



University of Basilicata
Department of Humanities

CALL FOR PAPERS

LiFE 2020 Conference **Lucania between Film and Ecology** **Bodies, Environments, Representations**

A Nearly Carbon-Neutral Conference

New deadline for submissions: 15th May 2020

The LiFE 2020 conference is organized by the Department of Humanities at the University of Basilicata, in collaboration with the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures and Modern Cultures at the University of Turin. The initiative originates from the 2014-2020 National Operative Program in Research and Innovation.

The LiFE 2020 conference aims to explore the diversified connections between Basilicata, cinema and ecology, and thus to identify and emphasize the forms and ways through which urban/rural historical, cultural and social contexts have been and may be variously identified and represented. In order to explore the above mentioned connections that may be easily grouped under the term “film ecocriticism,” we can refer to the most general concept of the “film world” as the hermeneutic horizon within which ecocritical research can examine not only different ways of representing reality, but also the processes of signification through which it can be rethought and transformed. In this sense, moving images can be considered as a powerful means of transformation and change, from past to new ways of interpreting and inhabiting the world. This is the general framework within which the conference aims at considering film as a proper medium for ecocritical and philosophical reflections on a regional reality such as Basilicata, its history, its people, and its territory.

Film ecocriticism is a suitable approach for reflecting on the relations between human and nature, and for describing contemporary environmental crisis inasmuch as it represents an exemplary critical perspective of being “between”: between a present of environmental overexploitation and destruction and an increasingly precarious, uncertain future, between a present that must still be carefully analysed and discussed and a future that must be imagined and represented before it can be realized. From this standpoint, film can allow us to abandon the traditional anthropocentric perspective in favour of a more inclusive, ecocentric one. This pondering on moving images offers an occasion to reflect on the historical and cultural heritage of Basilicata, as well as on its traditions, values and symbols, and the way they might revive and survive in the future. This approach includes a thorough research within different kinds of films and genres, from narrative to documentary cinema.

The LiFE 2020 conference thus aims to embrace the idea of film ecocriticism – in the broader perspective that we have described above – as a privileged keyword for interpreting cinema and its connections with Basilicata and, in more general sense, with the very idea of the “South.” The conference represents a starting point for reflections that refer to different but contiguous approaches to film, such as environmental studies, ecocinema, film-philosophy, film theory, critical-theory, gender studies, animal and post-human studies. In this broad context, we imagine the conference as enabling a space in which borders between different disciplines and research perspectives can be usefully redrawn.



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Submissions may include, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- Sustainable development
- Biopolitics
- Capitalist excess, speculation, and precarity
- Climate change/justice
- Earthquakes and other catastrophic, traumatic events
- Ecolinguistics
- Ecosophy
- Eco-cities
- Environmental activism
- Environmental arts
- Environmental ethics
- Environmental history
- Ethnobiology
- Film ecology
- Globalization and post-colonialism
- Green and environmentalist cinema
- Human/non-human relation
- Management/disavowal of environmental risk
- Posthumanism
- Queer ecologies, ecofeminism, and environmental justice
- Space and environment within cities
- Virtual spaces/real spaces
- War, trauma, and the environment

Scholars from all areas of cinema and media studies, as well as historiography, etno-anthropology and environmental humanities are invited to submit proposals on original, unpublished research related to the conference theme. We welcome diversity in theoretical and methodological approaches to the linguistic and cultural contexts considered.

Nearly Carbon-Neutral format

In this difficult and challenging period, we have decided to postpone and transform our event into a nearly carbon-neutral (NCN) conference. Please note that the Environmental Humanities Initiative at UC Santa Barbara estimated that a relatively small academic conference can generate the equivalent of 20,000 pounds or more of CO₂ (chiefly from travel), which is the total annual carbon footprint of ten people living in India or thirty-three in Kenya. For this reason, apart from the very serious problems related to the current health emergency, which we all hope will be solved and overcome as soon as possible, we also believe that for a conference that deals with ecological and environmental issues the NCN format is more appropriate. Consequently, LiFE 2020 Conference will take place entirely online.

Contributors will not have to travel anywhere and there is no registration fee. Conference talks will consist of material that can be submitted online. Each talk should take the form of: (1) a video recording, which could be filmed with a webcam or smartphone; or (2) a screen recording of a presentation, such as a



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Department of Humanities

PowerPoint, with the talk as a voiceover; or (3) a hybrid of the two, with speaker and presentation alternately or simultaneously onscreen.

Each talk should be no more than 20 minutes long. User-friendly instructions on creating and submitting presentations for the conference will be provided on acceptance of abstracts.

The materials created by the contributors will be uploaded to the conference website, where they can be viewed at any time during the conference days. The conference will be open on September 21, 2020 and take place over ten days (from Sept. 21 to Sept. 30). Q&A will also take place online during this period, as participants and registered attendees will be able to pose questions to speakers via online comments and speakers will be able to reply in the same way.

While we realize that this approach will not replicate the face-to-face interaction of a conventional conference talk and Q&A, we hope that it will nonetheless promote lively discussion, as well as help build a community of scholars with intersecting research interests. An advantage to this approach is that individuals who would not otherwise be able to become involved in the conference will be able to fully take part.

The conference languages will be English (primarily) and Italian. Please send your submission with an abstract (max. 300 words) and a short bio (max. 150 words) in one document as an email attachment to manuela.gieri@unibas.it and/or alberto.baracco@unibas.it by **May 15, 2020**. Notifications about acceptance or rejection of proposal will be sent promptly.

Scientific and Organising Committee: Manuela Gieri (University of Basilicata, Italy), Chiara Simonigh (University of Torino, Italy), and Alberto Baracco (University of Basilicata, Italy).