

Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies

Ecocriticism and Geocriticism

Overlapping Territories in Environmental
and Spatial Literary Studies

Edited by
Robert T. Tally Jr. &
Christine M. Battista



Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies

Series Editor:

ROBERT T. TALLY JR., Texas State University

Series description:

Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies is a new book series focusing on the dynamic relations among space, place, and literature. The spatial turn in the humanities and social sciences has occasioned an explosion of innovative, multidisciplinary scholarship in recent years, and geocriticism, broadly conceived, has been among the more promising developments in spatially oriented literary studies. Whether focused on literary geography, cartography, geopoetics, or the spatial humanities more generally, geocritical approaches enable readers to reflect upon the representation of space and place, both in imaginary universes and in those zones where fiction meets reality. Titles in the series include both monographs and collections of essays devoted to literary criticism, theory, and history, often in association with other arts and sciences. Drawing on diverse critical and theoretical traditions, books in the Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies series disclose, analyze, and explore the significance of space, place, and mapping in literature and in the world.

Robert T. Tally Jr. is Associate Professor of English at Texas State University, USA. His work explores the relations among narrative, representation, and social space in American and world literature, criticism, and theory. Tally has been recognized as a leading figure in the emerging fields of geocriticism, spatiality studies, and the spatial humanities. Tally's books include *Fredric Jameson: The Project of Dialectical Criticism*; *Poe and the Subversion of American Literature: Satire, Fantasy, Critique*; *Utopia in the Age of Globalization: Space, Representation, and the World System*; *Spatiality*; *Kurt Vonnegut and the American Novel: A Postmodern Iconography*; and *Melville, Mapping and Globalization: Literary Cartography in the American Baroque Writer*. The translator of Bertrand Westphal's *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*, Tally is the editor of *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies*; *Kurt Vonnegut: Critical Insights*; and *Literary Cartographies: Spatiality, Representation, and Narrative*.

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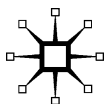
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STUDIES

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ECOCRITICISM AND GEOCRITICISM

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for
William V. Spanos

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SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

The spatial turn in the humanities and social sciences has occasioned an explosion of innovative, multidisciplinary scholarship. Spatially oriented literary studies, whether operating under the banner of literary geography, literary cartography, geophilosophy, geopoetics, geocriticism, or the spatial humanities more generally, have helped to reframe or to transform contemporary criticism by focusing attention, in various ways, on the dynamic relations among space, place, and literature. Reflecting upon the representation of space and place, whether in the real world, in imaginary universes, or in those hybrid zones where fiction meets reality, scholars and critics working in spatial literary studies are helping to reorient literary criticism, history, and theory. *Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies* is a book series presenting new research in this burgeoning field of inquiry.

In exploring such matters as the representation of place in literary works, the relations between literature and geography, the historical transformation of literary and cartographic practices, and the role of space in critical theory, among many others, geocriticism and spatial literary studies have also developed interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary methods and practices, frequently making productive connections to architecture, art history, geography, history, philosophy, politics, social theory, and urban studies, to name but a few. Spatial criticism is not limited to the spaces of the so-called real world, and it sometimes calls into question any too facile distinction between real and imaginary places, as it frequently investigates what Edward Soja has referred to as the “real-and-imagined” places we experience in literature as in life. Indeed, although a great deal of important research has been devoted to the literary representation of certain identifiable and well-known places (e.g., Dickens’s London, Baudelaire’s Paris, or Joyce’s Dublin), spatial critics have also explored the otherworldly spaces of literature, such as those to be found in myth, fantasy, science fiction, video games, and cyberspace. Similarly, such criticism is interested in the relationship between spatiality and such different media or genres as film or television, music, comics, computer programs, and

other forms that may supplement, compete with, and potentially problematize literary representation. Titles in the *Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies* series include both monographs and collections of essays devoted to literary criticism, theory, and history, often in association with other arts and sciences. Drawing on diverse critical and theoretical traditions, books in the series reveal, analyze, and explore the significance of space, place, and mapping in literature and in the world.

The concepts, practices, or theories implied by the title of this series are to be understood expansively. Although geocriticism and spatial literary studies represent a relatively new area of critical and scholarly investigation, the historical roots of spatial criticism extend well beyond the recent past, informing present and future work. Thanks to a growing critical awareness of spatiality, innovative research into the literary geography of real and imaginary places has helped to shape historical and cultural studies in ancient, medieval, early modern, and modernist literature, while a discourse of spatiality undergirds much of what is still understood as the postmodern condition. The suppression of distance by modern technology, transportation, and telecommunications has only enhanced the sense of place, and of displacement, in the age of globalization. Spatial criticism examines literary representations not only of places themselves, but of the experience of place and of displacement, while exploring the interrelations between lived experience and a more abstract or unrepresentable spatial network that subtly or directly shapes it. In sum, the work being done in geocriticism and spatial literary studies, broadly conceived, is diverse and far reaching. Each volume in this series takes seriously the mutually impressive effects of space or place and artistic representation, particularly as these effects manifest themselves in works of literature. By bringing the spatial and geographical concerns to bear on their scholarship, books in the *Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies* series seek to make possible different ways of seeing literary and cultural texts, to pose novel questions for criticism and theory, and to offer alternative approaches to literary and cultural studies. In short, the series aims to open up new spaces for critical inquiry.

Robert T. Tally Jr.

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Christine M. Battista

I want to thank Christine Battista for first proposing this collection of essays, for her hard work in co-organizing and coediting the project, and for her general enthusiasm and grace at each stage of the process. I am grateful to the students and faculty of Texas State University for their part in making my workplace a space of engaged and energetic critical inquiry, particularly during the years in which this project was being completed. Among these, I would especially thank Suparno Banerjee, Devin Baumann, Collin Couey, Doug Dorst, Katrina Goudey, Craig Hanks, Michael Hennessy, Priscilla Leder, Daniel Lochman, Emi Kanemoto, Katie Kapurch, Whitney May, Amanda Meyer, Susan Morrison, Rebecca Raphael, Benjamin Reed, Deanna Rodriguez, Teya Rosenberg, Aimee Roundtree, Leah Schwebel, Jon Marc Smith, Victoria Smith, and Sarah Youree. I thank

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Robert T. Tally Jr.

Jointly, we would like to thank the contributors for their excellent contributions to this volume. At a very early stage of this project, we benefited from conversations with Eric Prieto, Bertrand Westphal, and Rachel Collins. An earlier version of Prieto's chapter appeared in a special issue of *Épistémocritique: Littérature et Savoirs* IX (Autumn 2011), devoted to *géocritique*, and we thank Prieto, editor Laurence Dahan-Gaida, and the journal. We organized a session on this subject for the Tenth Biennial Conference of Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE) in 2013, and we would like to thank the audience and the panelists, including Judith Rauscher, who revised and expanded her fascinating presentation for inclusion in this book. We are especially grateful to Brigitte Shull and Ryan Jenkins of Palgrave Macmillan for their indefatigable editorial assistance and overall enthusiasm for this project.

We dedicate this collection to William V. Spanos, a true scholar and activist, as well as a monumental figure in the history of literary criticism and theory, notably one who eschews monumentalizing theories and practices. Spanos's work has deeply influenced and informed our thinking about space, place, and worldliness in an age in which boundaries, borders, human and non-human lives, and indeed Being itself are continually at stake. Spanos has dedicated his career and life to reimagining and activating the role of the public intellectual through his generative writings and inquiries into the ontological state of our current world occasion. We hope this collection offers a small contribution to the intellectual and political project undertaken in the spirit of Spanos's assiduous, critical, and joyful investigation into the conditions and possibilities of worldly world that we inhabit.

INTRODUCTION: ECOCRITICAL GEOGRAPHIES, GEOCRITICAL ECOLOGIES, AND THE SPACES OF MODERNITY

*Robert T. Tally Jr. and Christine
M. Battista*

At a Modern Language Association convention several years ago, following a session we had organized on geocriticism, a group of us discussed the possibility of continuing what we took to be a crucial conversation on the relations between space, place, mapping, and literature.¹ While we all agreed that the topic was both timely and necessary, some wondered if the ostensible, if misleading, neutrality of space or spatiality worked against the project. That is, one could not necessarily be an advocate for space or spatiality, as opposed to advocating for a distinctive political policy or social cause, and expect others to rally around that banner. As one colleague put it, naming ecocriticism as the specific counter-example, geocriticism does not have a clearly visible political constituency or program. Whereas ecocritics, along with virtually all scholars associated with environmental literary studies, are generally understood to be advocates for the environment, often serving as activists with respect to all-too-salient matters of environmentalism, conservation, preservation, sustainability, climate change, and naturalism, geocritics presumably had no particular position with respect to the use and abuse of space or place, apart from the fact the geocritics insisted that such uses were themselves meaningful. And yet, the critics and theorists most influential on or connected with geocriticism were far from apolitical themselves. On the contrary, part of the impetus for strenuously asserting or reasserting the significance of spatiality in social or cultural criticism was an abiding belief on the part of such thinkers that the omission of spatial considerations from these fields had serious

political consequences. If ecocriticism appeared to offer a socially and politically engaged form of literary studies that maintained a deep connection to “real world” concerns, surely geocriticism had its own similarly engaged aims and effects.

In fact, the geocritical emphasis on space, place, and mapping correlates strongly to the conviction among spatially oriented critics that space is of the utmost social importance. The key theorists who have been influential on the development of geocriticism have been themselves deeply engaged political thinkers, often coming from oppositional political traditions. For example, Henri Lefebvre’s distinctive Marxist analysis of social space and its production has been instrumental in the theories of postmodern spatiality proposed by David Harvey, Edward Soja, Fredric Jameson, and others. The post-structuralist turn to space in the works of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, similarly, has made possible new ways of imagining the effectiveness of State power in modern societies, while also delineating spatial practices that can serve as forms of resistance. Postcolonial critics like Franz Fanon, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak have placed greater emphasis on space and geography in their revisionary investigations into the historical experiences of imperialism. Feminist theorists, such as bell hooks, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Doreen Massey, have insisted on looking at the fundamental ways in which gender, race, and class are configured into variously spatialized social organizations. Literary geography has itself been motivated by intensively political goals, as the need to map the spaces and places of literature appears crucial to the genealogical disclosure or uncovering of formerly repressed narratives. In all of these and more, we find an abiding concern for the environment, however narrowly or broadly conceived. In this sense, the social or political impetus behind much of the ecocritical tradition is also effective in motivating geocritical approaches. While distinctive in meaningful ways, both ecocriticism and geocriticism share a concern for the manner in which spaces and places are perceived, represented, and ultimately used.

As the cartographic anxieties of modernity are compounded by ecological crises, spaces, places, or territories are increasingly called into question. What once seemed to be fixed, stable, or at least reliable spatial or environmental markers, such as national boundaries, regional borders, public or private properties, and even identifiable climate zones, are now threatened by the increasing volatility of both the social and natural worlds. Indeed, this distinction between the social and the natural is itself dubious and unhelpful, and it becomes increasingly untenable as the twenty-first century wears on. The older sense

of Enlightenment, with rationality conquering nature in the forms of modern science, leading irrevocably to the disenchantment of the world, seems to have tangled up in a complex skein of intersecting relations among nature, culture, and society. Under present circumstances in an age of globalization and of an increasingly planetary frame of reference, critical theory and practice has disclosed the inherently artificial and unsustainable means by which humans have sought to organize the real-and-imagined spaces of the world in pursuit of individual, social, and cultural development and progress.

Arguably, in its production of geographic and other forms of knowledge, cartographic practices have resulted in the perceived alienation of the human subject from, and within, nature, as the mapmaker is positioned outside of the geography surveyed, which then becomes an abstract space onto which are plotted abstract, geometric, or topographic figures. The abstract space is thus cut off from the lived spaces of human interactions, as well as from the natural ecosystems that are their conditions for possibility. This estrangement has only exacerbated the environmental crises that have served to remind all that the conditions for thought are necessarily subordinate to, and dependent on, the conditions for life. Hence, the convergence of critical practices attuned to both environmental and the spatial relations is especially timely.

Of course, literature has been one of the chief means by which human beings have made sense of and given form to their “world,” a world conceived as a simultaneously social and natural space in which to live. The archetypal conflict of man “versus” nature provides a revealing glimpse into a certain frame of reference that cannot really be maintained, as mankind is ever and again forced to bear witness to itself as “part of” the natural world. Similarly, those stories and poems that delight in the harmonies of human and nature have often tended toward a romantic, unrealistic, or utopian view that is sharply criticized by critics who note the vividly social or cultural aspects of “human nature,” if the term can still be used. If the human being is but an animal, that creature is still a social animal, Aristotle’s *zoon politikon*, a featherless biped who must endure both the elements and the company of his or her fellows. Unsurprisingly, then, the stories that these social animals tell inevitably involve the plenum of human experience. Narratives tend to map social and natural spaces, while registering the difficulties attendant to human engagements with both.

In its turn, literary criticism, whose prime directive is to help us make sense of these poetic attempts at making sense of the world, is

called upon to respond to such narratives. It is therefore no accident that in this period of elevated anxiety about space and the environment, a growing number of critics have focused on these matters. Scholars working in the broadly interdisciplinary field of literature and the environment or ecocriticism have been in the forefront of bringing together ecological and literary concerns, while an increasing number of critics associated with the spatial turn in literary and cultural studies have placed greater emphasis on space, place, and mapping. As the title of this volume indicates, ecocriticism and geocriticism, each broadly conceived, have much in common, even as they remain distinct in their aims, methods, and results. The essays included in *Ecocriticism and Geocriticism: Overlapping Territories in Environmental and Spatial Literary Studies* demonstrate the ways that the two approaches can be brought into productive relation, offering new ways of seeing literature, ecology, and geography, as well as the world that necessarily subsumes and contains them.

As has been noted by many writers and with increasing alarm, the present epoch is characterized by a curious development. For the first time in geological history, apparently, human activity has become the most environmentally influential force on the planet. To use the term popularized by the Nobel Prize-winning atmospheric chemist Paul Crutzen in 2000, we may now be said to be living in the “anthropocene,” an age that appears to have begun with the rapid onset and pervasive spread of industrialization around 1,800, or perhaps a century or two prior to that, or even many millennia earlier, depending on whom one asks.² As Crutzen and his colleagues explain, from the moment of roughly the Industrial Revolution, mankind has managed to systematically transform the earth from its more or less stable ecological conditions in the “natural geological epoch” (or holocene) into those of the anthropocene, an epoch in which “human activities have become so pervasive and profound [. . .] they rival the great forces of Nature and are pushing the Earth into planetary *terra incognita*.”³ Crutzen’s research has disclosed the magnitude and the accelerating rate of human influence over the environment worldwide, registering the extent to which human activities have utterly transformed the planet’s “natural” geological cycles. And, for all of the progress that such activities have made from the perspective of a teleological narrative of social development or the march of civilization, from another perspective, the results have been devastating. Erratic weather patterns and disasters due to climate change and erosion, species extinction, resource depletion, biochemical toxicity, increased cancer-related illnesses, and innumerable deaths associated with the

industrial and environmental hazards are just a few of the visible consequences of living in the anthropocene.

Whereas Crutzen argues that this massive anthropocentric transformative shift began in the 1800s, one could argue this logic of domination has long been implicated within the ontology of what used to be called Western modernity. The Cartesian mind-body dualism, “a construction of the self that depends on a radical splitting off of the mind from the human body and the body of earth in which the latter becomes subaltern,”⁴ in Jeffrey Myers’s words, establishes a rational *res cogitans* separate and distinct not only from a physical body but from the natural world. This “splitting off” of self from nature is a necessary precondition to the formation of an individual self that maintains superiority over nature and other natural elements. From the foundations laid by Cartesian rationality and by the ordering of the world accordingly, it is a small step to the anthropocentric theory of mankind’s separation from, and sovereignty over, nature.⁵ In the continual, cumulative desire to develop and exploit the planet’s remaining resources, humankind has further alienated itself from the natural world, thus exacerbating problems associated with the mass commodification of scant natural resources and the concomitant environmental destruction. This anthropocentric ontology has given rise to an epidemic of sociopolitical thinking, which has, in turn, codified or recodified the spaces of the planet according to a specious and baleful antagonism between the natural and the human.

Most of the time, it seems, “nature” stands in the background, a more-or-less picturesque backdrop to the main drama of human activity. Often the public takes particular notice only when the natural world encroaches upon the human in such ways as to enable visceral evidence of the dangers consequent to various carelessly or intentionally exploitative actions, at which point there is some collective resolve to take action to combat the problems. Natural disasters, including manmade ones such as the Exxon Valdez or the Deepwater Horizon oil spills, bring the significance of the natural environment urgently to mind. Similarly, in the cultural or intellectual sphere, discussions of environmental justice or ecological preservation have been more likely to occur following well-known disasters, whereas the spatial and social conditions for the possibility of environmental disasters tend to maintain a steadier focus. The long arc of history demonstrates the degree to which the natural-versus-human distinction is untenable at best; worse, it is an intentionally obfuscatory tactic designed to prevent meaningful consideration of the inextricably intertwined fates of natural and social spaces.

In this sense, *anthropocene* may not be the most helpful term, drawing as it does so much of its rhetorical power from the sense that a distinctive *anthropos* could exert such influence over a planetary geological domain. Critics of the term have noted that, in its quasi-scientific appearance, the concept of an anthropocene elides any consideration of specific agents or structures beyond the “human,” which are responsible for environmental destruction. Worse, some would argue that such a notion intentionally covers up and thereby excuses the bad actors. “It doesn’t take a genius to recognize that capitalism is the engine behind the environmental crises of the early twenty-first century,” writes Christopher Nealon in a recent review, adding “it’s not so much *Homo sapiens* as the rich who are destroying the earth—rich people, rich nations.”⁶ Citing a number of conscientious objectors to the term *anthropocene*, McKenzie Wark in *Molecular Red* invites us to invent new metaphors:

Personally, I like the *#misanthropocene*, but don’t expect it to catch on. Jason Moore prefers *Capitalocene*, Jussi Parikka the *Anthrobscene*. Kate Raworth suggests *Manthropocene*, given the gender make-up of the Anthropocene Working Group considering it as a name for a geological era. Donna Haraway offers to name it the *Chthulucene*, a more chthonic version of Cthulhu, the octopoid monster of H. P. Lovecraft’s weird stories.⁷

Wark’s playful tone belies the seriousness of his project. Whatever else the anthropocene might be called, Wark suggests, it needs to be called *something*. That is, something has changed, and the situation in which we find ourselves in the twenty-first century itself needs to change. New ways of thinking about our world, its history, and its future are likely needed in order for any change to occur.

In a sense, then, the older discourse of Enlightenment rationality, the scientific revolution’s disenchantment of the world, or the conquest of nature by humanity probably needs to evanesce as well. The vague historiographical period of post-Enlightenment “modernity” inevitably cedes the upper-hand to an impersonal discourse of History, or worse, to “human nature,” when in fact the agents of the current crisis are fairly well known. As Nealon puts it, such generalizations are always

ready to explain contemporary capitalist and ecological crises in terms of some failure of humanity to be its best self, or some innate violence in our nature. This is what the language of “modernity” does: it pursues intransitive questions of human essence instead of relational questions

about what some humans have done to other humans. Climate change: we're all in this together! That may be true, but erasing the history of how "we" got here will only make it harder to see the contours of the planet-devouring system that has forced some of us to reproduce it for the benefit of some others, decade after decade.⁸

The places of the planet, along with their literary or cultural representations and interpretations, remain within the force-field of a profoundly material production of space, as well as a more-or-less cognizable consumption and distribution of space, for which a criticism—focused on the present, attentive to the past, and attuned to a possible future—is necessary.

In recent years and extending across disciplinary and institutional divisions, scholars in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences have attempted to develop interpretative tools, methods, and technologies better suited to identify those aspects of knowledge-production that impinge on environmental and ecological matters. In literary studies, for example, ecocriticism has drawn attention to the relations between literature and the environment. Related to this development, but also operating with its own distinctive discourses and methods, geocriticism or spatial literary studies have focused on the reassertion of space in critical and social theory, occasioning and responding to a spatial turn in the humanities and social sciences. Although ecocriticism and geocriticism clearly have much in common, with both insisting upon the importance of place in analyzing texts, they have sometimes been at odds with respect to ethical or political grounds, among others. As spatially oriented critics know all too well, especially since many of them have been responsible for identifying and criticizing the practices, geography or cartography has often served a repressive purpose in the subjugation of territory, sometimes operating in conjunction with the forces of power and knowledge that have likewise made possible extensive environmental destruction. A jointly ecocritical and geocritical approach offers a more sophisticated line of inquiry that examines the intersections between mapping and ecology. Developing and nourishing an approach that examines the underlying, often invisible interstices of power that invest the social body politic and landscape is one of the goals of this book, whose contributors offer a range of perspectives from which to combine ecocritical and geocritical practices in order to make sense of the social, natural, and spatiotemporal world we inhabit. One of the greatest challenges facing critics today involves bringing to light what Said has called the "normalized quiet of unseen power,"⁹ for the concealment

of the mechanisms and effects of power from our purview threatens the ability to interpret, understand, and change the world. The future of the planet, as well as of humanity, depends upon it.

Scholars investigating the relationships between space, place, and the environment in literature and society should also recognize the ontological underpinnings of the present historical occasion. This means, among other things, looking at the effects of the processes by which human social development has managed to dramatically alter the forces of the natural world in an astonishingly brief span. Writing, theorizing, instructing, researching, thinking, and living in the anthropocene, our work and our lived experiences reflect this impactful shift in the trajectory of the planet's geological history. The study of literature can create a critical, creative space in which to imagine alternatives from within a precarious, ever-shifting but resolutely natural-and-social world, conceptual spheres that cannot be meaningfully separated for long in any conscientious criticism. Examining the overlapping yet somewhat incompatible relationship between ecocriticism and geocriticism can provide an approach to works of literature and culture that allows us to analyze the fractured, disjunctive spatial anxieties of modernity or postmodernity while simultaneously imagining a more sustainable modality of environmental inhabitation.

The contributors to *Ecocriticism and Geocriticism* each attempt to survey the overlapping territories of these critical practices, but the diversity of their interests, as well as their range of topics, texts, periods, genres, methods, and perspectives, indicates just how rich and varied ecocritical and geocritical approaches can be. The essays included here serve as evidence and examples of the productive ways in which critics may bring environmental and spatial literary studies to bear on each other, which in turn may allow students and other readers to look at both literature and their surroundings differently. As diffuse "schools" of criticism—the scare quotes serve to show how unreliable such a category must be in contemporary practice—ecocriticism and geocriticism represent two relatively recent and exciting discourses through which literary and cultural studies have placed renewed emphasis on the lived environment, social and natural spaces, spatiotemporality, ecology, history, and geography. These loosely defined practices have also fostered politically engaged inquiries into the ways that humans not only represent, but also organize the spaces and places in which they, their fellow humans, and many other forms of life must dwell. For all of their differences in methodology, focus, and aims, ecocritics and geocritics find common

ground in these abstract and lived spaces to be preserved, mapped, understood, and experienced.

Part I includes essays that explore the overlapping theoretical territories of ecocriticism and geocriticism, demonstrating simultaneously the distinctiveness of each critical discourse and the ways in which they may be brought into productive relationships with one another.

In "Geocriticism Meets Ecocriticism: Bertrand Westphal and Environmental Thinking," Eric Prieto provides an insightful introduction to geocritical approaches to literature and culture, focusing especially on Bertrand Westphal's elaboration of them in *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*. Prieto situates Westphal's geocritical theory and practice in relation to a somewhat more established body of work in ecocriticism and environmental literary studies. A significant geocritic in his own right, Prieto has also proven to be an able critic of geocriticism, pointing out its limitations as well as its possibilities for future cultural research.¹⁰ In this chapter, Prieto argues that a properly geocritical approach is enriched by its encounter with ecocriticism, and he demonstrates that the effectiveness of both methods is enhanced when the two are combined. In closing, Prieto also points to some of the directions that such work may take in the future.

Bringing new technologies to bear on the questions of ecocriticism and geocriticism in Chapter 2 ("Ecocritical and Geocritical Conjunctions in North Atlantic Environmental Multimedia and Place-Based Poetry"), Derek Gladwin examines the relationship between them by looking at two North Atlantic interactive multimedia websites that focus on the site-specific poetry of Eavan Boland and Marlene Creates, respectively. In one website, Creates, an environmental poet and photographer in Newfoundland, Canada, has created a multimedia experience titled "A Virtual Walk of the Boreal Poetry Garden." Across the North Atlantic, another website focused on Ireland titled "The Poetry Project: Poetry and Art from Ireland" employs a similar multimedia format, incorporating short videos of place-based poetry read orally in built and non-built environments. As Gladwin argues, these online representations of place and poetry employ elements of interest for ecocritics and geocritics alike. Through their layering of literary texts and multimedia, they bring into play spatial and environmental theories of place, bioregions, and real and imagined environments.

Ted Geier's "Noncommittal Commitment: Alien Spaces of Ecocosmopolitics in Recent World Literature" evaluates the spatial and ecocritical modes of select literary works and tracks their cosmopolitical critique of scalar forms, animal and environmentalist