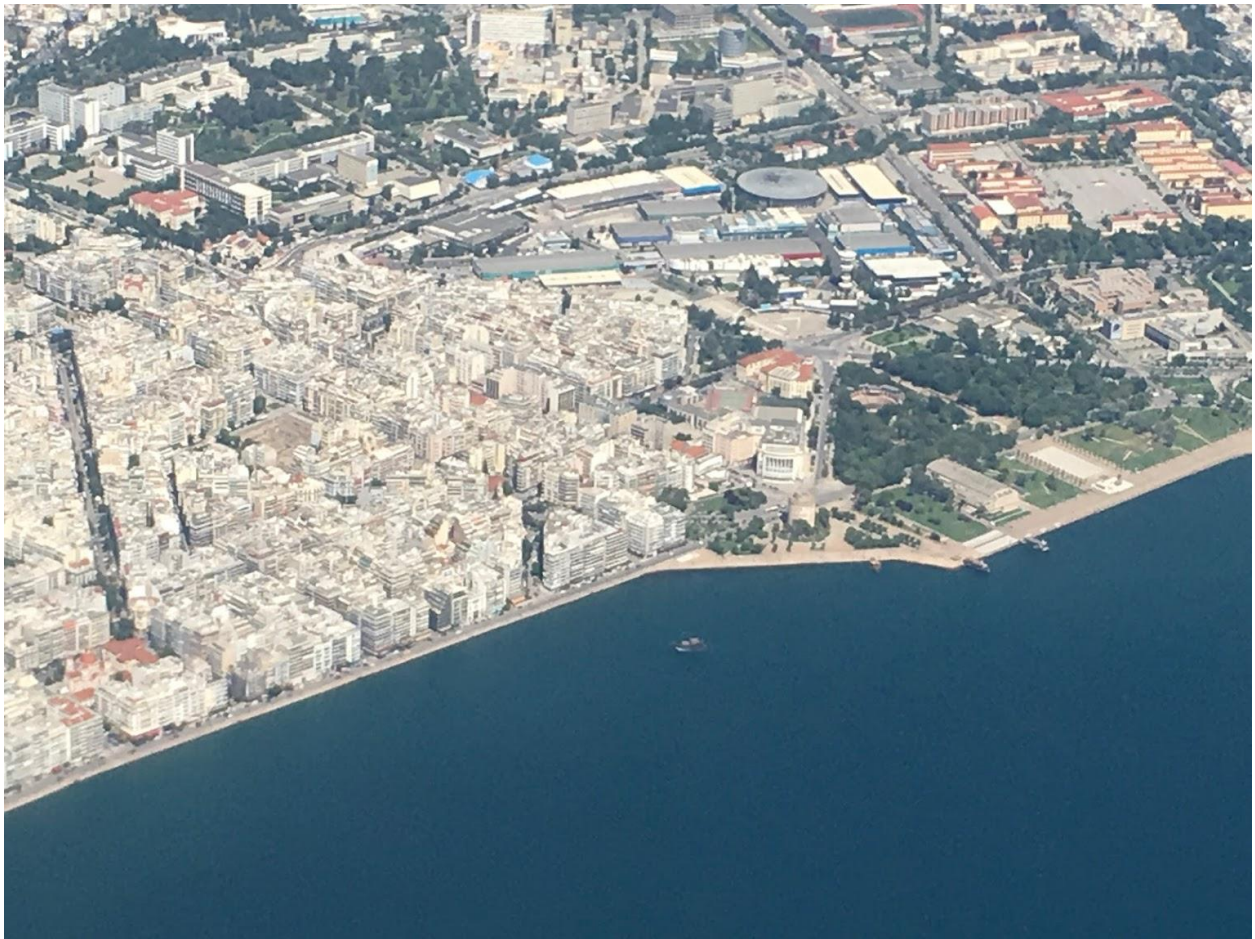


## EDITORIAL: ENVIRONMENTAL ECHOES

by

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“The most important function of literature today is to redirect human consciousness to a full consideration of its place in a threatened natural world.”  
Glen A. Love, “Revaluing Nature: Toward an Ecological Criticism”



*Fig. 1: Thessaloniki (author photo)*

The eight creative and reflective works collected in “Environments” revalue nature in just the ways Glen A. Love called for in his 1989 address to the Western Literature Association. Completed by students in “Studies in American Culture: American Literature and the Environment,” the projects collected in this issue of *Echoes* use a range of techniques to “redirect human consciousness to a full consideration of its place in a threatened natural world” (213). In this issue you will encounter activism and art as well as manifesto and music. In brief, the collected works serve as *Echoes* to Angie Thomas’s assertion, “Art is activism. Writing is

activism” (Kanter). These collected works apply and respond to the American environmental literature and ecocritical theory and criticism surveyed in the course. They provide creative and critical meditations on specific local as well as more broadly global environments. They also cultivate an environment for collective and individual action.

“Environments” opens with a direct echo of one of the course readings, Wendell Berry’s “Manifesto: The Mad Farmer’s Liberation Front.” “Manifesto: The Calculator Liberation Front” by Katherine Edwards (Giavridou Aikaterini) offers an updated, Greek version of Berry’s poem. As a manifesto, furthermore, it cracks open assumptions in order to push—if not shock—readers out of their complacency.

Maria Kalaitzi in her song “Prayer” also recycles old forms and texts for new purposes. In it you will hear cultural echoes of Christianity as well as personal ones, as the song features music by the Kalaitzi’s grandfather. This critical blend of old and new—like “Manifesto: The Calculator Liberation Front”—calls the listener to action.

Trees in the short story “A Tree Story” by Pavlos Synodis also have a call to action to share with the story’s narrator and *Echoes* readers. The short story takes particular inspiration from Alice Walker’s essay “Everything Is a Human Being,” which similarly engages trees in conversation and debate about human environmental (in)action.

In the next work we move from calls for action to reflection on the impact of bringing environmental theory to practice. Dasoula Eleni’s reflection on her service-learning project at a Thessaloniki primary school highlights how instilling environmental knowledge and ethics in Greece’s youth offers hope for a more sustainable future.

Maria Pentaftiki continues discussion of applying environmental theory to practice in her reflection about working for the Boroume market program. (Additional information about the organization’s work may be found on their website, <http://www.boroume.gr/>.) Pentaftiki serves as counter example to the concerns about Greeks, especially Greek youth, expressed in “Manifesto: The Calculator Liberation Front,” “Prayer,” and “A Tree Story.” Volunteering proves to be an effective and impactful means to “Think globally, act locally.”

Leah Hentschel, an Erasmus student from Germany, continues the local and global theme by offering her unique perspective on Thessaloniki and Greece in her essay “Living with Nature.” Hentschel ruminates on Thessaloniki as a city of contrasts and how Greece as a whole has extended her classroom beyond the campus of Aristotle University. Along this journey she discovers insights about herself as well as her adopted country—all of which are connected with the (un)natural environments she explores.

This “Environments” issue of *Echoes* closes with a drawing by Triantafyllia Fokianou, which takes its title from Henry David Thoreau, “In wildness is the preservation of the world.” Her artwork combines striking images of distinct environments culled from the course readings—including Aldo Leopold’s iconic “fierce green fire”—to craft its own environmental warning about the costs and consequences of losing nature’s wildness. The picture centers the wolf’s

stare, which—like all the essays and creative works in this issue—challenges us to redirect our attention and to meet and sustain its gaze before our neglect of the environments that maintain us extinguishes what “green fire” remains.

### Works Cited

Love, Glen A. “Revaluing Nature: Toward an Ecological Criticism.” *Western American Literature*, vol. 25, no. 3, Nov. 1990, pp. 201–15.

Kanter, Marisa. “Q&A: Angie Thomas On *The Hate U Give*, Black Lives Matter, And Writing An ‘Unapologetic Black Girl Book.’” *MTV News*, 10 Mar. 2017, <http://www.mtv.com/news/2991910/qa-angie-thomas-on-the-hate-u-give-black-lives-matter-and-writing-an-unapologetic-black-girl-book/>.