

XII Italian Conference of Scandinavian Studies

Sapienza Università di Roma – Istituto Italiano di Studi Germanici
Rome

Nordic Ecologies: Perspectives on Nature and Environment in Nordic Languages, Literatures, Media, and Cultures from the Middle Ages to the Anthropocene

15-16-17 June 2027

Throughout history, the relationship between humans and the environment has been a defining concern of human existence, emerging as a major focus of scholarly inquiry across the humanities.

Environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, the challenges of the Anthropocene and, diachronically, the relationship with nature and non-human entities in the North have prompted new reflections on the role of literature, language, culture, and the arts in shaping ecological awareness and imagining alternative futures.

The XII Italian Conference of Scandinavian Studies invites scholars to explore the multiple ways in which Nordic languages, literatures, cultures, discourses and media have represented, negotiated, and reimagined the relationship between humans and the natural world. The conference seeks to foster dialogue among literary scholars, linguists, philologists, historians of ideas, media scholars, cultural theorists, and researchers working in related fields.

Organised and co-hosted by Sapienza University of Rome and the Istituto Italiano di Studi Germanici (Italian Institute of Germanic Studies), this academic event aims to promote knowledge of Nordic studies, encouraging dialogue among disciplines within the international academic community of Scandinavian studies. The relationship between humans and nature in Nordic cultures addresses issues of social relevance, such as the climate crisis, sustainability, the changing relationship between humans and non-humans, as well as the translations, discourses, narratives, and vocabulary of nature in Scandinavian contexts.

The conference seeks to contribute to the dissemination of innovative and interdisciplinary reflections. The participation of established researchers and early-career scholars will ensure a significant impact, promoting intergenerational dialogue and the development of expertise.

The Nordic region offers a particularly fertile terrain for such investigations. From Old Norse sagas and poetry, medieval chronicles, travel accounts, and early modern scientific writings to Linnaeus and the emergence of modern botany, Nordic cultures have long engaged with questions concerning landscapes, animals, resources, and environmental transformations.

Contemporary developments have further intensified these concerns, as evidenced by the growing prominence of eco-critical and climate-oriented narratives in Scandinavian literature, film, television, and public discourse, where the interdependence between human and non-human is critically assessed by a narrative that decentres human subjects (Bergthaller & Horn 2020: 109).

Examples include Maja Lunde's *Klimakvartetten* (Climate Quartet) (2015-2022) from Norway, the Swedish eco-dystopian tradition from Harry Martinson's *Aniara* (1956), P.C. Jersild's *Efter floden* (1982) to the *Nordmark* series (2020/2021) by Engström and Richert, Kim Simonsen's writings from Fær Øer and Denmark, but also cinema with the adaptation of Martinson's *Aniara* (2018), the movie *Avgrunden* (2023), and television series such as the Norwegian *Kuppel 16* (2022).

The conference will therefore also examine how changes in human-nature relations may lead to future cultural erosion, thereby reinforcing the process of environmental degradation, which is currently the subject of narration in the literary writings of many Sami authors, such as Ann-Helén Laestadius, Linnea Axelsson, Elin Anna Labba, Niillas Holmberg, and many others.

A further line of research involves an examination of the agrarian novel in its Scandinavian declination. Worth mentioning here is Knut Hamsun's *Markens Grøde* (1917), once seen as an expression of conservatism with tendencies towards National Socialism, and now being rediscovered and appreciated from an eco-critical and environmentalist perspective.

Concern for climate and ecology is visible also through recent (and less recent) linguistic developments. Consequently, the conference seeks also to explore the vocabulary of nature, environment and catastrophe. Lexicological and lexicographical studies of this field are encouraged. For example, the so-called *nyord*, neologisms linked to nature and the climate crisis: in Norwegian, examples include *klimabøl* (2019), *det grønne skiftet/det grønne skiftet* (2015) and others (see <https://sprakradet.no/nyord-og-rettskrivingsendringer/arets-ord/>); in Danish, there are examples such as *biohut* (2018), *tordensne* (2013) and others (see <https://noid.dsn.dk/opslagsord-tilfojet-i-2026-til-nye-ord-i-dansk-1955-til-i-dag/>). Swedish offers examples such as *beredskapsodling* (2025), *evighetskemikalie* (2023) and others (see <https://www.isof.se/svenska-spraket/nyord/nyordslistor>).

Discourses, policies and news reports on the environment in the North may also be the subject of linguistic investigation. Examples include the Greta Thunberg movement and Fridays for Future, as well as the rhetorical strategies used to legitimise the exploitation of natural resources, which are not infrequently the subject of greenwashing practices.

Research into the vocabulary of nature also extends to a diachronic dimension. The conference welcomes studies on texts and sources from the medieval and modern periods, providing innovative insights into the vocabulary of nature found in manuscripts, botanical studies, diaries and reports, thereby strengthening the link between science and literature.

At the intersection of literary and linguistic studies lies translation. The conference welcomes research on (mainly) literary translation focusing on the subject of nature, inviting scholars to reflect on the (un)translatability of the vocabulary and of metaphors related to nature, the environment and landscape in translation to and from the Nordic languages.

The focus of the conference is not limited solely to literature, linguistics, and translation, but also extends to cultural developments linked to the discourse on nature as a descriptive element in early-modern travelogues, and as a resource to be exploited in late capitalism. Stories and discursive narratives have preserved landscape knowledge and memories, intending to instil a sense of history and environmental awareness in future generations, especially in endangered, peripheral regions such as Sápmi, a transnational territory where the exploitation of raw materials is carried out by nation-states through interventions on the landscape and by large state-owned companies (such as LKAB in Sweden).

The conference welcomes contributions dealing with all Nordic-language areas, including Danish, Faroese, Finnish-Swedish, Greenlandic, Icelandic, Norwegian, Sámi, and Swedish cultures, from the medieval period to the present day.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Eco-criticism and environmental humanities in Nordic contexts;
- Human-nonhuman relations;
- Posthumanism, and multispecies studies;
- Animal studies and zoo-literature;
- Ecofeminism and environmental justice;
- Spatial representation of nature, landscape, and atmospheres in Nordic literatures;
- Environmental dystopias and speculative futures;
- Climate fiction (cli-fi), science fiction, and Nordic noir;
- Children's literature and environmental education;
- Nature and ecology in theatre, film, television, and digital media;
- Anthropocene, Capitalocene, and ecological crises;
- Reflections on natural disasters, hyperobjects, and catastrophic narratives;
- Nature, magic, folklore, and the supernatural;
- Ecocritical reinterpretations of classical and canonical texts;
- Linguistic representations of nature and the environment;
- Lexicography and terminology of climate and environmental discourse;
- Neologisms and environmental communication;
- Translation and the (un)translatability of metaphors related to nature, and landscapes;
- Corpus-based approaches to environmental language;
- Critical discourse analysis of climate-related political, media, and institutional texts;
- Multimodal approaches to environmental communication;
- Intersections between science, language, and literature.

Scholars interested in participating are invited to submit an abstract (max 250 words / 1,000–1,500 characters) and a short bio-note (max 150 words) in Italian, English, or any Scandinavian language (Danish, Norwegian, Swedish).

Please specify the language in which you intend to give your presentation.

The abstract should be submitted as a .doc, .docx, or .rtf file.

Venues:

15.06.2027: Aula di Geografia, Sapienza University of Rome, Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, Piazzale Aldo Moro 5, Rome.

(<https://maps.app.goo.gl/1EMU4165bhM7wmXSA>).

16.06.2027: Istituto Italiano di Studi Germanici, via Calandrelli 25, Rome.

(<https://maps.app.goo.gl/HXj59PrfRYogkbcH8>);

17.06.2027: Aula di Geografia, Sapienza University of Rome, Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, Piazzale Aldo Moro 5, Rome.

(<https://maps.app.goo.gl/1EMU4165bhM7wmXSA>).

Information on accommodation options and directions to the venues will be provided at a later date.

Please send proposals to:

scand.rome2027@gmail.com

Deadline for submissions:

31 October 2026, h. 23:59.

Notification of acceptance:

By 1 December 2026, h. 12:00.

Conference languages:

Italian, English, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish.

Registration fee:

€ 80 (Full, Associate Professors and Researchers, RTT);

€ 60 (doctoral candidates, students, post-docs, independent researchers).

Further details concerning when and how to pay the fee will be provided in upcoming communications.

Scientific Committee:

Massimo Ciaravolo, Sara Culeddu, Giuliano D'Amico, Davide Finco, Luca Gendolavigna, Angela Iuliano, Maria Cristina Lombardi, Paolo Marelli, Andrea Meregalli, Camilla Storskog, Anna Wegener.

Organising Committee:

Luca Gendolavigna, Mauro Camiz, Maria Cristina Lombardi, Angela Iuliano, Emilio Calvani, Bruno Berni, Mihaela Frunza, Viviana Santovito, Ellen Bartumioli, Pernille Thull, Julia Shore Paludan.

We look forward to receiving your abstract, and to seeing you in Rome!

References (a selection):

- Bergman, K. (1970), *Agrarromantik und Großstadtfeindschaft*. Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain.
- Buell, L. (2005), *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Calidori, N. (2022), "Antropocene", *APhEX - Portale Italiano di Filosofia Analitica*, 26, n.p.
- Caprioglio, A. (2019), "Introduzione", in *CoSMo. Comparative Studies in Modernism*, 15, pp. 217-220.
- Chakrabarty, D. (2009), "The Climate of History: Four Theses", *Critical Inquiry* 35: 197-222.
- Chakrabarty, D. (2018), "Anthropocene Time". *History and Theory*, 57 (1). 5-32.
- Ciaravolo, M. (2001), "Sull'adesione di Knut Hamsun al nazismo". *Studi nordici*, vol. VIII, 2001, pp. 9-25.
- Coupe, L. (2000), *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*. London: Routledge.
- Crary, J. (2022), *Scorched Earth: Beyond the Digital Age to a Post-Capitalist World*. London-New York: Verso.
- Crutzen P.J. (2002), "Geology of Mankind", *Nature*, 415, p. 23.
- Dror, S. (2014), *The Ecology of Dystopia: An Ecocritical Analysis of Young Adult Dystopian Texts*. Master of Arts Thesis. Vancouver: University of British Columbia.
- Ekengren, F. (2013), "Materialities on the Move: Identity and Material Culture Among the Forest Finns in Seventeenth-Century Sweden and America". In Magdalena Naum, Jonas M. Nordin (eds.), *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity. Small Agents in a Global Arena*. Springer. New York, 146-165.
- Fiorentino, F., Miglio, C., Valtolina A. (2025). "Introduzione". In Francesco Fiorentino, Camilla Miglio, Amelia Valtolina (eds.), *Scritture della Natura. Letteratura, Arte e Filosofia*. Mimesis: Milano-Udine, pp. 7-21.
- Friberg, A. (2022), "Disrupting the Present and Opening the Future: Extinction Rebellion, Fridays for Future, and the Disruptive Utopian Method." *Utopian Studies*, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 1-17.
- Fur, G. (2013), "Colonialism and Swedish History: Unthinkable Connections?" 17-36. In Magdalena Naum, Jonas M. Nordin (eds.), *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity. Small Agents in a Global Arena*. Springer. New York.

Garrard, G. (2008), *Ecocriticism*. London: Routledge.

Glotfelty, C., Fromm, H. eds. (1996), *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Grage, J. (2011), „Fleisch und Blut und Boden. Ambivalenz und Anthropologie in Knut Hamsuns Markens Grøde und Hans Henny Jahnns Fluß ohne Ufer“. In: Sophie Wenerscheid (eds.), *Sentimentalität und Grausamkeit, Ambivalente Gefühle in der skandinavischen und deutschen Literatur der Moderne*. LIT Verlag, Münster.

Guanio-Uluru, L. (2019), „Climate Fiction in Nordic Landscapes“. *Barnelitterært forskningstidsskrift*, 1, pp. 1-11.

Haverty Rugg, L. (2017), „Displacing Crimes against Nature: Scandinavian Ecocrime Fiction“. *Scandinavian Studies*, 89 (4), *The Happiest People on Earth? Scandinavian Narratives of Guilt and Discontent* (Winter 2017), pp. 597-615.

Henningsen B., Klein J. Müssener H., Söderlind S. (eds.) (1997), *Skandinavien och Tyskland 1800 – 1914, möten och vänskapsband*. Deutsches Historisches Museum, Nationalmuseum, Norsk Folkemuseum, Berlin.

Horn, E., Bergthaller H. (2020), *The Anthropocene: key issues for the humanities*. New York: Routledge.

Horning, A. (2013), „Insinuations: Framing a New Understanding of Colonialism“. In Magdalena Naum, Jonas M. Nordin (eds.), *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity. Small Agents in a Global Arena*. Springer. New York, pp. 297-306.

Iovino, S.; Oppermann, S. (eds.) (2014). *Material Ecocriticism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Mai, A-M. (2015), „Eco-crime: Scandinavian Literature takes on the environmental crisis.“ *Post45*, May 23 <https://post45.org/2015/05/eco-crime-scandinavian-literature-takes-on-the-environmental-crisis/>.

McEachrane, M.; Faye, L. (eds.). (2025), *Decolonial Sweden*. Routledge Studies on African and Black Diaspora. London-New York: Routledge.

McFarlane, B. (2015), „The Aesthetics of Disaster in Contemporary Film“. *Film Criticism*, 39 (1), 4-48.

Morton, T. (2013), *Hyperobjects*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Moylan, T. (2000), *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia*. Routledge.

Niederhauser, J. et al. (2025), "Einleitung, Die sozial-ökologische Krise als Terrain gesellschaftlicher Kämpfe", in Graduiertenkolleg »Krise und sozial-ökologische Transformation« (Hrsg.), *Kämpfe um Transformation Kritische Analysen und Interventionen zur sozial-ökologischen Krise*. Bielefeld: Transcript, pp. 13-28.

Och, G. (2004), „Segen der Erde? Landschaft und Heimat in Romanen der Weimarer Republik“, In Seelow, H., Haraldsdóttir, K. (eds.): *Große nordische Erzähler des 20. Jahrhunderts, Symposium aus Anlaß des 100. Geburtstages von Halldór Laxness*. Erlangen, 2. – 4. Mai 2002, Universitätsbund Erlangen – Nürnberg, Erlangen.

Rossi, R. (2012), "Transgression, Nostalgia, Order: Representation of the Primitive in Émile Zola's *La Terre* and Knut Hamsun's *Markens Grøde*". In *Nordlit*, nr. 28, pp. 257-70.

Schnurbein, S. (2016), "Asatru – A Religion of Nature?". In *Norse Revival, Transformations of Germanic Neopaganism*, Brill, Boston.

Schweizer G. (1976), *Bauernroman und Faschismus. Zur Ideologiekritik einer literarischen Gattung*, Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde e.V. Schloss, Tübingen.

Storfjell T. (2009), "Borrowed authenticity: America in Markens Grøde". In *Nordlit*, nr. 25, pp. 273-290.

Trexler, A. (2015), *Anthropocene Fictions: The Novel in a Time of Climate Change*. London: University of Virginia Press.

Verges, F. (2026), *Rendere pulito il mondo. Capitalismo razziale e lotta decoloniale*. Ombre Corte: Bologna.

Vidali, P. (2025), "La svolta ecologica. La natura come ecosistema". In Francesco Fiorentino, Camilla Miglio, Amelia Valtolina (eds.), *Scritture della Natura. Letteratura, Arte e Filosofia*. Mimesis: Milano-Udine, 23-35.

Zimmermann, P. (1975), *Der Bauernroman, Antifeudalismus – Konservativismus – Faschismus*, J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart.