

## **Call for Panels, Papers and Presentations**

### **Association for Literature, Environment, and Culture in Canada (ALECC) Biennial Conference**

**August 7 – 10, 2014  
Lakehead University, Thunder Bay campus  
Thunder Bay, Ontario**

Proposals must be submitted by **October 1, 2013** to [alecc2014@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:alecc2014@lakeheadu.ca).

## **Culture, Justice, and Environment**

“I want to propose a more radical notion of displacement, one that, instead of referring solely to the movement of people from their places of belonging, refers rather to the loss of the land and resources beneath them.”

- Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence*

In his provocative book *Slow Violence* (2011), literary scholar Rob Nixon argues that new vocabularies, images, and narrative modes and figures must emerge in order to adequately describe and respond to environmental violence and injustice, such as the loss of livelihoods due to deforestation, poisoned waterways, or climate change. Nixon emphasizes the role of writers, literary scholars, and other cultural workers in environmental debate precisely for their ability to give public presence to what has been culturally unseen or neglected. Debilitating environmental illnesses too “slow” to fit the standard disaster narrative. Memories of what a place has meant to those who made their lives there. Transnational resource extraction industries and resistance movements. Animate worlds where diverse species meet. Imagined landscapes of futures desired and disavowed. Placing “justice” at the intersection of culture and environment, the 2014 ALECC conference invites critical and creative reflection on the socio-ecological dimensions of historical and contemporary cultural practices and productions.

Proposals from all ALECC members and other interested academics and cultural workers are invited, and we encourage participants to focus especially on these questions about justice, culture and environment:

- “How can we convert into image and narrative the disasters that are slow moving and long in the making? How can we turn the long emergencies of

slow violence into stories dramatic enough to rouse public sentiment and warrant political intervention?” (Nixon 3)

- What “new modes of literary production and analysis” can respond to the ways that “the human body is vulnerable to the substances and flows of its environments, which may include industrial environments and their social/economic forces”? How might attending to “work environments spark lines of inquiry, paths of struggle, and even bodies of literature”? (Alaimo 28-31)
- How might connections be drawn between ecocriticism and Indigenous studies? How might Indigenous approaches to narrative, orature, performance and audience contribute to theorizing culture, justice and environment? How might ecocriticism contribute to “the socio-pedagogical function of Indigenous literature [to] promote social justice for Indigenous people” (Episkenew 193)?
- “How might gender shape the visions and understandings that writers and critics bring to environmental justice issues? How might environmental justice writing and activism be gendered in ways that have not yet been theorized? How might problematic constructions of gender, race, class, species, and nature underlie environmental injustices?” (Stein 6)
- Where are animals and discourses of animality in the intersections of culture, justice and environment? How might we “interrogate the significance of the various ‘social, cultural, economic, political and environmental contexts’ that gave shape to particular relationships between humans and animals, and to particular representations of animals, in specific times and places”? (Landry 24)
- “What does it mean that ideas, spaces, and practices designated as ‘nature’ are often vigorously defended against queers in a society in which nature is increasingly degraded and exploited? What do queer interrogations of science, politics, and desire offer to environmental understanding?” (Mortimer-Sandilands and Erickson 5)
- What vocabularies, insights and methods might literary and artistic modes and expertise from earlier periods—Medieval, Renaissance, Romantic, Victorian, Modernist—provide on socio-ecological questions often defined from a contemporary perspective? Are the frameworks of “slow violence” and “environmental justice” relevant to ecocritical study on these periods?

- How might literary attention be directed towards a broader range of environmental writing, especially nonfictional genres such as “memoirs, essays, public science writing, polemics, travel literature, graphic memoirs, manifestos, and investigative journalism”? (Nixon 25)
- “How do we as environmental scholars keep questions of political agency and historical change central in order to connect specialist knowledge to broader public worlds in which environmental policy take shape and within which resistance movements arise?” (Nixon 32)
- In what ways might Canadian literary studies engage with the environmental repercussions of Canadian national and foreign policy? What Canadian and Aboriginal environmental archives and stories “are closed because many from elsewhere have not had ears with which to hear them”? (van Wyck 16)

### **Participate in ALECC 2014**

Participants in the ALECC 2014 conference will have the opportunity to engage these questions of culture, justice and environment in a variety of ways, including keynote and panel sessions, readings and performances, workshops, field trips, hands-on activities, and participation in community-led environmental activities.

We invite scholarly papers, creative writing, performances, visual art, new media and hybrid presentations from across Canada and internationally to consider such questions as they relate to northern Ontario, other places and spaces in Canada, and around the world. The submission of pre-formed panels and creative presentations is welcomed, as described below.

**To propose an individual paper, creative or other work, including a reading** (20 minutes), please submit a blind (no name included) proposal that includes a title, 500-word (maximum) abstract, your preference for a scholarly, creative or mixed session, and any requests for audio-visual equipment. In a separate document, please send name, proposal title, current contact information, and a one-page curriculum vitae (used for funding applications).

**To propose a pre-formed scholarly panel or creative session** (three presenters, 90 minutes session total), please submit as a complete package the following:

- session title,
- 200-word session abstract,

- one page curriculum vitae and contact information for the session organizer and each presenter,
- blind 500-word abstracts for each paper/presentation (as possible).

Proposals should indicate clearly the nature of the session and all requests for audio-visual equipment and any other specific needs (e.g., space, moveable chairs, outdoors, etc.). We ask that panel organizers attempt to include a diversity of participants (e.g., not all from the same institution).

We are happy to consider proposals that do not easily fit either of these categories (e.g., workshops, roundtables, exhibits, performances); please contact the conference organizers directly in that case.

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**For more information, please contact:**

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