

## KEYNOTE SPEECH

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### **Cultural Ecology in Decolonial Perspective**

Cultural ecology is an ecotheoretical approach which specifically focuses on the role of literary and other forms of cultural creativity in the transdisciplinary context of the environmental humanities. The paper argues that some of the key assumptions of cultural ecology are mutually co-productive with a decolonial perspective. Both approaches foreground marginalized voices, particularly also indigenous forms of ecocultural knowledge and imagination. Both are inspired by the cultural work of art and literature as an ecological force in culture, which has an intrinsic potential of deconstructing and, in effect, de-colonizing pathogenic power structures, while also developing imaginary alternatives to these systemic realities in their creative transformation. Both approaches recognize the uniqueness of cultural ecosystems while at the same time emphasizing their transcultural connectivities.

Whereas some versions of decolonial theory tend to replace previous ideological binaries with new ones – such as between the Global South and the Global North, indigeneity and modernity –, other voices in this expanding field consider decolonial thought not as anti-modern and instead advocate for different modernities instead of one modernity, for a pluriversal versus a universal ecocultural modernism. It is in this non-binary, decentering yet also newly reconnective form of transcultural pluriversality that cultural ecology resonates and appears potentially co-productive with a decolonial perspective.

**Key words:** cultural ecology, decolonial theory, environmental humanities, ecocriticism, transcultural literary studies