

EDITORIAL

This issue of the journal is entwined in several interesting ways. Not only does it feature works from writers based in Thailand, but also from writers whose works are also grounded in India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, New Zealand, the United States of America and Australia. In other ways, the threads of this issue seem to encapsulate thematic concerns that can be found in the titles of the contributions: the chronotope, ecocriticism, ecology, multiculturalism, “culture studies”, soil, jungle, primordialism, complexity, ideology and inscription. The review in this issue also entwines with a previous issue of the journal as it is a review of a book by Tom Cohen, a contributor of an article in Volume 7.2. Also, a review of Stephen Oliver’s latest book of poems in Volume 7.1 is followed in the current issue with a story by the poet. In yet other ways, two of the articles in this issue are by authors who have contributed articles in previous issues. The new articles by these writers are developments of themes announced in their previous work that we think will be of on-going interest to readers of the journal.

In such ways, we continue to structure this journal over its various issues in an ecological shape, with articles referring to each other, reviews of works by authors who contribute articles or creative works. By editing the journal along these lines, it is hoped that we may foster the development of a community of scholars and artists who by co-operating with each other may strengthen each other’s voice in the international context. In this endeavor, we are trying to practice what the editor has argued for in an article published in Volume 7.2 where the call for more collaborative work was made in the context of a discussion of one of the editorial board member’s most recent scholarly publication.

In keeping with the broadening scope of this journal, we are happy to include here three articles that are each over 10,000 words in length. We feel that such open-ended lengths of articles are called for if we are seriously to address issues related to big themes such as the environment in all its various guises or aspects. The “growth” of the journal is in this manner seemingly

organically linked to the growth of the contributors and to the growth of their writing spaces.

It has been our implicit editorial policy to allow each contributor their own voices and formats. Instead of imposing an artificial “standard” of writing style or form of presentation, we have tried to let the writers shape their own work with a minimum of editorial impositions. If things are to grow, they need the freedom and the space in which to be nurtured naturally, not artificially. While such an open or free way of editing may irk some more “academic” readers who seek conformity and standardization, as they see it as some kind of face validity or quality marker, we feel that such narrow strictures are actually the opposite: signs of a *faux* agreement to what others in academe may want to see. In keeping with this aim, we see no reason to expect all our contributors to sound like conventional voices in Western academic discourse; we acknowledge that with the expansion of ideas of lingua francas (discoursal, lexico-grammatical and sociocultural), we need to accept and cherish the different ways writers express themselves...as indications of their own cultural perspectives. In this way, we hope readers will understand and accept the originality of what we are trying to do and that such readers will be inspired to contribute their own voices to the growing number of writers who are attracted to such a new way of embodying academic and creative work in a single space or place. Now that the journal will be going on line later this year, we hope that we can expand the size of each issue by including more works it.

One more innovation to be found in the current issue of the journal is the review of work that to some may seem old. As is argued in the review, we need to go back to works in the archive and re-enliven them; otherwise we are in danger of being trapped in a present that has no historical or cultural roots. The past in our various fields is still fertile ground for developing new ideas and identifying ways that we may have gone wrong in our present, perhaps myopic or claustrophobic, narrow spaces. In doing this, we are taking our cue from one of the seminal figures in twentieth century thought, Walter Benjamin, who argued for a materialist historiography that sought to rescue the past (much as Proust did) and so change the present destructive trajectories we may be on.

If to our readers, the “future” seems closed or pre-determined in terms of our environmental destruction, then we hope that this journal may offer a sanctuary of sorts in which to reconsider our options and to find ways of collaborating with each other to understand our pasts, presents and futures in different voices and discourses. The only thing that we may feel certain of at present is that if we continue on our present apparently self-destructive course we will have no future at all. We need to stop seeing ourselves as our own nemesis: apocalypse can just as strongly be understood as a revelation as it seems at present to be passively understood as our doom or destruction. The first step in this revelation would be to see the Anthropocene as coming to an end; but out of it something may be rescued or salvaged that may, just may, offer us hope in the future. Unlike Ernst Bloch, we don’t have to start our utopist vision with a blank page, although the prevailing powers in our world seem hell-bent on wiping out all that the Humanities have had to offer along with any trace of humanity as we have known it in the past and as some of us may still remember of it now. In protest against this de-humanizing drive, we offer this journal in its constantly morphing shapes and voices as form of resistance to the homogenization of our minds and spirits. We are NOT like other journals!

Stephen Conlon

Editor