

Introduction

Hello, and welcome to volume two of *Undercurrents*.

For this issue we have chosen the theme "Nature, Culture, Self." With this broad theme we hope to embrace three converging domains whose relationships to each other constitute the principal focus of inquiry within the interdisciplinary field of critical environmental thought. In attempting to explore and articulate a new view of the human place in nature, ecophilosophers and activists are frequently led to questions of the self and its relation to the world. This often includes questions of culture and its role in changing how we perceive of our relationship to non-human nature. These are difficult and uncertain questions, but ones with direct relevance to contemporary social and ecological urgencies.

The response to our call-for-papers was encouraging, and eclectic. The papers we have chosen for this issue reflect some of the variety of approaches to social change. In addition to the papers there is some artwork and poetry that we think will contribute to a further understanding of the relationships implied in our theme.

The issue begins with Margot La Rocque's paper on human voice-overs in wildlife documentaries. By revealing the bad anthropomorphism of much of the narration within this genre, she points out that though these works appear to represent a sympathetic relation between humans and the rest of nature, often they merely continue to subvert the non-human.

In his paper, Jean-Marc Daigle reflects on his experience with a local project in order to discuss the importance and potential of urban wild places to inspire the growth and unfolding of human bonds with, and sensitivity to, the earth.

Paul Nonnekes' paper is one which rewards effort. His poetic evocation of the child's experience of the earth is written in a style which complements the creative challenge of his message.

Jacqueline Pearce's paper is a comparative discussion of how three of the transformative branches of the environmental movement -- deep ecology, social ecology and eco-feminism - conceptualize an "ecological self."

In her paper, Nancy O'Sullivan provides a critical assessment of the different approaches that have been taken toward establishing an ethical position for the relationship of humans to animals. She argues that conventional philosophical approaches are inadequate to the task.

Once again there are a number of people who deserve thanks for their assistance in getting *Undercurrents* published. We therefore would like to sincerely acknowledge the support of Dean Edward Spence and the Faculty of Environmental Studies for giving us a home, Frances Chan for her guidance through the computer maze, and André and the folks at *Our Times* for their friendly and professional printing services. Kim Armitage, Julia Murphy, Jackie Pearce, Craig Naherniak and Judith Fraser all worked on the journal committee until other commitments took them away from us, and we thank them for the time they gave to *Undercurrents*.

Finally, we would like to thank you for reading and supporting **Undercurrents**. We have received a substantial number of supportive letters from those of you who read volume one. This encouragement has meant a lot to us. We appreciate your critical and constructive comments; they help us guide **Undercurrents** in a direction that will allow us to make student work accessible and relevant to a wider audience of activists, scholars and concerned people. Graduate students interested in contributing to **Undercurrents** should consult the editorial policy in the inside back cover.

Undercurrents is published and administered entirely by graduate student volunteers, operating on the principle of group consensus in decision making. There is no editor-in-chief, and no hierarchy of responsibilities; the journal is published with a process that reflects the social vision **Undercurrents** seeks to promote. This is not easy, but the group feels that process is just as important as the results of our work.

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

