

Editorial, Vol. 1, no. 2

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Welcome to this second number of *ECOZON@*, *European Journal of Literature, Culture and Environment*. For the first, which came out in April 2010, the editors solicited short articles from leading researchers presenting their views on the current state and future prospects of ecocriticism. 17 essays were published under the heading ‘The Future of Ecocriticism’, and a further 10 focused on ‘European and Transnational Ecocriticism’. This second issue of the journal adopts a more traditional format, which will also be adhered to in future numbers. It opens with a guest-edited, thematically focussed section, which is followed by essays of a general nature. As in the first number, there are also sections devoted to creative writing, visual art, and book reviews. The book reviews seek to fulfil one of the journal’s central aims by mediating ideas and approaches between countries and languages, whether it be by presenting in English works written in other languages or published outside the US and UK, or by reviewing English-language studies of a culture in the language of that culture.

The themed section, “Greening Across Borders: The Natural Environment in a Globalised World”, is guest edited by Christa Grewe-Volpp who introduces it with an overview of the recent debate about sense of place in a globalised world. It contains four essays contributing to the ongoing discussion. These are mindful of the need to go beyond essentialist notions of localised place as home, and recognise the participation of places in larger global forces and developments. Yet they contend, in different ways, that local identities and belonging remain significant. The first two essays, by Christopher Oscarson and Scott DeVries, are concerned with novels written in the 1990s, by Swedish and Nicaraguan authors. The third, by Alexander Starre, examines the genre of the captivity narrative, comparing the depiction of the shifting relationship with the natural environment in early examples with that in more recent ones. Micha Edlich discusses two art works in the fourth essay, arguing that they simultaneously critique the ecological implications of globalisation and express a consciousness of their own reliance on frequently detrimental global processes.

The regular section consists of two articles and an interview. Roman Bartosch demonstrates how reading works from a narratological perspective can reveal a hidden ecological dimension. His reading of Jack London’s *Call of the Wild* shows how the text’s apparent ruthlessly Darwinist orientation is belied by the voice it gives to an animal, and its subtle negotiation of diverging ethical convictions. Bartosch argues that attention paid to the literariness of a text can give insight into alternative ways of realising ecological ethics by means of dialogicity, plurality and diversity rather than subscribing to traditional moral

systems. He concludes that literature constitutes an ethical discourse by dint of its very dialogicity and polysemy. In the next essay, Steven White discusses the work of Gioconda Belli, the popular Nicaraguan author whose science fiction novel *Waslala* Scott DeVries had read as a defense of place in the face of globalisation. Belli has won numerous literary awards and recently presented her new work in Madrid. White's is, however, a decidedly critical reading. He argues that Belli homogenises the environment unduly, treating it as a decorative backdrop. Despite the richness of her natural metaphors and her apparent affinity with the environment, she lacks the intimate knowledge of local specificity and the biological community which many of her countrymen possess.

Following the panel discussion on European ecocriticism in the first issue of *ECOZON@*, the editors propose to feature further panels and interviews reflecting its emergence, evolution, internationalisation and establishment in Europe. The series is conceived as forming the basis of an international archive of information on the institutional development of ecocriticism, approached from a multi-centered comparative perspective. Although it is one of *ECOZON@*'S principal aims to promote European ecocriticism, the journal also seeks to foster ecocriticism as an international activity, by giving priority to transnational and comparative research, and publishing in languages other than English. It can thus provide a platform for the much called-for move from local to global. In the current number, Diana Villanueva-Romero interviews Scott Slovic about the beginnings of the ecocritical movement in the US and its subsequent development, including the potential for its internationalization, albeit by adapting to the local culture.

A new feature of this issue is the possibility of commenting on the articles. Readers can directly contact authors through the platform with questions. There is also a forum for open debate on issues arising out of the articles or on ecocriticism in general. This feature has been implemented retroactively, so debates on the theoretical perspectives of the first issue are also possible. We hope that the addition of this facility will help *ECOZON@* to become a vibrant forum for ecocritical debate.