

Call for Papers

American Literature Association

29th Annual Conference
May 24-27, 2018
San Francisco, CA

“Future Earths”

Session Sponsored by

The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment

We seek proposals for an ASLE-Sponsored Session focused on American literary works that imagine/re-imagine landscapes or ecologies of the future—whether utopic, dystopic, apocalyptic, intentional (future-by-design), or more ambiguous/nuanced. These could be works of contemporary speculative and science fiction, or they could be works from the past that projected the environmental future—as seen, for example, in the tradition of the American jeremiad. Papers might deal with (but are not limited to) topics such as these:

- * How do visions of future earth constitute responses to modern technologies or to contemporary issues such as overpopulation, climate change, and/or our reliance on fossil fuels?
- * How are social categories of difference such as race, gender, sexuality, and/or class implicated or represented in visions of future earth? If American literature is inherently a comparative literature, as Paul Lauter has argued, what are the unique contributions to visions of future earth offered by writers from diverse ethnic perspectives?
- * In what ways have visions of future earth challenged or furthered ecological understanding?
- * In what ways do visions of future earth require us to reconsider or re-imagine human relationships to place, to each other, and to power?
- * In what ways does the literature of future earth challenge or reaffirm the preconceptions and themes of traditional forms of nature writing? (The concept of wilderness or the notion of nature as realm for spiritual questing, for example.)
- * What vision of a future earth is inherent in traditional works of nature writing—Thoreau’s *Walden*, for instance?
- * In what ways does the literature of future earth contribute to the environmental movement in America? If we can’t learn from the past, can we learn from the future?
- * How have recent turns in ecocriticism and environmental literature—to urban or “everyday” nature, built environments, environmental justice concerns, ecopoetics, new materialisms, African American or multicultural environmental thought—been incorporated into recent literary visions of future earth?

Please send one-page abstracts (for a 15-minute presentation) by **January 1, 2018**, to Ian Marshall at ism2@psu.edu. **Remember that proposals must deal in some way with American literature viewed from an ecocritical perspective.**