

Message from the Guest Editors

Language of Sustainable Development: Discourses on the Anthropocene in Literature and Cinema

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Global industries, multinational corporations, outrageous rise of global population, deforestation, the global oil and nuclear industries pose the ongoing challenge for sustainability of Earth's resources. Exploitation remains the main problem, and may be analyzed from Marxist, materialist and capitalist perspectives. Aerologists, deep ecologists, environmentalists, lawyers in the legal space, scientists and academics pose numerous questions about the future of humanity. Writers and activists foresee the end of the human era. In 2002, the Nobel Prize-winning atmospheric chemists, Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer, resurrected the concept of the anthropocene to denote the current interval of time on earth in which many key processes are dominated by human influence (Crutzen, 2002). The birth of the anthropocene is the departure from the conditions of the Holocene epoch that nurtured the growth of human civilization (Forster, 2013).

Since 1800, the global population has risen from roughly 1 billion to 6.5 billion in 2000 and a projected 9 billion by 2050 (Roser, Ritchie and Oritz-Ospina, 2019). The duration of the anthropocene is now arguably the most important question of our age—scientifically, socially and politically. We cannot think of a greater or more urgent challenge. Socio-cultural products (anthropocene-literatures and anthropocene-films) may be viewed as futuristic telescopes to arrive at the concept of what we term postearth—the product of the robbery of the earth by humans as they begin to recreate and reshape it. By postearth, we mean the condition of the Planet Earth as a result of the shift in its climatic condition(s). Creative writers and filmmakers have engaged the anthropocene in their works. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, a novel in the field of the Environmental Humanities, and James Cameron's *Avatar*, a film located in the Biocentric discourse, capture the profundity of the anthropogenic exercise. Despite the growing body of studies on the anthropocene or, simply put, the climate conundrum in the global academia, journals, dedicated solely to publishing essays on the intersection of literature, performances, film and the environmental discourse are very few. This brought to bear the need to engage in the conversation on environmental crisis in the thematic section of this issue of *Language, Discourse and Society*.

More than sixty submissions were received within the period of the Call for Papers. However, only five were able to make it through the very high standard of peer review mechanism of the journal. The discourses offer a clear insight into the upsurge in protest culture, exploitation, power and environmental justice in the global academia and attests to the paradigm shift from the positivist to the constructivist, and from a Humancentric view of existence into an Ecocentric epistemology.

The focus of the thematic section of this issue is the language that has been used by artists to communicate the anthropocene. The section also explores how creative artists have been able to use their works as pedagogical tools to echo the threat of the Anthropocene to the

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sustenance of Planet Earth. In the lens of ecocriticism, Chinyere Lilian Okam and Onyekachi Peter Onuoha interrogate Frank Rajah Arase's *Somewhere in Africa: The Cries of Humanity* and David Oyelowo's *Blood and Oil*. Their article, ***Revolutionary Trope and Environmental Pedagogy in Arase's Somewhere in Africa: the Cries of Humanity and Oyelowo's Blood and Oil*** examines critically the revolutionary dimension(s) of environmental pedagogy. In ***Language of the Oppressed: Boon of Nature and Curse of Humans in the Life of a Refugee***, N. Lavanya and Anjum Khan investigate the role of humans in the destruction of nature and co-humans. The research, which is an analysis of Zoya Phan's *Little Daughter*, examines the destructive tendencies of the anthropocentric activities of humans. Put together, all the articles address pressing issues of environment in a world that is beset by pandemics, corruption, climate change, and unprecedented migrations that appear to put all humanity in a developmental crossroads that must be confronted head-on if we ever hope to get out of the woods for the sake of our common humanity and sustainable development.

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