

# Editorial: Three Years with Lagoonscapes and Environmental Humanities

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2024 is a year that since its inception has been characterized by a series of wide-ranging international events in favour of the environment, biodiversity and global sustainability. The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) launched, again this year, a work program to support multilateralism, dialogue and actions based on science, innovation and partnerships, to safeguard the planet. In this context, Sixth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6), hosted in February in Nairobi (Kenya), emphasized the urgency of promoting effective and sustainable multilateral actions to combat climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. A frenetic decade of action has been envisaged by Member States to develop the network of interaction and dialogue necessary to meet these global challenges. In the following months, from March to June, other events of global importance took place, such as the International Day of Zero Waste, against unsustainable humanity consumption and production practices or The Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in Ottawa (Canada), to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

Alongside the major meetings, a true constellation of other international days for the environment has developed, such as those concerning wetlands and human beings, migratory birds, 'Mother Earth', biological diversity, wildlife, etc.

It is impossible in the few lines of an editorial to summarize the kaleidoscope of initiatives which at a local and territorial level have animated the ecocritical debate and the anguish of the so-called Anthropocene and on environmental upheavals. On the other hand, each nation and culture today seems to have its own sensitivity and an even too differentiated agenda in terms of environmental awareness, worldview, green and/or eco-friendly initiatives and related debate. It is interesting to note in this regard that in Venice, the place of production of our Journal, the famous 'Biennale Arte' has always been a means of sending political messages and reflecting on ethical and social themes: in particular this year, the 60th Biennial edition of 2024, the pavilions were enriched with works, performances and installations in which several artists tried to tell the complex relationship between man and the environment, as well as provide food for thought on the fate of forests, artificiality, and the protection of habitats. In the fervour of this activity and debate, which does not only concern the political arena, but also the dimension of daily social life, of the creativity of art and aesthetics – and in particular in the face of growing military and state-induced environmental, human and non-human emergencies that at the moment are not subsiding – *Lagoonscapes: The Venice Journal of Environmental Humanities* continues to provide its uplifting contribution. 2024 is an important year for our Journal since it constitutes the turning point between the experimental, embryonic phase of the project and its development as such. In the complex and often agitated sea of Environmental Humanities, our publishing enterprise has passed what we could metaphorically define as the launch phase, i.e. the first complete three years of activity. Ecocriticism has perhaps been the most present discursive nucleus in *Lagoonscapes*: comparatist by vocation, in recent decades this approach has been nourished by the exchange between cultures and literature, recalling within its horizon the themes of postcolonial studies and decoloniality and the comparison between cultural traditions of different geographical areas and historical periods, multiplying its geographical spectrum in an archipelago of voices and interpreters. This literary soul emphasizes the analysis of the relationships between human and non-human and, more generally, between nature and culture, not excluding in some cases a pedagogy of environmental commitment and environmental empathy. However, it cannot be a beacon in the Environmental Humanities without the exploration and valorization of the artistic, cultural, religious (and not only literary) heritage of continents other than those commonly characterized by a European-based civilization, such as Asia, Africa and Oceania. Similarly, the animism and shamanism characterizing the cosmo-visions of the indigenous peoples and native ethnic groups of the Himalayan ridge, the Siberian steppes, and the Amazon forest are today considered the symbol of environmental resilience and

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resistance to processes of modernization and indiscriminate exploitation of the territories. For these reasons, the three-year *Lagoonscapes*' adventure has collected essays and thematic issues from all over the world, relating to literary works and traditions, but also voices and testimonies of oral cultures. To do this it was essential to also go through the painstaking research of specialists in the fieldworks of ethnography and anthropology. Landscape anthropology, which proposed an epistemological and conceptual revision of the incisiveness of the anthropic dimension and its intrinsic relationships with the environment, can today be considered, in its most contemporary developments, an integral and essential part of the constructive process of Environmental Humanities.

Having therefore reached its fourth year, our Journal inaugurates a completely new work session based on calls for papers, in which we are proud to present contributions from colleagues and professionals of scientific research alongside the experimental and creative work of younger and new-graduate authors. A new session dedicated to interviews, performance art and aesthetics enriches the final part of this volume. Including this seventh volume (issue 1/2024), we can count so far more than seventy articles published in open access by our university publisher, Edizioni di Ca' Foscari, for the collaboration of around eighty authors and guest editors. Having reached this important stage of our journey, all we can do is thank all those who believed in this undertaking and in the importance and value of the interdisciplinary debate that a scientific journal like *Lagoonscapes: The Venice Journal of Environmental Humanities* can produce.

