

Introduction

An Exploration of European Ecocriticism in Four Review Essays

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Ecozon@ is testament to the growth and diversification of ecocriticism—a growth that shows in book reviews published in these pages since the journal’s founding in 2010. Much like *Ecozon@*’s first issue mapped out the state of the field in 2010, and offered directions for the future, the following review essays also reflect on the state of ecocriticism and the environmental humanities in 2020.

The four articles included in this special book review section aim to offer both breadth and depth. The first two essays are firmly grounded in the geographical development of ecocriticism, in Germany and Spain respectively. Anna-Marie Humbert’s “Ecocriticism in German Literary Studies” and Beatriz Lindo’s “From Ecocriticism to Environmental Humanities” provide a deep dive into two non-Anglo-American ecocritical traditions, highlighting works and themes often overlooked by scholars not working in these traditions. As such, Humbert’s and Lindo’s contributions are characteristic of *Ecozon@*’s aim to increase the visibility of ecocritical scholarship in languages and cultures beyond the English-speaking world.

The other two essays collected here further explore the various facets of European ecocriticism. The new nature writing may have developed largely in Britain, but the genre’s “newness”—an element Jos Smith touches on in the essay—invites reflection on the presence and absence of contemporary ways of writing about nature in Europe at large. The final essay is, perhaps, the most transnational of the four. In her review essay on the burgeoning scholarship on petro-cultures, Christa Grewe-Volpp offers a concise introduction to the works that established the field, as well as recent scholarship that is expanding it. Oil, indeed, is not only fundamental to Western modernity, as Grewe-Volpp writes, it is also a transnational concern, touching on politics, economics, and the environment in ways that crosses borders. As such, this essay is a particularly apt contribution to this collection seeing to highlight works published in European ecocriticism.

In putting together this collection of essays, it has been our aim to foreground traditions and developments that many readers of *Ecozon@* may not be familiar with and, at the same time, shed new light on familiar themes and literatures. I believe we have succeeded in doing so by bringing together four review essays that offer new avenues of exploration and novel ways of looking at familiar terrain.