

# ASLE-UKI Postgraduate Conference, 30-31 July 2014, University College Dublin

Locating Ecocriticism: Systems, Methodologies, Contexts

## **Confirmed Keynote Addresses:**

Day 1: Dr Sharae Deckard (UCD) and Dr Pablo Mukherjee (Warwick)

Day 2: Mark Cocker and Professor Anne Milne (Toronto)

How does one define a system? Be it an ecosystem, world-system, literary system, colonial system, the term itself, despite implying order, exudes chaos in its infinite iterability. In 2004, Greg Garrard wrote that "no single or simple perspective unites all ecocritics." It would seem, therefore, that system and ecocritic imply a commonality that diversifies beyond the usual implications of the terms themselves.

This conference will therefore investigate how thinking about systems, and thinking systemically, might impact upon green readings of literature. Ecocriticism has at its foundation an awareness of ecological systems, and maintains a keen focus on the myriad ways in which systems of human making depend upon, intersect with, or exploit nature, and how humans are as much a part of nature as plants and other animals, indeed, how nature is produced and produces through a myriad of systems. It is interested in how literature explores the vital relation of people to place and non-human life.

The conference will investigate the ways in which interlaced natural and cultural systems influence, and are influenced by, literary works and criticism. It seeks to open to critique conventional practices and representations in literature as well as grafting trajectories, making sense of the chaotic, or making chaotic that which seems ordered through new paradigms. Must a system be ordered to function, or is chaos the necessary entry-point? Is the motif of environmental crisis overused in literary, theoretical and scientific discourse to the point of exhaustion? Where does connection become convention in ecological critique, and how can this be avoided?

We invite speakers to engage with the theme creatively and we warmly welcome paper proposals and artistic works in progress relating to, but not at all restricted to, the following:

- Ways in which literary form relates to ecosystems
- Ways in which literatures of past periods understood ecosystems and/or understood nature through contemporary systems of thought
- Creating art/creating criticism through intercommunication and interdisciplinarity

- Environmental crisis and climate change: systems of measurement/warning systems, and literary representation
- Sensibility and Praxis: bringing ethics to bear on environmental systems.
- World-Systems theory, the capitalist *longue-durée* and literary depictions of commodity frontiers, plantation, and industrialisation
- Representing the anthropocene: narrative, form, and aesthetic engagement
- Postcolonial Ecocriticism: nature, culture, power
- Disability Studies and Ecocriticism

Please send an abstract of 250-300 words for 20 minute papers along with a short profile to [locatingecocriticism@gmail.com](mailto:locatingecocriticism@gmail.com). Participants will be notified of acceptance by 21 April.

We also have a wordpress site which will be updated with information regularly:  
<http://locatingecocriticism.wordpress.com>

Organisers: Emma Curran and Michael Paye

**Deadline: 31 March 2014**

*Sponsored by ASLE-UKI and  
UCD School of English*

**asle-uki**

