

## Abstract

Kerstin Ekman has emerged as one of the important literary voices in Northern Europe challenging facile definitions of nature and inviting readers to reconsider conceptions of the local. She accomplishes this by using ecological models in her fiction that explore how human subjects exist in interdependent relationships with their environments intertwining space with experience and memory to produce constellations of significance and meaning. The materiality of the space combines with human discourse to create a sense of place situated between immediate and the distant and between the constructed and the found.

In particular, her 1993 work, *Händelser vid vatten* [Blackwater] explores an ecological model of ontology in which all elements are intricately interconnected in myriad ways that question, among other things, the construction of place and the role of both materiality and place in an increasingly mobile, technologically mediated, and globalized world. My purpose is to consider Ekman's model(s) of ecological interdependence in dialogue with the theoretical discussions of space and place that have emerged in recent decades, particularly within the field of ecocriticism. In Ekman's work, the decidedly human propensities for naming, narrating, manipulating, and constructing space are counterbalanced by an experience of materiality and the natural environment's ultimate ambivalence to anthropocentrism. The novel's network of competing narratives, memories, definitions, and confrontation with materiality tend to frustrate the classical modernist epistemological project by lacking clear linearity, diverging, converging, and doubling back on themselves. The effect is to focus readers' attention on how space is produced as a means of understanding the diffuse subject's being in the world as part of complex material and discursive networks as well as between the constructed and the found, the subjective and the objective, the embodied and the abstract, and the local and the global.