

Short Fiction in Theory and Practice



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*If you knew you were at the last days of the human story,
what would you write? How would you write?*

—Ben Okri

‘The Short Story and Ecology’

In *The Ecological Thought* (2010), Timothy Morton argues that art is central in this moment of climate emergency. Because art is ‘a place in our culture that deals with intensity, shame, abjection and loss’ (10), it can help us face and represent the realities of the current environmental crisis, if not imagine ways out of it and worlds beyond our present one. Moreover, Morton reminds us that ‘all art – not just explicitly ecological art – hardwires the environment into its *form*’ (11). The choice to write a novel over a lyric poem, for example, determines the way in which a literary text engages with and represents the world within which it is produced. With all this in mind, we want to ask: what relationships exist between the short story and the environment?

Short stories concerned with ecology are clearly on the rise. Recent important collections such as Lesley Nneka Arimah’s *What It Means When a Man Falls From the Sky* (2017) or Diane Cook’s *Man v. Nature* (2014), and anthologies like John Joseph Adams’ *Loosed Upon the World: The Saga Anthology of Climate Fiction* (2015) all attest to the way in which short story writers are using their art to address the issues presently affecting the planet. But in what precise ways are they doing so? What have short stories today and, in the past, had to say about climate, nature, and our interaction with them? And is the short story in any way an especially suited form to address these issues? Typically seen as an urban form, the short story has long been associated with the city and its fast-paced rhythms, with the development of modern technologies like photography and cinema. Yet, the connection between short fiction and the natural world, from fairy tales to the stories of Sarah Orne Jewett or Ursula K. Le Guin, remains to be mapped and thoroughly explored.

The short story is also concerned with the environment in other ways. To begin with, short stories create their own environment to the extent that, as a distinct literary form, they engage in particular ways or world-making. Further, short stories rarely arrive to readers as standalone texts, but characteristically depend on their association with or integration in specific textual environments for their success. The collection, the cycle, the anthology, the magazine or the website all constitute ecosystems where the short story has lived and continues to live. The study of these aspects of short fiction would amount to the formulation of an ecology of the short story.



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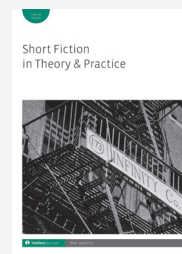
We welcome creative work and scholarly articles between 4000 and 8000 words addressing any aspect of the rich intersection between the short story and the environment. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Climate (short) fiction
- Nature in/and the short story
- Short fiction and environmental activism
- Ecocritical approaches to short fiction
- The short story and climate migration(s)
- Environment as form in short stories
- Context as environment in short stories
- Utopian/dystopian short fiction
- Writing, reading and teaching the short story in a context of climate emergency
- The ecology of fairy tales and oral storytelling
- Indigenous stories

Deadline for submissions: **30 June 2023**

Please visit the *Short Fiction in Theory and Practice* website for submission guidelines at: www.intellectbooks.com/short-fiction-in-theory-practice


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