

INTRODUCTION

Nature and Culture makes us speculate on the binary opposition of Nature/Culture (formulated by Claude Lévi-Strauss) and the interrelation of Nature and Culture as seen in modern societies. This opposition finds multiple implementations in many disciplines: folk ecology, environmental studies, and in folklore genres, the beliefs and customs of the calendric and family life cycles, folk religion practices, language, comparative mythology, and anthrozoology. However, Nature and Culture are not always opposed; they interrelate and complement each other.

In modern society due to the increasingly acute changes in nature, challenges of climate change, and correspondingly the cultural attitudes towards nature, actions and debates related to development and sustainability stand at the centre of European and worldwide rhetoric.

Environmental problems have not been under consideration for the first time but have been repeatedly addressed over the past few hundred years with philosophical and practical questions, certain schools have developed, such as deep ecology, which emphasise the importance of turning to nature, because nature is characterised by complex relationships, the existence of organisms of which is dependent on being the existence of others within ecosystems, all of which have equal rights to existence (Baruch Spinoza, Arne Næss, Kjetil Falan and others). Let us also mention the semiotic approaches that have been prompted by the work of Jakob von Yexküll (K. Kull, T. Maran, and others).

Relatively newly emerged research areas are aimed at a different, non-anthropocentric investigation of the world – more-than-human geography, multispecies ethnography, archaeology of fullness, zoo folkloristics, zoo poetics, zoo semiotics based on the posthuman vision of the world (J. Igoe, W. Dressler,

E. Kohn, E. Marris, B. Büscher and R. Fletcher, S. Toncheva and others), on the newly collected data. The study of the Nature/Culture dichotomy became a broad interdisciplinary field – where humanities and social sciences cooperate with Earth and environmental sciences, economics, health, food security etc.

In this issue of the journal, the primary focus is on practical ecological studies and human opinions of the processes taking place, the practices of submerged villagers to commemorate their place of residence, old and new practices in medicine (including those related to COVID-19) and the arc of life, folklore phenomena and research history.

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December 2023

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