

EDITORIAL

Jeremy Gilbert

This issue of *new formations* has been guest-edited by Ashley Dawson, with some direct input from the editors of the journal. I will not summarise the articles here, as Dawson does this in his expert introduction, which also offers perhaps the most economical and precise narrative history of the history of enclosure and its centrality to capitalist 'modernisation' available in English. Suffice to say that we are enormously proud to present this timely and urgent set of contributions towards the development of what Lee Medovoi's article calls 'political ecology'. Despite a history of sporadic engagements (ranging from Raymond Williams' *The Culture and the City* through Berland and Slack's special issue of *Cultural Studies* - Volume 8 no.1 - in 1994, to our own special issue on Ecocriticism), cultural theory and cultural studies has rarely dealt thoroughly with ecological issues, tending to retreat into its habitual scepticism regarding anything that might smell of naturalism. The fact that ecological questions frame all of the urgent political debates of our epoch as well as animating some of the most dynamic areas of critical thought surely means that this situation cannot continue. There is no need for it to do so. As we see from this collection, it is only through a radical interdisciplinarity which can accommodate insights from geography, economics, cultural studies, anthropology, philosophy and the natural sciences that the questions our current predicaments pose can be properly addressed; and it is precisely the remit of *new formations* to make just such engagements possible.

We begin by offering one set of prompts to both thought and action from another area of practice: conceptual art. On the facing page, we show an image of Matthew Fuller's 'Digger Barley'. 'Digger Barley' is a distribution of several kilos of barley seeds harvested from St George's Hill in Surrey, a site of land occupations and common agriculture during the English Revolution. It has been circulated at: Manifesta 7, the European biennial of contemporary art; Futuresonic, Manchester; and at several social centres and other events. Further copies, including actual packets of seeds, are available from: Matthew Fuller, Centre for Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths, New Cross, London, SE14 6NW, UK.