

Editorial *Ecozon@* 17.2 2026 “Eco-Crip Cultures: Disability and the Environment”

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Literature, culture and environment, the broad subjects of *Ecozon@*, are terms that have increasingly become sites of debate regarding their singular status, that is, the effect of using them in the all-encompassing, abstract singular that some might think of as ‘merely’ grammatical. However, while the intention of speaking of literature, culture and environment—perhaps more prominently even, of the human—in the singular might suggest not only unity and connectedness, but also exclusivity. For at least two decades, the discussion of the effects of a concept such as “the Anthropocene” (another significant singular) has directed attention to humans as a collective agent. As Dipesh Chakrabarty points out in his seminal essay “The Climate of History” (2009): “To call human beings geological agents is to scale up our imagination of the human” (206). This process of scaling is intriguing in many ways. It allows for the kind of “species thinking” in which Chakrabarty is interested and which recognizes that agency emerges from collective actions at a level where individuals are mostly unaware. But as ecocritic Timothy Clark has shown, this view probes the limits of historical imagination (Chakrabarty 2009, 2020) but also challenges the very foundation of literary analysis and criticism. Clark’s concept of “scale framing” (2015, 97), later developed into “scale reading,” suggests that literary critics in general, and ecocritics in particular, would do well to take the planetary perspectives into account and develop reading frames that are able to account for the different scales on which humans act as agents: the personal, the national and the planetary. All different scales yield different readings of the same story, yet even on the scale of the personal, individual, “the human” appears as if it were uniform. The, as Clark aptly calls it, “critically naïve” (99) assumption that readers know and understand the personal level is not as innocent as it might appear in its heuristic use. Rather, ecocritics and environmental humanists such as Ursula Heise, Rob Nixon, Stacy Alaimo, to name but a few, have pointed out that scaling brings with it a tendency to equalize what is not equal and, thus, distribute not only agency between

the human and more-than-human, but also runs the risk of misattributing or outright negating responsibility. While it is not necessarily a result of bad faith to do so, it is a critical junction for the study of “literature, culture and environment” in a broader humanist/humanities context. As Chakrabarty has summarized with regard to historiography: “All disciplines have to create their objects of study. If medicine or biology reduces the human to a certain specific understanding of him or her, humanist historians often do not realize that the protagonists of their stories—persons—are reductions, too. Absent personhood, there is no human subject of history” (215).

To assume “the human” as a singular and, consequently, literature, culture and environment, in singular form, thus, produces a certainty that amounts, thinking with Roland Barthes, to a myth of ‘humanity’ that rejects the very possibility of challenging its validity and uniformity. To put it bluntly, what happens if human (singular) and environment are not only opposed, but that thinking in terms of the singular can not only evoke a lack of connection and complexity, but also an active ignorance of the diverse beings who are part of both and have a right to take part in both? Holding on to and promoting plurality and diversity, then, is a task and a challenge that affects all disciplines concerned with environments and particularly calls on literary, cultural and ecocritical thinkers, because it adds to the necessary skill of scale reading the equally necessary ethics of questioning one’s own assumptions about access, equality and justice. Current scholarship reflects these goals by exploring the diversity of human and more-than-human bodies and relationships and challenging notions of health as a goal or condition for care and protection.

While scaling to the planetary and thinking in the abstract remain central for our work, we need not forget the conditions which allow us to imagine ourselves able to leave the ground and/or access all kinds of environments at will. Questioning one’s own position of writing and thinking, challenging notions of ability and wholeness while attempting to work towards livable worlds, requires careful balancing, cautious communication and also acts of decisive dissent against harmful notions of homogeneity and singular ideas of humanity, not least because the protection and celebration of difference is the hallmark of anti-fascist environmentalism.

Doing away with assumed certainties of homogeneity of “the human,” culture and environment, whether in singular or plural, the guest editors of *Ecozon@*’s 2026 fall issue’s special-focus section “Eco-Crip Cultures: Disability and the Environment,” Shanna Lino (York University, Canada) and Maryanne L. Leone (Assumption University, USA) aim to explore the intersection of disability and ecology. Reclaiming the derogatory “crip,” crip theory, the editors point out in their call for papers, engages and “deepens the critique of homogenization to defiantly salvage and resituate the derogatory term that it reappropriates. The merger of crip theory with ecocriticism expands the assertion of the material intersectionality of race, gender, and sexuality to also engage with ecology, thus exploring the potential for mutually beneficial existences of disabled bodies and communities with the natural environment.”

The seven contributions of the special-focus section bring together ecological thinking and disability on different scales, in different linguistic and historical contexts and take care to bring together the highly specific with broader environmental pictures. Angela Conzo, University of Salento, Italy, opens the section with a consideration of “Bodily Disability and Ecological Disaster” through a reading of Christa Wolf’s *Störfall* (Disaster) (1987) in which the generic hybridity of the text becomes a means for critiquing cultural norms that, in the face of environmental disaster, increase the harm of environmental disaster. Conzo argues “that *Störfall* articulates a temporality of cripp latency—a suspended time in which futures are uncertain, and bodies remain exposed to delayed, invisible harm” and thereby calls for an “embrace of the cripp body” and an “ethics of fragility” in and through which it becomes possible to extend care to and beyond the human in all its forms. In “Floating at the Edge: Eco-Crip Perspectives on Disability and Nature in Muhammad Makhzangi’s ‘He Was Chasing a Butterfly in the Sea’,” Mila Fantinelli, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Italy, explores a “rare example” of eco-crip literature in Arabic and finds in it a “model of disability that is neither tragic nor inspirational but ecological: a record of environmental force, a recalibration of perception, a critique of autonomy, and a form of knowledge.” Where the body becomes a medium for environmental traces, connections abound in ways that defy and complicate Eurocentric assumptions about disability as well as environments. Protichi Chatterjee, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, makes “a case for a neurodivergent gaze” by investigating possibilities of “Co-Composing with Laura Aguilar’s ‘Nature Self-Portrait’” series. Moving away from normative and discriminating ways of seeing and experiencing more-than-human worlds and ecological textures, the artist achieves a mode of communicating with nonhuman others that is affective rather than linguistic. This form of engagement, Chatterjee shows, has the potential to displace the phantasm of a “neurotypical human” from the center of meaning-making. In “Crippling the Post-Disaster Cityscape,” Lisa Cristea, TU Braunschweig, Germany, compares mutual human and more-than-human vulnerabilities in two Indian novels by Veena Nagpal and Indra Sinha. Building on Stacy Alaimo’s call for “cripping environmental studies” and adding “multispecies perspectives” to Disability Studies, Cristea explores post-disaster cityscapes as both “disabled ‘environment[s]’ due to its trans-corporeal enmeshment with toxic matter, but it also functions as a disabling ‘space’ for human bodies.” By attributing the emergence of both environments and (human) bodies as disabled as “a result of neocolonial and neoliberal notions of ‘development’,” the novels and their reading in this contribution serve as important steps in decolonizing Disability Studies and in reconsidering environmental ethics in light of social, political, ecological and bodily diversity.

Employing what is both metaphor and material reality, “Breathing through Catastrophe,” Somak Mukherjee, University of Manchester, UK, investigates the role of respiratory illness in Sarah Crossan’s young adult dystopian novels *Breathe* and *Resist*. In dialogue with a wide range of scholars, this contribution asks how what philosopher Peter Sloterdijk has elsewhere called “the assumption of breathability,”

causes breathing to emerge as “a counter-practice grounded in shared vulnerability, precarity, and interspecies interdependence.” Being forced to understand breathing as precarious and collective fundamentally changes how lives can be lived and what assumptions about livability can be made. Focusing on oil exploitation in the Niger Delta, Khawla Bendjemil, University of 8 May 1945-Guelma, Algeria, investigates in her contribution “Debilitating Ecologies: Eco-Crip Resistance in Saro-Wiwa’s *A Month and a Day* and Agary’s *Yellow-Yellow*” both paradoxes of resistance and care-practices in toxic spaces. Following the notion of toxicity and toxic pollution and disability as systemic harm from “slow violence” (Jasbir Puar via Rob Nixon), Bendjemil connects fictional and real-life activism in all its complexity. Concluding the themed section, Christian Hummelsund Voie, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway, asks whether there is such a thing as “Crip Nature Writing?” and investigates the ableist bias and the “corporeal unconscious” of nature writing, respectively. Reading Elisabeth Tova Bailey’s *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating*, Hummelsund Voie points out how “Bailey’s bedside becomes a site of profound genre-innovation and reappraisal of ecological values.” This reconsideration is essential in a context where gendered and ableist notions of “wild nature” still abound.

The general section of this Fall 2026 issue of *Ecozon@* connects in many ways to the topics raised in the themed section’s eco-crip focus, particularly the necessary broadening of perception and alternative insights afforded by thinking on an individual scale of bodily and ecological diversity. The general section offers an especially rich array of studies on generic, geographical, linguistic, ecological and perspectival questions with six articles in English, ranging from the rhetorical and narratological analysis of writing styles to different genres, forms of activism and being (non-)human and methods of investigating and representing environmental knowledge and critique in scholarship and popular media.

Diving into the practices of noticing more-than-human nature and presenting them convincingly to a (mostly) human audience, Fredrik Appel Olsen, University of Copenhagen, Denmark, analyses Rachel Carson’s “superb use of parataxis” in his article “Environmental Parataxis. Writing Hyperabject Patterns of Death in the Web of Life in Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*.” In this fine-grained investigation, Olsen not only demonstrates both the rhetorical prowess as well as the pitfalls of a seductive writing style and its elements. Critiquing Carson’s tendency to overlook “the inequality and injustice of this distribution of toxic waste,” Olsen formulates a pointed call for (future) science communicators and writers: “The task of the writer employing the environmental parataxis to write about the PFAS crisis, then, is to compose and amplify a pattern of death in the web of life to overwhelm the reader and inspire action, while avoiding representing this web as encompassing all equally.”

Nandita Ghosh, Fairleigh Dickinson University, USA, also looks for streams and flows, paying special attention to their distribution in “Hydropolitics, Colonization, and Frontiers: Reading Dystopian Landscapes in Hawai’i and India.” Through a comparative approach, Ghosh connects Hawai’i and India as geographically and environmentally specific sites through poetry and theatre as a means of engaging the

imperialist practices of hydropolitics as well as the local activism against these forms of injustice. Conceptualizing writing as a form of activism, Ghosh interweaves literatures, cultures and environments in a decidedly pluralistic way.

Going beyond generic difference, Amélie Aubert-Noël, Université de Lille, France, looks at metamorphoses of the human form itself. In a reading of two Italian novels, Aubert-Noël explores “Metamorphosis Towards Human-Vegetal Hybrids, From Utopia to Dystopia and Back,” clearly demonstrating how the figure of the plant-human hybrid is not in itself subversive, but rather that its subversive status depends on the (ideological) context of the text in which it appears. This is far from self-evident, and Aubert-Noël insightfully shows how harmful preconceived notions of subversion (however well-meaning) can be, because they miss important aspects and opportunities of critique.

In “The Art of Change: Decolonization and Gendered Indigenous Environmental Artivism in Works by Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers and Ann-Helén Laestadius,” Juliane Egerer, University of Augsburg, Germany, turns the attention towards Indigenous knowledges as they emerge and form filmic and literary works. The gendered perspective on activism that Egerer employs makes apparent how activism and art intersect with place-and person-specific knowledge-making practices that are essential parts of human/more-than-human relationships and the ways in which they affect minority and Indigenous environmental justice.

A methodological question lies at the heart of the collectively authored article “Sensoriographic Sensibilities: Immersing, Recording, and Storying the Senses in Multispecies Worlds” by Maya Hey, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden; L. Sasha Gora, University of Augsburg, Germany; Sevgi Mutlu Sirakova, LMU Munich, Rachel Carson Center, Germany; Philine Schiller, University of Augsburg, Germany; Lena M. Schlegel, Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg, Germany; and Penelope Volinia, University of Augsburg, Germany. The authors develop strategies to realize an often-called-for practice, namely the integration of “multisensory methods to know other earthly beings.” Building on feminist thinkers who already are engaged in the practice and ethos of decentering humans, the author-collective works out the concept of “sensoriographic sensibilities” accompanied by “recursive writing” in a both impressively practical and conceptually sound piece that balances the multiple “tensions between sensing the world and writing its complexities.”

Concluding the general section, Massih Zekavat, University of Groningen, The Netherlands, offers an analysis of the role that the mode of satire can play in contemporary environmental discourse. In “*Rumours* and Realities: Employing Satire to Navigate the Blah Blah Blah of Neoliberal Environmental Politics” Zekavat offers a thoughtful interpretation of the 2024 film *Rumours* and its satirical rendition of world (climate) politics. With a careful focus on the paradoxes of a film that must necessarily navigate being part of the very capitalist system it critiques, this contribution offers a perspective that productively meshes with the multiperspectival and diverse approach of the current issue of *Ecozon@*. That is, satirizing alone might not be

enough when it does not make room for “nuanced and inclusive dialogue[s] on environmental and multispecies justice and emancipatory worlding.”

The Creative Writing and Arts section of *Ecozon@* vol. 17.2 begins with editor Eli Tavella’s powerful musings on the specificity of experience and artistic communication. Tavella invokes humming via artist Mel Bagg’s video “In My Language” (2007), and follows then their own perception of the piece to question meaning-making practices beyond the heteronormative and homogenizing of experience in favor of a multispecies sensorium that allows for both specificity and connectivity to emerge from relationships among humans and more-than-human beings. Engaging with the theme of the volume, the creative writing and arts section features contributions that negotiate and engage with the challenges and promises of daring to engage with disability ecologically and with ecologies through crip theory or, as Tavella puts it: “Across poetry, experimental nonfiction, autotheory, speculative fiction, visual art, installation, photography, and multimedia practice, the common thread lies in cultivating situated relations with agential beings whose singular histories resist abstraction, and in practicing care-full attentiveness as an ethical stance grounded in specificity and a commitment to collective flourishing. *This* river, not *a* river. *This* beetle, not *a* beetle.”

Naomi Ortiz, Author, Poet and Visual Artist, observes the desert (and the inability of their camera to capture its brilliance) from a wheelchair-accessible concrete table in “#LifeIsForLiving,” challenging the seemingly easy way of predicting collapse instead of observing and being part of lives lived. Ortiz, thus, creates a strongly challenging notion of being *there* that defies nature writing conventions as well as ableist views of encounter and value. The visual essay from Petra Kuppers, University of Michigan, USA, “‘Disable the River’: Eco Soma Methods of Painting and AI Surrealism” explores “Crip Drifts [as] methods for moving through the world as a disabled artist living with pain.” In direct dialogue with AI, Kuppers explores what it means to disable a river, a view, and the complex implications of collaborating with a potentially harmful technology. Yet, side by side, the images evoke powerful disagreements as well as a collaboration that, in its uncanniness, catches the eye and invites its viewer into the “in-between.”

Rejecting restorative fantasies in “Fake Lake Intimacies,” Stephanie Heit, Independent Artist, USA, seeks solidarity between broken worlds and bodies. From the generative friction of “mad ecopoetics” emerge ways of adapting and reading worlds and ecological connection as continuous processes of adaptation. Gaelle Chassery, Sensory Artist, Writer and Advocate, Scotland, presents an entangling of texts and sensory installation in “Mapping, Tending and Bridging the Environments of Chronic Illness: Inner, Outer and In-Between,” and explores the intersections of chronic illness, multispecies companionship and sensory art. She thereby puts into question the ableist assumptions underlying concepts of sustainability as well as creativity and collaboration:

Disabled autistic creativity is often misread as solitary, private, or inaccessible because institutions recognise community mainly through visible participation. My

practice shows another model: community made through attention, materials, ecosystems, sensory access, and the visitor's embodied encounter. But for this kind of creativity to enter public spaces, institutions must understand access as infrastructure, not rhetoric. Connection does not always require physical presence.

Paying tribute to nature, our ecological realm, as Chassery writes, is a way of connecting that does, indeed, forego physical presence and might thereby offer relief to environments under stress from humans, who, though they love it, overstretch its capacity to yield (like the lake in Heit's piece) or to give even more.

Alex Dolores Salerno, Independent Artist, USA, forms and follows chains of coffee beans materially and metaphorically. Asking about the supply chains and growing conditions, Salerno connects with coffee in a way that leads to a call for a "Eco-Crip revolution, or in other words, the refusal to abandon." Instead of abandoning, Salerno embraces connections in their paradoxical closeness and distance: "As a consumer, the utmost transparency around how coffee is processed after it's harvested does not alleviate my concerns around how it is grown, and these concerns are not disconnected from my chronically ill life or my transness. My bodymind is nature itself, as is yours."

Sarah Hopfinger, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, UK, offers a contribution enacting a struggle with expectations and a refusal of productivity; it questions ways of moving through the world through an encounter with a beetle. An everyday possibility, seemingly mundane, this encounter offers, however, a significant change of perspective and, importantly, joy.

Lena M. Schlegel, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Germany, offers a poem related to the co-written essay on sensoriorgraphy, "Thinking with Leaves: Poetic Resonances with Nocturnal Creatures." It listens to the stories that leaves tell and shares her work on the sensoriorgraphy team (see Hey et al.) in a deeply wondrous language that both celebrates the gliders and mourns the "double death" (Deborah Bird Rose) of ash forests. Yet "all is not lost while there is still 'shimmer'," Schlegel reminds us, and attending to the tension between loss and hope yields not only poetry but room to grow for plants and people.

In "All Day, Waiting for Another Sun to Rise," Molly Wickett, Artist, UK, presents and discusses her sculptures that evoke disruptions of normative temporal orders "through forged fungal forms, oxidized surfaces, gravity, texture, scale, and the bodily experience of moving through the installation." By confusing time scales and creating a space that allows for a "multisensory encounter with a world 'that continues after what should have been a world-ending event'," Wickett points out how the present holds the future without determining it. Closing the section is the short story by Lorraine Boissoneault, Freelance Writer, USA, "The Lake Erie Sisters," which portrays an encounter with a monster embodying the connection, exchange and hurt between humans and the lake out of which it emerges. As Tavella writes in the arts introduction: "Cure here acts by moving the lake's harm into the bodies of those who

seek repair, thus exposing the promise of a return to wholeness as a redistribution of burden. By unsettling distinctions between harmless and harmful, native and non-native, ordinary and monstrous, the story exchanges restoration for newly negotiated forms of kinship and interdependence.”

The volume concludes with four book reviews, one in Spanish, one in German, and two in English. José Manuel Marrero Henríquez, Universidad de las Palmas de Gran Canaria, España, reviews the edited volume on petro-cultures by Manuel Silva-Ferrer, *Paisajes del subsuelo. Mapas y pliegues de las culturas del petróleo en la Venezuela del siglo XX*, (Berlin y Boston: De Gruyter, 2026), 407 pp. The second review also addresses petro-cultures: Philipp Sperner, Universität Wien, Austria, reviews the edited volume by Antonia Villinger, Universität Wien, Austria, *Fossile Fiktionen: Kohle als Energiequelle in der Literatur von 1850 bis zur Gegenwart*. The third review is by Paul Cockburn, Durham University, United Kingdom, and it discusses the climate book by Johan Höglund, *The American Climate Emergency Narrative: Origins, Developments and Imaginary Futures* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), 214 pp. The final contribution is by Faezeh Mohajeri, The State University of New York at Albany, USA, who reviews Stacy Alaimo’s new blue humanities book, *The Abyss Stares Back: Encounters with Deep-Sea Life* (University of Minnesota Press, 2025), ix+256 pp.

Keeping in spirit with the changes of perspective throughout this volume, *Ecozon@* is a site of change as well. After six years of invaluable work for the journal, Heather I. Sullivan will move on to other endeavors and we thank her from the bottom of our hearts for her service and keeping up with the growing number of contributions and ensuring the quality of a journal that is committed to collaboration, ecologies beyond the human and, above all, to connection. Thank you, Heather, for keeping this spirit alive and sharing the joy of our work!