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Introduction

Welcome to Undercurrents. The papers in this year's volume converge on the theme of the representation and domination of Nature in Western culture. This theme reflects on the problem of how representational thinking, in the form of language, ideology, beliefs, or technology, mediates and filters the experience of the relationships between humans and the rest of Nature. When re-presented, Nature becomes separated, bounded and objectified, and therefore gives itself up as an object for domination.

To begin this issue, Mark Meisner explores some of the historical relationships of language forms to human perceptions of Nature. He attempts to reconstruct the changes in language from oral to literal forms, and explains how the printed word has lent itself to the reification of Nature. Next, in his paper, Darryl Lee deconstructs the dominant conceptualization of the ecological crisis using it as a mirror of our own social condition. As such, he maintains that in order to come to terms with our current relation to Nature, we must first untangle the myths and language that surround it. Working on an ironic analysis of the better bathroom as a surrogate for the experience of Nature, Andrew Satterthwaite helps us to understand how we reconstruct and therefore distance Nature by representing it in this cultural form. Using the example of 'animal war heroes,' Gary Genosko examines the anthropocentric bias inherent in how we anthropomorphize animals. Although perhaps unavoidable, Gary argues that we should aim to be more critical of our anthropomorphic relations with nonhumans. In her paper, Margot La Rocque offers some criticisms on the idea and practice

of wildlife cinematography. She argues that instead of helping to preserve wild Nature, this genre merely records and represents wilderness, thereby transforming it into an object of manipulation for and by a consuming public. Craig Naherniak's paper uses the example of biotechnology to caution us against the paradox inherent in domestication. The paradox lies in that in attempting to dominate Nature, through its re-presentation as material for technological manipulation, the technology of domestication, in turn, threatens to 'engulf' and dominate humankind as well. Finally, through the example of modern forestry practices, rolf struthers creatively challenges the danger inherent in representational and technological modes of thinking.

Each of these papers, on their own, embrace the theme of this particular volume, and the mandate of the journal in general. Despite this, the selection of this year's papers was, nonetheless, a difficult task. In previous volumes, the editors felt that the process involved in publishing *Undercurrents* was significant to the social vision we wished to articulate. It was decided, therefore, that a discussion of the process be included in the introduction. This year, the emphasis on process was no different; indeed, at times it seemed to take precedent over the more 'pragmatic' function of actually putting this volume together. Ideally, process concerns are shared, and understood to carry a weight equal to that of publishing. In our process we aim to operate without any hierarchy of responsibilities and on the basis of group consensus in decision making. These principles however seemed to engender their own set of problems. Without an editor-in-chief, incongruities associated with normal functioning can become intensified. Without a fully articulated framework in place to deal with discordances, we spent much time deliberating on the appropriateness of style and content of each paper. Though it was often tense and difficult, the editors felt that the process should not be compromised. With this volume, we believe that we have succeeded in publishing *Undercurrents* while at the same time working toward our desired forms of organization and decision making.

We would like to thank a number of people who in different ways contributed to the publication of this year's volume. First of all, we would like to extend our appreciation to all of our funding sources, including the Faculty of Environmental Studies, the Faculty of Graduate Studies, the Graduate Student Association and the Environmental Studies Students Assoc. Also, we would like to thank our printers, the people at *Our Times*, Anita McBride for her continued support and Frances Chan for her computer expertise. We look forward to a continued friendship with all of you.

Of course, we would like to thank you for reading *Undercurrents*. In the past, we have received letters of support and criticism from some of our readers: your thoughts help guide our vision of what is relevant and accessible to activists and scholars alike. We would like to hear from other voices across the country. Graduate students interested in contributing to *Undercurrents* should consult the editorial policy in the inside back cover.

We hope that you enjoy this issue. Please tell your friends and colleagues about us.

The Editors