

Introduction

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Three of the four articles in 'Ecological Humanities' engage dialogically with the work of the late ecofeminist philosopher Val Plumwood. The first, 'A Postcapitalist Politics of Dwelling', initiates a dialogue between the ecological humanities and community economies, forming links and connectivities that honour Val's work and extend it in ways that she had hoped might happen. The second, 'Genetic Conservation in a Climate of Loss' examines gene banking and conservation, engages questions of what counts as nature, and offers a critical 'rethink' of the kind Val was urging. The third, 'Dancing with Disaster', takes up issues of exponentially increasing climate disasters, and seeks an ecosophical *ratio* that may equip us generously to meet the challenges of climate change as ethical partners within the multi-species communities that are, and increasingly will be, experiencing climate chaos. The 2009 Victorian bushfires have brought climate chaos to us incredibly vividly, reminding us that much that we speak of in the future tense is actually in process at this moment.

The fourth article, by Val Plumwood, is a work that was in progress at the time of her death. The ideas she presents in the article were first formulated as a speech for Melbourne Writers' Festival in 2006. In editing this article for publication I have kept to Val's text other than to correct errors and standardise the format. 'Nature in the Active Voice' offers a succinct account of Val's thinking as a way of laying out the basis for two main points that are articulated from her position as a 'Philosophical Animist'. The first is a critique that discloses the connections between reductionist science and creationism. The second is a call for poets and other writers to join in a rethink 'which has the courage to question our most basic cultural narratives'. She calls for writing that is 'open to experiences of nature as powerful, agentic and creative, making space in our culture for an animating sensibility and vocabulary'. This, she says, is a major task facing the humanities today.