Introduction

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"From its inception ecocriticism adopted a belligerent attitude towards critical theory."[1] This is the opening gambit of John Parham's article on "The Poverty of Ecocritical Theory" in the ecocritical special issue of New Formations, a major British journal of culture, theory and politics. Edited by Wendy Wheeler and Hugh Dunkerley, Earthographies joins a number of other recent publications, including Catrin Gersdorf's and Sylvia Mayer's collection, Nature in Literary and Cultural Studies and several new monographs, such as those of Kevin Hutchings, Dana Phillips and Timothy Morton (and we might add immodestly, Axel Goodbody and Kate Rigby), which signal that the alleged ecocritical antipathy to theory is on the wane. This is in our view a welcome development, and one to which this volume seeks to contribute.

Yet there is a sense in which the oft-repeated allegation that, until recently, ecocriticism has been universally a-theoretical in orientation is misleading. For one thing, it overlooks some valuable early forays into ecocritical theorization, such as those of Patrick Murphy, who effectively harnessed Bakhtinian dialogics to the practice of ecofeminist criticism, and SueEllen Campbell, who was among the first to discern some significant points of confluence between poststructuralist critique and the kind of deep ecological thinking that informs much contemporary American nature writing. More generally, though, the charge of ecocritical theory-phobia fails to recognize the theoretical moment that is implicit in the admittedly widespread rejection of the then dominant mode of critical or cultural theory by most 'first-wave' ecocritics. As Terry Eagleton avers in After Theory--a work that is itself eminently theoretical--theory "comes about when we are forced into a new self-consciousness about what we are doing. It is a symptom of the fact that we can no longer take those practices for granted."[2] If this is so, then Cheryl

Glotfelty's insistence in the introduction to the first ecocriticism reader that, at a time when "earth's life support systems were under stress" it was simply unconscionable to continue with literary critical "business as usual," must be seen to mark a crucial point of departure for ecocritical theory.[3]

In the hip world of North American literary and cultural studies where ecocriticism was to enjoy its first efflorescence, "business as usual" was dominated by a set of theoretical approaches drawn largely from French poststructuralist and postmodernist thought, which purported to be 'subversive' (as they certainly once were), but which had come to represent, as Eagleton observes, "a rather stifling orthodoxy"[4] that seemed to offer no point of entry for ecological concerns. In this context, it is hardly surprising that the theoretical space opened up by ecocriticism was, in the first place, largely antipathetical to 'theory' in its then prevalent modality. Thus, for example, in his first work of ecocriticism Jonathan Bate expressed his exasperation with the doctrinaire linguistic constructivism of New Historicist Romanticism studies by proclaiming that it was "profoundly unhelpful to say 'There is no nature' at a time when our most urgent need is to address and redress the consequences of human civilization's insatiable desire to consume the products of the earth."[5]

And yet, as Laurence Coupe succinctly puts it in the introduction to his Green Studies Reader, "in order to defend nature," as most ecocritics seek to do, they also need to "debate 'Nature'."[6] In other words, the ecocritical objective of lending salience to what David Abram helpfully termed the 'more-than-human world' within literary and cultural studies necessitates, among other things, a critique of inherited notions of 'nature', and thereby also 'culture', to which said 'nature' is always implicitly opposed. In its very resistance to 'theory', then, ecocriticism cannot avoid assuming the burden of theoretical reflection that this resistance itself entails. The pressing question then becomes not how to escape from theory, but which path of theoretical reflection to pursue. Coupe offers some possibilities by including in his Reader texts by a number of European philosophers and cultural theorists, including Kate Soper, Raymond Williams, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Martin Heidegger (to whom Bate himself turned in seeking to offer a more theoretically reflected model of ecocritical practice in The Song of the Earth).

By and large, however, it is true to say that the "ecocritical insurgency," as Lawrence Buell terms it,[7] has so far failed to take advantage of the powerful and varied means of critique supplied by European philosophy, such as are presented in this volume.

If there is such a thing as European ecocriticism, its distinctive features might be sought in a number of dimensions. First, geographically, in that it is likely to be primarily concerned with cultural landscapes, with pastoral rather than wilderness, given the shaping impact of relatively dense populations on the land over the centuries, and hence with a largely domesticated and in places such as the Low Countries even 'artificial' nature dependent for its survival on human agency. This may make European thinkers more open to perspectives departing from traditional ecocritical assumptions about the dichotomy of nature and culture, and conceiving of nature as a cultural responsibility and project. Secondly, European thinking about the natural environment is characterised by a historical rupture in the association of nature with national identity which still plays such an important role in the United States. The discrediting of local belonging, which is commonly regarded as one of the principal foundations of environmental consciousness in America, by its appropriation in the ideology of Blood and Soil was of course felt most strongly in Germany after the Second World War. But in France and Britain too committed environmentalists have had to distance themselves from problematic traditions associated with notions such as that of the organic community. Some consequences of this are arguably regrettable, others have been enriching: reluctance of academic critics to engage positively with texts with overt political implications on the one hand, but enhanced critical self-reflection on the other. And thirdly, European ecocriticism takes inspiration from the proximity of the continent's diverse languages, societies and cultures. Its many socio-political structures, images and narratives have prompted awareness of the relativity of cultural values and understandings of human interaction with the natural environment.

The contributions to this volume draw on traditions of thinking about nature and culture and about the role of literature and the arts in shaping and reshaping this thinking which arose in European Romanticism, but their

primary focus is on thinkers of the twentieth century. They explore approaches ranging from Russian Structuralism to German Phenomenology, from British Marxism to French Feminism, from Poststructuralism and Reception Theory to Chaos Theory and Biosemiotics. In some cases (for example the essays on Heidegger and Bakhtin) they present new aspects of bodies of thought whose relevance for ecocritical practice has already begun to be explored elsewhere. In others they introduce emerging fields and developments in eco-theory in continental Europe which have so far gained limited exposure in the English-speaking world.

Selection is unavoidable in undertakings of this kind, but we hope that the volume succeeds in providing a general orientation for non-specialists without sacrificing the detailed examination of individual thinkers necessary to inform future ecocritical analysis. To seek to cover all areas of European thinking relevant to ecocritical theory and practice was not our aim, but rather to present those theories and approaches which appeared to us and to our contributors to offer the greatest potential for innovative readings of literature and, by extension, other forms of cultural production. Our contributors were given the task of providing an introduction to a thinker, theory or approach, explaining key concepts, and demonstrating their significance through practical application to a text or texts. However, the subject matter has been allowed to determine the balance between theory and practice in the individual essays. We are delighted to be able to include an original contribution by one of the leading voices in contemporary feminist theory, Luce Irigaray: her essay is followed by a commentary setting it in the context of her work in general and of ecofeminist theory.

The essays are grouped under five headings which reflect focuses of critical concern: Memory and politics; Culture, society and anthropology; Phenomenology; Ethics and otherness; Models from physics and biology. Each essay stands alone, but the order they are presented in works broadly from early ideas to more recent ones, and from foundational to increasingly complex systems of thought. A number of themes cut across these groupings, linking the essays in different sections of the volume: eco-aesthetics is for instance discussed by Müller as well as Rigby, intertextuality by Goodbody, Murphy, and Elvey, the language of nature by Müller, Westling and Rigby, and

metaphor by Müller and Westling. Shared concern with nostalgia, the body, and image, myth and narrative, and engagement with thinkers including Darwin, von Uexküll, Benjamin, Curtius and Prigogine can be traced through the index. The authors of the literary works discussed are also listed in the index, so that they can be readily identified and accessed.

The essays in the first section of the book are devoted to memory and the politics of memory. Kate Soper's opening call for a reappraisal of Romantic thinking and a practice of 'avant-garde nostalgia' as a politically progressive cultural strategy is followed by Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands's discussion of Walter Benjamin's relevance for ecocriticism. Martin Ryle reflects on underlying tensions between the quest for political justice and tendentially backward-looking care for the rural in Raymond Williams's landmark study The Country and the City, while Axel Goodbody argues that ecocriticism can benefit from adopting perspectives on place developed in cultural memory studies.

Romanticism's particular achievement is, according to Kate Soper, the expression it gives to the otherness of nature while reminding us of the cultural mediation of all means of access to it. The fusion of yearning for immersion in the natural world with awareness of its unreachable otherness which we find in Keats or Wordsworth finds a philosophical equivalent in Adorno's aesthetics, in which natural beauty is both a projection of our desire for reconciliation onto nature and a utopian gesture towards a world in which humanity would enjoy a harmonious egalitarian existence. Soper defends progressive, 'avant-garde' nostalgia as a Romantic remembering and mourning of what is irretrievable, but one directed towards an emancipatory future. It reflects on past experience in ways which highlight what we are deprived of in the present, and stimulate desire for a better future. She also advocates the discursive and visual representation in literature and art of an alternative hedonism, avoiding excessive material consumption.

A rather different way of relating to the past, and specifically to the past (and potential future) that inheres in the present, is explored by Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands in relation to Walter Benjamin's Arcades Project. This extraordinary and (perhaps necessarily) incomplete text is composed out of

the detritus of commodity capitalism in the form of fragments of experience gleaned from the nineteenth-century arcades of Paris during the time of their decline in the 1920s and brought together in surprising new constellations in the guise of the 'dialectical image,' within which the possibility of a different kind of future might be glimpsed. Mortimer-Sandilands indicates how this model of cultural criticism might be deployed to illuminate the cultural politics of current environmental conditions, and in particular, the place of nature in contemporary forms of commodity fetishism (with which nature writing and ecocriticism are in some ways complicit). Her contribution concludes with a discussion of how Benjamin himself prefigures such a materialist ecocritical project in his recollections of his own urban nature experiences in Berlin Childhood 1900.

Martin Ryle shows how the British Marxist critic Raymond Williams accommodated rural and urban values in a complex dialectical perspective in his theoretical writing. The Country and the City displays no interest in the non-human, and opens with a powerful critique of texts mixing realistic observation with myths concealing structures of oppression and exploitation. However, the later chapters of the book give an appreciative account of the depiction of the displacement and ruptures of history in the countryside by major British novelists such as Thomas Hardy and D.H. Lawrence. Ryle comments on the significance of border country as a theme in Williams's writing. It is depicted as a privileged site of a structure of feeling with radical potential resulting from the impact of modernity on popular traditional forms of life. Ryle also discusses shorter pieces written by Williams in the early 1980s, in which he traces Williams's growing recognition of the potential of 'retrospective radicalism' as a form of rural resistance to socialism's self-understanding as completing the capitalist project of modernisation through ever greater mastery of nature.

Axel Goodbody notes that while memory studies would appear to be concerned with politics rather than nature and time rather than place, it shares with ecocriticism a central concern with place and belonging. 'Places/sites of memory' form the focus of many texts interweaving identity construction with interrogation of our interaction with nature. In both fiction and non-fiction, symbolic 'figurations of memory' also provide nodes of intertextual reference,

which often possess eco-social significance. The memory studies focus on the adaptation of existing tropes and topoi in a context of collective value negotiation and identity construction can yield new insights into the meaning of literary representations of nature. Two texts are examined, an autobiographical novel by the Austrian writer Peter Handke, and a short work of poetic prose by the East German Volker Braun. While the first describes a mythical Slovenian rural community living in utopian harmony with nature as an antidote to the repressive world of the author's childhood, the second presents East Germany's open cast coal mines as a dystopian place of memory.

The second section of the volume contains three contributions relating to one of the most influential approaches in contemporary German literary studies, cultural anthropology. Timo Müller compares two theoretical approaches building on the ecocritical dimension of Wolfgang Iser's reception theory, Hartmut Böhme's eco-aesthetic and Hubert Zapf's conception of literature as a medium for cultural ecology. There follow essays by Linda Williams on how the theorist of civilization, Norbert Elias sees the development of our relationship with the non-human world, and by Laura Walls on the application of Bruno Latour's thinking on modernity and postmodernity for ecocritical textual analysis.

Timo Müller argues that Wolfgang Iser's groundbreaking work in reception theory and cultural anthropology in the 1970s and 1980s provided the basis for Germany's principal contributions to ecocritical theory to date. Cultural theorist Hartmut Böhme calls for a reexamination of the archive of literary images of human beings in their interaction with nature, for this constitutes a vital resource for our renaturalisation. Müller shows how Edgar Allan Poe's tale "The Fall of the House of Usher" articulates the language of nature by interweaving linguistic elements that address us bodily and immediately. The second approach examined here, Hubert Zapf's fusion of cultural ecology (rooted in Gregory Bateson) with textual criticism, offers a poststructuralist variant of literary anthropology: literature revitalizes the cultural system by condensing, undermining and transforming elements of public discourse in symbols and metaphors. Müller demonstrates the

usefulness of both models, which accord literature a crucial mediating function between the cultural system and its imaginary alternatives, in further readings from Poe's story.

Linda Williams asks whether the conception of modern human subjectivity in Norbert Elias's theory of civilization as unaware of its substantive connectedness with others includes a lack of awareness of our dependence on the non-human world. For Elias, the civilization process is based on self-control and self-restraint. The former balance between instrumental approaches to the natural world and forms of knowledge recognizing our interdependency is being lost. Writing in his late work of the need for a new epistemology that accepts nature's materiality and extradiscursivity, Elias suggests that forms of secondary involvement have the potential to act as a counterbalance to instrumentalism. This leads Williams to consider the relationship between human beings and companion animals. Empathy with companion species may be crucial to our responses to other non-human species. Examining a recording of a dressage event on You Tube, she notes the commentator's and spectators' belief that the horse is "dancing," i.e. an agent consciously contributing to and even enjoying the performance. This might be wishful thinking. Yet the scenario is a valuable vignette of the human envisaging itself in partnership with animal alterity.

In the concluding essay in the section, Laura Walls extends Bruno Latour's theorizing of modernity into literary territory. Modernity may be powered by a metaphysics of command and control, and assumes a radical separation between nature and culture, science and literature, but we have never, in this sense, been modern. In practice, Latour has shown, the empirical sciences have woven together nature, discourse, society and politics. Walls's Latourian reading of Emerson's Nature (1836) and Thoreau's Walden (1854) shows how while Emerson created a conception of 'Nature' as limitless resource, and of science as a "cudgel of eternal truth" objectively settling all disputes, Thoreau already began imagining the limits of this modern constitution and outlining alternatives. Throughout the 1850s, his writings weave the human and the non-human together, naturalizing the social and socializing the natural, in an actor-network of humans and non-humans. It is the task of literary criticism to investigate how works like Walden

register the fact that we have always been involved in the managing, combination and negotiation of human and non-human agencies.

The third section of the book, which is devoted to phenomenology, consists of essays reexamining the significance for ecocritical work of the philosophies of Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and introducing the ecophenomenology of Gernot Böhme, brother of the cultural theorist Hartmut Böhme discussed earlier by Timo Müller. Trevor Norris opens with Heidegger's challenge to reconceive being-in-the-world as an alternative to the instrumental approach to nature which has led to the environmental crisis. Whereas previous ecocritics such as Jonathan Bate have been primarily concerned with late writings of Heidegger's such as "The Question of Technology," Norris focuses on the earlier, inter-war essay "The Origin of the Work of Art," and his poetic quest for truth as unconcealment, via a mode of being as 'care,' i.e. involvement in a project alongside and engaged with other beings. The artwork is here envisaged as a field of being which allows us to gain insight into relations between things, people and environment which we fail to note in everyday life. Norris finds similar thoughts on art and poetry in the novels of D.H. Lawrence. Passages in Women in Love are shown to correspond to Heidegger's conception of the language of poetry as a dense, opaque and enigmatic form of revelation. Like Heidegger, Lawrence subscribes to a view of poetry as a presencing-by-absencing, and a call to contemplative attention to embodiment.

Louise Westling begins by noting how phenomenology broke with Cartesian mind/matter dualism and redefined the place of humans in the natural world by turning from abstract idealism to lived human experience. However, she argues, Merleau-Ponty differs from Husserl and Heidegger, who continued to assume human superiority to other life forms, in stressing human immersion in the natural world. He develops a unique notion of coevolution of all living beings and an ontology of "wild being." Westling shows how Merleau-Ponty is also concerned with the extent to which our experience of the natural world is mediated by human perception and culture, and with the participation of language, because of its physical properties, in the flesh of the world. Building on Merleau-Ponty's conception of philosophy

and literature as authentic uses of language articulating the bond between materiality and the world of ideas, Westling finds in poetry and fiction (exemplified by a short story of Eudora Welty's and a poem by W.H. Auden) passages relating to embodiment and the intertwining of human and animal which constitute ecophenomenological descriptions of the world.

Kate Rigby's contribution is concerned with the ecological aesthetics developed by Gernot Böhme since the 1980s, which builds on both Adorno's critical theory and the 'new phenomenology' of Hermann Schmitz. Böhme's central tenet is that nature must be envisaged as an undertaking that lies before us, a cultural project directed towards transforming our industrially degraded environment into a humane living space. This transformation can draw on a knowing of nature through shared physicality and relationality. Art and literature have a key role to play in discovering other-than-human nature and recovering our own naturality. Böhme's theorizing is focused on 'atmospheres', or moods evoked by places and experienced corporeally, and how they can be cultivated and developed. The arts, he writes, can serve as a field for public training in the experience, articulation and production of atmospheres. By translating inchoate impressions into articulate speech, literature in particular can raise bodily experience of atmosphere into a transformative social practice. Poetry depicts and produces atmospheres, evoking bodily responses, as Rigby demonstrates with reference to a poem by the nineteenth-century Australian author, Charles Harpur.

The fourth section, which is devoted to ethics and otherness, opens with essays by Patrick Murphy, Timothy Morton and Anne Elvey on the Russian philosopher, literary critic and semiotician Mikhail Bakhtin, the Lithuanian-born Jew and French philosopher and religious thinker Emmanuel Levinas, and the Bulgarian-French philosopher, critic, psychoanalyst and feminist Julia Kristeva. These are followed by an original piece by the Belgian feminist, philosopher and cultural theorist Luce Irigaray, and an essay on the ecological dimension of her thinking by Christopher Cohoon.

The focus of Patrick Murphy's essay is on 'anothering' and its ethical implications. Murphy, who has explored the relevance of Bakhtin's dialogics for the study of nature-oriented literature in Literature, Nature and Other,

takes as his starting point the emphasis in Bakhtin's early writing on the responsibility of the speaker/ writer for the impact of their words on (human and non-human) others. Bakhtin writes of the necessity for a willingness on the part of the writer to identify their observational point of view as one perspective among others. The ecological crisis is due in part, Murphy argues, to societies and individuals not allowing non-human others to participate in generating our perceptions of ourselves as actors. Seeing oneself through the eyes of animals, plants, or inanimate objects is a prerequisite for ethical interaction with the rest of the world. Different styles and genres of literature and techniques such as sincerity, internal persuasiveness, comic structure and chronotopes all have a role to play in shaping the response to nature of diverse groups of readers.

Tim Morton's quest for a more reliable way of grounding ecological concern and our intervention in nature than popular sentiment leads him to Levinas, at the heart of whose philosophy lies personal ethical responsibility towards the other. For Levinas, the self is only possible by means of a recognition of the other that implies respect for and carries responsibility towards what is irreducibly different. Morton finds Levinas's conception of the epiphanic encounter with the other mirrored in the appearance of the albatross to the sailors in Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner." He explores the possibility of employing Levinasian terms such the "thereness" of nature and "exteriority" as a way to read the poem as an allegory of the fact that our existence is always coexistence with other life forms, a fact that should profoundly disturb us and awaken us to ecological responsibility. What leaves the wedding guest "of sense forlorn" at the end of the poem is the traumatic intimacy with the other. The albatross is an unnerving reminder of our unbearable dependence on a "nature" which at bottom is nothing other than life forms themselves.

Ecocritical approaches to biblical interpretation have so far tended to focus on the principle of ecological justice, the question of nature's intrinsic worth, or the retrieval of an Earth perspective from the text. Anne Elvey uses the conception of intertextuality in Julia Kristeva's Revolution in Poetic Language as a framework for engaging ecocritically with bibles as material artefacts. On the one hand, bibles are sites of interconnectedness between

plants, minerals, bodies and languages. On the other, biblical language is full of traces of the maternal body and other from which all reading subjects have emerged. It is rich in the language of desire, rhythm and imitation celebrated by Kristeva as the "semiotic." The various layers of intertextuality she describes, ranging from explicit allusions to sources to what has been repressed in it, are identified in a discussion of the parable of the Sower from St. Luke's Gospel. Elvey ends by suggesting ways in which a scriptural world increasingly bereft of its material context can be enriched again by reading practices embedding the text in its very materiality in the more-than-human Earth community.

The issue of gender which is present in Kristeva moves centre stage in Luce Irigaray's essay "There Can be no Democracy without a Culture of Difference," which appeared in French in 2006 and has been translated for this volume. Irigaray argues that the erasure of gender which has gone hand in hand with the suppression of the body has contributed towards the emergence of totalitarian politics and the destruction of the planet. The invention of the category of the 'neuter' and its substitution for the masculine have permitted a focus on quantity at the expense of qualitative difference, and created a universe in which human identity is defined by domination and material appropriation. Calling for the cultivation of a "coexistence in difference" with nature, rooted in recognition of our separate sexuate identities, she suggests at the end of her essay that the study of myth and literature can contribute to this project. Antigone, guardian of spiritual principles including bodily existence and the matriarchal tradition of returning the body to nature in death, invites us to learn to coexist and respect difference relative to our natural belonging and the values it represents.

Christopher Cohoon demonstrates the presence of environmental thought in Irigaray's wider work, and confirms her importance for ecophilosophy and ecocritics. Though gender and social issues stand centre stage in her writing, she often addresses them by appealing to nature. Cohoon pursues three dimensions of ecological attunement in works such as Sexes and Genealogies, Thinking the Difference, and I Love To You as well as "There Can Be No Democracy". The first is an ecofeminist appreciation of the historical oppression of women as bound up with the degradation of the

earth. The second is her sustained engagement with Sophocles' Antigone and its interlinked representations of women and nature. Finally, he argues, Irigaray's vision of a 'positive becoming' of femininity is inseparable from her understanding of nature and its relation to human culture. Her proposed 'return to nature,' which has puzzled many feminists, is explained in the context of her insistence on sexual difference: her hope is that this return to a reinterpreted nature will enable women to discover a way to cultivate a 'natural belonging' that has yet to find adequate expression.

The five contributions in the final section of the volume present approaches united by their erosion of the nature-culture dualism. Two derive from systems and chaos theory: Hannes Bergthaller and Heather Sullivan discuss Niklas Luhmann and Ilya Prigogine respectively. A further two stem from postmodern scientific theory: Serpil Oppermann writes on the new paradigm which has emerged from quantum physics, postmodern theory and deep ecology, while Marc Lussier explores parallels between William Blake's poems and the thinking of Deleuze and Guattari. In the last essay, Wendy Wheeler demonstrates how biosemiotic investigations into the communicative processes that are inherent in all biological systems enable a new understanding of human cultural creativity.

Hannes Bergthaller begins by pointing out an unacknowledged contradiction in Aldo Leopold's thinking in the Sand County Almanach. The land community is assumed to work because each creature's blindness complements the others'. But human beings, who have perceptual limitations like other animals, are being asked to act differently, namely to subordinate the interests of their species to those of the whole. This undermines the idea of nature as a self-regulating system. After tracing the emergence of cybernetics, which sought to solve this very problem in the natural sciences, in the first part of his essay, Bergthaller examines Luhmann's writing as the most sustained, provocative and philosophically ambitious attempt to develop second-order systems theory into a theory of social systems. While acknowledging ecological crisis, Luhmann rejected what he saw as the environmental movement's simplistic moralising. Modern society is characterised by a functional differentiation which effectively precludes its

realignment towards ecological imperatives. Rather than expecting literature to raise environmental consciousness and change society, ecocritics should then examine how environmental thinkers observe, critique their distinctions, and note their blind spots.

Serpil Oppermann argues that ecocentric postmodern theory not only provides the best way out of the epistemological crisis responsible for today's environmental situation, but also offers a theoretical model of relevance to literary critics. The most rigorous postmodern formulations of our relationship with nature are to be found in the new physics of quantum theory. Drawing on David Bohm and others, Oppermann observes that nature responds in accordance with the theory with which we approach it. We therefore need a new, less fragmented "way of doing science," and "a new kind of consciousness" freeing our discursive formulations from the misleading dichotomies of anthropocentrism and instrumentalism. Reconstructive postmodern theory acknowledges the inseparability of the world "out there" from the observing subject, and the fact that reality in its quantum states exhibits itself as an undivided whole. Ecological postmodern fiction combines literary realism with metafictional narrative strategies, thereby presenting the natural world as both object of experience and discursive construct. Jeanette Winterson's novel Gut Symmetries projects a holistic vision of reality while citing multiple scientific and other discourses problematizing binary thought.

Ecocriticism is, according to Heather Sullivan, part of a general shift away from describing our interactions with the world in terms of dichotomies, whose exemplary theorization may be found in Ilya Prigogine's open-system, non-equilibrium thermodynamics, with its conception of open flows of matter, systems of exchange, and reciprocal shaping. Postmodern science has come to regard nature and culture as hybrid forms with permeable boundaries, and to dissolve subjects into embodiments, situations and affinities, and human agency into an entanglement of cultural and physical pulses. The body and non-human nature are enabling conditions: we construct, but are simultaneously constructed by the world. This approach informs Sullivan's reading of Goethe's Faust, not as the tragedy of masculine power-seeking and instrumental exploitation of the environment, but as a complex work undermining such interpretation through its framing of the protagonist's

choices in cosmic situations, its focus on Mephistophelean influence and the fluidity of its water imagery. It is no accident that Goethe inspired pioneers of chaos theory such as Prigogine and Gleick: his great play portrays the provocative in-between of hybridity as affinity.

The 'experiential assemblage' which Deleuze and Guattari describe as characterizing all encounters with reality in the tenth chapter of A Thousand Plateaus is equated by Mark Lussier with an ecological mode of consciousness involving giving up traditional notions of a discrete self. Fibers spanning the boundaries of self and alterity are among the many tropes from chaos theory, high energy physics and quantum cosmology in Deleuze's writing. Mentality and materiality merge, dissolving selfhood in a multiplicity of varying relations. 'Becoming-animal' through unselfing facilitates ecological inhabitation. How, Lussier asks, can this mutual determination of subject and object be articulated, so as to foster ecological consciousness? William Blake's rhythmic poetry, and his composite of word and image, provide a model. Blake, who recognized the deadening effects of Enlightenment rationalism on the more-than-human, and the role played by self-consciousness in this alienated rationalism, anticipated the interconnectedness, non-localizability and indeterminacy which Deleuze sees as the ontological basis for transcendental empiricism. The final plates of Jerusalem show the awakening of awareness at the position of the other, through a sequence of acts of becoming-animal, woman and other.

The field of biosemiotics has a double genesis, having emerged around the same time independently in both Europe and North America. In her contribution, Wendy Wheeler expands the geographical bounds of the volume by examining the thought of the major American originator of the biosemiotic approach, Charles Sanders Pierce, alongside that of his European counterpart, Jacob von Uexküll. In particular, Wheeler focusses on Pierce's notion of "abduction" (the process whereby signs we have read and interpreted below the level of consciousness give rise to those odd hunches or sudden intuitions that enable new understandings to be formulated) as a key to understanding human cultural creativity and its continuity with the evolutionary processes evident in biophysical systems. With reference also to Heidegger's reworking of von Uexküll's concept of Umwelt in relation to

human poiesis or artistic making, Wheeler argues that the peculiar value of art lies in its ability to cause us to reflect on the complexities of human meaning-making itself. Her contribution concludes with a consideration of how this is accomplished in two recent British novels, A. S. Byatt's Angels and Insects and Ian McEwan's Black Dogs.

This is by no means an exhaustive survey of European thinkers whose work is capable of providing new insights into literary texts--Derrida, Virilio and Agamben are among those whom we would have liked to include, had space permitted. Our purpose will, however, have been served if the volume attracts new readers to ecocritical theory and stimulates further exploration of fresh approaches.

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[1] Parham, "Poverty of Ecocritical Theory," 25.
[2] Eagleton, After Theory, 27.
[3] Glotfelty and Fromm, Ecocriticism Reader, xvi.
[4] Eagleton, After Theory, 222.
[5] Bate, Romantic Ecology, 56.
[6] Coupe, Green Studies, 5.
[7] Buell, "The Ecocritical Insurgency."