

Saint Louis University Madrid

submissions to before March 31, 2018:  
slumadridconference@gmail.com

Nature and Narrative: Writing, Literature and Pedagogy in the Anthropocene  
Madrid, June 22-23, 2018

### CALL FOR PAPERS

Since the discovery of DNA the metaphor of writing to the genetic makeup of living beings has been a tempting one to engage. As George and Muriel Beadle wrote in 1966 (and as Marcello Barbieri points to in his essay “What is Biosemiotics?”) “The deciphering of the genetic code has revealed our possession of a language much older than hieroglyphics, a language as old as life itself, a language that is the most living language of all—even if its letters are invisible and its words are buried in the cells of our bodies” (Beadle and Beadle 1966).

If indeed bodies are “written” in something akin to what we consider language, what does this say about the relationship of narrative to Nature? And, what implications might this have for the teaching of writing and the study of literature? How does this begin to alter traditional views of subject/object relationships and ideas of autopoiesis? How has the relationship between Nature and narrative been imagined historically, and how has ever expanding scientific knowledge and an increasingly technological human habitat influenced our understanding of the relationship?

Do the stories we tell have material environmental impacts as Adrian J. Ivakhiv has argued? Should we take the signs that permeate the biological world as “readable” messages that can be interpreted? Can “interpretation” be said to exist in the mimicry that permeates cellular reproduction? Can we read narrative written in the inanimate world as well as the animate? If so, what impact does this have on the study of literature, the teaching of writing, and our understanding of the origins of narrative?

Potential topics include but are not limited to:

- Ecocomposition
- Biosemiotics
- Ecocriticism
- Poetics and Nature
- Travel Narrative
- Nature Writing
- Indigenous Literatures
- History of Science
- Nature in Science Fiction
- Ecofeminism
- Material Ecocriticism
- Narrative Scholarship
- Complex Systems Theory

Keynote:

Dr. Joni Adamson, Arizona State University  
Senior Sustainability Scholar, Julie Ann Wrigley Global Institute of Sustainability  
Professor English and Environmental Humanities, Department of English  
Director Environmental Humanities Initiative, Julie Ann Wrigley Global Institute of Sustainability  
Affiliate, School for the Future Innovation in Society

Affiliate, American Studies Program

Affiliate, Center for Biodiversity Outcomes, Julie Ann Wrigley Global Institute of Sustainability

Joni Adamson is one of the leading scholars in the fields of Ecocriticism and Environmental Justice. She is the author of over 25 book chapters and nearly as many articles in journals on Ecocriticism and the Environmental Humanities. She is the author or co-author of the books:

*American Indian Literature: The Middle Place*

*The Environmental Justice Reader: Politics, Poetics, Pedagogy*

*American Studies, Ecocriticism and Citizenship: Thinking and Acting in the Local and Global Commons*

*Ecocriticism and Indigenous Studies: Conversations from Earth to Cosmos*

*Humanities for the Environment: Integrating Knowledge, Forging New Constellations of Practice.*