

Luis I. PRÁDANOS, *Postgrowth Imaginaries: New Ecologies and Counterhegemonic Culture in Post-2008 Spain*. Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2018, 240 pp. [ISBN 978-1-78694-134-3].



*Postgrowth Imaginaries: New Ecologies and Counterhegemonic Culture in Post-2008 Spain* is a well-documented book of high intellectual argumentation that will greatly interest a vast array of scholarly readers, for the topic of counterhegemonic culture of post-2008 Spain goes beyond Spanish national frontiers and delves further into the general issue of the global imaginaries of the post-growth era.

Rooted in the context of the Spanish crisis, Prádanos's study attends to a variety of national materials, including research, literature, film, television programs, socioecological movements, manifestoes, legislation, and web pages. From these sources, Prádanos gives a detailed account of Spanish reactions against an economic system that has not successfully benefitted Spanish society, but instead has produced political corruption, unemployment, low-paying jobs, and rampant inequality. These problems are still to be solved, and Prádanos confronts them not only within the immediate limits of the Spanish financial meltdown and explosion of the so called "real estate bubble," but also from a global crisis whose ecological, political, economic, and cultural dimensions are the consequence of the general and systemic failure of the neoliberal concept of progress and development.

Unlimited growth in a limited biosphere is a contradiction in terms, a source of unsolvable problems and a font of unachievable promises of happiness and prosperity. Against the dominant discourse of growth, counterhegemonic reactions in Spain reflect in their global counterparts and reverberate across the world in the new imaginaries that arise depicting challenging approaches to progress, common good, quality of life, and a better future. These post-growth imaginaries contribute to the creation of a new "common sense," an active awareness that, with audacious and wise political decisions of hope, challenges the narratives of growth and those that Prádanos considers allied to them, that is, catastrophe-narratives promoting conformity or ignoring the structural ills of development, or straight negationist-narratives of climate change.

The order of the chapters is impeccable. An introduction on the challenging role of environmental humanities in the Anthropocene within the dominant imaginary of economic growth is

followed by the case study of the Spanish crisis in a global context of ecological decay and neoliberal crisis, and by sections on urban ecocriticism and Spanish cultural studies, on the question of waste, refugees, and nonhuman agency, and on the pedagogy of catastrophe-fictions and of projects engaged in the realization of a post-growth future. These issues are not only analyzed and discussed in their theoretical dimension but also profusely illustrated with a considerable amount of cultural examples, among them, documentaries and films by Óscar Clemente, Mercedes Álvarez, and Juan Cavestany; novels by Rosa Montero and Lara Moreno; Emilio Gancedo's testimony and travel books; the graphic novel *Memorias de la tierra* by Miguel Brieva; several urban projects and collectives; short narratives generated by the Transition Town movement; texts on waste by the philosopher José Luis Pardo; a Boamistura's street mural in Madrid; a song by Sr. Chinarro; a photography by José Palazón; cartoons by Miguel Brieva and Manel Fontdevila; films by Diego Quemado-Díez and Juan Antonio Bayona; the TV show *El barco*; an installation by Basurama; and the website [consumehastamorir.com](http://consumehastamorir.com). With all these materials, Prádanos's book leads to a conclusion that binds together the individual chapters and returns to the title and the rise of new post-growth narratives within the specific context of post-2008 Spain and, more generally, the Anthropocene era.

Excellent as it is, Prádanos's solid and well-structured book shows the passion of a scholar deeply involved in the topic of his research, and his sound argumentation against the imaginaries of neoliberalism at times becomes recurrent and self-confident, leaving little room for relativism or discussion. There are positive things in liberalism, and in fact Prádanos himself briefly acknowledges that, as early as 1848, one of the main neoclassical economists, John Stuart Mill, pointed out in the fourth book of his *Principles of Political Economy* that a stable system is more desirable than a system of ever-increasing population and ever-growing production and consumption. Stuart Mill's work was a precursor to the first global study of the economic system, *The Limits to Growth* (1972). Besides, growth is not only a feature of neoliberalism but also affects socialist productivism and communist countries. A question arises about the political party *Podemos* that appeared after the 2008 mobilizations in Madrid. Challenging as it affirms itself to be of the "old politics," its discourse relies on growth, production and consumption when arguing the solution to unemployment, and it seems that Spanish politics have not found a post-growth political party. It is true that environmental humanities have limited presence in Spain; nonetheless, the international recognition and academic leadership of a journal like *Ecozon@. European Journal of Literature, Culture and Environment*, which sponsored by the Universidad de Alcalá, EASLCE, GIECO, and the Franklin Institute, should be taken into account..

Luis I. Prádanos is an important voice in Spanish ecocriticism and Iberian cultural studies. His book reflects a strong critical perspective of in-depth intellectual insight on Iberian cultural studies and on the Western concepts of progress and development. *Postgrowth Imaginaries: New Ecologies and Counterhegemonic Culture in Post-2008 Spain* responds to an excellent academic standard that will

be of great interest in Spain and Euro-Mediterranean countries and, given the global scope of the issues involved, for an international audience.

José Manuel MARRERO HENRÍQUEZ  
Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

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