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Flys Junquera, Carmen; Marrero Henríquez, José Manuel; Barella Vigal, Julia (eds.) *Ecocríticas. Literatura y medio ambiente*. Madrid/Frankfurt, 2010, Iberoamericana /Nervuert, 422p.

Bearing in mind that practically all the existing works published related to environmental literary criticism and ecocritical theory are in English, this unique volume offers for the first time an opportunity for Spanish readers and scholars to learn more about the variety of theoretical and interpretive tools that ecocriticism deals with in its study and analysis of the relations between literature and environment. It takes the reader through the key philosophical points of reference that inform ecocritical theory as well as looking at new approaches to environmental literature and ecocritical theory.

The introduction and fifteen essays in this strong volume are written by literary specialists and translators from different fields in English, French and Spanish studies and are grouped around four main objectives: firstly to offer a clear synthesis of the theory and main debates that ecocriticism deals with; secondly to consider ecofeminism as one of the most active branches of ecocriticism today; thirdly to analyse how ecocriticism has been represented inside the national literatures of Hispanic, Francophone, and Anglophone communities, and finally to look at the possibilities that ecocriticism offers to explore areas such as mythology and children's literature.

Moreover, the volume is internationalised by the translation into Spanish of articles written by internationally renowned scholars: a review of ongoing debates in the field of ecocriticism by the respected English ecocritic Terry Gifford; an abbreviated version of the introduction to the canonical *Ecocriticism Reader* (1996), co-authored by American ecocritics Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm; writer and ecofeminist Barbara Gates' key article "*A Root of Ecofeminism: Écoféminisme*," first published in 1998; as well as a Preface to the volume written by ecofeminist critic Patrick Murphy and an extensive interview with Scott Slovic, one of the founders of ASLE, all of which have been translated with expertise into Spanish.

The introductory article entitled "Ecocríticas: el lugar y la naturaleza como categorías de análisis literario" (*Ecocriticisms: place and nature as categories of literary analysis*) that gives its name to the book offers an excellent overview of ecocriticism summarising its major concerns and debates as well as introducing key figures in the field. The first section of the book "Ecocrítica: Teorías y Debates" (*Ecocriticism: theories and debates*) is composed of 5 essays. The first essay is Diana Villanueva Romero's interview with Scott Slovic which reflects on the origins of ASLE and its

impact both inside and outside USA. This is followed by Cheryll Glotfelty's key text, and Terry Gifford's essay "Recent Critiques of Ecocriticism" which looks at the problems that underlie the plurality of different theoretical approaches to ecocriticism today and argues for the necessity of developing a clear methodology. Carmen Flys Junquera offers an extensive study of what environmental justice is and follows its origins as a movement in the USA and its development and literary application. Finally, Carmen Valero Garcés' essay reflects on the difficulties of terminology in the field of ecocriticism, and discusses the intricate problem of translating terms such as "wilderness" as used by Yi-Fu Tuan in his book *Topophilia*: the term appears thirty-four times in the original version and has been translated into Spanish using thirteen different forms. Indeed, perhaps the most constructive and useful element of the volume is the bilingual glossary included at the end of the book with a list of key ecocritical terms together with a concise definition in Spanish.

However, the *pièce de résistance* of the volume is undoubtedly the second section on ecofeminism. Esther Rey Torrijos offers an excellent entry on the genesis and development of ecofeminism presenting the basic principles as well as a review of the key works and authors. From the coining of the term ecofeminism in 1974 by Françoise d'Eaubonne who set the theoretical basis of the movement, and the first conference on eco-feminism hosted in March 1980 in Amherst, Massachusetts, under the title "Women and Life on Earth", Rey Torrijos draws a conceptual time line describing the leading theorists during the 80s and 90s and key works of pioneering figures such as those of Carol J. Adams, Greta Gaard, Patrick Murphy, Val Plumwood, Karren Warren, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Vandana Shiva, and Carolyn Merchant, amongst others. She also explains the main problems behind conceiving the role of the woman as a mediator between nature and culture, as well as looking at the cultural and political implications of the different ways of understanding the female identity and the human relationship with nature. In "A Root of Ecofeminism: Ecofeminisme," Barbara Gates offers a closer look at the writings of the French feminist Francois d'Eaubonne. Gates provides a useful summary of the central points of *Le féminisme ou la mort* (1974) and *Ecologie féminisme: révolution ou mutation?* (1978) and shows how the themes in her writing still resonate with ecofeminist theories and practices today. The next essay by Margarita Carretero González looks at the difficulty of defining ecofeminism and puts forward the current debates that surround the field and explains how they can be applied to different literary texts. Since, as Carretero González suggests, ecofeminism cannot be defined as a singular homogeneous movement, one of the most apposite definitions is possibly that of Karen J. Warren: "'Ecological feminism' is an umbrella term which captures a variety of multicultural perspectives on the nature of the connections within social systems of domination between those humans in subdominant or subordinate positions, particularly women, and the domination of nonhuman nature"

(179). This brings us to the third section “Ecocrítica y Literaturas Nacionales” (*Ecocriticism and National Literatures*) with five essays which focus on the current situation of ecocriticism and its application to national literatures in different countries. The first two essays emphasize the limited application of ecocriticism to Spanish literature. In “Ecocrítica e hispanismo” (*Ecocriticism and Hispanicism*) José Manuel Marrero Henríquez looks at the development of ecocriticism in Spanish-speaking countries and underlines the limited ecocritical interpretation of Hispanic authors, whilst regretting the lack of application of ecocriticism to such a rich literature. Along the same lines, Julia Barella Vigal’s essay reviews the importance of landscape and nature in Spanish literature, and as a specialist in 20th century Spanish poetry she concurs with Marrero Henríquez’s lament about the lack of ecocritical reading of contemporary poets. However, far from being pessimistic, Marrero Henríquez states that “the present shortage of ecocritical studies does not necessary imply a future shortage, nor a lack of suitability of Spanish literature and criticism to draw inspiration from environmental thinking and make it the centre of its creative activity, its analytical line of research, or its interpretative application” (207). The next essay by Montse López Mújica looks at the development and application of ecocriticism to francophone literatures. López Mújica concludes that with the exception of Quebec, the term ecocriticism is not usually used by French literary theorists and critics; although, as she emphasizes, that does not necessarily mean that environmental literature does not exist, nor that there is not a critical school of thought of environmental awareness in francophone studies. David Río Raigadas goes further afield to the “Wild West” to revise the representation of nature in literature of the American West and its development as a literary school. Here he offers a comprehensive overview of the first “nature writers” such as Aldo Leopold, Edward Abbey or Wallace Stegner and reminds us that “from the very beginning Americans approached the West not as the Children of Israel approached the Land of Canaan (...) but as Egyptian grave robbers might approach the tomb of a pharaoh” (279). He also briefly touches on other authors such as Mary Austin, Owen Wister, Willa Cather, Frank Bergon, Cormac McCarthy, Barbara Kingsolver, Annie Proulx or Barry Lopez. Finally Juan Ignacio Oliva Cruz, drawing on Yi-Fu Tuan’s *Topophilia*, compares the term with “Topophobia” – the inverse hostile attitude towards one’s surrounding – and underlines in his essay the importance of landscape, whether real or fictional. His focus is on poets who, having immigrated from the third world to Canada, have experienced first hand the feeling of having been uprooted from their cultural environment.

The fourth section “Ecocrítica en las leyendas y en la literatura infantil” (*Ecocriticism in legends and children’s literature*) which closes this volume is perhaps the most original, but sadly also the shortest with only two entries. The objective of José Manuel Pedrosa Bartolome’s fascinating essay “Ecomitologías” (*Ecomythologies*) is two-fold. On the one hand it gives examples of the importance of nature and

environmental conscience in oral Hispano-American traditions, on the other hand it shows the potential relevance of the key concepts of ethnography and cultural anthropology for the field of ecocriticism and provides a bibliography. This is followed by Esther Laso y León's detailed study of the current state of carried out by related to the current state of children's literature criticism and its incorporation into the field of ecocriticism. Her essay begins with a corpus of the most representative children's literary journals published in Catalan, Spanish, English, French and Italian and looks at how children's literature was "greened" in the 1980s and 1990s although, as Laso y León points out with reference to authors such as Defoe, Melville, Verne, Twain, Stevenson, Kipling or London, children's authors have always been genuinely inspired by the theme of nature throughout the modern era. In the words of J. Darcy: "In this sense, a hundred years ago people (including writers) were actually closer to rural life and its customs than we are. A reading of any late Victorian/ Edwardian writer who cares to describe the countryside for whatever reason testifies to their greater and more intimate knowledge of the landscapes and the flora and fauna of the English countryside. Such knowledge, born of close contact with the natural world, is rarely found except among specialists and enthusiasts in the later twentieth century" (349). The greening of children's literature in the 1990s has led many authors to ask questions related to environmental issues and concerns. However, as Laso y León concludes in her essay, "it will be left to see whether, in the coming years, the literary production will have given us answers, done away with the qualms and awoken new enthusiasm" (367).

Undoubtedly a review of such an extensive volume fails to do justice to the contents of these essays, each of which is both interesting and a pleasure to read. This is indisputably an extremely well referenced and effective book, which succeeds in its main objective of introducing Spanish readers to ecocriticism and offers important insights into the field. It is to be hoped that it will entice more scholars, historians and critics to consider environmental and ecocritical issues in Spanish speaking countries and create a baseline for future research, helping promote further critical debate amongst Spanish-speaking readers, writers and scholars.