cycle and ultimately the atmosphere and climate of the whole globe. It was **Paul Crutzen**, a Nobel prize-winning chemist, who coined the term 'Anthropocene', somewhat to the surprise of geologists, who had not considered humans as an 'epoch-defining' biophysical force... Some have argued that human-driven change dated further back to the agricultural revolution (5,000-8,000 years ago), but evidence for this is equivocal. What is generally agreed is that human influence on biophysical systems has increased markedly in the past half century or so. During the 'Great Acceleration' (1945-2015?), sometimes called the Anthropocene Stage II, humans have emerged as clearly the most dominant species on Earth (Steffen et al., 615-16). We humans are no longer just biological creatures amongst others, but potent physical agents for change on Earth.

The rise of new ecological and environmental concerns demands a holistic engagement with knowledge, simultaneous understanding of science

and politics, and perhaps, above all, a sense of human engagement with the natural world. The ideas of 'world literature', 'world history' and 'global change' are interrelated, and increasingly recurrent themes in public intellectual initiatives. ... (T)he ways in which we write the literature of humans and nature ... are more interdependent than ever before. I began with the global because global concerns drive political pressure and many of the big stories of our times. Those of us with expertise in the humanities—in the issues that make human life matter—have an interest in a literary genre that works on the human scale, but is also inclusive of both the global and the local. We need a literature that enhances understanding of relations between people and nature, of how we notice change personally, and how such global changes affect places we know intimately.

.... What does the Australian context bring to global environmental issues and how can we write the Australian environment into literature? Bruce Bennett, in his introductory lecture to the Association for the Study of Australian Literature conference in 2007, advocated more emphasis on literatures of place and local understandings of environment. ... Regional writing is often sharply environmentally attuned, and has the potential to offer universal insights in very particular ways. **Deborah Bird Rose's** *Reports from a Wild Country*, for example, draws on stories from Northern Australia to expose the tropes of colonialism, as much as place itself. Incidentally, she uses 'wild' in a very different way from the North Americans: in North Australia 'wild' is unkempt, uncultured, unloved in very much the Aboriginal sense, and very far from the heroic and picturesque wild of 'high art' nature writing in the other hemisphere. Similarly **George Main's** *Heartland* uses his home in the

rural south-west slopes of New South Wales to critique the myth that industrial agriculture is good for a place, and to develop a language for healing ecological damage. Neither of these books is strictly regional—yet they are driven by powerful regional sensibilities.

.... The Australian experience of disappointment that has marked its relations, both literary and literal, with the environment is also an experience with the unexpected, with the variable and unpredictable. Right at the heart of this dismay is something increasingly universal: variability, unpredictability and extreme weather are now ‘global’ phenomena, central to the climate change discourse... Australian history demands flexibilities of scale that are different from places where the agricultural revolution preceded the industrial by thousands of years, and Australian nature has invented its own answers to the idea of disturbance. Such cases test the history and ecology of global change, and create a new space for writing about nature. Australia has the potential to become a ‘literary entity’ for the rest of the world. This will depend on our capacity to write Nature as a subject and to understand the Human as a physical force in the Earth’s ecosystems.

Libby **Robin** ANU

Blog News: ‘Planetary’

A new media space in green pedagogy across the disciplines. ‘Planetary: Teaching the Environmental Humanities’ is now online at planetaryblog.wordpress.com ‘Planetary’ is in part, inspired by ASLE and its international affiliates, ‘Planetary’ follows the conventions of free use, with attribution, outlined by the Creative Commons movement

<http://creativecommons.org/>. This means readers are free to use ideas and information on ‘Planetary’ as long as they give proper credit to the original authors. To join, contact **Anthony Lioi** alioi@juilliard.edu

REPORT FROM BELGIUM

Poetic Ecologies

From May 14 to 17, 2008, I attended *Poetic Ecologies*, an international ecopoetry and poetics conference organised by the Department of Languages and Literatures at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium. The event was attended by over one hundred and fifty academics and poets from Australia, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, India and South Korea.

Within the framework of a nascent ecocritical paradigm, the conference explored the multiple and changing forms of ecological and ecocritical consciousness in English-language verse, past and present. As such, the forum not only interrogated the notion of ‘ecology’ and asked what actually constitutes ‘ecocritical’ and ecologically-engaged poetic practice; various panels also sought to shed light on the complex issue of ‘Nature’ versus ‘Text’ and on the possible interrelationships between ecological texts and textual ecologies—in other words, between the systems of Nature and those of Culture. In its cross-boundary coverage of ecopoetry and poetics in English, the conference did not privilege any bioregion or poetic tradition in particular, but heard presentations from all areas of the Anglophone world.

Franca Bellarsi, the conference convenor, is currently negotiating the publication of conference proceedings with academic publishers **Peter Lang**. The volume will contain selected papers as well as poems by each of the poets

who read their work. Overall the conference was an exciting process of gathering together and formulating some of the key concerns of an adolescent branch of literary studies. Australian scholarship had a major presence at the forum so we can expect that Australian scholars will play a significant role in the future development of the field.

Stuart Cooke Ph.D Candidate, ANU

REPORT FROM THE USA

Thinking Through Nature; philosophy for an endangered world hosted by the International Association for Environmental Philosophy and the University of Oregon, in Eugene, Oregon, 19-22 June 2008.

Conference organiser and eco-phenomenologist Ted Toadvine was always intent on a big show. From the multiple keynotes to the wide variety of speakers (also read as difficult array of streams to choose from), with a film launch and a variety of associated excursions included, this event promised an intense networking of current and ongoing ecophilosophical and ecocritical projects. The trick to a successful negotiation of the conference required a good balance of stamina with judicious choice of panels, both combined with modulating the inevitable disappointment of missing some speakers by catching up with them, as well as random others, in between and at meal breaks.

Keynote highlights for this participant began on the first evening, when **Gary Nabhan** presented his ruminations on the intersections between scientific communities and the humanities/social sciences in regards to environmental discourse. His focus on local issues as they relate to matters of global

importance made good sense and his reiteration that the story of what we do and why we do it heartened those of us diagnosing a narrative of ecological destruction not distinct from the technoscientific paradigm that might further hasten both the ongoing destruction and/or successful healing of our shared planetary biosphere. **Donna Haraway** likewise presented an enlightening and widely encompassing address considering the interplay of scientific and philosophical/literary discourses, in this case one that further fleshed out her ongoing analysis of the intersection between human and other animal species. The particularities of such liminal spaces and events, including the discovery of ways of being that undermine much traditional thinking about human and nonhuman life-possibilities, excited many sparkling minds over the conference banquet on Saturday evening. With a like-minded attitude no doubt fostered by their mutual experiences at the History of Consciousness Program at UC Santa Cruz, filmmaker **Michael Tobias** also considered animal rights as central to the possibilities of a 'conservation biology'. The premier of his latest offering, *Hotspots*, surveyed many of the ways in which environmentalists are succeeding (as well, of course, as failing) to bring the issue of the rights of other animals to the table when decisions are made in regards to how land may be used in certain circumstances. It was also nice to watch funny and lovable monkeys dance around the forest (we don't have to intellectualise this ALL the time!). The advances in current thinking that can be tapped into at such events are too numerous to mention here. Suffice it to say that a wide array of ecophilosophers and ecocritics of all persuasions presented their findings in a manner that proved to be mutually very helpful, and that the collegiate climate of critical analysis into the influences and

tendencies involved in the global issue of ecological crisis proved to be inspiring enough to keep candidates happily shuffling from one panel to the next. With a group of around a dozen, I also joined the overnight after conference hike to the Oregon Dunes coastal park with sociologist and bushman **Ken Liberman**. Now that is the way to end a fabulously successful ecophilosophy conference.

Geoff Berry Monash University

REPORT FROM INDIA

Vanakkam! Thanks to the Australia-India Council Fellowship scheme it was my great good luck to be at Madras University for two months earlier this year. As well as teaching, I was invited by Dr **R. Swarnalatha** to deliver a public lecture at the Indian Institute of Technology; and later, to hold a seminar at the Study Circle Corner, Madras Christian College, Tambaram.

Beginning with a reference to **Steve Irwin**, the first lecture ('Ecocriticism Down Under') had no shortage of connections between 'places'. Irwin was memorialised last year with the opening of a Crocodile Rehabilitation Centre at Neyyar Dam (Kerala). Another, but unsettling, connection concerned the prevalence of *Eucalyptus Globulus* in the Nilgiris. ('Nilgiris' translates as 'blue mountains'; it's known for its tea, and for its eucalyptus oil). For all its floransins the Nilgiris has a 'no plastic bag' policy, a policy that opened up the discussion to representations of seascape (the *naydal* in Sangam Literature) and the current state of the Bay of Bengal. This in turn led to a rain-date with biology students to visit the nesting sites of the Olive Ridley turtle, led by **Siddharth**. There is (in Tamil Nadu, at least) a pleasant tradition of 'gifting'

speakers, and **Siddharth** kindly presented me with a Tanjore painting of Ganesa, the Shaivite god with an elephant's head.

Two days later I was south of Chennai on the leafy campus of Madras Christian College—apparently referred to as 'the lungs' of Chennai. There (happily) not a eucalypt was in sight. Leaves did appear however, in another of the wonderful traditions of honouring speakers and guests—this time with meals served on banana leaves. (No water wasted in washing up, and the leaves are fed to the cows). Such a feast and all for one talk titled 'Pre-Colonial Imaginings, Post-Colonial Footprints'. The Study Circle is organised by **Alex K. Rayson**, and **S. Susan Deborah**, and is the brainchild of the *tinai* stalwart, **Nirmal Selvamony**. The previous speaker, ASLE member Dr **Mark C. Long** from the University of New Hampshire, had recently attended a conference at MCC (see the OSLE-India Newsletter #8 for his interview <http://osle-india.tripod.com/>).

One of the striking things about these two experiences was the positive inter-relationship between disciplines: engineers, biologists, and arts students attended the events. Apparently crossovers of this kind are common. And on enquiring I was sent a list of some of the eco-courses (called 'papers') that are open to students across the disciplines. Locally, they include Madras Christian College which offers an optional post-graduate paper ranging in topics such as Deep Ecology, Oikopoetics, and Ecossemiotics; Loyola College, teaching 'EcoPoetics'; Bishop Heber College, 'Ecoliterature'; Lady Doak College, (Madurai) offering — imagine this — *obligatory* courses titled 'In Tune with Nature'; 'Environment and Society', and 'Environmental Aesthetics' for enrolment *across the sciences and arts!* It also offers electives in 'Environmental

Issues and Management’, and ‘Environmental Awareness Programme’.

R. Swarnalatha at IIT edits the peer-reviewed journal of OSLE-India, the *Indian Journal of Ecocriticism* (IJE). Current contributors include **Arne Naess**; **Charlene Spretnak**; **Alan Drengson**; **Mark C. Long**, **Nirmal Selvamony**, and much more. Submissions enquires should be sent to: osleindiajournal@gmail.com She is also co-editing a special issue on Indian Ecosophy for ‘The Trumpeter’: see Call for Authors in this newsletter.

Madras Christian College publishes the ASLE-India newsletter, and its editors can be contacted at: **Watson Solomon** nirmaldasan@hotmail.com and **Rayson K. Alex** raysonalex@gmail.com

And, finally, here’s an **opportunity** if you’re travelling to Tamil Nadu. **Pondicherry University** (located in a former French colony, complete with a French quarter) invites scholars to participate in their Teaching and Research programs. The University will provide accommodation, honorarium, and reimburse the cost of travel within the country for the above purpose. For syllabi, see www.piondiuni.org or contact the Vice-Chancellor vc@pondiuni.edu.in *Vanakkam!*

CA.Cranston Hon. Assoc., U, Tasmania

Association for Environmental Studies and Sciences (AESS) announces the creation of a new professional organisation for those who teach and do research in the area of environmental studies and environmental science. The purpose of AESS is to serve the faculty, students and staff of the 1000+ interdisciplinary ‘environmental’ programs around the world. We seek to

improve communication across boundaries that too often divide the traditional academic disciplines—the physical, biological, and social sciences, and the humanities—that need to be brought to bear in understanding and dealing with environmental problems and solutions. The association works to support the professional development of Association members not just as individuals but also to advance Environmental Studies and Sciences as a whole.

We intend this organisation to be more broadly interdisciplinary than the existing environmental organisations. Toward that end, we plan to start an interdisciplinary journal and hold annual meetings with opportunities to present research. If you're interested in joining, go to <http://aess.info>.

MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES & PUBLICATIONS, AUSTRALIA

The latest issue of ISLE (Vol. 15.1 Winter 2008) contains a review by Gerd Bayer, of **Tom Wilson**’s *The Recurrent Green Universe of John Fowles*, pp. 292-293.

There’s also an article discussing **Mudrooroo Narogin**’s *Dr Wooreddy’s Prescription for Enduring the End of the World* titled ‘The Pathologization of Environmental Discourse: Melding Disability Studies and Ecocriticism in Urban Grange Novels’, pp. 111-134. Author **Breyan Strickler** is also running a panel at the MLA conference (Oct) on cross-cultural ecocritical perspectives. Contact Breyan.strickler@loras.edu **Bruce Bennett** will be honoured in a colloquium ‘Home and Away—Writing about Place’ to be held at the National Library, Canberra, 24-25 October (details in ‘Conferences’)

http://www.unsw.adfa.edu.au/hass/conferences/pdf/colloquium_program_web.pdf

Ruth Blair will be presenting at the 3rd 'Creative Conservation' conference, U of Queensland 6 September (details in 'Conferences') <http://www.ecco.org.au/cc3>

Stuart Cooke's paper, 'Singing Up Country in the Poetry of Judith Wright and Pablo Neruda' will be appearing in the August edition of *Australian Literary Studies*. A short essay on poems by **Les Murray** and **Martin Harrison** is about to appear in 'Tears in the Fence' (UK). Cooke also has poems in current or soon to be released editions of *Southerly*, *Overland*, *Woorilla*, and *Famous Reporter*. And he's going to be the guest editor for the next issue of *Cordite*, which will be titled 'Pastoral' www.cordite.org.au Submission details will be released shortly. (See also Stuart's 'Report from Belgium').

CA.Cranston 'Wet, in the Mindscape of the Dry' in *Words on Water: Literary and Cultural Representations*. Maureen Devine and Christa Grewe-Volpp (eds). Wissenschaftliche Verlag Trier: Germany —'Literary Ecoconsciousness' in *Reading Down Under: Australian Literary Studies Reader*. Amit Sarwal and Reema Sarwal (eds.) New Delhi: SSS Publications

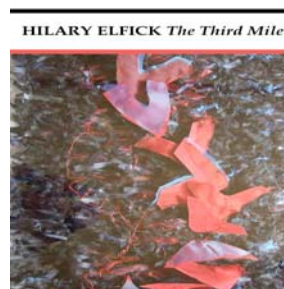
—'From Shanty to Shanti: Teaching Australian Literature in Asia', ASAL Conference, U. of Wollongong, July '08

— Commissioned article: 'Water From the Moon: Illusion and Reality in the works of Australian Novelist Christopher Koch by Jean-François Vernay'. *JASAL* Vol. 7, pp.116-121 '07



Hilary Elfick 'An Ordinary Storm', a meditation on Shakespeare's *The*

Tempest is now available in book, CD, and DVD; and



'The Third Mile', poetry collection, tbp UK (Nov). For both items, contact Hilary at elfick@btinternet.com

Pete Hay

"'Balding Nevis': Place Imperatives of an Invisible Cohort within Tasmania's Forest Communities', *Geographical Research*, 46 (2008), 224-233.

—'Defending the Wild Lands', in *Endangered: Tasmania's Wild Lands*, Penguin, Camberwell (2007) xiii-xxii. Subsequently reprinted in *Earth Song* 2008.

—'I'm Going on The River', essay for the 25th Anniversary of the Franklin River Campaign, souvenir program, 1 July 2008

—'In Search of Essence', Review of Clive Hamilton's *The Freedom Paradox* 'The Monthly', August 2008, 66-69.

Tony Hughes-d'Aeth 'A Critique of Ecocriticism' for *Reading Down Under: Australian Literary Studies Reader*. Amit Sarwal and Reema Sarwal (eds.) New Delhi: SSS Publications

Ian Johnstone along with **Max Lawson** established a unit at Armidale this semester titled 'Thoreau, Emerson and the Conduct of Life'. He's willing to email the paper to any members who are interested: johnstone@bluepin.net.au

Emily Potter 'Communicating Climate Change: Public Responsiveness and Matters of Concern', co-authored with **Candice Oster**, *Media International Australia*, No. 127, May 2008

—'Australia and the New Geographies of Climate Change', co-

authored with **Paul Starr**, *Australian Humanities Review*, 44, 2008

— 'A Sustainable Practice: Rethinking Nature in Cultural Research', *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 22.2 (April) 2008: 171-178

Kate Rigby '(Post-)koloniale Inkorporierung: Ökologie und Esskultur in Australien' ('(Post-)colonial Incorporation: Ecology and Food Culture in Australia' in **Claudia Lillge** and **Anne-Rose Meyer** for *Interkulturelle Mahlzeiten: Kulinarische Begegnungen und Kommunikation in der Literatur* (Intercultural Meals: Culinary Encounters and Communication in Literature), Bielefeld: transcript, 315-36 — (ed.), 'Lifting Our Eyes From the Page: Religion, Literature and the Earth', Special Issue of *Religion and Literature*, 40.1 (Spring 2008)

Libby Robin 'The Eco-humanities as literature: a new genre?' In *Australian Literary Studies* 23(3) 2008: 290-304. (Extract reproduced in this issue)

Deborah Rose reports that www.ecologicalhumanities.org is up and

running. The most recent event was a symposium to honour **Val Plumwood**. Entitled 'Climate Change and the Crisis of Reason'. We are now making available MP3 recordings of a number of the speeches and short appreciations, including **Kate Rigby's** wonderful talk 'Dancing with Disaster'.

(<http://www.ecologicalhumanities.org/ccs.html>)

— She also contributed to a series of free public lectures sponsored by the School of Philosophy at ACU National, Melbourne. Her lecture 'Indigenous and Western Understandings of Nature' was held on 25 June. Other speakers included **Raimond Gaita** 'The significance of the

Human'; **Clive Hamilton** 'Understanding Nature from Ourselves'; **Alex Arbuthnot** 'Country and City'; **Martin Harrison** 'Sense and Sustainability'; **Freya Mathews** 'The Radical Meaning of Sustainability'.

Chris Wallace-Crabbe will be a Keynote speaker at 'Refashioning Myth: Poetic Transformations and Metamorphoses', Melbourne U, 2-3 October. — 'Concerning Cheer' (poetry), in *Antipodes* Vol 23 No 1 (June 2008) 23

David Young, who freelances as a writer on history and the environment has been awarded the Fulbright-Creative New Zealand residency at the East West Centre, U. of Hawaii. He will begin work on a series of essays centered on the theme, 'Hidden Sanctuaries', looking at indigenous traditions around freshwater across the Pacific against current issues of sustainability. His book on the endangered whio (blue duck) was reviewed in a recent issue of this newsletter. His tenure begins in mid September and he will be there for three months. Visitors welcome!

We'd love to know what you're doing so please, let us know about it...

PUBLISHING OPPORTUNITIES CALL FOR AUTHORS

The Calibre Prize

Submission Deadline: **30 Sept 2008**

Australian Book Review (ABR) and the Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) are seeking entries for the third Calibre Prize for an Outstanding Essay. The Calibre Prize, with a first prize of \$10,000, is one of the world's major essay competitions.

The Calibre Prize is intended to generate

new essays and to foster new insights into culture, society and the human condition. It is an inclusive competition. Essays from leading authors and commentators are welcomed but so too are essays from emerging writers. All **non-fiction subjects** are eligible: from life writing to literary studies, history to politics, biography to philosophy, **natural history** to popular science, travel writing to **environmental studies**.

Essayists must reside in Australia or be Australian citizens living overseas. Multiple entries are permitted; all essays will be judged anonymously, and can range from 3000 words to 10,000 words. ABR will publish the winning essay.

Last year's winner was our own Vice-President, **Mark Tredinnick**, with 'A Storm and a Teacup'. The guidelines and application form are available on the ABR website:

<http://www.australianbookreview.com.au>

For info please contact Peter Rose

E-mail: abr@vicnet.net.au

From Solidarity to Schism: 9/11 and After in Fiction and Film from Outside the United States

Submission Deadline: **20 August 2008**

The focus of this edited collection is on how writers and filmmakers from outside the US represent September the 11th and any of the far-reaching events that came about because of the attacks that day. Do these fictions and films, as cultural practices, inaugurate new narrative or formal devices in their efforts to represent the attacks and/or their fallout? What manner of critique is offered, if any? Have these fictions and films ushered in a new aesthetics of terror and its consequences? This collection will be an important supplement to the US-centered cultural

and critical production addressing 9/11, providing researchers and teachers alike with resources and contexts that will allow them to broaden their own examinations of related works.

Please send all inquiries and abstracts of no more than 500 words (or full drafts of between 4000-6000 words) to the editor, **Cara Cilano**, at cilanoc@uncw.edu

Green Theory & Praxis: The Journal of Ecopedagogy

General Call for Papers for its upcoming **December** issue.

Green Theory & Praxis represents a scholarly effort to present research papers and essays at the transformative nexus of ecological politics and culture, social structures, sustainability education and ecocriticism. The journal seeks to offer a forum for careful study of the theoretical and rhetorical positions, political and economic adjustments, behavioral and institutional alterations, pedagogical and cultural mobilisations, and spiritual emergences that will or should emerge in response to increasing ecological damage of both a physical and psychic nature. Given the scope and complexity of our approach, we anticipate transdisciplinary research papers, and we invite scholars and activists **from countries throughout the world** to submit manuscripts for peer review. To freely register, submit your work online for review and receive more information, visit the Journal's website: <http://greentheoryandpraxis.org>

The current issue is online at:

<http://greentheoryandpraxis.ecopedagogy.org/index.php/journal/issue/current>

Modern Fiction and the Ecological: the Environmental Crisis and the Future of Ecocriticism

Submission Deadline: **1 October 2008**

Though 'ecocriticism' became an official term and a field of study four decades ago, the now-recognised global scale of the threat to the planet's ecosystem gives ecological studies an uncommon urgency. As a field that disputes the ethical validity of humanity's interaction with the earth ecocriticism foregrounds the questionable contemporary constitution of 'the Human' and the status of 'Humanism' itself, and by extension Humanism's co-constituent local, national, and international institutions. MFS invites essays that speak to the significance of these issues and open new pathways to this growing discipline. Of special interest are essays that will have an impact on **literary studies** across the various fields of scholarship. Essays should offer new openings to the sites of narrative production formerly enriched by conjunctions with various forms of cultural, historical, and theoretical studies. Possible questions include, but are not limited to, the following: What are the precise relationships between narratives of modernity and the environment? How is the environment represented in modern fiction and what can we inherit from these representations? Do ecological representations in fiction differ from cultural representations, political representations, national representations? Or does the ecological lie beyond the limit of representation? Can ecological studies rightly be considered part of the tradition of humanism, if the ecological by definition names an engagement with the non-human? Or is it no longer possible to separate the human from the ecological? Has ecocriticism had a measurable affect on the relation between the human and the ecological? Are their openings to be made between ecocriticism and area studies, deconstruction, gender studies, global

studies, postcolonialism, race relations, state policy studies, etc., Ultimately, how do modern narratives offer viable alternatives to thinking and (re) constituting the relationship between humanity and the environment? Accordingly this special issue of MFS seeks essays that will not only confront the normative and regulatory fictions of what could be called 'environmentality', but also consider, through an exploration of the creativity and power of imaginative acts, the potential for a less threatened ecological order to come.

Essays should range in length from 6,000 to 9,000 words (excluding notes and works cited) and should follow the current edition of the MLA Style Manual. Please submit two copies of the essay along with a cover sheet that lists the author's name, essay title, mailing address, telephone number, and email address. MFS does not accept electronic submissions. Please mail essays and cover letters to: Editors, Modern Fiction Studies, Dept of English, 500 Oval Drive Purdue U, West Lafayette, IN 47907-2038 Guest Editor: Robert P. Marzec rmarzec@purdue.edu

'The Trumpeter'

General Call for Papers for its upcoming
Special Issue, 2009
Submission Deadline: **30 Nov 2008**

'The Trumpeter' is an environmental journal (published by the Athabasca Uni Press, Canada) dedicated to the pursuit of understanding and wisdom as it attempts to aid in the development of an ecosophy, or wisdom, born of ecological understanding and insight. 'The Trumpeter' is planning a special issue on India's contribution to ecosophy. The broad theme will be the Panchamahabhutas: the five fundamental elements of water, fire, earth, space and air. We invite original unpublished

articles, narratives, poems, artwork / photo essays relating to any of these topics such as: Dharmic ecology; the darsanas of various orders that contemplate the relationship of humans with the universe; reading Indian literary and religious texts from an ecological perspective; Prakriti in Vedic, Buddhist and Jain traditions and the consideration of the concept of the mahabhutas in these traditions; the manifestation of the five elements in the theories of aesthetics and cultural ecology, such as rituals of embedded ecologies (e.g. Kolam, mandala etc) which explore the complex relationship between nature and the cultural world; oral traditions and the manifestation of the five elements in their primary myths and rituals; Gandhian ecology and the vision of an ecologically sustainable world.

Authors are requested to submit their work online. Guidelines for submissions are available on the journal's website <http://trumpeter.athabascau.ca>



A.R.A.W.LII, launched in January 2008, welcomes contributions to the Poetry Journal *Prosopisia* (named after the State-tree of Rajasthan growing on the foothills of the Aravali Ranges). that Douglas Clark (UK) will be the guest editor of the forthcoming number of *Prosopisia*.

Visit <http://www.arawlii.com>

from writers, poets, and scholars. **Anuraag Sharma** writes that the second issue of *Lemuria* is to be guest edited by **Bruce Bennett**.

Contact: sharma_anuraag@yahoo.com

Earth's Body: An Ecopoetry Anthology

Deadline: 15 December 2008

Coeditors Ann Fisher-Wirth and Laura-Gray Street solicit submissions for an **international** anthology of ecopoetry. Our working definition of 'ecopoetry' is flexible; it includes not only what might be called nature poetry, and not only poetry that focuses on environmental issues, but also experimental poetry—poetry that explores language in its relations with the other-than-human. The anthology will include only living poets or poets who were alive as of July 2007, and will include only poems either written in English or already translated into English; for poems not written in English, both the original and the translation must be submitted, and if accepted, both will be published. We will consider work that has been previously published. The poet (and/or translator) must control the copyright to the work. Please send up to six poems to BOTH Ann and Laura-Gray. Send them as email or by snail mail. If by email, make sure the spacing and lineation travel accurately. **WE WILL NOT OPEN ATTACHMENTS.** Please also include a short bio and a cover letter, and an SASE for our reply.

Wirth: afwirth@olemiss.edu

Street: street@randolphcollege.edu

Lemuria

Lemuria, the Journal of Indo-Australian Studies, is also accepting contributions

OVERLAND seeks Novel manuscript

Overland is looking for an original full-

length novel manuscript to publish as a special edition of the journal in **2009**. Send the first 10,000 words of your novel only, a CV outlining publications and writing experience and a synopsis and stamped self-addressed envelope to Overland magazine, VU–Footscray Park, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, Vic, 8001. <http://www.overlandexpress.org/overnovel.html>

Antipodes:

A North American Journal of
Australian Literature
'Protect Australia Fair'

To be published in **December 2009**

Contributions are sought, devoted to international perspectives on fear and protection in Australian culture, focusing primarily on literature, film, visual arts, literary theory, psychoanalytic approaches and philosophy. Suggested length for essays is 4,000 words. Essays should be suitable for an interdisciplinary and international readership. All submissions will be double-blind-refereed by an international panel of distinguished scholars and members of *Antipodes* editorial board. Essays must conform to MLA style (6th edition).

Submit enquiry, expression of interest or finished essay to **Nathanael O'Reilly** at nathanael_oreilly@uttyler.edu. or **Jean-Francois vernayj@yahoo.com**

The International Fiction Review

The International Fiction Review is a reviewed scholarly periodical devoted to international fiction. It invites essays on contemporary fiction by international writers including minority writers. Contributors are invited to explore all narrative forms in any interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, and critical context. The journal is available online to subscribers at www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/IFR Please

send submissions to the editor **Christoph Lorey** □ University of New Brunswick Canada e-mail: ifr@unb.ca

Red Bubble, an Australian-based e-community just closed its competition for work relating to the theme of 'Gaia—The Living Planet'. The current competition is 'Compassion'.

<http://www.redbubble.com/groups/gaia-the-living-planet>

CONFERENCES
CALL FOR PAPERS : Australia

'Futures'

Cultural Studies Association of
Australia

Kalgoorlie, WA

6-9 December 2008

Submission Deadline: **5 Sept 2008**

The 2008 Conference will interrogate possible and impossible local, national, regional, and global futures. Our imaginings of the future shape the lived experience of the present and our cultural memory of the past. These imaginings are usually polarised towards the deeply nihilistic or the jubilantly utopian. This conference will address the spaces between real and fictional futures, and the hopes and anxieties that emerge from those spaces. Confirmed speakers: **Mieke Bal**; **Fred Chaney**, Reconciliation Australia; **Kim Scott**, novelist, winner of the Miles Franklin Award, WA Premier's Literary Award, and RAKA Kate Challis Award.

Email abstracts (250-300 words) to **Ron Blaber**: R.Blaber@curtin.edu.au For all other conference enquiries contact either **Leigh Brennan** l.brennan@curtin.edu.au

Visit the conference website at:

<http://www.csaa2008.curtin.edu.au/>

'New England New Writing'

University of New England, **Armidale**

9-11 February 2009

Submission Deadline: **1 October 2008**

Featured speakers include **Jane Goodall**, author of *The Walker*, *The Visitor* and *The Calling*; **Sophie Cunningham**, Meanjin; editor and author of *Geography* and *Bird*; **Wendy James**, author of *Out of the Silence* and *The Steele Diaries*

A Conference for Writers and Critics Within and Beyond the Academy, this conference will bring together scholars engaged in the study of contemporary Australian writing, with practising authors, for a program of writing workshops, readings, critical papers and master classes. We invite writers of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and critical writing in the arts and humanities to present their work. Members of the academy and the publishing industry will present information about the current Australian publishing scene; writers can contribute to a discussion about the context for Australian writing, hear from peers and learn from leading authors in a variety of genres. Participants are invited to offer a discussion of their approach, methods, research, influences and theoretical / philosophical interests.

Anne Pender anne.pender@une.edu.au
 Elizabeth Hale ehale@une.edu.au
 Fiona Utley futley2@une.edu.au
 Wendy James wjames@une.edu.au

‘Minding Animals’

International Academic and Community
 Conference on Animals and Society
 University of Newcastle
13-19 July 2009

The conference will be a benchmark event in the study and interpretation of human / nonhuman / animal inter-relationships. It will bring together a broad range of academic disciplines and representatives from universities, non-

government organisations and the community, industry and government around the world. Conference delegates will examine the interrelationships between human and nonhuman animals from a cultural, historical, geographical, environmental, moral, legal and political perspectives. The conference will also bring together a number of leading scientists, philosophers and social theorists, academics and community leaders, all committed to animal protection and welfare. Importantly, there will be a **literature stream**. The coordinator of this stream is **Jennifer McDonnell** jmcdonel@une.edu.au

For general info contact Rod Bennison
rod.bennison@newcastle.edu.au

And while we’re on the topic of animals, this, from **ASLE-Canada**: if you haven’t seen ‘Cruel Camera’, about the treatment of animals for films, television and other human entertainments, you can watch it online at the address below. You can also watch the 1982 version that the journalists at the Fifth Estate made. <http://www.cbc.ca/fifth/>

CONFERENCES
CALL FOR PAPERS : ‘Other Places’

Island Time: The Fate of Place in a
 Wired, Warming World
 Eighth Biennial **ASLE** Conference
 University of Victoria
British Columbia
3-6 June 2009

Submission Deadline: **15 Nov 2008**

ASLE seeks proposals for papers, panels, roundtables, workshops, and other public presentations connecting language, nature, and culture. As always, we welcome interdisciplinary approaches; and proposals from outside

the academic humanities, including submissions from artists, writers, practitioners, activists, and colleagues in the social and natural sciences.

This year's theme uses the conference's temporal and spatial location on Vancouver Island as a metaphor for the past and future of place generally. This, ASLE's first conference outside the U.S. is a fitting location to consider how the Internet and globalisation connect us all, as well as how the threat of climate change is affecting our interpretation of texts and cultures, not to mention the material world itself.

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

We are also interested in receiving proposals on the following topics: island literature and life, including writing about metaphoric islands, islands of urban and suburban nature, and environmental restorations; place-based writing in any genre or field, including ecopoetics, ecotheatre, environmental film, environmental history, and cultural geography; environmental literature as world literature, including comparative literature, cross-cultural approaches, borderlands writing, and travel writing; literature from rooted modes of life, including forestry, fisheries, agriculture, viticulture, and apiculture; ecocriticism, literary theory, eco-philosophy, post-

structuralism; scientific research and writing, including the history of science; ideas of the human; meditations on animals and animality; the body, and disability studies; narratives of 'greening the campus', including initiatives related to recycling, transportation, and energy; environmental rhetoric and eco-composition; ecopedagogy; undergraduate research and creative work; the literature of environmental hope and joy

Plenary sessions include speakers **Jeannette Armstrong; H. Emerson Blake; Greg Garrard; Karsten Heuer; Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands; Ruth Ozeki; Richard Primack; Andrew Revkin; Amy Seidl; Daniel Slager; Rita Wong**, and Jan **Zwicky**.

Pre-Conference workshops and seminars on Animal Studies, with **Linda Kalof** and **Nicole Shukin**; Ecological Media, with **Michael Ziser** and **Andrew Hageman**; Habitat Studies, with **Laurie Ricou**; Place-based Pedagogy, with **Laird Christensen** and **Hal Crimmel**; Science Studies, with **Ursula Heise**.

For additional information, submission guidelines, graduate student travel awards, and book and graduate student paper awards see: <http://asle.uvic.ca/>

For answers to questions about the conference site and field sessions, Email **Richard Pickard** at rpickard@uvic.ca **Dan Philippon** danp@umn.edu

And while we're on Islands, a journal dedicated to Island research, **Shima** v2n1 April 2008, is now online (open access):

<http://www.shimajournal.org/current.html>

2008 Film & History Conference
'Nature and the Environment in Feature

Films'
Chicago, Illinois
30 October-2 November 2008
Late-entry Deadline: **1 Sept 2008**

This area investigates the uses and representations of nature and environment in feature films, rather than the more often discussed use of documentaries to reflect on the natural world. Thanks to Al Gore, and others, we expect and respect documentary films that address environmental issues but feature films can also speak to environmental issues. Feature films sometimes tackle the same issues and sometimes do so unintentionally. Can feature films provide a forum for discussion on environmental issues? Is such a message always sensationalised with Hollywood stars and big budget special effects? Is this always an intersection of box office revenue and message, with box office the only hoped for winner? Consider films like 'Day After Tomorrow' or 'There Will Be Blood'. How do these films, and many others, represent the natural world and / or the misuse of that world? Can feature film stories be more effective at sending an environmentalist message because of the larger audiences they may reach?

Submit a 200 word abstract to
Deborah Carmichael Michigan State U.
Carmic28@msu.edu
Website www.uwosh.edu/filmandhistory

University of Louisville Center for
Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods
9-12 January 2009
Submission Deadline: **22 August 2008**

The 7th Annual Hawaii International Conference on Arts & Humanities will be held at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Beach Resort in Honolulu, Hawaii. All Areas of Arts & Humanities are invited. Cross-disciplinary submissions with

other fields are welcome. Submit your paper/proposal online. For information: http://www.hichumanities.org/cfp_artshumanities.htm

Email: humanities@hichumanities.org

'Recreate, Replace, Restore:
Exploring the Intersections between
Meanings and Environments'

Ohio Northern University

17-19 April 2009

Submission Deadline: **31 October 2008**

The natural world has been 'humanised'—even areas thought to be wilderness bear the marks of human impact. Given the long reach of human influence, environmental thought in the humanities and the sciences have sought to understand how we can limit, change, or reverse the more disastrous effects that humans have had on the environment. Preservation is not the sole or primary strategy; restoration, sustainable design, and other creative responses to place have become part of the debate. Further, both the sciences and the humanities have increasingly realised the interconnection between human accounts of meaning and the more-than-human world. Thus, reflections on the proper approaches to natural and built environments increasingly include investigations into contested religious, philosophical, and ethical meanings of the environments that surround us. The aim of this conference is to further the ongoing dialogue on religion, ethics, and the environment by exploring three interrelated concepts: to recreate, to replace, and to restore. Conference organisers seek papers in the humanities, social sciences and the ecological sciences. Send paper proposals to **Mark Dixon** m-dixon@onu.edu or **Forrest Clingerman** f-clingerman@onu.edu Send poster proposals to **Jay Mager** j-mager@onu.edu. Include name, contact

information and 3-5 keywords in addition to a 300-500 word abstract. More information will be made available online at www.onu.edu/org/wgren.

‘Women and Environments: The Feminism of Ecology and the Ecology of Feminism’

Women's Studies Association,(SEWSA)
Appalachia State University
 Boone, North Carolina

2-4 April 2009

Submission Deadline: **1 November 2008**

Send proposals womens_st@appstate.edu
 Updates, keynote speakers, travel details available 1 September at sewsa.nwsa.org

CONFERENCE EVENTS

(Only if you're in the area: submission deadline long gone)

Biennial conference of the British Australian Studies Association:
 ‘Changing Australia’

Royal Holloway, University of **London**
2-5 September 2008

Australia is ever changing—culturally, politically, economically, artistically, historically, and geo-graphically—and this conference seeks to investigate, and interrogate, some of those changes. How has the international image of Australia changed, as well as the clichés and stereotypes? How is the definition of what it is to be 'an Australian' changing?

It is expected that a selection of the papers will be published in the BASA journal, Australian Studies. The conference website is:

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/humanities/menzies/basa/conf2008.html>

Contact:

Liz Schafer, Prof. of Drama and Theatre Studies, University of London
E.Schafer@rhul.ac.uk

Creative Conservation #3
 Peaceful Space: sound, space & environment
 an intercultural dialogue

The University of **Queensland**, St Lucia
9-6, Sat 6 September 2008

This ‘festival of ideas’ brings diverse perspectives on and interpretations of a peaceful space in today’s environment. Creative conservationists from diverse disciplines will present their ideas of peaceful space through talk, performance and presentation. This year, we also plan to launch a ‘Creative Conservationist Network’. Presenters include: **Greg Bamford**; **Ros Bandt**; **Lorraine Biggs**; **Ruth Blair**; **Katherine Brimblecomb-Fox**; **Kevin Clements**, director, Australian Centre for Peace & Conflict Studies; **Masafumi Komatsu**, artist / musician, Kyoto Seika University, Japan
<http://www.ecco.org.au/cc3>

‘Home and Away’ Writing about Place
 National Library of Australia, **Canberra**
24-25 October 2008

A stimulating colloquium on the places we inhabit or imagine in literature and in life. In honour of **Bruce Bennett** (who nevertheless has to chair a session). Emeritus Professor, University of NSW at ADFA, Bennett is to be publicly appreciated by a stellar cast of speakers. It’s a veritable Who’s Who in Australian Studies



http://www.unsw.adfa.edu.au/hass/conferences/pdf/colloquium_program_web.pdf

International conference
Roehampton University, **London**
14-15 November 2008

The political dimension of post-coloniality has tended to be a dominant aspect of postcolonial critique and analysis in recent decades. The articulation of political discourses upon cultural practices has ensured that 'power relations' have been assigned a position of particular prominence in the supposedly interdisciplinary field of postcolonial studies. There exist, however, many examples of postcolonial literary and cinematographic narratives that can be understood as seeking to transcend the 'political' and which lend themselves to a more generalised reading on an ethical or philosophical level. Postcolonial narratives that examine the precariousness of human existence in conditions of extreme violence and vulnerability can often be seen as inviting broader speculation about 'viability' and 'sustainability' in general, or engaging in a critique of the humanist discourses that have underpinned western imperialism.

Conversely, contemporary threats to human survival that are posited as consequence of various types of ecological disruption (global warming, climate change, water supplies, depletion of resources) may perhaps best be figured within a postcolonial framework. It may also be the case that the burgeoning field of environmental history, especially as it related to empire, can play a role in both theorising the postcolonial world and in thinking through the broader connections of empire, ethics and humanism.

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Transcultural Studies
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'Huracán: Environment, Histories, and
Cultures of the Caribbean
Gulf Basin, and US South'

**Association for the Study of Literature
and the Environment**
7-8 November 2008

High profile storms have redefined regional weather maps. Should weather maps be used to redraw cultural maps? This symposium suggests the figures of hurricanes and their paths to interpret cultures from Africa and the Caribbean to the Gulf Basin and US South. Huracán begins with a basic pre-supposition: regions hit by similar storm systems may share environmental and historical determinants. What patterns emerge when we examine a broader region across national or linguistic borders?

Contact **Martine Fernandes**
martinef@stpt.usf.edu or
Thomas Hallock thallock@stpt.usf.edu

Items of interest

'Ten Common Mistakes to Avoid
in Trying to Create a Better World'
Richmond Town Hall from 2 till 4pm
Saturday 30 August 2008

Professor **Stuart Hill**, Foundation Chair of Social Ecology at the University of Western Sydney, a Blue Mountains resident, and Australia's leading educator in social change will explore this topic with a Melbourne audience.

Stuart will share his ideas from a lifetime of engaging in social change. An instigator of lateral thinking and holistic problem solving, Professor Hill will consider initiatives to address the common mistakes that humans make in trying to bring about change. After his address at the Richmond Town Hall there will be an opportunity for

questions. In true social ecology style, further discussions may continue in the afternoon if there is interest.

Meeting Room 1, First Floor, Richmond Town Hall, 333 Bridge Road, Richmond
RSVP olivia@luluconsulting.com.au

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Vanclay, Higgins and Blackshaw (eds) *Making Sense of Place: Exploring concepts and expressions of place through different senses and lenses*. Canberra: Nat. Mus. of Aust Press, 2008

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Continuum Journal of Media & Cultural Studies, Volume 22 Issue 2 2008. Special issue: 'Environmental Sustainability'. Authors: **Rod Giblett, Libby Lester**

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Lawrence Buell will be a plenary speaker at Sydney U in January 2010. The symposium *Reading Across the Pacific: Australian-United States Intellectual Histories* Conveners **Nicholas Birns** birnsn@newschool.edu **Robert Dixon** Robert.dixon@usyd.edu.au are already accepting proposals for papers.

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OECD released (16 June 2008) a major report on the *Environmental Performance of Agriculture in OECD countries since 1990*. The country section can be accessed (under 'Information by country') together with the supporting database online www.oecd.org/tad/env/indicators For a summary version of the report 'At a Glance' contact **Luisa Constanza** (luisa.constanza@oecd.org). Information about the OECD's work on the environmental performance of agriculture is available through **Kevin Parris** kevin.parris@oecd.org

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Calling interested researchers: **Inger Larson** (Sweden) writes that she would like to contact people doing research in the genre of Nature Notes published in newspapers. She says they seem to have

been prolific in Britain as well as in the U.S. and Canada, and perhaps elsewhere [See Libby Robin's extract, above]. Nature Notes have been prolific in Inger's own country, Sweden, which she is currently investigating. She is interested in contacting anyone interested from a journalistic or literary perspective **anywhere in the world**. Also if there is literature on this specific subject area of nature notes in the press, could you let her know? 'Sadly my own search results remain pretty meagre'.

Inger.Larsson@htbibl.lu.se



To submit items to ASLE-ANZ *A New Zletter*

email CA.Cranston@utas.edu.au (Australia) or cmjmt@clear.net.nz (NZ)