Literature, Ecology, Ethics

Recent Trends in European Ecocriticism

An International Conference
Hosted by the “Ethics of Textual Cultures” Program
University of Augsburg, Germany, March 3-5, 2011

As increasing public awareness has put environmental issues on the political agenda, ecological approaches have been gaining momentum in literary studies. The growing interest and input from various sides has profoundly affected ecocritical debate. Not only has it opened new perspectives on classic texts; it has also extended the domain of ecological questioning far beyond the boundaries of traditional ‘nature writing.’ No less momentously, it has created an increasing demand for methodological self-reflection. Ecocritics today can build on substantial theoretical groundwork, but at the same time they need to confront the inherent tensions and contradictions of an approach that reaches beyond disciplinary and epistemological borderlines. Many of the questions raised by these developments call for reflection on the interplay of literary and environmental ethics, and on the ethics of ecocriticism itself.

The conference wants to stimulate intense, controversial, and productive dialogues between different approaches to ecocriticism. Our panels will bring together established ecocritics and younger scholars in what we hope will be exciting, mutually beneficent discussions. There will be keynote lectures by Axel Goodbody (Bath) and Sylvia Mayer (Bayreuth). We welcome proposals for presentations on all aspects of recent European ecocriticism, including but not limited to:

- ecocritical readings in various literary genres;
- new developments in ecocritical theory;
- critical discussions of classic works of ecocriticism;
- the ethics of environmentalism and ecocriticism;
- academic responses to eco-political questions and debates;
- ecocriticism and the new media;
- transcontinental perspectives on European ecocriticism.

Presentations should be 20-30 minutes in length and are intended as starting points for comparative discussion. Please send your abstract (250 words) and a short biographical statement including your institutional affiliation and postal and e-mail address to Timo Müller (timo.mueller@phil.uni-augsburg.de) or Michael Sauter (michael.sauter@phil.uni-augsburg.de) by October 31, 2010.

Organizers: Dr. Timo Müller / Michael Sauter, Lehrstuhl für Amerikanistik, Universität Augsburg, Universitätsstr. 10, 86135 Augsburg, Germany.

Website: http://www.philhist.uni-augsburg.de/ethik/ecology