

CRITICAL PLANT THEORIES AND CULTURES: EXPLORING HUMAN AND MORE-THAN- HUMAN WORLD ENTANGLEMENTS

Open Cultural Studies (www.degruyter.com/CULTURE) invites submissions for a topical issue “Critical Plant Theories and Cultures: Exploring Human and More-than-human World Entanglements”, edited by Dr. Peggy Karpouzou and Dr. Nikoleta Zampaki (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece).

DESCRIPTION

Plant Humanities is a very recent branch of critical inquiry in literary and cultural studies, which, although discussed since the 1970s, entered public discourse only in 2013 with Michael Pollan’s article “The Intelligent Plant” in *The New Yorker*. Plants are involved in various cultural aspects of our life and are studied in a wide range of research fields, e.g. literature, philosophy, biology, medicine, politics, etc. The jargon used for the study of plants in the Humanities is flourishing rapidly, for instance, “plant criticism,” which describes the plants’ representations through metaphors, symbols, etc., in literary texts or “botanical imaginary,” which addresses the author’s relationship with the plant world, marking at the same time the impact of the plants on textual writing and creativity. Accordingly, a text or artwork is both medium and space for exploring new kinds of relationships between the human and non-human life-forms. A pivotal point in this discussion is to learn how new types of practices can emerge in the symbiosis of life-forms (Karpouzou and Zampaki, *Symbiotic Posthumanist Ecologies in Western Literature, Philosophy and Art. Towards Theory and Practice*, 2023).

A post-anthropocentric approach on studying the plants marks the so-called “vegetal turn” under which it is argued that plants are agents of senses, intelligence, and consciousness, communicate with each other by being multi-voiced agents, remember, make choices and move. They possess agency and psychology that has been studied in various literary and cultural texts highlighting that plants also raise ethical concerns, such as the cultural repercussions of genetically modified organisms and moral implications of “plant sentience.” Considering “plant sentience” and eventually granting rights to the more-than-human world can be seen as a manifestation of a post-anthropocentric way to promote solidarity and “[...] negotiation of appropriate human-plant relationships.” (Hall, “Plant Autonomy and Human-Plant Ethics,” 2009: 180). This approach to the study of plants is also articulated in terms of a ‘return’ to the indigenous and religious practices of the past but also encourages present and future thinking about digital plant ecologies, bio-informatics or smart bio-cities that incorporate plants in dwelling, architecture, etc. Moreover, fields like digital plant ecologies provide a common starting point for interdisciplinary and multi-/inter-/trans-cultural collaboration in cultural heritage, area/regional and education studies. Finally, exploring plants in terms of “who” are and not “what” involves a bio-centric ethics of care and the activity of imagining and creating new worlds and more sustainable futures.

In this special issue, we will discuss critically the necessity to rethink plant life, its presence, role, and impact on various aspects of our human and non-human world by initiating an interdisciplinary dialogue, whereby different terrains of Humanities would learn from each other to think about, imagine and describe vegetal life with critical awareness.

Potential topics could be but not limited to:

- Critical plant theories and cultures
- Plants in Environmental Humanities and Posthumanities
- Plants in gender studies
- Plants in popular culture and folk studies
- Plants in narratology and storytelling
- Plants in global literature (poetry and prose)
- Plants in world philosophy and ethics
- Plants in bioethics and genetic engineering
- Plants in biopolitics and Medical Humanities
- Plants in Energy Humanities and petrocultures
- Plants and environmental justice
- Digital plant ecologies / plants in Digital Humanities, code studies, programming languages, Bio-informatics
- Plants in visual studies and film studies
- Plants in music studies and dance studies
- Plants in media and communication studies
- Plants in aesthetics and art(s), e.g. bio-/eco-art, AI art, cyborg art, etc.
- Plants, biomimicry, architecture and design studies
- Plants in spatial, regional and area studies
- Plants in urban studies, smart cities and citizenship
- Plants in religious studies
- Plants in postcolonial and indigenous studies
- Plants in memory studies
- Plants in linguistic studies
- Plants in food studies
- Plants in cultural heritage and cultural policy
- Plants in education studies
- The future of Plant Humanities

HOW TO SUBMIT

Submissions will be collected by April 30, 2024 via the on-line submission system at <https://www.editorialmanager.com/culture/>

As the article type, choose: "Critical Plant Theories and Cultures".

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Further questions about this thematic issue can be sent to Dr. Peggy Karpouzou (pkarpouzou@phil.uoa.gr) and Dr. Nikoleta Zampaki (nikzamp@phil.uoa.gr).

In case of technical problems with submission, please write to
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