

Editorial

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Welcome to the inaugural issue of *ECOZON@*, *European Journal of Literature, Culture and Environment*. The journal is a joint initiative of GIECO (Group for Research on Ecocriticism in Spain) and EASLCE (European Association for the Study of Literature, Culture and Environment). Its principal aim is to provide a forum for debate furthering the study, knowledge and public awareness of the connections and relationship between literature, culture and the environment. EASLCE, founded in Münster, Germany in 2004, has a small but growing membership in countries stretching from Portugal to Georgia and beyond. GIECO is also a young research group, with active members in universities across Spain. It has been an aspiration of both to publish a journal, and we are delighted that it is now possible to achieve this aim through collaboration.

Having taken the decision to publish as an on-line journal, both for reasons of sustainability and because of the geographical spread of our potential readers and contributors, use of the Open Journal Systems so helpfully provided by the Canadian Public Knowledge Project was an obvious choice for our platform. Although English is the principal language of this journal, one of our most important aims is to publish ecocriticism in other languages. This desire is driven by a dual wish to expand the range of ecocriticism outside the context of the disciplines of English and American Studies by stimulating ecocritical research in Europe's national philologies, and at the same time to enrich English-language ecocriticism through contact with ideas from other cultures. Linguistic limits are, however, set by the Open Journals Systems software, which only permits the use of five languages. So, although we hope very much that ecocritics in Scandinavia, the Netherlands, the Baltic states and other countries and linguistic communities will participate actively in debates in our pages, we regret we can only accept essays in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

Two annual numbers of the journal are planned, to appear in Spring and Autumn. Each issue in the future will consist of a special focus section and a general section, and provide space for creative writing and art, and for book reviews. The

second number is dedicated to "Greening Across Borders: The Natural Environment in a Globalised World". Themes under consideration for issues to come include "Landscape and Cultural Memory", "A Critical Glossary of Ecocritical Terminology", "Ecocriticism and War", "New Materialism", "Postcolonial Criticism and Ecocriticism", and "European Nature Writing". This first number has, however, a special format. Its appearance coincides with the consolidation of a Third Wave of ecocriticism, one foregrounding transnational and comparative aspects. As a European journal, *Ecozon@* seeks to contribute to the internationalization of ecocriticism principally, though not exclusively, from a European perspective. For this opening number we therefore approached leading figures in international and European ecocriticism, and asked them to provide short essays on their perception of the present situation and future prospects for ecocritical theory and practice.

The essays in this number are divided into two sections, the first addressing issues of global relevance, and the second focused on the question what European ecocriticism might be and how it might develop. The first section opens with overviews of Third Wave and Environmental Justice ecocriticism. The next essays argue that ecocriticism should be pursued as a contribution to consilient knowledge (E.O. Wilson), that it should be extended to new genres such as popular scientific literature and travel writing and pursued more actively in relation to the media of film and photography, and that the analysis of websites should play a major part in ecocritical pedagogy. An assertion of the continuing importance of place-based cultural activity as a way of fostering sustainable behaviour is followed by proposals for new developments in areas where ecocriticism interfaces with feminism, theories of (post-)humanism, queer theory, and the study of the body and materiality. The relevance of ecophobia, discourse analysis, systems theory and the examination of chronotopic motifs is also explored. Small wonder that, as Serpil Oppermann proposes, the development of ecocriticism can be envisaged as following the model of rhizomatic growth with multiple entry-points.

The second section begins with an account of a panel discussion on European ecocriticism held at a conference in the Netherlands in January, 2010, and an essay by Franca Bellarsi reflecting on the defining features of European ecocriticism. The subsequent essays provide initial overviews of ecocritical work in half a dozen countries. In one way or another, these essays signal European debates, and interpretations of the field as well as its potential. Some of these overviews present the

work being carried out; others highlight directions being developed and the differing approaches to ecocriticism; some examine the work of a particular author (Marguerite Yourcenar and Ian McEwan) and yet others emphasize the internal debates which seem to be hindering the flourishing of ecocriticism. We have been encouraged by, and are extremely grateful for this generous response from practising ecocritics. We hope that readers will find the essays published here as informative and thought-provoking as we have as editors, and that they will be inspired to contribute themselves to future numbers of the journal.

The Creative Writing section presents the diverse work of two Spanish poets, Julia Barella and Jorge Reichmann, two British poets, Terry Gifford and Christopher North, an Irish poet, Rosemarie Rowley and a Native-American poet, Linda Hogan. Their poetry ranges from evocations of life's connectedness to dizzying reminders of the discontinuities and shocking conflicts between human life and nature. We also offer a playful short story written by a Spanish writer in English, José Manuel Marrero Henríquez. In Visual Arts you will find the work of two Spaniards: a well known Spanish landscape artist, Fernando Casás and a young artist, Agustin Batista, who has also designed the cover image especially for this issue. It is our hope that many more artists will contribute to the journal, providing visibility for ecological writing in other languages and countries, as well as encouraging ecological engagement in the visual arts.

As the first multi-lingual journal in our field, *Ecozon@* aims to facilitate the flow of ideas across language barriers. We therefore regard the final section of the journal, Book Reviews, as of particular relevance to our mission. It will place special emphasis on reviewing scholarship in languages other than English and also allow for longer review essays which attempt to contextualize the reviewed works in a more fine-grained way. Even more than in the other sections, we will here be dependent on active participation by our readers, and hope that that they will contribute extensively.

The success of *Ecozon@* rests on the international ecocritical community. By launching it through the Open Journal System, we hope to encourage the expansion of the discipline beyond the confines of the English language and to enrich it through international, multilingual and multicultural cross-fertilisation.