

(Re-)Thinking nature. German Ecopoetry since the 'ecological revolution'

This thesis, which focuses on cultural sciences and interdisciplinary research, examines five collections of poems by different German poets addressing the interrelation between humans and nature in the face of ecological crises. Despite the topicality of the subject, research on the relationship between literature and the environment has been slow to establish itself in Germanic studies, which can be explained by the ideology of '*Blut und Boden*' / 'blood and soil'. This is also the reason why environmental poetry has been neglected, although in recent years, numerous anthologies have witnessed a renewed interest in ecological issues among poets. Therefore, the thesis aims to revitalize this field of research while taking into account the political and ideological implications of poems. It starts with close readings of environmental poems from the 1970s and 1980s, written under the influence of the international 'ecological revolution', and opts for a diachronic perspective by also looking at contemporary texts. The project begins with the observation that today's German ecopoetry, raises awareness of ecological consciousness by addressing the socio-political and environmental issues related to the climate crisis, but that contemporary poetry favors other writing styles and aesthetic strategies than the poetry of the 1970s.

Using visions of death and destruction, the ecological poetry of the 1970s and 1980s (Günter Kunert, Sarah Kirsch) primarily questions the exploitation, pollution, and destruction of the planet, combined with a critique of technology and skepticism towards any growth-oriented progress. In contrast, poetry collections (by Ulrike Draesner, Silke Scheuermann and Marion Poschmann) published since the beginning of the millennium deal more with natural (potential or past) disasters, species extinction, and climate change, which are highlighted by experimental semantic forms and linguistic approaches. These techniques challenge existing modes of perception and encourage readers to reflect on their behaviour towards the planet. In the face of the ecological crisis, poetry can thus serve as an instrument of perception and knowledge while also assuming a seismographic function.

Despite their different approaches, the five poetry collections call into question the hegemony of humankind and advocate for a new ethics (of nature) by privileging ecocentric or biocentric perspectives (e.g. those of animals or plants). To this end, they often draw on romantic programs or pre-modern theories and fantasies about nature (such as 'Mother Nature'). In addition, the texts raise awareness of ecological issues by highlighting the interdependencies between humans and non-humans. This often involves a (self-)critical reflection of concepts of nature, literary traditions and scientific methods that are closely linked to technological, economic, and social issues.

Following these findings, a didactic model of *CriticalCultureNatureLiteracy* (CCNL) is proposed for teaching ecology-oriented poetry within the framework of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). As the example of Silke Scheuermann's poem 'Dodo' shows, reading 'with' and 'against' the text can encourage students to critically reflect on anthropocentric perspectives, social values and traditions, ecological responsibility, and sustainable lifestyles.