



**Ecotones: Encounters, Crossings, and Communities**

2015-2020

**Ecotones 3**  
**Indian Ocean: Ecotones, Contact Zones, and Third Spaces**

**Observatory for Indian Ocean Societies**  
**University of Reunion Island**

in partnership with  
EMMA (Université Paul Valéry Montpellier 3) and MIGRINTER (CNRS-Université de Poitiers)

**June 14-15, 2018**

<https://emma.www.univ-montp3.fr/fr/valorisation-partenariats/programmes-europeens-et-internationaux/ecotones>

**CALL FOR PAPERS**

An “ecotone” initially designates a transitional area between two ecosystems, for example between land and sea. The “Ecotones” program (2015-2020) is a cycle of conferences which aims to borrow this term traditionally used in geography and ecology and to broaden the concept by applying it to other disciplines in social sciences and humanities. An “ecotone” can thus also be understood as a cultural space of encounters, conflicts, and renewal between several communities (Florence Krall).

The objective of the “Ecotones 3” conference is to further study these ecotones from an interdisciplinary approach, with a particular focus on the Indian Ocean as a space of mobility and a “contact zone” (Mary Louise Pratt). The exploration of geocultural ecotones, perceived not as mere lines of demarcation and fracture, but also as in-between spaces where tensions are at work, highlights the porosity and instability of geographical, political, and socio-cultural boundaries in a changing world. The interstice then becomes a “third space” (Bhabha, Soya) that promotes cultural mixing and diversity, the emergence of new “composite” entities/identities (Glissant), hybrid alterities resulting from encounters and conflicts, but that also generates oppositions, clashes and other frictions. In the midst of these historical and cultural interplays in the Indian Ocean region, the notion of vulnerability (individual and collective exposure, as well as social and political vulnerability) must also be foregrounded. This fragility can be perceived as a source of potential risks; it can also lead to greater resilience, which requires awareness of this very fragility. The urgency of protecting endangered ecosystems must not make us forget that populations, that are also at risk, are closely linked to these ecosystems. The concept of “slow violence” (Rob Nixon) can certainly be useful in this

context. New approaches are also needed to explore current, ultracontemporary issues and to understand how the Indian Ocean region can offer insights into the evolution of the world in which we live at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with its processes of “deterritorialization” (Appadurai) and “minor transnationalism” (Lionnet and Shih).

Possible topics might include, but are not limited to:

*-In Social Sciences:*

- colonial and postcolonial histories: power relations and tensions between communities in multicultural societies and the emergence of “third spaces” where identities are renewed through negotiation;
- the process of transculturation related to voluntary or forced migration, the processes of diasporization, creolization, borrowing, syncretism, and cross-pollination;
- cultural divides and identity cleavages, vulnerabilities, modes of opposition and resistance, avoidance strategies;
- migratory processes, the sociology of cities, towns, and neighborhoods;
- interactions between cities and nature, ecological neighborhoods and other alternative hybrid areas;
- spatial planning, the urbanization of agricultural land and the emergence of a liminal third space;
- the mutations of fragile natural environments, latent threats, and resilience; economic development and environmental protection of coastal areas and insular regions.

*-In the Arts and Literature:*

- the Other in multicultural societies: artistic and literary representations of “contact zones,” encounters and clashes, negotiations and adjustments, crises and conflicts; invisibility, resilience, and the formation of countercultures;
- colonial literature as “contact literature” (travel narratives, etc.); Indian Ocean literatures, diaspora and migration;
- the production of a hybrid aesthetic, between appropriation of and resistance to dominant models: processes of creolization, *métissage*, grafting, subversion, and revision;
- ecocriticism, the poetics of space and ecotones.

*-In Linguistics and Creolistics:*

- the circulation of languages in the Indian Ocean;
- the processes of “abrogation” and “appropriation” of colonial languages;
- vernacular languages in postcolonial societies;
- the intersections between orature and literature;
- translation.

We invite contributors to upload their proposals (a 250-word abstract, title, author’s name, a 150-word bio, and contact) to the conference website:

<https://ecotones.submittable.com/submit/94373/ecotones-3-indian-ocean>

Each presentation will be 20 minutes (followed by discussion time).

A selection of papers will be considered for publication at the conclusion of the series of Ecotones events.

**Venue:** University of Reunion Island

**Dates:** June 14-15, 2018

**Languages:** French and English

**Deadline for submitting a proposal:** December 15, 2017

**Notification of acceptance:** February 1, 2018

### “Ecotones 3” Organizing Committee

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