

postHUMANities

Humanities Center 2014-2015

Nature's Voices: On Hearing Beyond the Human



Thursday
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4:10pm

Scheler Humanities Forum
Linderman Library Room 200

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What does it mean to speak for nature? One of the central tenets of contemporary environmental criticism is “thou shalt not anthropomorphize.” To give a human voice to nature is, according to such critics, to reduce the nonhuman world to a mere reflection of our own desires and needs. And yet what are the alternatives? This talk explores the ethics of speaking in Nature’s voice, its dangers as well as its potential benefits, from medieval views of nature to the European Enlightenment up through recent ecological thinkers. It argues that defining the category of nature has been one of the recursive tropes of modernity; as such, it is a topic on which today’s humanities are ideally positioned to speak.

Co-sponsored with the Department of English

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