

PANEL 5: NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT IN INDIGENOUS WRITING

Nature as a living agent – Reading Nature and Environment in Mudrooroo’s *Dr. Wooreddy’s Prescriptions for enduring the Ending of the World*

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Stating that nature and environment are important elements in the context of indigenous writing might amount to a truism which bears the danger of an unchallenged reproduction of the colonial image of the “noble savage”, unless environment and imagery from nature are further qualified - are examined more closely in individual pieces of indigenous writing. In my paper I thus engage in a close reading analysis of nature and environment in Mudrooroo’s (Colin Johnson) 1983 novel. I suggest that Helen Tiffin’s approach to post-colonial literature as “Counter-Discourse” provides a helpful analytical tool for reading nature in Mudrooroo not only as a narrative element, but as a living agent and as a protagonist in its own right. I examine how in Mudrooroo’s novel subject-object dichotomies between humans and nature are systematically unwound, and how locations of the self within a nexus of being are negotiated from an indigenous perspective. I argue that this undoing of subject-object relations between humans and nature is at the heart of Mudrooroo’s text. In foregrounding nature and environment within a narrative reworking of first encounter, Mudrooroo’s text is an act of empowerment. This empowerment is achieved through a representation of environmental consciousness which resists the act and notion of displacement, as well as the oppressive conceptual logic behind the notion of the “other”, and hegemonic assumptions against indigenous epistemology and ontology.

Bio

I began my university training in 2009 at the University of Cologne, majoring in English and Philosophy. I am currently in the final stage of obtaining my teaching degree (State examination). In 2013, I additionally enrolled for a BA program in Oriental –and Islamic studies in Cologne. I was introduced to post-colonial studies working on a paper dealing with literary representations of transgenerational traumatization. My fields of specialization are post-colonial theory and post-colonial literature, taking a special study –and research interest in indigenous writing and cultural production. Having a Canadian family background, I am especially interested in a cross-cultural comparative perspective on post-colonial literatures, focusing on work produced by Australian and Canadian indigenous writers.