

CFP: Ecozon@ 12.2 Autumn 2021

Eco-Georgic: From Antiquity to the Anthropocene

Guest Editors: Sue Edney (University of Bristol), Philipp Erchinger (University of Duesseldorf) and Pippa Marland (University of Leeds)

Georgic, a genre or mode of writing about agricultural labour and rural life, is typically concerned with ways of being at work in an environment that tends to overtake or resist all human efforts to master it. As David Fairer has argued, georgic nature is always, to some degree, out of tune with our human endeavours to live in agreement with it (2011). It therefore constantly challenges us to adapt to its changing conditions. In Virgil's *Georgics*, for example, human activities of cultivation and construction are repeatedly threatened to be overrun or swept away by the life of the more-than-human world--the world of pests, storms and droughts--in and through which they have to proceed. Georgic work, in short, takes place in a "world in process whose rewards are hard won" (Fairer 2015: 111). Hence the genre's interest in all products of human skill and invention by means of which the earth, not necessarily a comfortable place, can be made to yield its fruits (Beck 2004). Yet, while georgic, from today's perspective, is often quickly dismissed as being deeply implicated in outdated anthropocentric and nationalist ideologies of cultural improvement, industrialisation, exploitation and colonisation, it also addresses a number of questions about the relations between human and nonhuman spheres that, in our contemporary historical moment, seem urgent and fresh.

Thus, this issue of *Ecozon@*, taking its cue from Fairer's concept of "Eco-Georgic" (2011), proceeds from the assumption that the georgic mode, with its interest in the messy involvement of human and nonhuman action, resonates with current debates in ecocriticism and the environmental humanities. Like much recent work in this field (Abram 1996, Alaimo 2010, Bennett 2010, Moore 2015), georgic literature often presents human culture as a way of working through, rather than being opposed to, nature. The daily work of sustaining, understanding, refining, and transforming human existence, it suggests, is inextricably caught up in, rather than separate from, the evolution of non-human matter and life. Last but not least, the georgic tradition affords a consideration of the changing functions of literature. For georgic has always reflected the use of the pen through the work of the plough, creating analogies between the making of poetry and the cultivation of the land. As a result, it poses questions about the relationship between the arts of writing and farming and, more generally, between literary and non-literary ways of working with the material world.

We invite articles that explore the ecology of georgic literature in all its theoretical and historical implications and shades. Conceptually, we encourage contributors to think of georgic in three ways: as a specific generic tradition that has its roots in Hesiod and Virgil, reaching its heyday in seventeenth and eighteenth-century verse; as a more fluid way of writing that, as "a rhizomatic underpresence" (Goodman 2004: 1), has remained influential throughout the history of literature, informing not only poems, but also fictional

prose, essays and travel reports; and, finally, as a mode that is gaining new relevance and vitality as contemporary writers increasingly find themselves “writing to” the multifaceted crisis of the Anthropocene.

Submissions could address, but are not limited to, one of the following topics:

- Re-readings of the georgic tradition in the light of ecological and ecocritical concerns
- Issues, such as human-animal relations or the weather, that are relevant to the georgic tradition
- Farming and literature
- Anthropological and ecological aspects of literary labour or work
- Cultural histories of soil
- Georgic’s relation to pastoral and other genres
- Rewilding, wilding, land sharing
- Georgic ontology and epistemology
- Queer and feminist Eco-Georgic
- Georgic and contemporary ecocritical theory
- Anthropocene Georgic

Please direct any queries to the editors Sue Edney (sue.edney@bristol.ac.uk), Philipp Erchinger (Philipp.Erchinger@uni-duesseldorf.de), and Pippa Marland (P.J.Marland@leeds.ac.uk).

Manuscripts of 6000-8000 words may be submitted via the journal platform as early as December 2020 and no later than January 15, 2021. Authors must comply with the guidelines indicated on the platform. Title, abstracts, and keywords must be provided in the language of the article, English, and Spanish. MLA style should be used for citations. Permission must be obtained by the author for any images used, and the images should be included in the text. Manuscripts will be accepted in English, German, and French. Though it is not an essential requirement, we highly encourage potential authors to make prior contact with the editors by submitting a preliminary abstract (approximately 500 words).

References:

Abram, David. *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World*, Vintage Books, 1996.

Alaimo, Stacy. *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self*, Indiana UP, 2010.

Beck, Rudolph. 'From Industrial Georgic to Industrial Sublime: English Poetry and the Early Stages of the Industrial Revolution', *The British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 27.1, (2004): 17-36.

Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Duke UP, 2010.

Fairer, David. "Where fuming trees refresh the thirsty air": The World of Eco-Georgic', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 40 (2011): 201-18.

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Goodman, Kevis. *Georgic Modernity and British Romanticism*, Cambridge UP, 2004.

Moore, Jason W. *Capitalism in the Web of Life*, Verso, 2015.