Christina Gerhardt

Editor’s Note

The other essays open with Greta Gaard’s “(Un)Storied Air, Breath and Embodiment,” which “through focused discussions of aircalypse, gendered responses to smog, smog psychology and affects, and smog cultural studies [...] restor(i)es attention to breath and air in ecocriticism.” In “‘Nature is Dope’: Timothy Olson and Athletic Masculinity in Nature,” Harri Salovaara uses masculinities studies to argue that “Olson’s athletic brand [...] blends aspects of hegemonic and ecological masculinity.” In “Ghosts of the Past: The Language of Trauma and Environment in Hari Kunzru’s White Tears,” Heather Duncan argues that Hari Kunzru’s “White Tears is a complex, moving, and viscerally frightening exploration of the legacy of racially motivated violence and structural inequality in the United States.” Specifically, Duncan considers White Tears as eco-horror, “for while the novel may not overtly explore environmental themes,” the way it dissolves borders, between life and death, past and present, “bring home the horror that is written into landscape we find ourselves in today.” In “Carrying the Stories Home: Barry Lopez’s Horizon,” James Perrin Warren revisits “the narrative arc of Horizon” arguing that it “is a lifelong story of navigation, a story of finding the horizon and moving out toward it, even as we allow it to move in toward us.” Rita Elizabeth Risser’s “The Nature of Cities: From Polis to Emirate” revisits Aristotle’s notions of what constitutes human flourishing in cities to consider 20th century cities. In “Appetitive Enclosures and Fragmentary Shorelines: How the Topography of Robinson Crusoe’s Island Challenges Gendered Narratives of Colonial Possession,” Dani Redd “shows that [...] the island [...] transforms Crusoe’s subjectivity, and in doing so unsettles gendered colonial binaries of possession and dominance.” Robert Myers in “Ambrose Bierce and the War Against Nature” “argue[s] that while the experience of war exposed Bierce to the ability of humans to destroy nature, in his fiction ecophobia leads to efforts to master a threatening nature.” Susan Poursanati and Aria Farmani’s “William Morris’s The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs J. R. R. Tolkien’s The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrân and Lawrence Buell’s Ecocritical Perspective” taps ecocritical theory to examine the “strong presence of the non-human world” in Morris and Tolkien. Chitra Sankaran’s “Retrieving the Margins: Use of Thinai by Three Contemporary Tamil Women Writers” presents how Sri Lankan poet Leena Manimekalai, Singaporean writer Kamaladevi Aravindan and Singaporean poet Kanagalatha use Thinai in their writings to retrieve linguistic and cultural margins. Closing out the essays is Stuart Cooke’s “Nonhuman Complexity Poetics: Leaf-Cutter Ants and Multispecies Composition,” in which he extends what he has “called ‘ethological poetics’ or the study of creative practices of composition
and inscription in nonhuman creatures,” by focusing on leaf-cutter ant poetics.

The volume also features two works of Creative Nonfiction: Clinton Crockett Peters’s “Outdoor Pursuits” takes us to Big Bend in southwest Texas and Robert (Rex) Welshon’s “Angel Cove” takes us to Utah. The volume includes poetry by Joanne Leow, Urmila Mahajan, Mary Adler, Stephen Berendt, and James Gurian.

As ever, our book reviews section highlights some of the latest publications in our vibrant field. Happy reading!