

## Editorial, Vol 4, No. 2

Axel Goodbody, University of Bath  
Carmen Flys Junquera, University of Alcalá

Welcome to Issue 4.2 of *Ecozon@*. In the themed section of this number, Serenella Iovino brightens the darkening days of autumn (in the Northern hemisphere) with a collection of eight essays on 'Mediterranean Ecocriticism'. These are followed by three further essays in the General Section, creative writing and artistic contributions, and book reviews.

In Serenella Iovino's introduction, 'Mediterranean Ecocriticism: or, A Blueprint for Cultural Amphibians,' the complexity of the Mediterranean world, compounded of geography and history, nature and culture, and undergoing constant transformation, serves as the starting point for an exploration of the stories and ideas, landscapes and discourses associated with this "sea between the lands." However, Mediterranean ecocriticism is a project which extends beyond mere ecocritical analysis of Mediterranean subjects, and seeks to develop a new conception of ecocriticism characterised by hybridity and connectivity. Here, the Mediterranean is de-essentialised and de-romanticised: it is understood not as a site of origins and lost perfection, purity and supremacy, but rather a locus of intercultural connection, and a crossroads of socio-environmental emergences. As a "living assemblage of multiple subjects and forces," this "middle place" offers a template or blueprint for reading other texts and places through the lens of the narratives and images of their histories, social conflicts and environmental transformations. Starting with a contribution by Bertrand Westphal, founding father of *géocritique* and a leading expert on Mediterranean geography and culture, the essays which follow move along an imaginary East-West trajectory. Touching on post-colonialism, nomadism, new materialism, psycho-geography, embodiment and other approaches, they share a theoretical orientation associating Mediterranean discourse with natural-cultural ecologies. The readings of literature and film by the Spanish, American, Chilean, Turkish and Lebanese scholars Luis Prádanos, Elena Past, Arnaldo Donoso Aceituno, Massimo Lollini, Serpil Oppermann, Marianne Marroum and Antonio Cuadrado-Fernández thus illustrate a conception of the Mediterranean as an aggregate of landscape and imagination, and a "cooperative agency which materially interferes in cultural production."

The General Section opens with an essay by Jennifer Fuller, 'Seeking Wild Eyre,' which explores the parallel between the landscapes of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and the general interest in landscape and nascent environmental awareness in Victorian Britain. Whereas most critics have treated the landscapes in the novel as vehicles communicating insight into its characters, Fuller reveals a link with the Victorians' desire to preserve 'natural' or 'wild' landscapes, which was driven by their quest for

freedom and self-realisation. In the second essay, 'The Limits of Violence,' David Sumner examines the ethical imperative in Edward Abbey's 'Monkeywrenching' novels, which have an important inspiration for radical environmentalism in the United States since the 1970s. Although a security guard is killed towards the end of Abbey's second novel, Sumner argues that he maintains a clear ethical distinction between destruction of property in defence of wilderness and violence against people. The third and final essay, Marie-Theres Wieme's 'This series will take you to the last wildernesses,' examines the BBC nature documentary *Planet Earth*. She shows how, far from being disinterested, scientific sources of information, such as blue chip nature documentaries actively participate in both the maintenance and subversion of the nature-culture dichotomy. Non-human animals are presented as other to humans, but the degree to which they are varies according to our familiarity with the species in question, and some sequences make a powerful emotional appeal.

In the Creative Writing and Art Section, Isabel Hoving introduces work thematically associated with the Mediterranean focus of the number. First, she writes of the distinctive use of colour in the popular, folk-like murals depicting Mediterranean scenes of the Malagan painter, Santiago Fernández Aragüez. Fernández Aragüez's paintings, examples of which are reproduced on the journal cover and in the Art Section, endow the landscape with spiritual meaning and reflect the local people's experience of it. The photographs of Carma Casulá illustrate a very different aspect of life in the Mediterranean area, documenting an artistic installation, 'In the Mouth of the Filomena,' which she created in memory of those who worked the "Ojos Negros" [Black Eyes] Mines at Sierra Menera, Teruel, Spain, which closed in 1986. Further photographs are the work of the Italian architect and traveller, Christian Arpaia. Most of his striking *Southern Suite* pictures were taken in the Bay of Naples. The final item in the section is a translation of the short story 'Let Fair Weather Bring Me Home' by the acclaimed Maltese writer, Oliver Friggieri, in which the natural environment in Malta is intertwined with customs shaping family life on the island.

The issue is rounded off by 9 substantial book reviews. Works presented include the ground-breaking essay collections *Heights of Reflection* (on mountains in the German cultural imaginary), *The Bioregional Imagination, Environmentalism in the Realm of Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature, Emerson and Thoreau*, and monographs by Marc Pedelty (on ecomusicology), Eric Otto (on science fiction and transformative environmentalism), Todd Borlik (on ecocriticism and early modern English literature), and Scott Knickerbocker (on ecopoetics). The final review (which is in Spanish) is of Roberto Forns Broggi's introduction to South American ecocriticism, *Nudos como estrellas*.

The editorial team has continued making changes to improve the journal. Improved reviewer guidelines and author instructions and guidelines are being uploaded. Increasingly, more information is being made available in languages other than English and there are also many "invisible" changes meant to improve visibility and indexing that should bear fruit progressively. We have already decided upon the themes and guest editors for 2016 and will post them shortly. Moreover, we have added a new

section, “Whole Issue,” meant to facilitate the download and printing of the whole issue, rather than article by article, if desired. The *Ecozon@* editorial team hopes readers will enjoy and profit from this issue. We remind you that we would be delighted to hear from you. Finally, our guest editor in this number, Serenella Iovino, will be known to many readers of *Ecozon@* as the author of the Italian introduction to ecocriticism, *Ecologia Letteraria: Una Strategia di Sopravvivenza* (2006), and as a founding member and past president of EASLCE. We take this opportunity to congratulate her on her recent appointment as Professor of Comparative Literature in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures and Modern Cultures at the University of Turin.