

Call for Papers

Negotiations: Journal of Literature and Culture. Volume 4

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Theme: *Narrating the Environment*

Literary and cultural narratives of nature have evolved over time from being the subject of anthropocentric admiration or a backdrop for human action. Since the environmental turn in the human sciences in the latter half of the preceding century, artistic and critical engagements with the natural world and its representations have necessitated fundamental epistemic revisions in the humanities, particularly in the hierarchical and binary mode of thinking which has traditionally assigned a highly imbalanced and erroneous scale of significance to human and non-human entities in human imagination and action. In the contemporary moment, the need for adapting in the face of the threat of the anthropocene looms over art and other forms of representation. It has therefore become imperative to reframe artistic and humanistic inquiries along environmentally just modes of thought and behaviour. The best of literature and other art forms in history have always been responses to challenges in the immediate and larger human environment. Much of contemporary creative and critical projects are informed by an ecological consciousness in the face of the present climate crisis and carry a critique of the human exceptionalist thinking and its disastrous consequences. Roy Scranton sums up the precise role the humanities have to play in the altered landscape of our world threatened by a climate apocalypse: “In order for us to adapt to this strange new world, we’re going to need more than scientific reports and military policy. We’re going to need new ideas. We’re going to need new myths and new stories, a new conceptual understanding of reality...a new way of thinking our collective existence...a new vision of who “we” are... a new humanism, undergirded by renewed attention to the humanities.” (*Learning to Die in the Anthropocene*, p 19).

As Scranton, among others, has demonstrated, redefining the very notion of being human is a fundamental concern in the agenda of the environmental humanities. Donna Haraway’s notion of “making kin” with other beings in a deeply entangled planet gestures towards the move away from a human-centric view of the earth’s history to collaborative relationships and dynamic processes earlier hinted at by H. P. Lovecraft in what she terms famously as the chthulucene (*Staying with the Trouble*, 2016). Humanistic and anthropocentric discourses cause as much harm to the non-human world as to many members and sections of non-human animals as well, which are assigned positions of the other within the same discourse in terms of gender, race, class or sexual difference. Cary Wolfe points out, humans and non-humans alike have a stake in

speciesism, notwithstanding its direct and disproportionate effects on the latter. (*Animal Rites - American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory*, p 5). She believes that the framing of subjecthood in the West has always had a speciesist foundation, which must thereby be radically reconceptualised in order to develop a truly just framework for humanistic engagement with the world. Jean-Luc Nancy offers an alternative mode of configuring subjectivity, which she terms as “being singularly plural” which is based upon the recognition of a plural, shared state of being in which the self and the other coexist. (*Being Singular Plural* pp. 28-41). The new formulation of ontology must then be in terms of a co-ontology or co-essentiality, where being is constituted by interspecies or intersubjective dependencies, by “co-constitutive entanglement across machinic, animal, human and microbial textures”. (Manuela Rossini, “Bodies”. *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Posthuman*, p 165).

The current epistemic framework in the humanities and social sciences is driven by a core belief in the value of biodiversity of ecosystems, which however, also brings up the question of how these simultaneous worlds of the human and the more than human seek and find attunement with each other. Perhaps adequate answers can be found by shifting one’s mode of enquiry away from the totalising Western knowledge paradigm and seeking answers in cultures and alternative knowledge systems across the world. The livelihood and people-centred environmentalism of the global South which is led by women, indigenous and local communities operates through a critique of the extractive colonialist policies of globalisation led by the North and offers a model for upholding diversity in the entire biosphere including humans and non humans and for finding real world solutions for marginalised populations which bear the biggest burden of ecological destruction and climate change. Incorporating traditional ecological knowledge and indigenous ecological practices into modern conservation policies hold the key to finding sustainable solutions to climate change and planetary sustenance. Robin Wall Kimmerer’s lyrical recital of Native American ecological wisdom, for example, which is based upon a relationship of gratitude and reciprocity with the ecosphere, presents the necessity of combining science and storytelling in understanding the planet and human role in it. Her work can be a valuable template for scholars of environmental humanities in developing a dialogue with environmental science and policy in order to understand and reshape human relationship with the natural environment. Closer home, in the context of NE India, the literary works of Janice Pariat, Mamang Dai, Easterine Kire, Anuradha Sharma Pujari or the anthropological enquiries/ethnographies of Bengt Karlsson, Dolly Kikon or even historical readings by Arupjyoti Saikia and Joy Pachuau have brought new insights into the planetarity of our own habitats.

Negotiations: Journal of Literature and Culture, published by the Department of English, Cotton University invites original research papers for its upcoming fourth volume on the theme “Narrating the Environment”. The volume envisages fresh exchange of ideas that address the

growing body of writings and narratives that speak to the issue and the problems of living in the anthropocene even as literary and cultural forms are constantly finding room or being replaced by innovative and creative ways of meeting the anthropocene. The following sub themes may be consulted for thematic guidance although papers need not be limited to these and can be written on any area of literary and cultural studies relevant to the theme outlined above.

- Place, Space and Landscape
- Storytelling and Material Cultures of the Anthropocene
- The Anthropocene and Climate Crises
- Decolonial Ecologies
- Indigenous Ecologies
- Urban Ecologies
- Nature and Technology
- Globalization and Deterritorialization
- Multispecies Entanglements
- Ecological Anxieties and Affective Transformation
- Political Ecologies of Northeast India: Knowledge, Practice and Threats
- Fragile Ecologies and Rewilding
- Women in Environmental Leadership

All submissions will be selected through blind peer review. Submissions are open from students, faculty, researchers, practitioners, teachers and PhD Scholars. The issue will be published online.

Important Dates:

Submission of full paper: January 22, 2026

Intimation of acceptance: March 31, 2026

Journal Publication date: April 2026

About the journal:

The Department of English at Cotton University, Guwahati has been publishing its journal, *Negotiations* bearing ISSN No. 22500707 since 2004, which has produced three issues in print so far.

Author guidelines:

1. Communication and Submissions- All submissions and subsequent communications or queries regarding the manuscript may be addressed to the chief editor by email at hodenglish@cottonuniversity.ac.in

Submissions must contain the following items:

- I. Article manuscript (without author names)
- II. Declaration letter by the author that the article submitted is original and not published elsewhere.
- III. Title page with paper title and complete names of all author(s), clearly stating name of corresponding author with email address and contact number of corresponding author, brief bio-note for each author stating current designation and affiliation (50 words).

2. Manuscript structure-

Article manuscript must contain the following components in the order as mentioned:

- Title, Abstract, Key Words (6-8), Introduction, Analytical Discussion, Key Findings, Conclusion.
- Names of authors, or affiliation etc. must not appear anywhere in the article manuscript

3. Word limit: 6500-8000 words

4. Referencing in MLA 9th edition format, double-spaced (including notes and references), Times New Roman font size 12.

5. The Manuscript published elsewhere or selected/ submitted for publication elsewhere shall be disqualified.

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