ISSN 1949-8519 (Print)
ISSN 2154-6711 (Online)

Forum for World Literature Studies

世界文学研究论坛 Vol.6 No.2 June 2014

Literature

الأدب

Littérature

Literatura

Литература

Shanghai · Wuhan · West Lafayette

Forum for World Literature Studies

Vol.6, No.2, June 2014

Ethics, Community and Literature Studies

Edited by Wang Songlin

Activist Ecocriticism Studies

Edited by Simon C. Estok

Book Reviews

Edited by Yang Gexin

Shanghai · Wuhan · West Lafayette

世界文学研究论坛

2014 年第 2 期

伦理、社会与文学研究

王松林（栏目主持）

激进主义生态批评研究

西蒙 C. 艾斯托克（栏目主持）

书　　评

杨革新（栏目主持）

上海·武汉·西拉法叶

编委会

Forum for World Literature Studies(Print ISSN: 1949-8519; Online ISSN: 2154-6711) is a peer-reviewed academic journal sponsored by Shanghai Normal University, Purdue University and the Wuhan Institute for Humanities, and co-edited by Professor Huang Tiechi of Shanghai Normal University, Professor Nie Zhenzhao of Central China Normal University and Professor Charles Ross of Purdue University. This journal provides a forum to promote diversity in world literature, with a particular interest in the study of literatures of those neglected countries and culture regions. With four issues coming out every year, this journal publishes original articles on topics including theoretical studies, literary criticism, literary history, and cultural studies, as well as book review articles.

Forum for World Literature Studies accepts submissions in English or Chinese by authors from all over the world. The manuscript is expected to be of about 5000-8000 words and must follow the MLA style. Submission should be made including an abstract of about 200 words, a short biography of the author, and three to five keywords, as well as the main body of the essay. Manuscripts from America shall be submitted to Charles Ross (Email: cross@purdue.edu; Mailing address: 500 Oval Drive, West Lafayette, IN47907; Phone:765-4943749), and those from outside America shall be submitted to the office in Wuhan: *FWLS* Office, Wuhan Institute for Humanities, #19-2-1-103, Wanke Meilizhicheng, Fourth Gaoxin Road, No.1, Donghu Hi-Tech Development District, Wuhan, 430205, P.R. China. Phone: (86) 27 87920279. Email: fwlstudies@gmail.com. Website: http://www.fwls.org.

Forum for World Literature Studies was indexed by SCOPUS and also included in the databases of EBSCO, Gale, MLA(MLA International Bibliography) and ABELL(The Annual Bibligraphy of English Language and Literature).

To subscribe to this journal or purchase any single issue, please contact us at fwlsmarket@gmail.com or fwlstudies@gmail.com.

Contents

Ethics , Community and Literature Studies

Activist Ecocriticism Studies

Book Reviews

目　　录

伦理、社会与文学研究

激进主义生态批评研究

书　　评

Ethics, Community and Literature: An Introduction

Wang Songlin
Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ningbo University
818 Fenghua Road, Jiangbei District, Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, 315211, China
Email: wangsonglin@nbu.edu.cn

We are in a time of rapid change, a time that ethical issues are addressed by various disciplines: philosophy, economics, medical science, art and literature, to name only a few. Terence Hawkes rightly points out in his General Preface to the *New Accents* series that a time of rapid and radical change will inevitably affect the nature of those disciplines that both reflect our society and help to change it and he perceptively realizes that such changes are nowhere more apparent than in the central field of literary studies, because the erosion of the assumptions and presumptions that support the literary disciplines in their conventional form has been proved fundamental. What, then, are the assumptions and presumptions that are central to literary studies? A survey of the tradition of world literature exhibits that there has been a clear line of ethical concerns in both literary writing and literary criticism ever since the ancient time. To many, literature serves as a moral library or an illustration of philosophical ideas and actual moral life by supplying "the kind of experience needed to develop a person's faculty of moral judgment" (DePaul 563). The idea of literature has "civilizing values" and "teaching values" was proposed by many authors, thinkers, educators as well as critics like Mathew Arnold, who in his *Culture and Anarchy* suggests that culture seeks "to make the best that has been thought and known in the world " and "to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light." Here, quite conspicuously, Arnold binds cultural value with ethics. Undoubtedly, ever since the rise of literary studies ethics has been the conventional "assumptions and presumptions that support the literary disciplines."

However, with the passing of time and as the discourse of criticism changes, the traditional ethical assumptions and presumptions have been eroded and replaced by various theories, deconstructive theories in particular in the last two or three decades of the 20th century. Most theories of the latter half of the 20th century are hostile to ethical criticism. For a very long time the ethical commitment of literary criticism has been challenged and marginalized and the old map of criticism were totally changed.

In the circle of criticism and in the university classroom of Department of English Studies scholars have been busy mongering "theories" and "theories." Such situation remained unchanged until late 1980s and 1990s in particular when a revival of or a renewed interest for the ethical issues in literature emerged.

This rise of ethical criticism soon became widespread and impressive. According to A. Mendelson-Maoz, in the 1980s and the 1990s several journals devoted special issues to the subject of ethics and literature: *New Literary History* 1983 (Diamond, Murray, Nussbaum, Putnam, and Raphael), *Ethics* 1988 (Backer, Booth, Diamond, Nussbaum), *PMLA* (Publications of the Modern Language Association of America) 1991 (Attridge and Buell), *Yale French Studies* 1999 (Nouvet), and *Poetics Today* 2004 (Askin). *Philosophy & Literature* has devoted an issue to a Symposium on Morality and Literature (hosting the debate between Nussbaum and Posner) in 1998, and deals with ethical criticism almost in every volume.[1] Evidently, after many years' clamor of "theories," criticism began to assume an "ethical turn." Then, what is ethical criticism in this so-called age of "after-theory"?

In order to answer this question and draw this map in China, Nie Zhenzhao, vice chairman of China Association of Foreign Literature Studies, vice chairman of International Association for Ethical Literary Criticism, and professor of comparative literature in Central China Normal University, began to establish a set of paradigms for ethical literary criticism at the turn of the century. Nie's unremitting endeavor in ethical literary criticism has now become influential and his ideas have been hotly discussed and responded in several international symposiums. We can safely say that a renewed interest for ethical criticism (or an "ethical turn" together with an "ecological turn" which is essentially related with the issue of ethics) is now prevalent and that the map of literary criticism assumes a new and clear contour, at least in China. The seven articles under this column are selected from the contributions to the 3rd International Symposium on Ethical Literary Criticism held in Ningbo University (China) last year. These essays, all soundly based on close reading and analysis of literary texts, are designed to discuss the question of ethics and aesthetics, ethics and community, ethics and identity, and ethics and ecology.

Cesar Dominguez, from the University of Santiago de Compostela of Spain, begins this cluster of articles by citing Tobin Siebers' famous statement: "The heart of ethics is the desire for community." Then he points out that it is with the world literature paradigm/discipline that the idea of community has become more visible in the form of the "human family," an ethical topic that works of world literature turn to address after the WWII. Cesar Dominguez also discusses the issue of the "desire for uncommunity" in "hermitic literatures," i.e., literatures by isolated peoples. He raises the question of whether such "isolated literatures" should be integrated in world

literature as a foil to the "desire for community."

The sense of community which is indispensable to ethics is also responded in "Should Literary Criticism be Ethical?" by Hitoshi Oshima from Fukuoka University of Japan. To illustrate his opinions about the ethical values of a literary work, Hitoshi Oshima quotes Albert Camus's Nobel Prize Speech in 1957, which claims that "an artist forms himself or herself through the ceaseless going-to and coming-back-from others, between beauty indispensable to him and the community impossible to run away from. That is why he neglects nothing." Hitoshi Oshima regards Camus's "Not to neglect anything in the world" as "the most eloquent sign of his or her love and sincerity for the world" and hence the basis for an ethical literature. He further points out that just in the same way that an ethical writer should examine whether or not he or she neglects anything in the world, an ethical critic should examine whether or not the writer neglects anything in the world. He suggests that an ethical critic should be the one who takes care to find such value as makes a literary work ethical, the one who appreciates it in a way that allows many readers to share it.

Another contributor who deals with the problems of ethics, identity and community is Florence Kuet from University of Malaya of Malaysia. She investigates the relation of family and community in Han Suyin's works from the perspective of ethical choice and cultural identity, arguing that the central theme of Han Suyin's life lies in her successful attempts in reconstructing the ethical order of her world. Florence Kuet finds several breakthroughs in Han Suyin's characterization, firstly, her ability in defusing the curse of her illegitimate existence in the family as well as the community where she was brought up; secondly, her success in challenging the ethical norms of her era, and thirdly the rebirth of her new "dual-identity." Evidently, for Florence Kuet the sense of community features a sense of family belonging as well as a sense of cultural and ethical identity.

Much as Cesar Dominguez's considering ethics as the desire for community, Hitoshi Oshima's defining "Not to neglect anything in the world" as the base of ethical literature, and Florence Kuet's taking community as a way of ethical choice and cultural identity, Xu Yan from Ningbo University of China studies the issue of existence and community in the novel *The Farming of Bones* by the Haitian American writer, Edwidge Danticat. Xu Yan's article "To Narrate is to Be " centers on the character Amabelle Désir's life-long endeavors to extricate herself from a sense of non-existence by the way of narrating. In another word, the heroine tries to associate herself with some communities through the working of words. The death of Amabelle's parents cuts her loose from the solid family foundations since birth. Her helpless choice to be a handmaid in the neighbor country alienates her further from her Haitian community. Humble as she is as a handmaid, Amabelle still rebuilds a new

community with her boyfriend and his friends. But the 1937 Massacre exterminates her new community mercilessly and completely. Again the only hope for her is to find a safe nest in words to lay down all the people and their existence, thus finding a grave in words to commemorate them and establishing a narrated community that she still identifies herself with.

As is mentioned above, accompanying the "ethical turn" early in this century there was an "ecological turn" which is closely related with environmental ethics and, in Timothy Morton's term, "melancholy ethics." Peter I-min Huang from Tamkang University applies Morton's "dark ecology" or "melancholy ethics" to discuss the novel *Power* (1998) by Linda Hogan, the renowned Native American writer. He convincingly points out that Derrida's concept of vulnerability is similar to Morton's "melancholy ethics" in terms of shared suffering between human and non-humans and the need for compassion. Derrida, who regards compassion as the basis of ethics, strongly stresses the necessity of experiencing compassion to open "the immense question of pathos" and "of suffering, pity and compassion." According to Huang, this kind of ethics does not attempt a separation of man from the environment, whether human or non-human environment, nor does it distance itself by relating to it only in "aesthetic" terms. Rather, this understanding of ethics is a commitment to recognizing that love is as much about loss and separation as about amalgamation and unity. By proposing a non-human perspective of ethics, Huang contributes a new understanding of the theme of moral judgment and sacrifice in the novel.

The other two contributors, Young Suck Rhee from Hangyang Universitty of Korea and Knut Brinhildsvoll from the Centre for Ibsen Studies at the University of Oslo of Norway, both deal with the moral and aesthetic effects of literature, the former by analyzing W. B. Yeats' poems, the latter by exemplifying the role of ethics in the works of Emile Zola, Henrik Ibsen, Bertolt Brecht, Robert Louis Stevenson, to name only a few. Young Suck Rhee attempts to rectify a misreading of Yeats by most readers who regard Yeats' poetry as aesthetically pure. He argues that ethics is closely related with art and poetry and that Yeats was perhaps one of the first poets who considered it wrong to separate ethics from aesthetics. Young Suck Rhee regards Yeats as a combination of "priest of religion" as well as an artist. Knut Brinhildsvoll's article focuses particularly on different kinds of genres and their artistic expressions, which aim at obtaining a moral effect and a mental change. He begins with Aristotle's theory of catharsis and moves on all the way from Horace to Hegel, Karl Max, Bertolt Brecht, F.R. Leavis, and quite significantly to Emmanuel Levinas, whose ethical philosophy about Self and Other servers as the a theoretical door-opener in literary disputes about moral questions. The innovation of this article lies in its demonstration of the unity of content and form of literary works, that is, in Knut Brinhildsvoll's own

words, "ethical questions may be attached to the work's formal structure as well." Brinhildsvoll coins the term "the ethics of aesthetics" to justify a call for a new ethical agenda in artistic writing.

Note

1. See Adia Mendelson-Maoz, "Ethics and Literature: Introduction." *Philosophia* 35(2007):111–116, P113.

Work Cited

De Paul, R. M. "Argument and perception: The role of literature in moral inquiry." *The Journal of Philosophy* 85.10 (1988): 552–565.

责任编辑：杨革新

World Literature and the Ethical Turn: A Desire for Community?[1]

César Domínguez
Department of Literary Theory & Comparative Literature, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela
r/ Calvario 13-15, 27800 Vilalba (Lugo), Spain
Email: cesar.dominguez@usc.es

Abstract Tobin Siebers has famously stated that "the heart of ethics is the desire for community." The aim of this paper is twofold. On the one hand, I will discuss how world literature is responding to the "ethical turn" (Michael Eskin) in relation to the long tradition of inclusion of the Other within comparative literature. Whereas comparative literature was born twice in western Europe in the aftermath of war conflicts — the Napoleonic Wars and WWII — it is with the world literature paradigm/discipline that the idea of community has become more visible in the form of the "human family" reflected by works of world literature and by the "human family" that works of world literature address. On the other hand, I will address the issue of the "desire for uncommunity" as expressed by hermits and anchorites. I will analyze the case of Christopher McCandless's simple living and how it may be related to "heremitic literatures," that is to say, literature by uncontacted peoples. The obvious ethical question is whether such "isolated literatures" should be part of the fieldwork of the comparatist and, hence, integrated in world literature.
Key Words anthropology; community; ethics; uncontacted people; world literature

As a comparatist, the invitation to participate in this "Third International Symposium on Ethical Literary Criticism" has proved to be a unique opportunity to rethink the primary tenets of the discipline. But this is particularly difficult in the case of comparative literature, for there is no general consensus on what comparative literature does, except for the distance it maintains from national literary studies. And yet, despite this lack of consensus, comparatists usually express a fierce pride in the ethical aims of the discipline, which is based upon its aspirations for international understanding in the aftermath of military confrontations. As Jan M. Ziolkowski rightly notes, comparative literature emerged after the Napoleonic wars, consolidated its position as a discipline after the Second World War, and experienced its greatest

expansion in the US during the Vietnam War.

It is claimed that by researching and teaching literatures cross-culturally, comparatists aim at increasing mutual understanding by stressing common human values beyond borders. In support of this claim, the history of comparative literature exhibits striking parallels with the history of international law, to the extent that it shares some foundational texts, for instance, Immanuel Kant's *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht* (1784; Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose) and *Zum ewigen Frieden. Ein philosophischer Entwurf* (1795; Perpetual Peace. A Philosophical Sketch). Ziolkowski states that "the constitution of comparative literature was linked explicitly with that of the United Nations" (26). Though he does not substantiate his assertion, it is undeniable that, according to some statements on the discipline one may read in textbooks, comparative literature is figuratively conceived of as the general assembly of the United Nations. "La letteratura comparata è diventata un sapere imprevedibile e poetico," says Armando Gnisci, "che si è rivoltato contro la sua testa europea e si è trasformato in una specie di *parlamento*: dando luogo al colloquio di tutte le voci letterarie del mondo e dei loro discorsi che *insegnano* [...] a intendere le differenze, a salvarle e non solo: ad amarle; a volerne essere parte, dote, grazia, rivendicazione e lotta (se necessario)" (xviii).

The ethical aims of comparative literature appear to be self-evident, and yet, beyond these vague and idealistic statements, there is no critical reflection on the links between comparative literature and ethics. When recent developments regarding the role of ethics in literary studies[2] are taken into consideration this lack of critical reflection seems all the more poignant: In the 2004 special issue of *Poetics Today* devoted to literature and ethics, Michael Eskin described a "turn to ethics" in literary studies and, conversely, a "turn to literature" in (moral) philosophy, which originated in 1983 or thereabouts (557). For Eskin, *apud* James Phelan, the turn to ethics in literary studies was a reaction against the formalism of deconstruction. The "double turn" took place between 1983 and 2004, a period which corresponds in the history of comparative literature with a move from both the "excesses" of *Theory* — with deconstruction once again at the centre of discussions — and the limitations of the Euro-American canon to the wider world, as symbolically encapsulated in the term *word literature*. Between 2003 and 2004 three anthologies of world literature — Bedford, Longman and Norton — were published. In these anthologies, the rationale for the change from *Western literature* and *world masterpieces* to *world literature* is posited in terms of a richer corpus of literary materials, an "extraordinary range of exciting material is now in view" (Damrosch & Pike xvii). Drawing once again on Gnisci's image, one may say that the number of member voices of the general

assembly of the "United Literatures," which represents the world literary community, is higher than ever before. Hence, one should not overlook the fact that in one of the founding books of the turn to ethics — Tobin Siebers's *The Ethics of Criticism* (1988) — it is claimed that "the heart of ethics is the desire for community" (202). This leads me to pose the following question: Does the (paradigm?) shift from comparative to world literature respond to such an ethical desire?

The aim of my paper is to provide a tentative and oblique answer to this question. Tentative, for it is not possible to deal with all the issues raised by such a question within the limits of this paper; oblique, for I choose a rather different starting point. The ethics in comparative literature has been claimed for its performativity, that is to say, what the discipline aims to achieve either directly or collaterally — a better mutual understanding between human communities, and an increasing awareness of common human values. However, I instead focus on the illocutionary dimension of the utterance, which the comparatist claims as *literary*, and whether or not both the appropriation of the utterance — the fact of being charted and included in an atlas of world literature — and its illocutionary definition as *literary* is legitimate.[3] The reader may have surely noticed that from this perspective, comparative literature faces a similar conundrum to that of anthropology. In fact, as I have argued elsewhere, the institutionalization of both disciplines in nineteenth-century France was mutually dependent. To illustrate my point, I will draw on an extreme example of the negation of a "desire for community," namely, the iconic figure of the "asocial human being," variously called hermit, anchorite, or misanthrope, though important nuances should be observed between these terms. As a collective, one of the translations of this iconic figure and one which I will focus on is "uncontacted peoples," a term for which the question "Uncontacted by/for whom?" is of key importance.

After briefly sketching some reflections on comparative literature and ethics from an illocutionary perspective and its methodological consequences, I will deal with testimonials of texts by "asocial" individuals, comprising the Machiguenga community which lives in the Amazon basin. The meta-textual feature — more specifically, a Western text about non-Western texts by Mario Vargas Llosa — has the obvious shortcoming of a Western mediation, but, at the same time, the clear advantage of showing us how the Other, either individual or collective, is formed under Western eyes. In my final remarks, I will establish connections between the two parts of the paper in order to question such images as "human family" and "literary friendship," which are typical of the "ethical lexicon" of comparative literature.

The Ethics of a Comparative Discipline, Which does not Compare?

While the ideological obsequiousness and jargon-oriented bent of *Theory* has been

extensively discussed and fuelled by the "Sokal Affair" (Sokal & Brickmont), one aspect the discussion does not seem to have taken into consideration is that related to the naming of disciplines. Though put in simplistic terms,[4] I think we may broadly agree that names of disciplines encapsulate a blend of, primarily or even exclusively, object of study and, secondarily, methodology. The latter case applies, for instance, when the object of study is shared by several disciplines, but their distinctiveness depends on their different methods or scopes. Within astronomy, for example, both theoretical astronomy and observational astronomy study the physical and chemical properties of objects and matter outside the Earth, but with different tools and aims.

This is not the place to trace the disciplinary history of comparative literature. It may suffice to recall the arguments of Benedetto Croce at the beginning of the twentieth century and of René Wellek in the mid-twentieth century, against the validity of comparison *qua* method and, hence, the non-existence of something called comparative literature *qua* discipline. This has led some comparatists — for lack of a "better" name — to state that comparative literature is not about literary comparisons, and more recently to sentence it to death. I guess that Alan Sokal would claim that naming a discipline that does not compare "comparative" is typically a contradiction of humanities and social sciences, and I agree.

It is my contention that, on the one hand, comparative literature does compare and, hence, it is *comparative* and, on the other hand, that comparison *is* a method, which needs to be considered from pre-disciplinary, disciplinary and trans-disciplinary perspectives. I agree, therefore, with both Guy Jucquois — who argues that a comparison is a complex research method rooted in the "exigence de principe de multiplier les angles de vision" ("Le Comparatisme" 39) — and Marcel Detienne — who reminds us that "Il n'y a rien que l'esprit humain fasse si souvent que des comparaisons" (9).

By "pre-disciplinary perspective," I mean that comparisons form part of a critical epistemology for they are an extremely common operation in the human mind. A comparison is a kind of reasoning which consists of discovering a minimal correlation of analogy or correspondence between elements of two or several systems, and observing both similarities and differences. As Adrian Marino puts it, "l'opération proprement dite consiste dans un rapport quelconque entre deux termes, en vue d'établir les points communs et les écarts: identité et/ou différence (*A* et *B* comme *C*; *A* n'est ni *B* ni *C*)" (234).

By "disciplinary perspective," I refer to the methodological shift from comparison *qua* comparison, to disciplinary fields in which this heuristic procedure prevails. As per Croce's and Wellek's argues, the disciplinary perspective implies an acknowledgement that "il n'y a pas de différence méthodologique spécifique entre la

comparaison pratiquée par le comparatisme [the literary one] et par n'importe quelle autre discipline, vu l'universalité et l'ancienneté d'un procédé que l'on retrouve dans toutes les sciences naturelles ou humaines sans exception" (Marino 233).[5] In the case of comparative literature, comparisons need to adjust to the features of the object of study, which is plurilingual by nature.

Finally, by "trans-comparative perspective" I refer to the fact that several disciplines may recur to comparison as their main research method. Of key importance is taking into consideration the relationships among these disciplines, which work by border-crossing, be these borders linguistic, national, cultural or biologic.

To my knowledge, a meta-comparison, that is to say, a comparison of comparative disciplines has not been carried out. It is my contention, after some preliminary attempts, that if such a meta-comparison were to be conducted, many problems seen as specific of comparative literature would be solved but on the other hand, some ethical issues enshrined in the comparative method — and not in some vague *a posteriori* effects — would become visible. When one compares comparative disciplines, one realizes that they all agree that their object of study is problematic. Faced with such an object and in order to explain it, a hypothesis is formulated, from which consequences will follow. These consequences are inductively examined. Consequently, the backwards transit from facts to causes is made through the kind of reasoning which Charles S. Pierce called *guessing* or *abduction*. Abduction contributes to knowledge by providing inference to the best explanation, a process which induction completes by finding confirmatory facts.[6]

Considering the comparative method as abduction means acknowledging that scientific statements are fallible, for experimental testing may refute the consequences that follow from the hypothesis. The subject's degrees of consciousness in relation to the environment result from a never-ending learning, whereby heterogeneous phenomena are progressively integrated. And it is here where ethics is enshrined. Comparisons — as acts of formal-logic constituted by the interdependence of a differential thought (the inductive process) and a totalizing view aimed at the invariable (the deductive process) — imply a form of relationship with the Other which requires what Jucquois ("Le Comparatisme" 28) calls *décentration*, meaning questioning certainties and suspending security and coherence. In contrast to those scholars who state that either comparative literature is not about comparisons or it is not clear what comparative literature compares, I argue that comparative literature compares phenomena relevant to its object of study, namely, world literature. Therefore, world literature is neither a new discipline nor a paradigm, but the ultimate object of comparative literature. Consequently, the state of crisis of comparative literature, *pace* Wellek and René Étiemble, is not the result of a methodological

weakness, but the epistemological and ontological result of, respectively, its method — comparison — and object of study — world literature. World literature is a constantly changing historical phenomenon in spatial, temporal and reader terms. In short, the ethics in comparative literature is not the result of an idealistic stance — what comparative literature might achieve in terms of mutual understanding — but the result of constantly questioning its explanations in accordance with its epistemological principles. This is what Jucquois ("La Cohérence" 235) has called *interprétation suspensive*.

As mentioned in the introduction, Tom Siebers is the author of *The Ethics of Criticism*, a book which has been considered foundational for the turn to ethics in literary studies. In his contribution to the *Bernheimer Report* in 1995, Siebers recalls the image of comparative literature as a "United Nations" and its underlying aim of resolving "conflict among the people of the world," and he rightly wonders whether "it is a reasonable [… ambition] for the discipline." Furthermore, he expresses rather mournful concerns about both the discipline, of which he has "no doubt [it] is dying," and its practitioners, who need "to decide whether they want to live or die by it" ("Sincerely Yours" 196). I completely agree with Siebers in that "perhaps the greatest task facing comparatists in the coming years will be to grasp the underlying ethical and political symbolism of comparative literature," though I would rather not speak of "symbolism" *per se*. Such a concept indicates that Siebers exclusively considers ethics in comparative literature as the *performative*, and not as the *décentration* imposed by comparison *qua* method. And this also explains why for Siebers, comparative literature can easily either die or be replaced by something else, which for him is multiculturalism. "The only difference between the dreams" of comparative literature and multiculturalism, says Siebers, "is one of standards" ("Sincerely Yours" 196). However, as far as I know, multiculturalism is not a discipline, but a set of ideologies and policies regarding cultural diversity. And in the eighteen years since Siebers's statements, no university awards degrees in multiculturalism, whereas the necrophillic attraction of comparative literature seems to be quite alive. In the next section, I will focus on ethics in comparative literature in illocutionary terms by way of a specific example.

Humboldt's Parrot

In June 1800, while exploring the course of the Orinoco River, Alexander von Humboldt found "an old parrot that nobody understands," for it spoke the language of the Atures, an extinct race "chased by the cannibalistic Caribs" (264). I take this to be a touching example of linguicide, a parrot as the last speaker of a human language. Several words of the Atures's extinct language were transferred to Humboldt by the

parrot, but none of their stories.

"The study of literature does not, in principle, exclude any time or any culture," argues Anders Pettersson. And he follows, "Nor are there any a priori restrictions that would render impossible research and expositions with a large historical and cultural span — or even world histories of literature" (1). Furthermore, Pettersson cautions against taking the concept of *literature* "at face value" (23). Both statements are in accordance with the arguments I have presented in the preceding section: First, world literature as the object of study of comparative literature, which makes of the discipline a *locus* of crisis, both ontological (What is world literature?) and epistemological (Is it possible to know world literature?). Second is the *interprétation suspensive* typical of abduction. And yet I find a lacuna in Pettersson's line of reasoning, for he advocates that it *is* possible to study literature across times and cultures, provided that one takes into consideration that "Many cultures have operated with a division of texts into literary and non-literary — or at least into categories that students of literature have become accustomed to regarding as corresponding to such a distinction" (6). *Many* cultures, but how many? Or, better said, not *all* cultures?

It is my contention that this question pinpoints the ethical in comparative literature in illocutionary terms, in contrast to the traditional and rather naïve performative perspective on ethics. To put it bluntly, the question is: What are the ethical implications of the comparatist's claim that the utterance to be analysed — and hence charted in an atlas of world literature — is *literary,* or synonymous or nearly synonymous with literature in Pettersson's words (6)? Though it is not certainly Pettersson's case, such a claim leads to quasi-universalistic statements on "literature-proper" and "not-quite-literature," as when George Steiner argues that "All societies of which we have knowledge devise and perform music. By no means all have a literature, except in the most rudimentary and vaguely expanded sense of the term" (148). From a systemic-oriented and semiotic approach the situation is rather different: In the early 1960s Russian mathematician Andrey N. Kolmogorov proved that poetry cannot be written in artificial languages, and Roman Jakobson proved the potential iconism and hence the artistic aspect of natural languages (Lotman, *Universe* 18). Upon these findings, Yuri M. Lotman ("Dynamic Model") advanced the thesis that the creative function is a universal quality of natural languages.

But the ethics in comparative literature stops neither at the performative, nor at the illocutionary in terms of the comparatist's claim of the utterance as literary; even if the concept of "literature" is both historicized and cross-culturally tested. What about a community's refusal of the use of their utterances by a comparatist? An extreme case of such a refusal is embodied by uncontacted peoples. As stated in the introduction, I will not deal directly with utterances by uncontacted peoples, but meta-

textually through Western mediation.

In Mario Vargas Llosa's 2010 *El sueño del celta* (*The Dream of the Celt*) one finds the story of British consul Roger Casement's transformation into a fighter for Irish independence after his colonial experiences in the Congo Basin and the Peruvian Amazonia. Thematically and formally, *El sueño del celta* should be placed in relation to a previous novel by Vargas Llosa, namely, 1989 *El hablador* (*The Storyteller*), which tells the story of Saúl Zuratas, a university student who abandons civilization to live with the Machiguenga, an indigenous people of the Amazon jungle. The Machiguenga are my meta-literary example of uncontacted people for exploring the ethical implications of a refusal of use of utterances. It should be borne in mind, however, that "uncontacted peoples" is a tabooistic category. It names the unsayable on the premise that it remains unsayable. Otherwise, if said, the community as such ceases to exist, for contact has taken place. And here death is not only a cultural symbol, but mainly a fact, as proved by extinction due to the lack of immunity to "common" diseases. Moreover, the two-way direction of the "un-" in "*un*contacted" should not be overlooked, as is usually the case, for the condition that a people be named *uncontacted* is that the Other be equally uncontacted. "They" are uncontacted provided that "we" — who name them as uncontacted — are also uncontacted by them. Interestingly, a taboo here is the condition for defining both the I and the Other, which pinpoints the fact that either all communities are indigenous or none is so.

After swapping his law studies for anthropology as a result of his attraction for the "natives" of the Amazonian jungle, Saúl starts to question the tenets of the latter discipline. "A Saúl le han entrado dudas sobre la investigación y el trabajo de campo. Dudas éticas" (Vargas Llosa, *El hablador* 43).[7] The reader follows the discussions between Saúl and his friend, the narrator, an anonymous, middle-aged Peruvian writer, about how "civilization" should deal with the Amazonian native tribes. Here "civilization" is mainly embodied in academia, both local (Universidad de San Marcos) and international (the Summer Institute of Linguistics). For his professors and colleagues, Saúl becomes the representative of an ideology — "purismo amazónico" ("purism concerning the Amazon") — whereby "academic contact" with the natives is as dangerous as imperial contact.

> Contó que, hacía pocos días, había habido una discusión en el Departamento de Etnología. Saúl Zuratas desconcertó a todos proclamando que las consecuencias del trabajo de los etnólogos eran semejantes a la acción de los caucheros, madereros, reclutadores del Ejército y demás mestizos y blancos que estaban diezmando a las tribus.
>
> — Dijo que hemos retomado el trabajo donde lo dejaron los misioneros en la

> Colonia — añadió —. Que nosotros, con el cuento de la ciencia, como ellos con el de la evangelización, somos la punta de lanza de los exterminadores de indios. (Vargas Llosa, *El hablador* 43-44) [8]

The narrator, while progressively losing contact with Saúl to the point of believing that he and his father have migrated to Israel, becomes more and more interested in the Amazonian natives after having been invited to participate in an expedition organized by the Summer Institute of Linguistics. His interest is especially excited by one such tribe, the Machiguenga, who have been reluctant to accept contact after decimation during the "época [… de] la sangría de árboles" (Vargas Llosa, *El hablador* 97; "period [… of] the tree-bleeding"). In fact, the Machiguenga have divided into two communities, one with "contactos con el mundo blanco y mestizo [… que] habían entrado en un proceso de aculturación," and another — the Machiguenga-Kogapakori — disseminated "en los bosques del llano, que vivían casi en total aislamiento y conservaban más o menos intacta su forma de vida tradicional" (Vargas Llosa, *El hablador* 92).[9]

The narrator gets to know one of the Machiguenga's songs thanks to two members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics — the Schneils — who managed to make contact with individuals of the group in near-total isolation. The narrator provides the reader with a transcription of the song with interlinear translation.

Opampogyakyena shinoshinonkarintsi
Me está mirando la tristeza
Opampogyakyena shinoshinonkarintsi
me está mirando la tristeza
ogakyena kabako shinoshinonkarintsi
me está mirando la tristeza
ogakyena kabako shinoshinonkarintsi
me está mirando bien la tristeza
okisabintsatana shinoshinonkarintsi
mucho me enoja la tristeza
okisabintsatana shinoshinonkarintsi
mucho me enoja la tristeza
amakyena tampia tampia tampia
me ha traído aire, viento,
ogaratinganaa tampia tampia
me ha levantado el aire
okisabintsatana shinoshinonkarintsi

mucho me enoja la tristeza
okisabintsatana shinoshinonkarintsi
mucho me enoja la tristeza
amaanatyomba tampia tampia
me ha traído el aire, el viento
onkisabintsatenatyo shinonka
mucho me enoja la tristeza
shinoshinonkarintsi
tristeza
amakyena popyenti pogyentima pogyenti
me ha traído gusanito gusanito
tampia tampia tampia
el aire, el viento, el aire.
(Vargas Llosa, *El hablador* 98-99)[10]

However, his transcription is not first-hand, but rather third-hand, for the narrator copies the Schneils' transcription, which, in its turn, is based upon one produced by a Dominican missionary, which coincides with the version the Schneils listened to. And were the reader to pay attention to the authorial voice in the Acknowledgements, she may think it is in fact fourth-hand, for Vargas Llosa thanks Father Joaquín Barriales, "collector and translator of many Machiguenga songs and myths that appear in my book" (*The Storyteller*, n.p.).

In contrast to this multi-layered mediation by academia, the reader has more direct access to the Machiguenga's utterances not in odd numbered chapters, whose narrative voice is the Europeanized narrator's, an alter ego of Vargas Llosa, but in even numbered chapters, whose narrative voice is that of the Machiguenga *hablador* — literally, 'the speaker,' rather than *storyteller* — which both the alter ego and the reader will progressively realize is Saúl Zuratas himself. Edwin Schneil is one of a Western privileged few who has attended a couple of performances by such an individual, "ese personaje raro, que no parece curandero ni sacerdote […]. Hablador" (Vargas Llosa, *El hablador* 104).[11] When Schneil describes the physical appearance of the *hablador* to the alter ego, he realizes it is Saúl, for both of them have "un lunar morado oscuro, vino vinagre, que le cubría todo el lado derecho de la cara" (Vargas Llosa, *El hablador* 17).[12] It is this birthmark which gives Saúl his nickname, Mascarita (Mask Face).

One might say that Saúl, as mask of a Machiguenga *hablador* — a term, by the way, which is not provided in Machiguenga, but either in Spanish or masked as "un ruido fuerte, largo, gutural y con eses" (Vargas Llosa, *El hablador* 104)[13] — has

deceived both scholars (the Schneils, the alter ego of Vargas Llosa) and readers, for he is not a *real* Machiguenga "x," where "x" stands for the Machiguenga's term for *hablador*. And yet, were he not a *real* Machiguenga "x," how is it that he was accepted by the Machiguenga? Once again, the unsayable, for if the *hablador* were pronounced in Machiguenga, the taboo would be violated, and the *hablador* himself would fade to leave as his only trace a Humboldtian parrot which, this time, would speak the extinct language of the Other, which happens to be the traditional Western I. "[U]n lorito hablador de nombre [Gregorio] y apellidos [Samsa] kafkianos que repetía todo el tiempo el apodo de Saúl: '¡Mascarita! ¡Mascarita!'" (Vargas Llosa, *El hablador* 19).[14] The otherness of the Other, therefore, is not so different from the otherness of the I, as embodied in Gregor-Tasurinchi. Either in the Western parlance (Gregorio) or in the Machiguenga parlance (Tasurinchi), the term voices the monstrosity of the Other (the verminous bug, the Machiguenga), which is the monstrosity of the Self (the traveling salesman, the wandering Jew).[15]

In their aim of avoiding contact with Westerners, the Machiguenga-Kogapakori lead a nomadic life in small communities which, on the one hand, separates them and, on the other hand, takes them further and further into the remotest parts of the jungle. The role of the *hablador* is, therefore, most important, for he reminds the small Kogapakori communities that they belong to a bigger community (the Machiguenga); he provides them with news, both recent and old, and recites stories to them. For the Europeanized narrator, the *hablador* may be compared to "trovadores y juglares medievales" (Vargas Llosa, El hablador 107).[16]

I find this comparison revealing, for — consciously or unconsciously — the Europeanized narrator denies the Machiguenga world coeval with the Western world. And yet they are side by side. For Saúl Zuratas, the Machiguenga's wish to remain uncontacted should be respected. "Nuestra cultura es demasiado fuerte, demasiado agresiva. Lo que toca, lo devora" (Vargas Llosa, *El hablador* 113).[17] Before becoming a Machiguenga *hablador*, Saúl had bitterly criticized linguists for being mainly responsible for acculturation.

> Los lingüistas eran algo muy diferente. Tenían, detrás de ellos, un poder económico y una maquinaria eficientísima que les permitiría, tal vez, implantar su progreso, su religión, sus valores, su cultura. ¡Aprender las lenguas aborígenes, vaya estafa! ¿Para qué? ¿Para hacer de los indios amazónicos buenos occidentales, buenos hombres modernos, buenos capitalistas, buenos cristianos reformados? Ni siquiera eso. Sólo para borrar del mapa sus culturas, sus dioses, sus instituciones y adulterarles hasta sus sueños. (Vargas Llosa, *El hablador* 111)[18]

The similarities between (comparative) linguistics and comparative literature are obvious. The recent re-emergence of the concept of world literature has been explained on the grounds of overcoming Eurocentrism — as materialized in "masterworks by European writers from Homer onward, together with a few favoured North American writers" — and reaching "Many new worlds — and newly visible *older* worlds of classical traditions around the globe" (Damrosch & Pike xxvii). But is the *hablador* not right when a comparative inclusion of Machiguenga utterances in world literature results in a statement that comparative literature "has come to signify […] to set classics too long prepotent, too long dusty aside, often in the boisterous shadow of, the Afro-American, the Chicano, the *Amazonian* traditions" (Steiner, "What Is" 209-10; emphasis added)? It is indeed a mapping that wipes *their* dreams off the map.

What are the alternatives? One might say that what Saúl has achieved is not so different from what linguists achieve. As with linguists, Saúl has learnt *their* language and *their* culture. However, in contrast to linguists, Saúl's is not a knowledge exclusively aimed at the society which seeks contact, but mainly at the society which seeks *un*contact. This is in spite of his being "extraordinario injerto en la tribu," "él era ya uno de ellos" (Vargas LLosa, *El hablador* 205).[19] And this is due to the fact that contact was not imposed, for it is the *un*contacted people who decide to host Saúl and metamorphose him into an *hablador*: "'Ahí llega el hablador. Vamos a oírlo'. Yo escuché. Me quedé muy sorprendido. '¿Hablan de mí?', les pregunté. Todos movieron la cabeza 'ehé, ehé, de ti hablamos', asintiendo. Yo era, pues, el hablador. Me quedé lleno de asombro. Así me quedé" (Vargas Llosa, *El hablador* 232).[20] As for comparative literature, if Western comparatists want to chart world literature, the questions are: Do Others, for example the Humboldtian Atures/*Autres*, want to be charted? Do Others want to host us? What benefits do Others gain? Are we really open to be metamorphosed by the Other?

In another foundational book for the turn to ethics in literary studies, Wayne C. Booth claims that "Our subject […] is the ethical value of stories we tell each other as 'imitations of life'" (15), and details nine author's responsibilities and five reader's responsibilities to achieve *friendship*, a metaphor for people meeting as they share stories. But what can be said of the respective responsibilities of the literary scholar, and more specifically, the comparatist? In this paper, I have tried to reflect not on the ethical performance of comparative literature, about which much has been written, but on the ethics in the illocutionary, meaning the act of appropriation of utterances and its definition *qua* literature. For me, the greatest task facing comparatists in the coming years will be reading texts on the assumption that they are "authored," that they are,

as Derek Attridge argues, "the creative work, however mediated, of at least one mind. […] a full response to the otherness of the text includes an awareness of, a respect for, and in certain sense […] a taking of responsibility for, the creativity of its author" (25). This is the kind of response Saúl Zuratas embodies. His lesson is that one may only become an *hablador* after having been accepted as *escuchador* (listener), which is tantamount to an infatuated receiver. "Me quedaba maravillado de oírlos. Recordaba todo lo que decían. De este mundo y de los otros" (Vargas Llosa, *El hablador* 231).[21] When one is willing to listen, one may realize that Others have better concepts and better definitions than we have. "Ésa es la sabiduría, parece. ¿Cierto lorito?" (Vargas Llosa, *El hablador* 145).[22]

Notes

1. This paper forms part of the research project "Europe, in Comparison: EU, Identity and the Idea of European Literature," funded by the Spanish Government (FFI2010-16165). It is also related to the activities of the Jean Monnet Chair for "The Culture of European Integration".

2. Nie Zhenzhao. "Towards an Ethical Literary Criticism." Unpublished Paper.

3. This is my contribution to Peter Hitchcock's argument that "The impasse of 'world' does not block the possibility of ethical responsibility in the practice of properly globalized literary studies" (371-72).

4. Pace Immanuel Wallerstein's argument that the "naming of disciplines [...] reflected very much the triumph of liberal ideology" (19) during the nineteenth century, when comparative literature emerged as a distinct field of inquiry in French universities.

5. A line of reasoning such as that advocated by Wellek would find the result that no comparative discipline may exist. And yet this is not the case.

6. "el análisis comparado distingue básicamente entre las unidades descriptivas y las aproximaciones correlativas. Comparar significa, en ese sentido, describir y poner en relación (compartir). Ambas operaciones son analógicas y pueden adscribirse a una pluralidad de métodos y de disciplinas, que implican un enfoque no deductivo, sino abductivo del comparatismo, que consistiría en formular hipótesis generalizadoras basadas en la analogía y en reconstruir a posteriori la imagen total o parcial (gradual en tanto que comparatista) del objeto mediante un proceso de generalizaciones" (García Gabaldón 156).

7. "Saúl's starting to have doubts about research and fieldwork. Ethical doubts" (Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller* 20).

8. "He then recounted how, a few days before, there had been a meeting in the Department of Ethnology, at which Saúl Zuratas had flabbergasted everyone, proclaiming that the consequences of the ethnologists' work were similar to those of the activities of the rubber tappers, the timber cutters, the army recruiters, and other mestizos and whites who were decimating the tribes. 'He maintained

that we've taken up where the colonial missionaries left off. That we, in the name of science, like them in the name of evangelization, are the spearhead of the effort to wipe out the Indians'" (Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller* 20)

9. "in contact with the white and mestizo world and had begun the process of acculturation" / "through the forests of the plain, living in near-total isolation and preserving their traditional way of life more or less unchanged" (Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller* 51).

10. "Opampogyakyena shinoshinonkarintsi / Sadness is looking at me / Opampogyakyena shinoshinonkarintsi / sadness is looking at me / ogakyena kabako shinoshinonkarintsi / sadness is looking hard at me / ogakyena kabako shinoshinonkarintsi / sadness is looking hard at me / okisabintsatana shinoshinonkarintsi / sadness troubles me very much / okisabintsatana shinoshinonkarintsi / sadness troubles me very much / amakyena tampia tampia tampia / air, wind has brought to me / ogaratinganaa tampia tampia / air has borne me away / okisabintsatana shinoshinonkarintsi / sadness troubles me very much / okisabintsatana shinoshinonkarintsi / sadness troubles me very much / amaanatyomba tampia tampia / air, wind has brought to me / onkisabintsatenatyo shinonka / sadness troubles me very much / shinoshinonkarintsi / sadness / amakyena popyenti pogyentima pogyenti / the little worm, the little worm has brought me / tampia tampia tampia / air, wind, air" (Vargas Llosa, The Storyteller 55).

11. "that curious personage who doesn't seem to be either a medicine man or a priest […]. Hablador: a speaker" (Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller* 58).

12. "a dark birthmark, the color of wine dregs, that covered the entire right side of his face" (Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller* 4).

13. "a long, loud guttural sound full of s's" (Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller* 58).

14. "[T]here was a talking parrot with Kafkaesque name and surname who endlessly repeated Saúl's nickname: 'Mascarita! Mascarita!" (Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller* 5).

15. Saúl Zuratas's father — Don Salomón — converted to Judaism upon moving to Lima. The connection between the Machiguenga nomadism and the Jewish diaspora is made explicit by the hablador: "El pueblo que anda es ahora el mío. Antes, yo andaba con otro pueblo y creía que era el mío. […] Ese otro pueblo se quedó allá, atrás. Tenía su historia también" (Vargas Llosa, El hablador 236). / "The people who walk are my people now. Before, I walked with another people and I believed it was mine. […] That other people stayed behind. It, too, had its story" (Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller* 141).

16. "the jongleurs and troubadours of the Middle Ages" (Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller* 60).

17. "Our culture is too strong, too aggressive. It devours everything it touches" (Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller* 64).

18. "The linguists were a different matter altogether. They were backed by economic power and an extremely efficient organization which might well enable them to implant their progress, their religion, their values, their culture. Learn the aboriginal languages! What a swindle! What for? To make the Amazonian Indians into good Westerners, good modern men, good capitalists, good

Christians of the Reformed Church? Not even that. Just to wipe their culture, their gods, their institutions off the map and corrupt even their dreams" (Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller* 62).

19. "this strange graft onto the tribe" / "in their eyes he was one of them" (Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller* 121).

20. "'Here comes the storyteller. Let's go listen to him.' It surprised me a lot. 'Are you talking about me?' I asked. They all nodded their heads. 'Ehé, ehé, it's you we're talking about.' So there I was — the storyteller. I was thunderstruck. There I was" (Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller* 138).

21. "I marveled at what they said. I remembered everything. About this world and the others" (Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller* 137).

22. "That's wisdom, it seems. Right, little parrot?" (Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller* 84).

Works Cited

Attridge, Derek. "Innovation, Literature, Ethics: Relating to the Other." *PMLA* 114.1 (1999): 20-31.

Booth, Wayne C. *The Company We Keep. An Ethics of Fiction*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1988.

Croce, Benedetto. "La letteratura comparata." *La Critica* 1 (1903): 77-80.

Damrosch, David and David L. Pike, eds. *The Longman Anthology of World Literature*. Compactedition. New York: Pearson-Longman, 2008.

Detienne, Marcel. *Comparer l'incomparable.* Paris: Seuil, 2000.

Domínguez, César. "Cronopaisaxe e historiografía literaria. Fortuna da *critique en voyage* como xénero comparatista." *Paseantes, viaxeiros, paisaxes*. Ed. Federico López Silvestre. [Santiago de Compostela]: Xunta de Galicia — Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea, 2007. 99-109.

Eskin, Michael. "Introduction: The Double 'Turn' to Ethics and Literature?" *Poetics Today* 25.4 (2004): 557-72.

Étiemble, René. *Comparaison n'est pas raison: La Crise de la littérature comparée*. Paris: Gallimard, 1963.

Jucquois, Guy. "La Cohérence interprétative. Aspects anthropologiques de quelques notions philologiques." *Cahiers de l'Institut de Linguistique de Louvain* 12.1-2 (1986): 183-248.

---. "Le Comparatisme, éléments pour une théorie." *Le Comparatisme dans les sciences de l'homme. Approches pluridisciplinaires*. Eds. Guy Jucquois and Christophe Vielle. Bruxelles: De Boeck & Larcier, 2000. 17-46.

García Gabaldón, Jesús. "Comparatismo/comparado,a: marbete disciplinario." *Estudios de Lingüística. Universidad de Alicante* 11 (1996-1997): 149-61.

Gnisci, Armando. "La letteratura comparata." *Introduzione alla letteratura comparata*. Ed. Armando Gnisci. Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2000. ix-xxi.

Hitchcock, Peter. "The Ethics of World Literature." *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*. Eds. Theo D'haen, David Damrosch and Djelal Kadir. London: Routledge, 2012. 365-72.

Humboldt, Alexander von. *Personal Narrative of a Journey to the Equinoctial Regions of the New*

Continent. Trans. Jason Wilson. London: Penguin, 1995.

Lotman, Yuri M. "The Dynamic Model of a Semiotic System." *Semiotica* 21.3-4 (1977): 193-210.

---. *Universe of the Mind. A Semiotic Theory of Culture*. New York: St. Martins Press, 2001.

Marino, Adrian. *Comparatisme et théorie de la littérature*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1988.

Pettersson, Anders. "Introduction: Concepts of Literature and Transcultural Literary History." *Notions of Literature across Times and Cultures*. Ed. Anders Pettersson. Vol. 1 of *Literary History: Towards a Global Perspective*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006. 1-35.

Siebers, Tobin. *The Ethics of Criticism*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988.

---. "Sincerely Yours." *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*. Ed. Charles Bernheimer. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1995. 195-203.

Sokal, Alan D. and Jean Bricmont. *Fashionable Nonsense: Postmodern Intellectuals' Abuse of Science*. New York: Picador, 1998.

Steiner, George. *Extraterritorial. Papers on Literature and the Language Revolution*. New York: Atheneum, 1976.

---. "What Is Comparative Literature?" *No Passion Spent. Essays 1978-1996*. London: Faber and Faber, 1996. 200-24.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. *El hablador*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 2008.

---. *The Storyteller*. Trans. Helen Lane. New York: Picador, 2001.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. *Unthinking Social Science: The Limits of Nineteenth-Century Paradigms*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1991.

Wellek, René. "The Crisis of Comparative Literature." *Concepts of Criticism*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1965. 282-98.

Ziolkowski, Jan M. "Incomparable: The Destiny of Comparative Literature, Globalization or Not." *The Global South* 1.2 (2007): 16-44.

责任编辑：郑　杰

Should Literary Criticism be Ethical?

Hitoshi Oshima
Department of Japanese Literature and Comparative Literature, Fukuoka University
Kon-ya-machi 1675-2-1003, Karatsu, 8470053, Japan
Email: pacharsky07@yahoo.co.jp

Abstract If the term "ethical" means the attitude open to every being in the world without exclusion, a literary work is "ethical" so long as it expresses that attitude and so is a literary criticism that appreciates and evaluates it. Mikhail Bakhtin's polyphonic theory offers a basis to such literary criticism and Anton Chekhov's plays are good realizations of "ethical" literature.
Key Words ethical; polyphony in tune; polyphony out of tune

In the name of freedom of expression, some literary critics try to defend works in which we cannot find any ethical concern on the author's part. They insist that everything should be admitted in a literary world, if not in reality. In my opinion, such a position is not acceptable. Literary criticism should be ethical because literature is not for an individual but for a society.

What is ethical in literature? I would say an ethical writer is the one who cares for the ethical dimension in Life, the one who expresses it in one way or another. An ethical critic should be the one who takes care to find such value which makes a literary work ethical, the one who appreciates it in a way that allows readers to share it. I would like to quote here Albert Camus' words pronounced in Stockholm when he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1957. Those words, from the *Discours du 10 décembre 1957,* represent my position regarding the question of the ethical in literature.

> In my eyes, art is not a solitary enjoyment. It is a way to touch as many people as possible by giving them a privileged image of sufferings and joys common to them. This obliges any artist not to be alone but to submit to the most humble and universal truth. … An artist forms himself or herself through the ceaseless going-to and coming-back-from others, between beauty indispensable to him and the community impossible to run away from. That is why he neglects nothing. He obliges himself to understand instead of making judgments.[1] (240)

"Not to neglect anything in the world," that is Camus' key phrase for us. Just in the same way that an ethical writer should examine whether or not he or she neglects anything in the world, an ethical critic should examine whether or not the writer neglects anything in the world. For not neglecting anything is the most eloquent sign of his or her love and sincerity for the world.

Some would say stressing the social dimension too much will lead to oppressing the individual. I would say that is not the case as the above quote from Camus shows. A writer, an artist, is half individual, half social, going and coming back between the individual and the social. Only through respect for the social can we come to respect the individual.

Needless to say, I do not mean that a critic should evaluate works that represent the socially admitted moral values. Even works representing the bad or the ugly can be evaluated as ethical so long as they represent it in such a manner that encourages love, kindness, generosity, tolerance, etc. Violence or destructiveness might be a necessary element of a work when it is not represented to encourage the evil. A literary critic should be especially careful about the problem of whether the author has any intention to do harm to society or not.

Anti-ethical or non-ethical literary critics may argue that the notion of good or evil is too relative to be introduced as a criterion for literary criticism. They would say a good in today's society could be an evil yesterday or tomorrow and vice versa. Indeed, almost anyone appreciates today Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* or Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* as masterpieces of modern Western literature whereas those works were condemned as vicious by the French authorities during their own time in the 19th century. Nevertheless, I insist that literary criticism should be ethical because being ethical does not necessarily mean making any moral judgment on a work.

All we need to do, as critics, is to find ethical values in a work and appreciate them. What the French critics of the time of Flaubert or Baudelaire should have done was to find and defend in *Les Fleurs du Mal* or *Madame Bovary* the respective writer's sincere protest against the hypocritical morals in the society of their time. They should have appreciated the authors' desperate search for genuine love and nobility of spirit. Of course, the task was not easy to achieve, nor is it today.

"Not to neglect anything in the world," that premise of Camus which I mentioned above, is the basis for an ethical literature. In this sense, Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-81) was such an ethical writer and Mikhail Bakhtin who discovered it was an ethical critic. Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics* (1929) is an exemplary realization of ethical literary criticism. As he developed a theory to evaluate the writer's ethical dimension fully, we can consider him as an ethical critic.

The well-known theory of polyphony Bakhtin developed in *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics* is really ethical. The theory of polyphony tends to be interpreted as an aesthetic one because it explains a narrative structure that can be found in many of Dostoevsky's works, but we cannot overlook the ethical dimension implied in it. Let me quote one of the paragraphs concerning it.

> The real polyphony is composed of distinctive and independent voices, each voice invested with his or her own values and never destined to merge with others. Such polyphony is what distinguishes Dostoevsky's works from others'. What happens to his works is not the development of different personalities or destinies in a unified objective world which is nothing but a reflection of his unified consciousness. What happens instead is the involvement of different and distinctive plural consciousnesses into an event or another, without losing their respective integrity and independence.[2] (Bakhtin, 15-16)

As the quotation shows, Bakhtin's intention does not lie in establishing an ethics but rather in showing the particularity of the narrative structure of Dostoevsky's novels. Yet his structural analysis of Dostoevsky's literary text necessarily leads us to the ethical value of the Russian writer. Bakhtin says that Dostoevsky gave a different voice to each one of the characters in his novel, each one talking free of the author's intention. This implies that the Russian writer felt and expressed infinite respect and love for each of them.

This reminds us of Camus' remarks on the ethical in literature that an artist should not neglect anything in the world. Dostoevsky viewed by Bakhtin just realized the ethics that Camus pronounced. The Russian writer not only respected each one of his characters as individuals but loved them and let them be free, even from their creator.

When I think of Dostoevsky and his polyphony that Bakhtin pointed out, I cannot help but thinking of Anton Chekhov (1860-1904), not as a short story teller but as a playwright. Usually, those two Russians do not appear on our comparative table, but in my opinion, Chekhov was a hidden successor of Dostoevsky, precisely in polyphony. I do not mean by this that the playwright of *The Seagull* or *Three Sisters* consciously or intentionally tried to follow the author of *Crime and Punishment*. But looking back at them from today, I see a line of continuity between them.

It is true that more than once, Bakhtin said polyphony was not possible in a drama. The reason he gave for this is that a drama by essence had to be a unified work controlled by a unique consciousness of the author. Characters of a drama could have their own voices, he said, but their voices had to be integrated to a whole system of

the play; otherwise, it could not be a drama.[3] I agree with him to a certain degree. So far as a common drama is concerned, even a successful drama rich in characters can make symphony but not polyphony in Bakhtin's sense of the term. Nevertheless, I dare say that the Russian critic did not see the possibility of a drama that could realize real polyphony. Such is the case, I believe, with Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*.

It is curious that Bakhtin did not mention anywhere in his critical works the name of Chekhov as a playwright although he was a compatriot contemporary to him. He may have referred to Chekhov as a short story writer but not as a playwright. As Chekhov's plays were continuously on the scene during Bakhtin's lifetime, I cannot help wondering if he ever went to Moscow Art Theatre.

In my personal view, Chekhov's play is an extension of Dostoevsky's polyphony as I said above, even though the literary connection between the two writers has not been proved so positive as in the Tolstoy-Chekhov relation. Tolstoy and Chekhov knew each other personally; the latter admired the former as a novelist and the former appreciated some of the latter's works. Concerning the possible relation between Dostoevsky and Chekhov, we hardly know anything, which easily leads us to suppose that there was no literary relation between them.

Even if I am almost sure that Chekhov had no conscious intention to follow Dostoevsky's literature, I find a similitude and continuity between their literary works all the same. Contrary to Bakhtin's general assertion on dramas, I would say that Chekhov opened a new type of drama that could go beyond the playwright's unified consciousness. I insist that Chekhov realized a polyphonic drama, therefore an ethical one, which Bakhtin did not see.

To show the undiscovered linkage between Dostoevsky's novels and Chekhov's drama, and how polyphony worked in Chekhovian dramas, I would like to refer to one of his masterpieces: *The Cherry Orchard* (1904). As many know, *The Cherry Orchard* is a drama through which the author tried to show a historical change in Russian society after the *Emancipation Reform* of 1861. He skillfully depicted the decadent upper class, who were unable to rid themselves of their nostalgic vision of the past, as well as the lower class, who lost their traditional values without knowing what to do. The author did not forget describing a new type of people who began to realize the importance of labor for the making of a new society. Chekhov represented a whole society under a drastic change by way of vivid descriptions of a dozen of characters that appear on the scene.

The center of the drama is, however, not history but human beings in plural. History in the play is surely not a mere background. Yet it is onto the strength and weakness, the loneliness and warmth of each character, that the author casts special

light. As is usual with him, Chekhov introduces "dramatic" events quite prudently. The only event introduced in the drama is the auction of Lady Ranevskaya's estate, namely her beautiful cherry orchard and magnificent mansion. The auction is important because it decides the destiny of the lady, her family, her servants and friends. All the people surrounding her cannot but be affected by it. The auction is the very symbol of a definite social change.

The utmost importance is given by the author to each one of the characters: what he or she thinks, what kind of vision of life each one has, how he or she lives. Although some are given more chances to speak than others, all of them have their own distinctive voices. As is in Dostoevsky's novels, each one is a narrator of his or her own story. The whole play is sort of an ensemble of different autobiographical narratives.

Let us have a look at the scene in which Lady Ranevskaya, called Lubov, together with her daughter Anya have just come back home after five years' stay in Paris. She is moved to find her mansion and the cherry orchard again. Rediscovering the nursery in the mansion where her children used to sleep, she was deeply touched:

> Oh, my dear nursery, oh, our beautiful room. . . I used to sleep here when I was a baby. [Weeps] And here I am like a little girl again. [Kisses her adopted daughter VARYA, then her brother Gaev] And Varya is just as she used to be, just like a nun. And I knew Dunyasha, our young maid. [Kisses her.] [4]

Instead of responding to her sister, Gaev, however, talks about the poor functioning of the Russian railway, while Charlotta, the governess of Lady Ranevskaya's children, completely ignores Ranevskaya and Gaev, and suddenly begins to talk to Pischin (a friend of the lady who has come to welcome her): "My dog eats nuts too." Later in this scene, when Dunyasha the maid confesses her secret of her lover's proposal to Anya, the daughter who has just come back from Paris, Anya was indifferent and shows no interest in Dunyasha's remarks. She is completely immersed in her own world and keeps talking about her bored journey and her relief of coming back home.

Two points can be revealed from the scene. First, each one of the characters has a narrative of his or her own, which makes perfect polyphony in the Bakhtinian sense. Secondly, in spite of the similarity in the narrative structure of Chekhov's plays and Dostoevsky's novels, Chekhov differs from Dostoevsky in that his polyphony is, let us say, *out of tune* while the latter's is *in tune*. As a matter of fact, in the above scene, each character has hardly any dialogue with others but a monologue that no one else seems to have interest in sharing. Lady Ranevskaya, for example, is full of nostalgia on coming home after five years' absence, but her brother Gaev, who waited

for her for hours at the railway station, is thinking of the low quality of the Russian Railway service. As for Charlotta, the governess, she does not care about anything but her dog. Even if the sensible Pischin shows a critical attitude to her, she does not care at all. The worse is the maid Dunyasha's total lack in due consideration toward others. She boasts how popular she is among men, even though Anya, the daughter of her mistress, is exhausted after the long travel. Chekhov presents here a cruel reality that each human being is alone without a real connection to others, without mutual understanding. From this, we can easily come to the conclusion that he was a real pessimist.

As far as *The Cherry Orchard* is concerned, Chekhov continues showing his pessimistic vision from the beginning to the end. The whole drama sounds pessimistic and the last scene is truly pathetic. Fiers, the eighty-seven year old footman who has lived for the family of Lady Ranevskaya all his life, is left alone, everyone else moving to another place, believing without any evidence that he had been sent to hospital. Left completely alone, the old man, so much attached to the place, cannot and does not want to move. The following is his last words that make the very end of the play:

> They've gone away. [Sits on a sofa] They've forgotten about me. ... Never mind, I'll sit here. ... And Leonid Andreyevitch (Gaev) will have gone in a light overcoat instead of putting on his fur coat. ... [Sighs anxiously] I didn't see. ... Oh, these young people! [Mumbles something that cannot be understood] Life's gone on as if I'd never lived. [Lying down] I'll lie down. ... You've no strength left in you, nothing left at all ... Oh, you ... bungler! (Act 4)

Hearing the old footman's sad words, who would not say that the author was a pessimist? And yet, pessimism is not really an adequate term for the Chekhovian play. Let us pay attention to the author's own definition of the work. He said it was a *tragicomedy*, in which we can find both tragic and comical elements. We should esteem that both hope and despair are present. The Chekhovian vision of the world is complex, nuanced and gray. In other words, Chekhov treated human beings and human life just in the way as Camus wished a writer to do. Instead of judging, the Russian playwright included and accepted everything about human beings. His way of creating literature was ethical in the sense that I defined above, quoting Camus' words. If life is *out of tune*, if life is discordant, if it is discontinuous, we have to accept it and even love it. That is what we learn from Chekhov.

When comparing Chekhov's drama with Dostoevsky's works, we can find the difference in polyphony mentioned earlier between them. I would like show the

difference in polyphony by citing a passage from one of Dostoevsky's masterpieces *Crime and Punishment* (1866). The passage describes the first encounter of the hero Raskolnikov, a student who decided to commit homicide, with Marmeladov, a drunkard. Later the hero will know that the drunkard was the father of Sonia, a young prostitute who would love him, but neither we nor he know it for the moment.

> There are chance meetings with strangers that interest us from the first moment, before a word is spoken. Such was the impression made on Raskolnikov by the person sitting a little distance from him, who looked like a retired clerk. The young man often recalled this impression afterwards, and even ascribed it to presentiment……. At last he looked straight at Raskolnikov, and said loudly and resolutely:
>
> "May I venture, honoured sir, to engage you in polite conversation? Forasmuch as, though your exterior would not command respect, my experience admonishes me that you are a man of education and not accustomed to drinking. I have always respected education when in conjunction with genuine sentiments, and I am besides a titular counsellor in rank. Marmeladov — such is my name; titular counsellor. I make bold to inquire — have you been in the service?"
>
> "No, I am studying," answered the young man, somewhat surprised at the grandiloquent style of the speaker and also at being so directly addressed. In spite of the momentary desire he had just been feeling for company of any sort, on being actually spoken to he felt immediately his habitual irritable and uneasy aversion for any stranger who approached or attempted to approach him.
>
> "A student then, or formerly a student," cried the clerk.
>
> "Just what I thought! I'm a man of experience, immense experience, sir," and he tapped his forehead with his fingers in self-approval.
>
> "You've been a student or have attended some learned institution!... But allow me...." He got up, staggered, took up his jug and glass, and sat down beside the young man, facing him a little sideways. He was drunk, but spoke fluently and boldly, only occasionally losing the thread of his sentences and drawling his words. He pounced upon Raskolnikov as greedily as though he too had not spoken to a soul for a month. (Part I, Chapter 2)[5]

What I would like to show in this quotation is Dostoevsky's typical way of setting up a scene. The key expressions in it are "chance meetings" and "presentiment." The author prepares a special meeting between the two characters who present their encounter to be a fatal one. This of course does not merely indicate the author's literary skill. It rather shows his psychological insight into the fate to which all

humans are subject. In this sense, we can say that Dostoevsky the novelist was more "dramatic" than Chekov the dramatist.

Actually, Dostoevsky still lived in the dramatic age while Chekov lived in the post-dramatic one. Turgeniev, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky were all dramatic writers who believed in a Shakespearian way of viewing life. Chekhov, much younger than they, had a more modern and scientific vision of life which he probably obtained from his medical practices. His spirit was anti-dramatic and thus his dramas are paradoxical in this sense. His polyphony, different from that of Dostoevsky, is out of tune as I said. He as a playwright not only accepts the variety of human voices but embraces the discontinuity and non-communicability of our everyday life.

To conclude, I would like to repeat that not neglecting but appreciating every aspect of life and everything in the world instead of pronouncing judgment on it is the attitude I consider ethical. When an ethical writer expresses such an attitude fully and skillfully in his or her works, it is the responsibility of an ethical literary critic to point it out and to appreciate it in such a way that many can share it. Let us remember Albert Camus' speech in Stockholm. Let us remember Mikhail Bakhtin's polyphony theory of Dostoevsky's works. And let us remember Chekhov's plays in which all the characters have their own stories to narrate even if each one is infinitely isolated from others. Should literary criticism be ethical? Yes, of course, it should be so.

Notes

1. The translation of the original French text into English is mine.
2. The quotation is my translation from the Japanese version of the work.
3. See Bakhtin 36-37.
4. All the quotations from *The Cherry Orchard* are in English translation made by Julius West.
5. The quotation is from the English translation made by Constance Garnett in 1914.

Works Cited

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Dosutoefusuki no Shigaku.* Trans. Mochizuki Tetsuo. Suzuki Junichi: Chikuma-shobo, 2009.

Camus, Albert. *Oeuvres Complètes IV.* Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 2008.

Chekhov, Anton. *The Cherry Orchard.* Trans. Julius West. New York: Scribner's, 1916. Web. 1 May, 2014. <http://www.ibiblio.org/eldritch/ac/chorch.htm>.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Crime and Punishment.* Trans. Constance Garnett. Project Gutenberg. Web. 1 May, 2014. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2554/2554-h/2554-h.htm>.

责任编辑：郑　杰

Rosalie or not Rosalie: Han Suyin's Ethical Identity and Ethical Choices in the *Crippled Tree* Series

Florence Kuek
Department of Chinese Studies, University of Malaya
50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Email: pianist277@gmail.com

Dr Fan Pik Wah
Department of Chinese Studies, University of Malaya
50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Email: fan5668@hotmail.com

Abstact This paper tracks the identity and choices of Rosalie Chou based on Dr Han Suyin's autobiographical series. Han Suyin had rejected her maiden name Rosalie Chou, but learned later that she was to embrace it after all, since it marked a significant period of her regretful past. Nevertheless, the adoption of a Chinese pseudonym "Han Suyin" was also necessary for the reconstruction of her new identity. By revisiting identified ethical chaos and confusion in her family saga, as well as delineating competing moral imperatives against Eurasians in China during the 20th century, Han Suyin showcased a reconstruction of the ethical order in her world. The accounts of Rosalie evoked the ethical consciousness of any reader who would like to stand for her in her cultural displacement and identity complex at a time and locality where the East clashes with the West.
Key words ethical literary criticism; identity; choice; Han Suyin; Eurasian; 20th century China

Introduction

A decade after her relatively not-so-successful debut novel, *Destination Chungking*, China-born Eurasian physician-author Han Suyin suddenly gained worldwide readership due to her sentimental semi-autobiographical novel *A Many-Splendoured Thing*. The novel was also popularised by an Oscar-award winning film with an almost

identical title, "Love is a Many-Splendored Thing." Based on her real-life love story with the Australian journalist Ian Morrison in Hong Kong, *A Many-Splendoured Thing* portrayed an intriguing cross-cultural romance, along with the multi-faceted East-West conflicts of that era. Notable tensions in the novel include: the jarringly different lifestyles of the European middle-classes as compared to the Chinese commoners; the great ideological divide between Christian missionaries and the Chinese locals; the pride of the Chinese people against the arrogance of the Westerners; etc. The overtone of the novel revealed a constant search by Ian and Suyin for "a place for (them) both." The search evoked questions of ethics, politics and society. As intense as their romantic relationship might be, there were no social and legal provisions at the time for the couple to be together. Ian was a married Australian war correspondent, while Suyin was a widow of a Kuomintang general, who temporarily resided in Hong Kong, but was determined to return to China whenever the political scenario allowed it.

In the subsequent decades, Han Suyin's soul-searching attempts persisted. She published a 5-volume autobiographical series, elaborating East-West conflicts via the microcosm of her family saga, and — from the perspective of this writer — with a central *ethical* theme: The search for a legitimate place for "Rosalie Matilda Kuanghu Chou" to thrive with dignity. "Rosalie Chou" was Han Suyin's christened maiden name. In the concluding chapter of the entire series, "The End and the Beginning," the then 60-plus years-old Suyin concluded that she became who she was due to the shaping memories of the poverty of the Old China, which was marked by the overworked rickshaw coolie, dead babies wrapped in newspapers, and blind junior beggars (*PH*, 314-315). Though regarded as a work of the leftist, Han Suyin's autobiographical series provided valuable snapshots of the emerging Modern China in the presence of the Western powers. Her five books, listed according to the timeframe of the storyline, as well as their respective year of publications, are: *The Crippled Tree* (abbreviation *CT* : 1885-1928, pub. 1965), *Mortal Flower* (*MF* : 1928-1938; pub. 1966), *Birdless Summer* (*BS* : 1938-1948; pub. 1968), *My House has Two Doors* (*HTD* : 1948-1965; pub. 1980), and *Phoenix Harvest* (*PH* : 1966-1980; pub. 1980).

Being born and raised in Henan and Peking respectively, Rosalie Chou encountered intertwined ethical issues due to ethnic polarisation, racial sentiments and gender stereotypes. The writer of this paper finds the post-colonialism and feminist theories insufficient to provide an in-depth study of Han Suyin and her literary world.[1] In fact, Han Suyin's literary portrayals of females were generally more "wifely" than feminist. Also, her dismissal of victim mentality in her autobiography, particularly her commentary regarding the predicaments of her mother and her brother in cross-cultural experiences as well as the self-strengthening power of the Chinese people in national building, had altogether served as the best internal evidence against critics

who tried to coin her writings in the post-colonial categories. On the other hand, the *ethical literary criticism* (ELC) that was strongly propagated by Prof. Zhenzhao Nie in 2004, appears more useful and appropriate in examining the ethical lines and knots of Rosalie Chou (Han Suyin)'s life stories, yielding a fuller and more comprehensive understanding of her 5-volume autobiography.

Ethical literary criticism is a literary research approach that combines literary analysis and ethical criticism. Professor Nie, chief proponent of the criticism, emphasises that the integral nature of literature is *ethics*, rather than aesthetics. The value of world literature is not its power to entertain, but its function to facilitate the understanding of human life and society in the light of social ethics.[2] Ethics is the mother of literature. The epics of Homer establish the ethical tradition in the Greco-European literature. Even as great world literature never fails to provide inspiring moral references to the material and spiritual life of mankind, literary criticism today should elevate literature that could stand the test of ELC. Quality literary work evokes the common experience of man's desire for moral perfection. ELC attempts to observe, analyse and expound various ethical issues in the simulated world of literature, in order to generate attention to viable ethical questions in real life.

The source of understanding, explaining and critiquing literature lies in its ethical and historical contexts. ELC does not make use of modern-day morality to judge events of a certain literary setting, for it would be a subjective moral judgment against a "false autonomy situation." One who employs ELC would have to enter the particular historical and social setting of the literature. One may even act as the advocate[3] for a certain character in the literature so as to comprehend the unique social-historical backdrop of the persons and events in the literary world. This approach leans towards Aristotle's view in studying human ethics via the simulated world of literature, rather than the Platonic moral criticism that critiques literature from the real time via subjective moral standards of the critiquing personnel.[4]

The *Crippled Tree* autobiographical series delineates the lifelong process of Rosalie Chou's self-rejection, self-acceptance and self-completion, reflecting her mode of survival through bold identity claims and debatable ethical choices at a given time and specific locality where the East clashed harshly with the West, i.e., 20th century China. This paper thus attempts to examine Rosalie Chou's identity complex and life choices via a prism of ethical dimensions, namely taboo breaking, ethical chaos, ethical confusion, ethical consciousness, ethical identity, ethical choice and ethical reconstruction. These dimensions are also key terms of the ELC. The qualifier here, "ethical," is not anchored on any subjective or modern day moral judgment. In fact, the debate of what is "right" and what is "wrong" is not what ELC purports. What interests ELC is the explanation of why and how the events of a certain

literature happened the way it did. Hence, this paper would try to provide the logic of the behaviours and choices of the protagonist, Rosalie Chou (in *CT* and *MF*) who later becomes Han Suyin (in *BS*, *HTD* and *PH*), with reference to the objective ethical framework of the time period as it is written.

That said, this writer also wants to clarify that the paper is not approaching the study on Han Suyin via a "historical discipline," but rather, it is using biographical and literary information in Han Suyin's literature as the "critical instrument" to understand the works produced by the author.[5] Also, it should be clear that Rosalie Chou as the "*arkhe anypothetos*," the unique personality of the literary artefact, is the proper subject of this literary study.

Taboo Breaking: It Pays to Commit the Forbidden

Things should not have been so complicated from today's point of view. However, during the first few decades of the 20th century, it was "illegitimate" for one to be born and live as a Eurasian in China. To trace it, the "crippled" family tree of Rosalie Chou started from her not-being-blessed mixed parentage, the union of Hakka Chinese Chou Yentung with his Belgian Catholic lover, Marguerite Denis. Yentung was one of the first few Chinese students who pursued railroad engineering in Belgium. Being a "heathen," his romance with Marguerite was strongly protested by the Denis. The young couple eloped, and when they returned to the Denis, Marguerite was pregnant and demanded to marry her Chinese beau. The scandal was hardly tolerated. The Denis declared Marguerite insane and decided to "wash their hands off her." Yentung was summoned by the Supervisor of Studies and the Chinese Consul, who threatened to deport Yentung back to China (*CT* 197). The couple, however, stood firm with their choice for each other. They were able to find a sympathiser to minister their matrimony in a rush. Yentung's side of the family in Chengdu telegrammed to give their unwilling consent: "Inform Yentung marriage permitted" (201). However, the consequence of a mixed marriage had far-reaching effects, especially when the couple relocated to Yentung's home province Szechuan, China in 1913. Marguerite, who gave up her Belgian passport and decided to identify with her Chinese husband in every way — "I want to be a Chinese" (204) — was humiliated and scorned by the Chinese locals. Even on the street, there was an attempt by a twelve year-old boy to humiliate her by urinating on her skirt (278). As a result, Marguerite never recovered from the bitterness of rejection. She turned into a ferocious woman even to her husband, and eventually left Yentung for Europe in 1949 (280).

Interestingly, her strong-willed daughter Rosalie repeated the same identity choice years later, "I want to be Chinese, like you, like Papa" (403) despite the awkwardness of her appearance and mannerism as compared to the Chinese locals.

Like her mother Marguerite, Rosalie was not afraid to breach the cultural taboos and religious sanctions during her era.[6] But Rosalie's worldview was quite different from her mother. Born in China and having discarded Catholicism, Rosalie adopted "China" as her new religion.[7] She tried to authenticate her "Chinese" identity via her marriage to Colonel Pao: "Pao became the personification of China to me" (*BS* 21). "Pao was Chinese; engaged to him, I was recognised at last (so I imagined) by China, and it was for China, not for a man, that I had left Europe" (25). Unfortunately, Pao turned out to be a severe abuser. Rosalie was harmed physically and emotionally throughout her eight years of marriage to Pao. The miserable marriage ended when Pao died in the war front. Even though Rosalie lost Pao, her assumption that she could validate her Chinese identity through marriage did work to a certain extent. It was because of Pao that Rosalie somehow had a higher claim to speak on behalf of the Chinese people as an in-group member. Yet it was also due to Pao that Rosalie Chou, a widow of a prominent Kuomintang member, was to leave China to look for her new home due to her dubious political identity. The ethical environment of the era compelled Rosalie to move to countries other than China, i.e., any country where she could possibly bloom and live with dignity.

Upon completion of her L.R.C.P, M.R.C.S, and M.B.B.S degrees, with honors in surgery and pathology from the School of Medicine, University of London, Rosalie decided to return to Hong Kong, "the gateway to China" (343-344). In her own words, she could not live "in peace" in England "while tremendous China, like the phoenix, was being reborn from the consuming pyres of the massive conflict" (350). Widowed with an adopted daughter Yungmei, Rosalie fell head over heels in love with a dashing white journalist, Ian Morrison, in Hong Kong. To Rosalie, Ian was more akin to the Asian Asia, rather than any Caucasian who might revel in the white man's burden (*HTD* 29-30). There was great respect and sensibility in their romance. However, their relationship was also hindered by Ian's estranged wife in Australia, who refused to divorce. Besides, Ian could not find a satisfying way to dismiss his duty to his children. To complicate the matter, Rosalie's firm decision to return to communist China whenever possible, naturally forfeited the inclusion of Ian in her further plan, for Ian was a war correspondent of *The Times*, the leading magazine of the democratic West. Their affair ended in 1950 when Ian was killed in the Korean war. Even if Ian had lived, their dream to be together was deemed to shatter as Ian was the last man whom Rosalie could legitimately marry.

Ethical Chaos: Foreignness is Deadly

When Rosalie's mother, Marguerite, accompanied her husband Yentung back to the conservative province of Szechuan, she was overjoyed that her Chinese dreams would

finally materialize: a Chinese prince, a Chinese pavilion, the beautiful landscape and lovable people. However, while Yentung deeply appreciated her love, Marguerite's foreignness was a big problem upon her relocation to China. During the early 20th century, the unexposed community in Southern Chinese provinces perceived oneness and cohesiveness as matters of life and death. Authenticity and purity of Chinese customs had to be guarded. "The Hakkas say they are the true people of Han, and that they have escaped degenerate habits brought by foreign rule" (*CT* 25). To them, any alien element ought to be uprooted. Under such moral imperatives, the villagers were ready to commit detestable group bullying. They would "punish" Marguerite for her mere existence in their territory. One day, when Yentung was working away at the railroad, a bunch of ruthless bandits ransacked the house in which this poor foreign wife resided. The burglars also decapitated her cook and hanged his head in the garden to showcase their violence. Not only did the local community completely ignore the decapitated head that was left hanging in Marguerite's garden, their young men, women and children mocked and harassed Marguerite on a daily basis behind that head-hanging tree. It was grave ethical chaos. "Enough, enough, ... I have had enough!" Marguerite screamed as the verbal attacks by the Chinese crowd "Foreign devil, foreign devil, foreign devil" took its toll on her (1-2). The message was clear in the air: Foreigner, get out of our (Chinese) territory!

About a decade later, Rosalie eye-witnessed yet another racial brutality, but this time, the ethnic identity of the aggressor and the victim inter-changed. Rosalie witnessed how her depressed brother George, Son of Spring, beat up a Chinese rickshaw coolie mercilessly. Not only had George kicked and hit the poor coolie violently with a walking stick, he also broke one of the shafts of the rickshaw with his boots. Rosalie was not in a position to intervene. But the effect of the brutality could not be dissolved — a few days after the incident, Rosalie could not help but to throw a terrible tantrum in the street (*MF* 31). She totally understood the utter loneliness of her brother. Being a Eurasian, there was none to care, and so George became an outcast socially and emotionally. He belonged nowhere. Acting out his frustration upon a readily available target on the street, the Chinese rickshaw coolie, was easy. But it did not soothe the desperation that was raging in one's divided psyche. Rosalie recognised and identified with that predicament of the mind. But she would not condone her brother's turning into a villain among the community of the don't-haves. Since day one, she had willed herself to wrestle with the emptiness within until she could have a breakthrough. She did not know how and when the battle would be over. Nobody had ever shown her what was the *right* way to do so, or if there was any *right* way to do it. "I had to do it, to live with myself, to be myself, and to continue growing, where others had stopped. I would not be a crippled tree,... At least I would

greet the tomorrow I had not made, even if it killed me" (*CT* 18). An alien could kill or be killed. Foreignness could be deadly. Ethical chaos could be the cause of insanity, unless one fights against it with good courage and great determination.

Ethical Confusion: Eurasians are Lesser Beings

Rosalie's father Yentung, being a Chinese engineer who worked under Belgian supervisors, had never earned salary comparable to that of a European, even though he was performing the same tasks. Rosalie's mother Marguerite, being married to a Chinese, was discriminated against and despised by wives of the Europeans. Yentung and Marguerite endured the racial biasness and hoped to raise their family quietly. But one incident before the birth of Rosalie permanently broke up their family: the death of their second son Gabriel Sea Orchid, due to, again, racial discrimination. As the socio-political situation in Chengdu was turbulent at the time, Yentung and Marguerite had sent their first-born Son of Spring to his grandparents in Belgium earlier. Sea Orchid thus became a much-welcomed baby. Moreover, Sea Orchid was regarded as the most beautiful baby in the eyes of his mother. He was christened Gabriel, meaning Messenger from Heaven, or Angel.

Along the Lunghai Railway where Yentung worked, European families were able to visit the doctor at his home anytime. Marguerite, wife of a Chinese, could only see the doctor at his morning clinic. One evening, baby Sea Orchid suffered massive convulsions. Yentung was out on the railway. As no immediate help was available, Marguerite desperately brought the dying baby in her arms to the French doctor's home. Her effort was in vain, as the doctor's wife who answered the door did not consent with the visit, "Get out, you and your filthy halfcaste brat, get out of my house" (304). It was a nerve-wracking evening. Marguerite could not challenge the deadlock in the European-Chinese ties at the time. Her angel baby died the next morning. After Yentung's return from the railway, he took care of the burial quietly. None of the European engineers or the doctor sent their condolences. The ethical confusion of whether a Eurasian is a human life or a lesser life was left unattended to.

The confusion and discrimination against the mixed bloods was even canonised. Rosalie recalled a book that had haunted her, entitled *Races of the World*. The book taught that the white race was most distinguished due to their significant brain weight. "... the brain of the average white man weighs one thousand six hundred grammes, that of the yellow man one thousand four hundred, the red man's brain weighs one thousand three hundred and forty and the black man round about one thousand two hundred..." (*MF* 129). The book also claimed that the mixed bloods were "prone to mental *im*balance, hysteria, alcoholism, generally of weak character and untrustworthy" (*MF* 129). Being classified as a degenerated species, young Rosalie

prayed fearfully for immunity from losing her brain, as well as a miracle to survive the suggested fate of regressing into a lesser being (129). Could a Eurasian young lady pursue her medical ambition in such an environment? Rosalie's contemporaries, Olga and Hilda, repeatedly condemned her for trying to be different than other domesticated Eurasian girls, "You'll never make it, you'll never make it, you just haven't got the brains" (134). But Rosalie wanted to challenge the unchallengeable. She would eventually become the benchmark of "Eurasians with the brains."

Ethical Consciousness: De-naming as Antidote to the Curse of Life

After the demise of Rosalie's second brother Gabriel, Sea Orchid, her mother Marguerite indulged in alcoholism and was totally unprepared for the birth of Rosalie. Even though Rosalie was her first daughter, Marguerite refused to look at this baby girl after the delivery. Treating Rosalie like an illegitimate child, Marguerite cursed, "Take that halfcaste brat away. It is not my child" (*CT* 304). Marguerite did not attend to the baby for an entire week, so much so that Rosalie was both suffering from jaundice and starving from malnutrition. Though the servant tried to feed her with some rice-water and diluted condensed milk, baby Rosalie was practically left to survive on her own. "Die, die!" Marguerite indulged in drinking, and kept calling out for the deceased baby, Sea Orchid. Rosalie's father finally intervened. On the eighth day of Rosalie's birth, Yentung slapped the wife, hitting her and putting the baby in her arms, "Are you going to feed her or not? She is your child" (350). It was the first and last time Marguerite had ever been ill-treated by her loving husband in that manner. Subsequently, the mother-daughter relationship between Marguerite and Rosalie became prone to rivalry than a loving bond.

Besides being named "that half caste brat," Rosalie was also called "the Wicked One" by her birth mother (317, 322). As Rosalie recollected, "Mama never really forgave her daughter for having taken Sea Orchid's place. She tried hard to love her, and she did her best, but no one can escape the unconscious, unexplained resentment for which only circumstance is responsible" (305). The love of one's mother is one of the basic needs as described in Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs. Deprived of the love of her mother, Rosalie felt abandoned. She had to thrive on her own. To add to the pain, she could never forget the "Big Hurt," namely the hurt related to her unwelcome birth (282). Managing her mother had always been one of the biggest predicaments during her youth. After many failed attempts, Rosalie knew that she would never be able to satisfy her mother. She finally decided *not* to go on as her mother's Rosalie. A sensitive and sensible girl, Rosalie would always be conscious about the curse of "illegitimacy" regarding her existence.

Rosalie's full maiden name was Rosalie Matilda Kuanghu Chou. She was named

after her grandmother, Matilda Rosalie Leenders, with the variation of having two Chinese names at the end of the string of names. "Kuanghu" was her personal name in Chinese, meaning the "light of the moon," for it was on the Harvest Festival day that she was born. "Chou" was her last name from the father. As bicultural as the name may sound, Rosalie rejected "Rosalie" as her name. "Rosalie, who did not want to be named Rosalie, crawled still farther away from the house..." (*CT* 319). Even as a preteen, Rosalie consciously chose to become Rosalie-no-longer. She wanted to be "another, not hamstrung Rosalie" (*MF* 38). She needed a name that marked the new beginning of Rosalie the doctor-to-be. One day, she had the new name for herself: Josephine. She announced it proudly to the mom, "From today I am Josephine." But her mother laughed about it, "Why that was the name of my servant, my maid, Josephine." She was also ridiculed by her sisters Tiza and Marianne, "Josephine, Josephine the servant, your name is Josephine the servant" (39). She was upset, but not crushed. Josephine-Rosalie had developed resilience to adversity at home. She was ready for unkind words and discouraging manners. She would live on. She would assert a new "she," a new identity in the forming. De-naming was her new found device, an antidote to the curse of her birth and her very existence.

The buoyant spirit of Josephine-Rosalie was necessary for her new belief. Within her, she saw herself sharing a future alongside the nation that she had gradually identified herself with in total — China. During her adolescence, she had been hearing pronouncements of China's doom, "China is finished," "This is the end," "There is no hope for China" (40). Yet this Josephine-Rosalie would not lose hope regarding China. In fact, she started to assert a tenacity that many others did not have. With dignity and moral courage, she was ready to go against all odds in order to greet the day of light, namely the day of transformation for China, and for herself. Although it took Rosalie a long time to figure out what to fight for, she finally got it altogether (32). Through a long period of soul searching and re-identification of herself, Rosalie was able to reconstruct the ethical order of her world through the recreation of herself. Instead of resorting to a victimed mentality or alienating herself from the Chinese community, she took on an active role as a contributing member to China and the Chinese. She eventually adopted a name that characterised who she wanted herself to be: "Han Suyin." Literally, "Han Suyin" means the plain voice of the Han people. The family name "Han (韩)," homophone of "Hanzu (汉族)," was deliberately chosen by Rosalie Chou to project her ethical identity of being a member of the majority Chinese.

Ethical Identity: Re-defining the Determinatives

One's *ethical* identity is differentiated from *metaphysical* identity. Metaphysics is

concerned with what constitutes a person, e.g., body and soul, and whether a person could be identified as the same person at all times, i.e., if a person could be X at a time, but Y at another, what makes X and Y the same person? *Ethical identity*, on the other hand, is the definition for the "core" self or "true" self of a person, a determinative of one's precise individualism: What makes X (or X+Y in different stages) a certain person, rather than another individual. In Rosalie Chou's case, examining her ethical identity means the observation of what makes the person X Rosalie Chou, rather than George Chou or Tiza Chou. In other words, the ethical identity of Rosalie Chou is what makes Rosalie Chou the exact person who she is, which basically could be answered from two dimensions: Descriptively, what are the core traits and values that define who Rosalie Chou is? Normatively, what are the core traits and values that *should* define who Rosalie Chou is.

Very often, race, class, age, gender and ethnicity are the basic determinatives of one's ethical identity in a community. As the saying goes, a leopard cannot change its spots. To a certain extent, these determinatives play undeniable roles in defining who a person is, and suggesting what core traits and values the person might probably subscribe to. However, one's ethical identity is also determined by the social roles that one assumes, for example, after Rosalie Chou completed her medical education and became a qualified physician, Dr. Chow (Chou), her Eurasian female identity become secondary in her socialisation. Her patients as well as her social circle would recognise her as a highly sought-after *doctor*, rather than a Eurasian lady. Also, because of her professional qualifications, any negative preconception regarding her as a female or her "Eurasian" background would automatically be re-evaluated. In her fourth book, *My House has Two Doors*, she recollected how easily she overcame gender discrimination in the medical profession when she first opened her own clinic in Johor Baharu Malaysia. A male doctor warned her then, "You won't have any patients. People don't like women doctors." Contrary to his stereotyped opinion, Dr. Chow (Rosalie)'s patients increased phenomenally. Besides getting patients from the city, her fame brought her patients from distant rubber estates (*HTD* 100-102). Eventually, whether a "pure-blood" or not, she received the appointment by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to be the Consultant on China Affairs.

In many ways, Rosalie's ethical identity was predominantly shaped and determined by her ideal self. Unlike her mother who only saw a secure future for Eurasian women in marriage, Rosalie was convinced of her capability to rise above gender discrimination and ethnic rivalry. Even at the age of 14 (or younger), Rosalie had envisioned that "When I am big I will do something so that there will not be a beggar left in China, and no child will be blind. One day each child in China will have an egg a day" (*CT* 348). Young Rosalie thought that an egg a day would cure

blindness, as she learned that from her mother. It was during a vacation at the home of a deceased doctor that Rosalie was first exposed to medical books. Having read those books, and being able to diagnose the diseases suffered by each family member, Rosalie instinctively knew that she would be a doctor in future (*MF* 16), and she eventually became a recognised doctor, as she had already seen herself becoming so.

Unlike her younger sister Tiza Chou the "Loved One," Rosalie the "Wicked One" (nick-named by her mother) was not feminine and domesticated like any other European girls. While Tiza naturally became what a Eurasian girl "ought to be," Rosalie found it difficult to be acquainted with the Western element in her dual-identity. Even as she learned to observe the Western courtesies of "saying yes madams, curtsying, holding a fork, and laughing socially," she felt that it would be more truthful to herself if she could be a part of "the squalor," namely, China of the time (*CT* 363). Rosalie, who refused to be the mommy's Rosalie, remembered — and an old photograph supported the fact — that she was fairly loved by her father. Father called her Meme, meaning "Little Sister." He held her, a baby then, in his arms, and she was bundled in the flowered blanket which had been Sea Orchid's blanket (305). Hence, even in the midst of identity crisis, "Who am I, what am I?... What is to *be*?" (320), Rosalie Chou figured out gradually that she wanted to be Chinese, "like Papa" (403). "This is Hsinyang in Honan, and Papa is Chinese and Mama is Belgian, and I am Rosalie or so they call me, but really, I am not Rosalie. I am me... And who was me?" (326).

All in all, the sense of ideal self and internalisation of convictions about her "Chineseness" served to determine the further development of Rosalie's ethical self. Her elder brother George eliminated his Chinese name after marrying a European lady, Helene, for he did not want his children to have any reference to the Chinese (*MF* 279). Unlike George, Rosalie's ethical identity remained clear: She was going to be "Han Suyin." She identified herself with the Hakkas, and the Hans, the majority Chinese.

Ethical Reconstruction: Repairing the "Railroad"

Young Rosalie was certain of one thing: that the trains would not run if her father was not at his office desk (*MF* 10). She fully identified herself with her father's whole-hearted commitment to his career. She could tell that "if love can be measured by vulnerability, my father was vulnerable to my mother, his wife, except in one thing: the railway" (32). She witnessed how her father battled with the constant threats and malicious interruptions of the railroad by the warlords, the soldiers, and the war. As a young girl, she remembered vividly that during one of her visits to her father's railway office, she could tell distinctively that something serious was hovering over the

office, "Papa, what is the matter?" At the back of her mind, she could discern that the uneasiness in the air was due to some socio-political upheavals, "perhaps once again the railway line was cut. Another war..." Her father's colleague, Mr. Hua, shivered in his winter overcoat and said wearily, "We are never finished, never. What is going to happen now? Are we going to stand up and fight? Or no?" (213). Nevertheless, Rosalie had high regards about her father who "had coped with war and destruction, and kept the railways running, patching them up, making do" (*PH* 313).

Like father like daughter. The father's unswerving dedication to the welfare of the railway left a life-long impression upon Rosalie. Rosalie's mother Marguerite rejected China due to its poverty. Rosalie's elder brother resented China due to his failure in social assimilation. But Rosalie envisioned a life living for China. Gradually, she figured out that she could not and would not disown China:

> ... it is from Papa, from being born in China, from all my childhood and growing up there that I have this inescapable passion and obsession with China. In this I have been, all unknown to myself, a Chinese intellectual of my generation of my time. All my reactions, everything I have done, have always been conditioned by this inner prompting of the heart, of which I am only now fully aware. (314)

Yentung Chou guarded China's railways during his entire life time. Inheriting the legacy of her father, Han Suyin (the grown-up Rosalie Chou as stated in *MF*, 192) diligently guarded the goodwill of China as a non-diplomat individual at an international level via her pen and her public lectures. "Sometimes I am told that I have sacrificed 'popularity and success' by 'giving up' writing love stories and novels, writing all too serious books (about China).[8] But I could not do otherwise..." (*PH* 316).

Ethical Choice: "To Be" versus the "Ought to Be"

One's ethnicity is given upon birth. People were born to be Chinese, English, etc. But in Rosalie's case, she *chose* to be Chinese. Inheriting two ethnic and cultural backgrounds was both a blessing and a curse for her. While young, she was enrolled in a Chinese school in the morning, and a French convent in the afternoon. At home, her meals would be a European breakfast, a Chinese lunch and a European supper. Occasionally, Rosalie's mother even mixed macaroni and Chinese noodles in her cooking. Yet managing the duality was not easy. Rosalie always felt that she had "an *other* life, a saving otherness which was also *self*" (*CT* 352). From time to time, she fell victim to the pressure of two clashing and non-communicating worlds. She vividly recalled the sheer loneliness while attending Yenching University for an entrance

exam in 1933:

> I was the only girl in European dress. I stood in a corner and lit a cigarette. I was alone. No one else stood alone; everyone went about in groups of twos or threes… Suddenly I saw myself, appallingly different, and I wanted to get on my bicycle and ride away, but this could not be done. So I lit another cigarette and puffed furiously. I must have looked so arrogant, puffy because I was so frightened, and fear makes one put on a face, obstinate and defensive. (*MF* 228)

The ethical atmosphere in which she was did not encourage her to model after the Europeans. Instead, choosing to be "Chinese" probably kept her from perpetual displacement. Also, believing in the future of China even during turbulent times gave Rosalie the moral courage to live her own yet-to-be-proven life. "'But you do know why' (said that other self in me). 'Because you cannot live without China, you dumb so-and so. Maybe you cannot live *in* China, maybe you are only a Eurasian, a dirty half-caste, as some people say, but you cannot live *without* China. For without China you die. *I* simply die, inside of *you*'" (*MF* 360).

Rosalie Chou had learnt to greet each day with courage and embrace "a continuity between what was and what is" (*CT* 19). She had to be ready to be all the Rosalies and all the different Rosalies to-be (371). Because of her persistence in choosing China and to be really Chinese at heart, she secured for herself a future that when she were to look back, Rosalie Chou had become a phantom, which stood transfixed with Han Suyin in her prime days (*BS* 1).

China was Han Suyin (Rosalie Chou)'s "religion" and object of her lifelong devotion. She was perpetually obsessed by China, a "phoenix reborn from its ashes," a nation with a promising future after shedding off "outmoded postulates" (*PH* 302). Nevertheless, Han Suyin's choice of self-identification with anything Chinese was a stark contrast to her own siblings and other Eurasians who tried hard to be Europeans. The community that had brought her up did not produce some "Rosalie ought-to-be." Rather, quite the contrary, Rosalie asserted her own worldview and eventually became her self-determined "to be," namely, Han Suyin. Despite occasional confusion, Rosalie distinctively knew who and what would be hindering her to become "Han Suyin-to-be." Painfully, she broke off the friendship with Meiling because Meiling loathed "those ugly poor people" on the street (*CT* 369). When China was at war with Japan in 1938, Rosalie abandoned her boyfriend and her scholarship, as well as her medical studies at University of Brussels so as to return to China as soon as she could, "... I have sixty pounds with me and I am going back, going back, going back, and now I know that there is no love, no other love, that there will never be any love

stronger than this, which has no name, which I did not know was in me, stronger than anything else" (362). Years later, after becoming a certified surgeon in England, and practically a widow of an ex-Kuomintang colonel, she again bid farewell to Europe in order to head back to Hong Kong, the island city adjacent to China.

Due to her close connection with Chou En Lai and other Chinese officials, Han Suyin boldly claimed that she was an "insider" of China's affairs, while other non-Chinese were on the "outside, not inside" (*HTD* 184). When China was completely closed to the Western world between 1949 and 1970, she was among the few who were allowed to visit China. When married a second time — this time to Englishman Leonard Comber, Han Suyin was offered a permanent residence in Malaya by the founding father of Malaya, Tunku Abdul Rahman. Yet, she declined the offer decisively, as Malaya would not be a conducive place for her to continue her advocacy for China (*HTD* 485). After her third marriage, Han Suyin and her husband Colonel Vincent Ruthnaswamy, who resided in Lausanne, Switzerland, frequented Hong Kong. In 1970, due to Han Suyin, Vincent became the first non-diplomat Indian to visit China since 1959 (*PH* 149).

In 1958, Han Suyin ended her medical practice after the success of her novel *The Mountain is Young* (*HTD* 271-272). Turning into a full time novelist, historian and lecturer (275, 283, 291), Han Suyin also assumed the role of East-West culture envoy at the period of time when China had "not one friend in the world" (274). She visited many provinces in China, including the interior areas. Even though initially condemned as "agents of American imperialism (in China)" together with Pearl Buck (*PH* 90), Han Suyin was finally acknowledged as one who brought the understanding of the West to the Chinese. Outside China, she was recognised as a non-diplomat advocate for China. The overseas Chinese in America and Canada had regarded her as their earnest consultant especially when Chou En Lai passed away in 1976 (279). The BBC rang her up when Chiang Ching, the leader of the Gang of Four, was arrested (293).

Due to Han Suyin's ethical choice in challenging and reconstructing how things "ought to be," she finally had a breakthrough against the curse of life upon her bicultural, mixed-racial and weaker-sex background. Her international presence includes New York, Chicago, DC, Paris, London, Italy, Phnom Penh, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, Japan, Algeria, Yugoslavia, New Delhi, Kazakhstan, Outer Mongolia and Mexico (9, 13, 15, 91, 92, 148, 157, 164, 166, 193, 202, 231, 248). In one of her public lectures in London, Han Suyin emphasised the importance of science and morality. For her, the modern "putting *me* first" way of life was erroneous. Instead, she proposed unselfishness and serving others — more specifically, "serving the people" — as the core value of human society.[9]

Conclusion

Narrative is inseparable from ethics. Han Suyin's autobiography depicts how a certain ethical environment could be detrimental to a person's rightful claims to live. It also evokes the ethical consciousness of any reader to wanting to stand for Rosalie Chou — Han Suyin, the protagonist of the story, in her cultural displacement and identity complex. In Han Suyin's extensive 5-volume autobiography series, the readers are invited to witness how Rosalie Chou resets the determinants of her ethical identity. Besides, one could also trek down the path with her as she exercises her ethical choice to self-determine the "Rosalie to-be," rather than conforming to the social expectation for her to become a certain cookie-cutter "Rosalie ought-to-be."

"This book[10] is about the fixed star of my self-completion, the one I had to follow despite all hazards" (*PH* 313). It seems that memoir-writing was Rosalie-Han Suyin's systematic way of unravelling the entangled ethical knots of all she had been through. From the two-cents worth of this writer, the central theme of Han Suyin's life lies in her successful attempts in reconstructing the ethical order of her world. She had resolved at some point to accept the fact that her family tree was crippled. But at the same time, she also exercised her will power to make the "crippled tree" thrive. "For although the tree was crippled, it has gone on living, and who knows but that its fruit shall be sweeter and better than that of any other?" (*CT* 306). Her breakthroughs include: first, her ability in defusing the curse of her illegitimate existence in the family as well as the community where she was brought up; next, her success in challenging the ethical norms of her era and thus successfully transpired from a despised mixed-blood underdog to a highly sought-after female medical professional and author; third, the rebirth of her new "dual-identity," that it was no longer a matter of the East-West, but rather, a reconciliation of the Yesterday-Today, i.e., Rosalie-Han Suyin in one piece. Last but not least, against all the well-meaning advice and life examples of European housewives, Rosalie-Han Suyin had also succeeded in creating a brand of herself, a class of her own. She became a signature high-achieving Eurasian, who was also a proud citizen of the world.

Through long episodes of painful soul-searching as a Eurasian, intertwined with the quests of "what was the real China?" (*MF* 26) and "what was the true soul of China?" (265), Rosalie of the yesteryears had gradually evolved into today's Han Suyin. Rosalie achieved her self-completion process in her final, grown-up version, namely, Han Suyin — "the plain voice of the Chinese majority." Though not without effort, she thrived gracefully and with dignity, attested especially by her accounts in *Phoenix Harvest*, the fifth book of her autobiographical series.

Hence, Rosalie or not Rosalie? The answer is a paradox of both yes and no. It is a

"yes," because Rosalie Chou lived. She lived throughout Han Suyin's autobiography. Even as Rosalie lived with a new name Han Suyin, the spirit and flesh of Rosalie was not dead in spite of the new identification. However, it is also a "no," for even though Rosalie was the "yesterday" of Han Suyin, it was a discrete "self" which had already given way to the "other," the preferred self. This other self was a new creation, known as "Han Suyin" at the international platform. Originally a Hakka-Belgian Eurasian, Han Suyin became truly international, making the whole world her home.[11] The "whole world became my home, until my roots extended and broadened to encompass the round earth" (*PH* 313). Deliberately, Han Suyin chose to be a diva reborn. She saw Rosalie as a phantom, the shadow of Han Suyin's past (*BS* 9). Han Suyin passed away at her home in Lausanne, Switzerland on 2 November, 2012, and would always be remembered for her colourful personality as well as her purposeful life as the clarion voice of 20th century China, where cultures and conflicting moral parameters met.[12]

Notes

1. Among others, Wang Xuding's (1996) PhD thesis entitled "Of Bridge Construction: A Critical Study of Han Suyin's Historical and Autobiographical Writings" provides one of the most extensive accounts on Han Suyin in post-colonial perspectives, i.e., the invading Western powers in China; Han's dominating mother lording over Han's father; Joseph Hers' attempts of control over Rosalie Chou (Han Suyin), etc. Articles that treat Han Suyin as a female subject are numerable. Notable articles include Helen Buss's feminist approach on the subject matter: "The Autobiographies of Han Suyin: A Female Post-colonial Subjectivity" (1992).

2. For the full exposition of the Ethical Literary Criticism (ELC), see Nie, *Wenxue Lunlixue Piping ji Qita*, 2012, especially pages 33-48 regarding exploring ELC as a new direction, and pages 3-15 regarding the fundamentals of ELC and its key terms. In fact, in the West, moral philosophers such as Martha Nussbaum and Richard Rorty, as well as literature critics like S. L. Goldberg, Wayne C. Booth, David Parker and his colleagues, had already been campaigning for a resurgence of ethics in literary criticism during the last two decades of the 20th century. David Parker's monograph *Ethics, Theory and the Novel* (*ETN*, 1994) drew attention to "the virtual absence of explicit ethical interest in contemporary literary discourse," particularly due to the damage of the decade-old post-structuralist theory at the time (*ETN*, 4, 32, 195). He also showcased the use of "ethical criticism" in critiquing five novels, namely, *Middlemarch*, *Anna Karenina*, *The White Peacock*, *Women in Love*, and *Lady Chatterley*. In the book Parker co-edited with Jane Adamson and Richard Freadman, *Renegotiating Ethics in Literature, Philosophy and Theory* (1998), however, the focus of using ethics in the reading and criticism of literature was lost. Discussions revolved largely around moral philosophy, rather than a further development on the idea of ELC. Also, it was not entirely clear whether their proposition of the "ethical criticism" leaned more towards the Platonian moral

criticism, or the Aristotelian school of literary criticism. Hence, when Dr Zhenzhao Nie presented a firm proposition for ELC in 2004, followed by his careful delineation of the key terms of ELC in 2010, the ELC approach finally took shape.

3. See Nie, page12. Nie reminds that ethical standards vary from one period of time to another. Hence, it would be most appropriate to enter into the particular time and space of a literature in order to make ethical observations in order to derive viable research findings. When a critic assumes the role of an advocate for a certain character in the literature, he or she would be able to understand the ethical environment of the said literary world.

4. Platonic moral criticism rejects Homer's depiction of the anthropomorphic gods. According to him, deity should not err. Wicked gods should never appear in literature. Plato disapproves of free expressions of moral ideas in literature as he could not see the demarcation between the simulated literary world and the real world. Aristotle, on the other hand, views the literary world apart from the real world. He allows a certain literary world to exist under its unique simulated setting. Aristotle's ethical criticism is thus, closer to literature itself, as it gives attention to the historical and literary contexts of the literature in view. See Nie, page 52.

5. As a historical discipline, biography makes use of any work an author has written as the source for revealing about the author's life. On the other hand, as a critical instrument, biographical information is used to understand the works produced by the author. The focus is not on the life of the author per se, but on his or her work. This approach also pays attention to the appreciation of the aesthetic and functional values of the works. See "Biography in Literary Criticism" in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Literature* edited by Garry L. Hagberg and Walter Jost (2010).

6. Apparent taboos and conflicts between moral imperatives of different cultures often evoke ethical dilemma or ethical paradox. Han Suyin's (Rosalie Chou) autobiographies reflected several ethical phenomena that were pressing on the need for an ethical reconstruction and related choices on her part.

7. Han Suyin said that she could not figure out her obsession about China until she heard an analysis twenty years later that coined China as the *religion* of the Chinese intellectuals, "But this is what has always been: our only religion, our only love, is China, and that is why China has persisted, endured, survived, and is reborn again and again, throughout the millennia" (*CT*, 115).

8. The words within brackets here are additions by the writer of this article.

9. Han Suyin's recorded speech in London, "The Thought of Chairman Mao and the Chinese People," delivered in 1972.

10. "This book" refers to *Phoenix Harvest*, book five in Han Suyin's 5-volume autobiography series.

11. Guan Huimei's masters dissertation, "The World is my Homeland — An Exploration of Han Suyin's Autobiography" expounds the process of Han Suyin's evolving from a struggling dual-identity female to a proud citizen of the world.

12.This work was part of the research findings regarding Hakkas in Malaysia, funded by the Short-Term Research Fund, University of Malaya [UMRG/RP006-2012C].

Works Cited

Adamson, Jane, Richard Freadman and David Parker eds. *Renegotiating Ethics in Literature, Philosophy and Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Buss, Helen. "The Autobiographies of Han Suyin: A Female Post-colonial Subjectivity." *Canadian Review of American Studies* 23.1(Fall 1992):107-126.

关惠梅："世界是我家园—《韩素音自传》中的文化身份问题的探索"（硕士学位论文）。福州：福建师范大学，1998 年。

[Guan, Huimei. "The World is my Homeland – An Exploration of Han Suyin's Autobiography" (M.A Dissertation). Fuzhou: Fujian Normal University, 1998.]

Hagberg, Garry L. and Walter Jost eds. *A Companion to the Philosophy of Literature*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Han Suyin. *The Crippled Tree*. London: Panther Books, 1972.

---. *A Many Splendored Thing*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1956.

---. *A Mortal Flower*. London: Panther Books, 1972.

---. *Birdless Summer*. London: Panther Books, 1972.

---. *My House Has Two Doors*. Granada: Triad Books, 1982.

---. *Phoenix Harvest*. Chicago: Academy Chicago Pub, 1985.

---. "The Thought of Chairman Mao and the Chinese People." Recorded speech in London, 1972. Transcribed. Gamma Cloud. Web. 12 November 2013. <http://gammacloud.org/special-collections/the-thought-ofmao-tse-tung/han-suyin/>.

聂珍钊：《文学伦理学批评及其他—聂珍钊自选集》。武汉：华中师范大学出版社，2012 年。

[Nie, Zhenzhao. *Ethical Literature Criticism and Others — Selected Articles of Zhenzhao Nie*. Wuhan: Huazhong Normal University, 2012.]

Parker, David. *Ethics, Theory and the Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Wang, Xuding. "Of Bridge Construction: A Critical Study of Han Suyin's Historical and Autobiographical Writings" (Ph.D. Dissertation). Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada, 1996.

责任编辑：刘富丽

To Narrate is to Be: Edwidge Danticat's *The Farming of Bones*

Xu Yan
Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ningbo University
818 Fenghua Road, Jiangbei District, Ningbo, Zhejiang 315211, China
Email: xuyanarwen@163.com

Abstract This paper studies the Haitian American writer, Edwidge Danticat's novel *The Farming of Bones*, finding that this novel, in a dual narrative structure, displays how Amabelle, a Haitian woman who suffers from a serious sense of non-existence, struggles to juxtapose, through narrating, pieces of her own past experiences together into a complete identity, and how she endeavors to offer testimonies to the existence of those killed that she has come across in life. Amabelle's sense of non-existence results from two events: she was orphaned at eight, and she lost her lover Sebastien and most of her friends in the 1937 massacre. When finding no place to lay down her sufferings, she turns to language, telling her dreams, describing her childhood life, narrating her lover's story and those deaths she witnessed. This paper claims that Amabelle the orphan seeks a sense of being through narrating her dreams and memories, while Amabelle the survivor of the massacre regains a sense of existence of her lover and, in the meantime, testifies the historical truth of the massacre through narrating her experiences, "to find a safe nest" to lay down it "where it will neither be scattered in the winds, nor remain forever buried beneath the sod." And in a conclusion, both Amabelle and the author Danticat have found the safe nest, i.e., narrating, through which the former gains and testifies existences and the latter records a historical event and passes it on.
Keywords Edwidge Danticat; *The Farming of Bones*; sense of being; non-existence

Edwidge Danticat (1969-), the Haitian American writer, has received a sustained publication of criticisms over her novel *The Farming of Bones* (1998) ever since it came into print. This novel centers on the 1937 genocide of Haitians living in the Dominican Republic, schemed by the ultranationalist, Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo Molina. During that massacre, 20,000 Haitians were chopped to death with machetes rather than by shooting, on account of the government's intrigue to disguise it as a sugarcane-cutters' conflict, thus to cover up the ethnic cleansing. After that,

little was revealed to the public. To a larger part, Danticat's novel means to reveal the historical truth of this silenced event. In consequence, this novel naturally bears a heavy historical mark, while its fractured narrative structure entices trauma theory in interpreting the heroine's response to her parents' drowning and her experiences in the massacre. Among the criticisms up to now, prominent concerns range from history and memory to trauma and identity.

Drawing on the theoretical discourses of "border theory" and "testimonio," April Shemak analyzed how the novel "deconstructs Dominican nationalism and produces a history of the Trujillo era through the fractured and ambiguous testimonial of Amabelle Désir" (85), and she came to a conclusion that Amabelle and other survivors' scarred bodies become "more enduring testimonies to the massacre" since their "oral testimonies are vulnerable to misinterpretation" (103). Martin Munro, focusing on Danticat's narrator Amabelle's response to her traumatic experiences in the massacre, examined "how Danticat's novel presents the effects of trauma on the individual and the community, how she identifies what is destroyed by trauma and also indicates the new structures and sensibilities that emerge from the traumatic or posttraumatic condition" (83). While Amy Novak probed the novel's narrative structure to further contend that *The Farming of Bones* examines the past through a "spectral narrative economy" that claims memory as a site of radical possibility. Skeptical about the exclusionary logic of Dominican official history which silenced the massacre, her argument challenged the national narrative of the historical event with individuals' bodies as "a marred testament" (95). Both Munro and Novak raised the possibility of representation in the aftermath of trauma and the relationship of individual memory to collective history. Furthermore, Nandini Dhar combined trauma theory and Nicole Brossard's concept of "women's memory" to argue the relationship between social identity and the formation of individual narratives of memory, pointing out that "there does not exist any homogenous concept called 'women's memory'" and "an understanding of her [Amabelle] trauma lies not solely in an understanding and recounting of the gender dynamics of the society, but also has to take into account the questions of race, class and nationality" (186). While in comparing two women's texts (Julia Alvarez's *In the Time of the Butterflies* and Edwidge Danticat's *The Farming of Bones*) that "attempt to rewrite imperial history, …renegotiating the masculinized national identity that is inherited from imperialism" (788-789), Lynn Chun Ink pointed out that Danticat's novel seeks to reframe history itself by reformulating a communal identity based on shared experiences, a common struggle, thus undermining the disavowal of community beyond national borders (800). Away from the historical dimension, Heather Hewett tactfully located her examination of this novel "at the theoretical crossroads of disability studies and trauma studies" (125).

With a reference to Esu and Papa Legba, the two disabled voodoo figures grounded in Afro Caribbean myth and ritual, Hewett explored the symbolic crossroads in *The Farming of Bones* that mark all transitional journeys of Amabelle when she changes from a young able-bodied beautiful woman to an impaired old body of deformity "no longer a tempting spectacle."

Judging from the above brief review, we can see that history and trauma are two unavoidable perspectives in understanding this novel. The author does not deny her intention of re-capturing history to remind readers of the purposely silenced history. "Nineteen ninety-seven had come and gone and no word said… no wreaths laid; I wrote this book as a memory and a tribute to what happened" (Francis 168). But this novel is not simply anchored there. Rather, it aspires to show what a powerful role a narration can play in shaping the existence of an individual person and interfering with historical truths at the same time. This paper attempts to study Danticat's narrative strategy in recovering the voice of the individual character Amabelle Désir and in exposing the silenced historical events in *The Farming of Bones*, thus revealing the vital role language plays in discovering one's real existence. In doing so, this paper will demonstrate and affirm Danticat's "honed craft" in targeting many testimonies at once, though Dale Peck considers it the author's "ambition as a writer; and if, in the end, she's not equal to the task she sets herself, the failure is less one of innate ability than of honed craft. I think she will write the book she wants to write, she's just not there yet" (135).

I. Seeking a Sense of Being through Narrating

The major character and narrator of the story, Amabelle Désir, is a Haitian handmaid of a Dominican señora Valencia. When Amabelle is still trapped in her nightmare of her parents' drowning years ago, her lover Sebastien Onius narrowly escapes a car accident, but his fellow laborer, another Haitian sugarcane cutter Joël does not. Señora Valencia's soldier husband Pica is the reckless car driver, but he doesn't even care to have a look at the victim to make sure whether he is alive or dead. While the Haitians are preparing a funeral for Joël and even brewing revenge, a decided holocaust is quietly progressing towards them. But Amabelle doesn't believe the rumor until the slaughter reaches near. She gets separated from Sebastien in their last effort to escape. After a scary journey and being beaten severely by a mob at the last stop, Dajabón, Amabelle crosses the border river, Massacre River, to her home country, permanently disfigured and deformed, one leg shorter than the other. After years' waiting for Sebastien's message, eventually, at the death of Trujillo, she ventures back to the other side of the river to have a look at the waterfall where Sebastian and others are said to have been killed. Back from the cliff, Amabelle decides to wait for the dawn,

immerging herself naked in the shallow water of the Massacre River, "cradled by the current, paddling like a newborn in a washbasin" (310).

This novel opens "His name is Sebastien Onius. He comes most nights to put an end to my nightmare, the one I have all the time, of my parents drowning". The narrator is Amabelle Désir. "Nightmare" of "my parents drowning" "all the time" sets the tone of the story as sad and a bit ghostly though the opening chapter pulsates with an erotic ecstasy. Immediately in the following chapter, we come to a sharp anti-romantic realization that Amabelle is a domestic servant, that her lover Sebastien is a sugarcane cutter in the field, and that when they two meet in her room, generally in the evening after Sebastien finishes his whole day work in the fields, they need to be careful not to arouse any attention from the master family. Apart from her low social status, we gradually get to know that although she is in her early twenties, in her prime, she is painfully living in her childhood spiritually.

Danticat adopts a dual narrative structure. There are two linear stories, one about Amabelle's dreams, her childhood in Haiti and her happy moments with Sebastien, the other about her present life as a servant in the Dominican Republic. In both stories, the narrator is Amabelle. Her dreams are mostly about her parents drowning. Her memory of childhood is mainly about her remembered anecdotes with her parents. Though Sebastien exists in her Dominican life, she does not mention him in her narration of that part until quite later in the development of the story. It feels like she divides her life into two worlds. She decidedly sifts something out of a spiritual world, where just family members stay. From a psychological perspective, Amabelle's division of her world is identified, in Sigmund Freud's vocabulary, as dissociation, and her screening indicates an absorption in retrospections, as Freud pointed out, "… men are brought to complete deadlock by a traumatic experience that has so completely shaken the foundations on which they have built their lives that they give up all interest in the present and future, and become completely absorbed in their retrospections" (239). For Amabelle, her foundations of her life were shaken when her parents were drowned. As a response, she neurotically has herself entrenched in the past and rejects the present. In another word, this neurotic symptom indicates her effort to linger on her fundamental connection to her past life.

Connection plays an indispensable part in one's sense of being. In the Christian world, man was originally connected to God. In the secular world, everyone was initially connected to his/her parents. When the connection to God was broken through original sin, man embarked on an everlasting journey to regain that connection. When their parents die, men are thrown into a sudden sense of panic and rootlessness. They begin to dedicate a special space permanently in their heart to their parents, to seek an eternal connection to parents. After all, connection to parents is the

original evidence of men's existence, or in Rollo May's word, one's "sense of being." According to Rollo May, a sense of being means one's experience of his being as real and meaningful (1958, 85), which involves the working of Ego and Self. Ego works as the necessary precondition of a being while Self organizes the inner activities and connects one to others in the society (1953, 79), and a healthy individual must build a relationship with others and interdependence with society, which is called social conformity (1939, 57). Amabelle Désir was confronted with the sudden loss of such a relationship and dependence when she lost her parents in the rising tide when she was only eight years old. Worse still, she witnessed the whole drowning scene. Her father tried to carry her mother across the river, but "the water rises above my father's head. My mother releases his neck, the current carrying her beyond his reach. Separated, they are less of an obstacle for the cresting river" (52). That is absolutely a horrendous disaster for a child, which she witnessed and it would surely "shake the foundations" of her world, "I scream until I can taste blood in my throat, until I can no longer hear my own voice" (52). Henceforward she fell into a perpetual nightmare, for years repeatedly seeing her parents drowning in her dream all the time. Since then, she began to single out a spiritual world consisting of her memories of her parents and her childhood. In this way, she can regain the connection to her parents. She does not feel herself an orphan there. In this spiritual world, she gets back her evidence of existence. In another word, she regains her sense of being through depicting a picture in her mind with words. Those words narrate her dreams, her memories and her fantasies. Later Sebastien is invited into this preferred world though he actually lives in her post-disaster world. His existence in her spiritual world is purely a narrative existence. He gradually comes to be part of her existence in both of her worlds.

Amabelle's struggling with a sense of being is also encoded in the author's purposeful designing of the typefaces and the reversal of verb tenses in the two worlds. Amabelle's dreams and memories of her parents are all narrated in present simple tense in bold print chapters, which are intertwined with the past tense narrative chapters of her everyday life in Valencia's house. The book reviewer Michael Upchurch simply denied the necessity of this design. "There are technical oddities as well that detract from the power of Danticat's story. The novel opens with what appear to be two alternating narrators — suggested by different typefaces and contrasting prose styles. Yet it soon becomes clear that both voices belong to Amabelle, a device that seems miscalculated and unnecessary." On the contrary, I find this device rich with meanings. On the one hand, Amabelle's parents died before she came to be Señora Valencia's handmaid. If there should be a clear division of the events sequence presented by verb tense, the narration about her childhood should be in the past tense while her life in Valencia's house should be in the present. Considering the basic

meanings of two verb tenses, the reversal of them aims at provoking the permanent or long-lasting sense of being with her parents, while her everyday life as a servant, to her, is already a past. This announces a psychological perversion between present and past, just echoing her division of her two worlds. She embraces the past but rejects the present as she prefers being with her parents to living alone as a servant. What's more, while her servant life is narrated in chronological order in a calm and well-controlled pace, the bold print chapters do not follow any clear order of time. They are her fragmentary memories narrated in prose style, in which it is hard to trace logic. It is no wrong to read her as schizophrenic, seriously trapped in the past, as many criticisms have argued. But the way I see it, this divided vision reflected in the confusing verb tenses does not really indicate her divided identity, but testifies to her struggle to retain her parents' existence in her life, or rather, to record her being in the coordinate system of life, her parents as a parameter and relativity. On the other hand, bold print generally means to emphasize, to highlight something important. For Amabelle, those fragmentary memories overtop her servant life in reality. In the master's house, her role as a servant and thus low status does not offer her the values that she used to experience while with her parents. Without parents, her life seems unreal, lacking in foundations. Being a servant, she does not feel meaningful. She looses her sense of being. "It's either be in a nightmare or be nowhere at all. Or otherwise simply float inside these remembrances, grieving for who I was, and even more for what I've become" (2). The author does not intrude into the narration, but such well-designed rather than "miscalculated" typeface cries for cognition the way a high relief or etching picture tries to provoke attention. This narrative method implies that subconsciously Amabelle would rather fall back heavily on her preferred past life, experiencing her being as real and valuable. Her handmaid life is just a backdrop to set against what she really yearns for. Fragmented as they are, like a puzzle game, each piece of her dreams and disordered memories serves as a piece of her true existence. Narrating those fragments helps to reorder them, reshaping an integrated being. This narration is a blunt poise against the sudden loss, a struggle with the lost sense of being. Richly imaginative from childhood, by means of language, Amabelle finds a great niche in her comfortable spiritual world with her parents accompanying her, with the old connection regained, and the former existence recorded.

II. Regaining a Sense of Being in Talking and Re-narrating

Sebastien's existence in Amabelle's two worlds links them together eventually. He gradually brings her back into a sense of being in the real world. Talking plays a vital role in achieving this end. Existential psychiatrists Caligor and May both hold that language works as an important means in representing one's sense of being. They

put forward that it is a kind of symbolizing capability of language to represent self-awareness, a capability for one to connect oneself with the world through language the symbol, a capability to gap one's inner value and the outer world (21-22). In the early stage, it is through constant talking that Amabelle and Sebastian together construct their sense of being on the foreign land. Sebastien is from the north of Haiti like Amabelle herself. He lost his father in a hurricane in 1930 and, though his mother was still alive, he left home and travelled afar to Dominican sugarcane fields to earn a living. With the absence of their parents, living in a foreign country, they value highly the companionship of each other. They value talking, the voice, the utterance that breaks the silence and void. When they are together, if not touching, they must be talking. Amabelle prefers to listen to Sebastien's talk, whatever it is about. She just likes to be surrounded by his voice. That gives her a sense of safety. "We must talk to remind each other that we are not yet in the slumbering dark, which is an endless death, like a darkened cave. . . Silence to him is like sleep, a close second to death" (13). They talk about their parents. He requires her to say something she admires most about her parents, hoping that she will ask him the same question so that he can narrate his father's death, which is essential for him too, to keep the connection and to record his father's existence. Their talking is always about their families, the foundation upon which they built their life in the past. So when they talk, they feel a sense of being.

But there are times when talking is not enough. So gradually, re-narrating is needed in order to create a new order, to sustain a real peace of mind. Sebastien is the only comforter for Amabelle, not only in the way that he offers her a listener, but he figures out a way to cure her nightmare for good, to re-narrate her recurrent dreams:

> "I don't want you to dream of that river again," he said. "Give yourself a pleasant dream. Remember not only the end, but the middle, and the beginning, the things they did when they were breathing. Let us say that the river was still that day."And my parents?"
>
> "They died natural deaths many years later."
>
> "And why did I come here?"
>
> "Even though you were a girl when you left and I was already a man when I arrived and our families did not know each other, you came here to meet me."
>
> His back and shoulders became firm and rigid as he was concocting a new life for me.
>
> "Yes," I said, going along. "I did wander here simply to meet you."
>
> …
>
> We had made a pact to change our unhappy tales into happy ones.…(55-56)

Re-narrating can change unhappy tales into happy ones. By re-narrating the meaning of her coming to Dominican land, to meet her lover, a new page in her life, Amabelle at last steps into her real world of her own accord. This is a significant step, and this is a significant gesture. Judging from what happens in the two preceding chapters, we can conclude that this re-narrating finally marks Amabelle's stepping out of her trauma, because this scene appears in chapter 10, which follows chapter 9 where Amabelle unfolds a complete narrative of her parents' drowning in a calm, well-controlled and almost peaceful manner. Amabelle, by narrating her parents' death completely and imperturbably, is going through a great step from her haunting nightmares, the trauma, to a blunt face-to-face confrontation with her wound. In Freud's word, her symptom of being trapped in the trauma disappears when she pulls the traumatic dream/ unconsciousness into her conscious world. "Symptoms are not built up out of conscious experiences; as soon as the unconscious processes in question become conscious, the symptom disappears" (241-242). When Amabelle, for the first time, calmly narrates the whole process of her parents' drowning, it means her nightmare/unconsciousness progresses into her conscious world. That symbolizes the disappearance of her neurotic symptom, her trauma, indicating her recovery from the trauma. The narrating is just like the dried scar, signifying the hurt but not hurting any more.

Another sign to show Amabelle's recovery from the trauma is that for the first time, Sebastien appears in Amabelle's narration of her daily life in Valencia's house. This is a sign of her divided worlds combining together. She is cured. Here it is necessary to make clear what makes Amabelle decide to welcome him to her present world. The narration of the drowning story closely follows chapter 8 in which the shocking car accident, the road killing looms out gradually through the man servant Luis the witness. The order of information in these three chapters, 8, 9 and 10, if studied closely, shows the author's painstaking narrative strategy. Before the hit-and-run road killing happens, Sebastien only exists in the bold print chapters of Amabelle's fragmentary memories. Immediately after the accident, Sebastien steps into the chronological narration of the novel. Chapter 10 opens with "when Sebastien returned from the compound that night." It looks like Sebastien, who, like a shadow, always dwells in the recesses of Amabelle's spiritual world, is now welcomed into her rejected world. He steps from her trauma world into her post-trauma world. She is forced out of her trauma by a stronger force, the automobile killing. The automobile killing functions as a shock therapy. Through these three chapters, the author narrates her heroine out of the trauma and puts her into her integrated being as a housemaid.

But Danticat has one more trick buried here. This automobile killing not only

cures Amabelle of her trauma, but also signals a second trauma to come to her. Unlike her former trauma, the second trauma victimizes not only her alone, but many others. Just like a rehearsal of the slaughter, soon after that accident, Generalissimo Rafael Trujillo began to carry out his vicious plan to wipe the Haitians out of the Dominican Republic. Amabelle and Sebastien unavoidably confront a threat of death. When they stay together, through talking and listening, they experience their being. When they get separated in the final effort to escape "El Corte," the cutting, again, narrating becomes the only hope Amabelle has to feel the existence, this time, mainly of her lover Sebastien, who is said by many to have been killed by Trujillo's soldiers. For a large part, from Chapter 26 to Chapter 37, there is no bold print chapter about Amabelle's dreams or memories. This long continuous narration is focused on the slaughter. Amabelle and Sebastien decided to join the group organized by Father Romain and Father Vargas secretly to cross the river. But Pica's men caught them in the chapel, killed the cane cutters and put Father Romain into prison. Arriving late, Amabelle missed them. So she decided to follow Yves, Sebastien's good friend to escape. It sounds like Amabelle is totally living through the dangerous escaping. Once in Haiti, half-dead, permanently deformed, Amabelle began tracking information about Sebastien. The last ray of hope is when she heard that Father Romain was in Haiti. When she finally came to his house, she found Father Romain was insane, unable to recognize anybody. Only after her visit to Father Romaine did she begin to narrate her dreams again. And there are only two chapters about her dreams, Chapter 37 and 40, before the novel comes to the end. This signifies her second trauma in her life story. Unable to find any trace to prove Sebastien is alive, despaired Amabelle turns to dream once more to get hold of his existence. Witnessing so many victims of the massacre on the edge of being erased from the history, she turns to language again, trying to testify their true existence.

III. Testifying a Historical Event through Narrating

When Amabelle begins to dream again, the contents of her dreams are different. "I dream all the time of returning to give my testimony to the river, the waterfall, the justice of the peace, even to the Generalissimo himself" (264). In the river, she witnessed how Odette died when her man was shot. She knew every detail about how people were forced to jump off the cliff over the waterfall, and how the lucky survivors down into the water were encircled by peasants with machetes to cut off heads. She dreams of giving testimony of the dead to the justice of the peace, not for money, but for someone "to write their names in a book, and take their story to President Vincent," "to concede that what she had witnessed and lived through did truly happen" (236), because "remembering and telling the truth about terrible

events are prerequisites both for the restoration of social order and for the healing of individual victims" (Herman, 1). She wants to give testimony to Trujillo himself of what had happened. But she is denied such a chance. So she has to find a place to talk to. This has become her great worry just like it would be Sebastien's great worry that she didn't know what had happened to him when she couldn't hear his voice to tell her the truth, because "perhaps one single word could have saved all our lives" (264). After decades of years of despairing waiting, now for her, "the slaughter is the only thing that is mine enough to pass on. All I want to do is find a place to lay it down now and again, a safe nest where it will neither be scattered by the winds, nor remain forever buried beneath the sod" (266). In desperation, the only thing she wants to do and can do is to record Sebastien's life, to give testimony of his existence through uttering some words about him, even simply his name, because "men with names never truly die. It is only the nameless and faceless who vanish like smoke into the early morning air" (282). Without a listener, her only choice is talking to herself. And her talking is the last bold print part, Chapter 40. "This past is more like flesh than air; our stories testimonials like the ones never heard by the justice of the peace of the Generalissimo himself" (281). Actually these words are not really dreams, but her wishes and efforts to note down the story, his story, and the history, even just the name of the one connected to and cherished by her. "His name is Sebastien Onius" is repeated several times, because "sometimes this is all I know" (281).

Chapter 40 is like an epitaph on the grave to Sebastien, the last narration to testify his existence. It is also like a farewell speech to the past. In Chapter 41, the end of the novel, it was in 1961, "after the Generalissimo was killed in a monsoon of bullets." Amabelle, now an old woman, in her physical inconvenience, went a very long distance across the border to have a last look at the waterfall. She found "the drop was much longer and the pool deeper than the one I remembered. Perhaps time had destroyed my sense of proportion and possibilities. Or perhaps this was another fall altogether" (302). The waterfall is not the one in her memory, and the old friend Valencia, "now we were neither strangers nor friends. We were like two people passing each other on the street, exchanging a lengthy meaningless greeting. And at last I wanted it to end" (300). Farewell to the waterfall, farewell to the past friend, farewell to the past place of dwelling, Amabelle comes back. Her last act is to slip into the cold current of the Massacre River, unclothed, looking to her dreams for softness, for a gentler embrace, for the dawn.

Florence Ramond Jurney understands Amabelle's entering the river as a means for her to "connect herself to her origins — to her own mother, but also to her father, to Sebastien, and to Mimi, essentially, to all those who form her community" (par. 39). Nevertheless I'd rather interpret it as a way to be connected with all the deaths she has

witnessed, of whom she wants to give testimony. When she cannot get any book to write them down, she herself becomes a testimony of those historical existences. After all, even if she could get a chance to have their stories written down, what would that writing be? "You tell the story, and then it's retold as they wish, written in words you do not understand, in a language that is theirs, and not yours" (246). When evil-intentioned, narrating can be a powerful weapon of attack. Father Romain's insane recitation of what was forced into his memory during his imprisoned days reveals the Dominican official narrative of the massacre, "How can a country be ours if we are in smaller numbers than the outsiders? Those of us who love our country are taking measures to keep it our own" (260). So massacre can be narrated as patriotic action.

Though the victims' life stories are erased and the true historical event is silenced, "it is perhaps the great discomfort of those trying to silence the world to discover that we have voices sealed inside our heads, voices that with each passing day, grow even louder than the clamor of the world outside" (266). When the slaughter becomes the only thing to pass on, "all I want to do is find a place to lay it down now and again, a safe nest where it will neither be scattered by the winds, nor remain forever buried beneath the sod" (266). Amabelle did find such a place. Or we should say that Danticat did find such a place for her. The safest place turns out to be in writing, a narration, in which what they want to pass on will never be scattered by the winds, nor will be forever buried beneath the sod. So it is, because Amabelle has proved it. For her, and for those silenced, to narrate is to be.

The author gratefully acknowledges support from Liu Kong Aiju Education Fund at Ningbo University.

Works Cited

Caligor, L & May, R. *Dreams and Symbols*. New York: Basic Books, 1961.

Danticat, Edwidge. *The Farming of Bones*. New York: Soho Press, 1998.

Dhar, Nandini. "Memory, Gender, Race and Class: Edwidge Danticat's *The Farming of Bones*." *Obsidian III Literature in the African Diaspora* 6:2 (2005) /7:1 (2006):185-264.

Francis, Donette A. "Unsilencing the Past: Edwidge Danticat's *The Farming of Bones*." *Small Axe: A Journal of Criticism* 5 (1999):168.

Freud, Sigmund. *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*. New York: Boni & Liveright Publishers, 1920.

Herman, Judith L. *Trauma and Recovery*. New York: Basic Books, 1992.

Hewett, Heather. "At the Crossroads: Disability and Trauma in *The Farming of Bones*." *MELUS*

31:3 (2006):123-145.

Ink, Lynn Chun."Remaking Identity, Unmaking Nation: Historical Recovery and the Reconstruction of Community in *In the Time of the Butterflies* and *The Farming of Bones*." *Callaloo* 27:3 (2004):788-807.

Jurney, Florence Ramond. "Exile and Relation to the Mother/Land in Edwidge Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory* and *The Farming of Bones*." *Revista/Review Interamericana* 31 (2001):1-4.

May, Rollo & Angel, E., etc. *Existence: a new dimension in psychiatry and psychology.* New York: Basic Books, 1958.

May, Rollo. *Man's Search for Himself*. New York: Delta House, 1953.

---. *The Art of Counseling*. New York: Gardener Press, 1939.

Munro, Martin. "Writing Disaster: Trauma, Memory, and History in EdwidgeDanticat's *The Farming of Bones.*" *Ethnologies* 28:1 (2006):81-98.

Novak, Amy. "'A Marred Testament': Cultural Trauma and Narrative in Danticat's *The Farming of Bones*." *Arizona Quarterly* 62:4 (2006):93-120.

Peck, Dale. "Field of Screams." Rev. of *The Farming of Bones* by Edwidge Danticat. *The Village Voice.* Sep 29, 1998.

Upchurch, Michael. "No Room for the Living." Rev. of *The Farming of Bones* by Edwidge Danticat. *New York Times Book Review.* Sep 27, 1998.

Shemak, April. "Re-membering Hispaniola: Edwidge Danticat's *The Farming of Bones.*" *Modern Fiction Studies* 48:1 (2002):83-113.

责任编辑：杨革新

Exploring Non-human Ethics in Linda Hogan's *Power* and Timothy Morton's *Ecology without Nature*

Peter I-min Huang
English Department, Tamkang University
151 Ying Chuan Road, Tamsui, Taipei, Taiwan
E-mail: peter@mail.tku.edu.tw

Abstract In *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (2007), Timothy Morton introduces a term that is well known among ecocritics: "dark ecology." He tells us that "dark ecology" is a "melancholy ethics," or the "refusal to digest the object into an ideal form," and an acceptance and even a love of "the thing as thing." In effect, this preserves the artificiality of the other and does not try to naturalize or collapse the other's "otherness." It also assumes there is no exit from what is not us (or what we believe or construct as "not us"). It does not attempt a "sadistic" distance from any object or thing or any human or nonhuman being and it does not in effect understand or regard these entities only in "aesthetic" terms. It is a commitment to recognizing that acceptance and love are as much about loss and separation as about amalgamation and unity, and it is a commitment that Morton brings to bear on his ecocritical arguments in defense of what many of us think of as second to humans: nonhuman beings. I compare Morton's "melancholy ethics" to posthumanism scholar Cary Wolfe's reference to the Derridean notion of vulnerability. The latter is similar to Morton's melancholy ethics insofar as both concern the issue of the shared suffering between human and non-humans. I bring Morton's term and Derrida's notion of vulnerability together in my discussion of the novel *Power* (1998) by the renowned Native American writer, Linda Hogan, a novel that sheds new light on the themes of judgment and sacrifice and proposes a non-human perspective of ethics.
Key words Timothy Morton; Linda Hogan; *Power;* dark ecology; melancholy ethics; environmental racism; vulnerability; Native American literature

In *Ecology without Nature,* Timothy Morton proposes the concept of dark ecology, and at its core a "melancholy ethics." For Morton, dark ecology is based upon a

refusal to "digest the object into an ideal form" (195). His dark ecology cautions against the intoxicating belief that "there is a 'thing' called nature that is 'out there' beyond us," against dwelling in its "bewildering quality of ambience" (183). Morton argues that dark ecology serves as a "halt" signal, to stop us from succumbing to "Romanticisms that follow a Hegelian dialectic," which achieve a reconciliation of the self to the other by turning the other into the self in disguise (196). In other words, dark ecology aims to *not* "turn the other into the self," but instead, leave things the way they are (196). The ecological ethics promoted by dark ecology, according to Morton, urges us to "love the replicant *as* replicant, and not as potential full subject" (196). On one hand, the melancholy ethics of dark ecology challenges us to appreciate "what in us is most objectified, the 'thousand thousand slimy things'" (196), and on the other hand it asks us to "[l]ove the thing *as* thing" (196).

Morton argues there are two premises of this ethical choice: 1) we choose to "preserve the artificiality of the other and do not try to naturalize or collapse otherness"; 2) we accept that there is no exit from "the other" and all of its toxic aspects. "The other" includes the earth itself. Since there is no exit from the earth, including the polluted worlds of this earth, we should not strive for "a sadistic/aesthetic distance" from it (196). We should stay in "the mud" instead of trying to pull ourselves out of it (196). We should not try to escape into a pure and pristine unpolluted world that does not exist.

Further, Morton argues that if we wish to care for the earth and all of its creatures, we need to acknowledge "the monstrosity at the heart of the idea of nature" (195). Dark ecology's melancholy ethics urges us to embrace this aspect of nature, "to love" what we think of as "disgusting, inert, and meaningless" (195). As he also argues, "[w]e ourselves are 'tackily' made of bits and pieces of stuff" (195) and the "most ethical act we can commit is to love 'the other' precisely in [its] artificiality, rather than seeking to prove [its] naturalness and authenticity" (195). What is worthy of our notice here is that Morton is implicitly critiquing an environmental thinking that associates with the movement of deep ecology. As he argues, this kind of thinking does not respect the natural world as it really is; rather, it sees reality as "standing in for *an idea* of the natural" (195; emphasis mine). For Morton, nature must be accepted with all of "its stitches…showing" (194). Morton's "dark ecology" is inspired by Freud's psychoanalysis of melancholy as well as by the movement of deep ecology. For Freud, melancholy is as "an irreducible component of subjectivity," or "a refusal to digest the object, a sticking in the throat, an introjection" (186). In this sense, dark ecology is based upon "negative desire rather than positive fulfillment" (186); it calls attention to aporia, the refusal to digest the idea of the other. Here, the other, including "nature," is "*not* a mirror of our mind" (186; emphasis original); and "[t]o truly love

nature [is] to love what is nonidentical with us" (185). For Morton, then, dark ecology also corresponds to Julia Kristeva's notion of the abject. It urges us to address the issues of "pollution, miasma, slime; things that glisten, schlup, and decay" (159) and it insists upon the need to "acknowledge irreducible otherness" (151).

I turn now to a novel, *Power* (1988), by the Native American writer Linda Hogan. Morton's dark ecology and melancholy ethics can serve to help readers to ecocritically understand this novel, about the hunting of an endangered animal species — the Florida panther. Hogan grapples with difficult decisions being faced by animal rights activists who respect the wish of indigenous peoples to preserve their traditional hunting practices. She is interested in both mainstream animal rights arguments calling for the abolition of the hunting of this animal and Native American arguments calling for the right to continue the hunting of it. She does not provide answers to the questions she raises but the questions that she does raise tie to Morton's concepts of dark ecology and melancholy ethics and these offer insights into the ethical dilemma at the heart of her novel.

Readers may be struck by the irreducible otherness of the Florida panther when they read *Power*. Hogan describes this animal as a being of tremendous mystery and enchantment. In the Native American Taiga language, the Florida panther is called Sisa. *Power's* narrator, a 16-year-old girl named Omishto (meaning "the Watcher") describes the panther as a sacred, mysterious animal. For many years she has never seen it. However, she has heard its cry, which is so loud she believes it can "bring down the world" (15). She also knows that her friend, Ama Eaton, has hunted and killed the Sisa. Omishto calls Ama by the nickname "aunt who loves the panther" (16) because although Ama has hunted the Sisa, she worships this animal and believes that it is "our [the Sisa's] one ally in this life" (16). She tells Omishto that when she was "born, an animal was born alongside of her to give her strength" throughout her life (16). This animal is the Sisa. She also tells Omishto that the Sisa is now endangered and sick because of humans' damage to its environment. In the evenings, searching for the Sisa, she "look[s] out in the darkness" (16). When she sees the Sisa, she and the other animal "exchange glances," and "see into each other's eyes" (16).

One day, Ama tells Omishto that she had a dream about the Sisa. It appeared to her in the form of a human, standing on two feet, and it beckoned her to follow it. As she did so, she saw that it was terribly emaciated and suffering from an illness. She tells Omishto that her heart is broken to pieces by this vision (24). As Omishto listens to Ama narrate the dream, "a patch of sharp sunlight cuts through the clouds and lays itself down on the road and the plants all around [the two women] start rattling in the light" (24). Also a "strange-smelling wind…begins to blow in" (24). It is "as if the world is also listening to Ama's words" (24). For the indigenous people, the wind is a

living force. It "enters a person at birth, stays with a person all through his or her life, and connects him or her to every other creature" (28). Taiga people call the wind "Oni," meaning God. For Taiga people, Oni is a force like God, "everywhere, unseen" (41). "It is a power every bit as strong as gravity, as strong as a sun you can't look at but know is there," Hogan writes, "a breathing, ceaseless God, a power known and watched over by the panther people" (178). This scene brings to mind what Morton refers to as the otherness that cannot be collapsed or digested, or a non-identical otherness. We are confronted by a terrible condition, caused to "the other" of animals by ourselves. We are also connected to this "other" according to what Morton calls "dark ecology" and what in Native American culture is inseparable from us.

According to another Taiga legend, Oni is the name of the owner of wind, and it is the word that the Sisa speaks to help "breathe" life into humans. It "cries out [this word] in the terrifying and beautiful dead of night where all the small animals break twigs, scurry, and hide" (182). Thus, the Sisa is considered sacred as "the one who first spoke it" (178) and the Taiga consider it an animal god and humans its little brothers and sisters. The Sisa keeps her eye on them to "keep them safe" (192). As the same time, the Taiga do not underestimate or euphemize the radical otherness of the Sisa: "The cat believes God has eyes that shine in the night. God has scales and fur, claws and sharp teeth, a long tail. God's shadow lies down on the ground like dust" (191).

In the world that Hogan constructs, animals actually have souls and power and can help humans. They also have power to kill and destroy humans. Omishto tells Ama another story, a story that had been told to her by her mother, about how a "red wolf came and took her home" (29). Her mother recounts how she had a fight with Herm, her husband, and he drove her to the woods and threw her out of the car during a violent storm. She was close to despair at finding her way out of the woods when a red wolf appeared and led her home. This same story is verified by two other Taiga women, Janie Soto and Annie Hide, who also tell Ama that animals teach humans about the woods, and songs to "renew the broken world" (29).

After Ama dreams of the sick and emaciated Sisa, she tells Omishto to follow her to hunt and kill the Sisa. Omishto is puzzled by Ama's decision. Ama tells her that she cannot endure such a beautiful and powerful animal to "die by poison or be hit by a car like the others" (62). She also knows that the Sisa is suffering greatly. She tells Omishto that they have to kill the Sisa because "Letting it die the way it is dying is worse" (62). Hogan here raises the question of an animal killing that is "both grace and doom, right and wrong" (62) and she does not provide an answer except to strongly suggest that the humans who are ultimately responsible for the death of the Sisa are not Ama or her people.

In another scene in the novel, there is a vivid description of Ama tracking and killing the panther. Under the cover of trees, she and Omishto see the cat first standing and then crouching at a river bank to drink water. Omishto can see the panther as clear "as the moon that shines out between clouds" (63). Omishto observes, "It is vulnerable and beautiful and bare. I hold still and watch it with fascination" (63). At this critical moment, Omishto reflects that "[i]t is an easy shot, but Ama, too, only watches. She could shoot it but she doesn't take it now when she can, when it's so easy" (63). Ama hesitates at this moment because of her strong love and caring for the animal. Also, she wants to make sure that the panther knows her love and trust. Omishto "breathe[s] and stand[s] and watch[es] it" (63), bewitched and awed by the animal's dignity and beauty. Describing it through Omishto's eyes, Hogan writes, "So beautiful, as it raises its head and seems to look right at me, its eyes turning to light, round and glinting, its body all animal and lean muscle, its face so thin" (63).

Hogan portrays the killing as an attempt by Ama to remember and respect her people's sacred hunting of the Sisa even as she knows that this tradition has been all but destroyed. The panther seems to know they are following it and it seems as if there is a mutual trust between them. The panther does not run away nor hide itself, but walks slowly as if to make sure that Ama and Omishto follow it. When it plunges into the water and swims across to the other side, Ama also "dips and submerges her whole body like she's being baptized, holding the rifle out of the water" (63). For the narrator, the panther seems to be "calling us forward" (64). He "looks back at us from time to time" and "is calm" (64). At times, it vanishes, but "its eye gives off a light," which is "its only outcry," "its testimony, its voice, its words" (64).

Ama's remark, "These cats are like ghosts" (64), acknowledges the otherness of the panther. The raw animality and cruelty of the panther are also evoked in a scene where Ama and Omishto watch the Sisa stalk and kill a deer. A lone deer bursts out from under a tree and then vanishes. Trying to breathe without making any sound, Omishto hears a cry in the darkness. Before long, there is silence. When two women next see the panther, it has taken shelter under the trees. It is breathing and looking toward them and it is also "guarding the dead deer…claiming it" (65).

Not long after the above mentioned events, Ama hunts for the panther again, "like a person with a calling," and finds it (67). It is "[a]s if the panther is a place and it holds her, as if they've always known and lived inside one another" (67). After she kills the Sisa, Omishto approaches Ama. She tells her: "You have killed yourself, Ama" (67). Ama "kneels down and holds the Sisa like a child in her arms, lifts it up as if it weighs nothing, so the sky can see it, like an offering" (69). Stricken with grief, she sees herself in the dead panther, "diminished and endangered," and "a poor woman in a cut-up land," she cries (69) The once beautiful, large, and powerful

animal was reduced to skin and bones in the last months of its life.

In the chapter titled "Judgment," Hogan contrasts judgment and sacrifice. She criticizes Christianity for putting too much emphasis upon judgment. She writes, "theirs is a spare God, short on love, thin on compassion, strong on judgment" (102). Ama and Omishto are held completely accountable for the killing of the protected species of Florida panther. At school, where the Florida panther is the school mascot, Omishto's white classmates call her a "Cat Killer" and scrawl "Killer" on her locker (105). As Hogan writes about many non-Native Americans, "The idea of the panther is loved while the animal itself is hated, unwanted" (105). She points to the irony that many people love the idea of the Florida panther but in destroying its natural habitats, in poisoning its hunting grounds, in building roads through its woods, in actuality they don't care about the real animal. Morton insists that the ecological-ethical act is to "let go of the idea of Nature, the one thing that maintains an aesthetic distance between us and them, us and it, us and 'over there'" (Morton 204).

The people who judge Ama harshly as a killer are people who embrace the idea of animals but do not take responsibility for endangering and threatening them. They maintain an aesthetic distance from the real animal. Unlike Ama, they like the other of "the animal" as an abstract idea, but not as a real animal that Ama cares for and loves. At the trial of Ama, Omishto testifies to the court that Ama knew the Sisa for many years and had often tried to protect it including when some boys tried to kill it. She tells the court that Ama's killing of the Sisa was an act of compassion not senselessness. As she also testifies, the killing of the Sisa would be even more than an act of compassion in previous times. In Taiga belief, a panther once asked Panther Woman to kill it in order to restore the dying world. It called for its sacrifice not so that another world would replace it but so that the present world would continue.

In *What Is Posthumanism,* Cary Wolfe cites Cora Diamond's article "Injustice and Animals" to argue that "the fundamental question of *justice* issues from an essentially different conceptual realm from the question of 'right'" (73; emphasis original). According to Wolfe, Diamond's argument is that when issues of justice and injustice are framed in terms of rights, they are "distorted and trivialized" (73). For Diamond, the language of rights still "bears the imprint of the context in which it was shaped: Roman law and its codification of *property* rights — not least, of course, property rights over slaves" (qtd. in Wolfe 73; emphasis original). As Wolfe paraphrases this part of her argument, the "question of justice cannot be reduced to the question of the fairness or unfairness of a share" (73). As Wolfe reads Diamond's arguments further, she criticizes the separation of justice from compassion, love and pity in contemporary moral theory (75). What the rights tradition misses is that the "capacity to respond to injustice as injustice" depends not on working out the abstract

"good," but on "a recognition of *our own* vulnerability," a recognition usually avoided by rights-oriented thinking (74). The "loving attention to another being, a possible victim of injustice, is essential to any understanding of the evil of injustice" (Diamond qtd. in Wolfe 75).

Elaborating further on Diamond's ideas, Wolfe refers to Derrida's concept of vulnerability as a fundamental ethical bond between human and non-human animals. Wolfe points out that in his work on ethics and nonhuman others, Derrida repeatedly returned to Jeremy Bentham's question about nonhuman animals: "Can they suffer?" (81). Whereas most philosophers pose the question of the animal in terms of either the capacity for thought or language, Bentham reframed of the problem in terms of suffering, or of non-being-able, a condition that Derrida characterizes in turn as "vulnerability" or "finitude" (qtd. in Wolfe 81). Derrida asks, "What of the vulnerability felt on the basis of this inability?" (qtd. in Wolfe 81). He continues, "What is this non-power at the heart of power?" (qtd. in Wolfe 81) As Wolfe argues, mortality or "finitude we share with animals is the most radical means of thinking that involves the experience of compassion" (81).

Both Wolfe and Diamond argue that vulnerability, mortality and compassion "lie at the core of the question of ethics: not just mere kindness but *justice*" (Wolfe 81; emphasis original). As Wolfe points out, Derrida also had argued for the necessity of experiencing compassion to open "the immense question of pathos" and "of suffering, pity and compassion" (Wolfe 81). Compassion reflects on the sharing of suffering among the living, which for Derrida is the basis of ethics. Thus for Wolfe and Diamond, animal rights movements "awaken us to our responsibilities and our obligations with respect to the living in general, and precisely to this fundamental compassion" (82).

Morton's melancholy ethics is similar to what Wolfe draws from Derrida's concept of vulnerability. It points to the shared suffering and pain of all living things and the need for compassion for the suffering. In *Power,* after Ama kills the panther, Omishto says that the police will ask her to provide information, not because "they care but because it's law, because you can't kill one of them" (72). In the trial the judge asks a biologist if the wild cat that Ama killed is the species of Florida panther and not another wild cat species. If it is not, Ama is "innocent." What the state and its representatives are concerned about is an abstract idea of an endangered species, not the evil or injustice committed to another being or animal. Hogan suggests that Ama's motive for killing the sickly panther is obviously love and compassion when she writes that "Ama cries just to look at it" (69). Her crying can be interpreted through Derrida's ethics of vulnerability, which stresses the shared nature of pain and suffering between humans and animals. Hogan writes: "Now it is just like her, like the woman

who wears boy's old shoes because she's poor and they are cheaper" (69). Once the panthers "were beautiful and large and powerful," but now this sickly panther is thin, very thin, with moss and leaves on its back. It grieves Ama so terribly to see it as a pitiful thing that she kills it — out of her strong love, worship and compassion, making it a ritual of sacrifice.The ecocritic Greg Garrard points out that the history of the colonization of the North American continent must be seen from ecological as well as postcolonialist perspective. He does so by citing the work of another ecocritic, Alfred Crosby. As he notes, Crosby calls European colonialism a form of "ecological imperialism" (qtd. in Garrard 123). The Anglo-European colonization of North America beginning in the fifteenth century "amounted to an 'ecocidal' campaign to exhaust and refashion whole habitats" (Garrard 123). Today, that campaign is still taking its course. "60 percent of African Americans and Latinos and more than 50 percent of Asian/Pacific Islanders and Native Americans" live in places contaminated by at least one uncontrolled toxic waste site (Garrard 128). As Garrard also notes, this history is also studied under the area of ecocriticism as "environmental racism." In *Power,* Hogan identifies Anglo-European colonizers of North America as violators of the land as well as its people. She asks: "Would they let me tell that sugarcane and cattle and white houses with red roofs had killed the land and the panther people?" (114) For her, the cattle and houses are the "beginning of this crime and… their makers remain unjudged and untried" (114). The courthouse is a divided world, "separated by scars and legal theft," where "the kudzu plants from the old world cover this beautiful ground with foreign, choking vines" (118).

Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin analogize the ties between racism and speciesism in an important study entitled *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*. At the time of the publication of this study, they noted that "its virtual absence" about the connections between racism and speciesism (148), including the connections between racism and speciesism in the specific context of Europeans obsession with cannibalism and depiction of indigenous peoples as cannibalistic. The "ultimate crime," it was one of the most potent epithets within a discourse of othering and constituted "irrefutable evidence of an unregenerate animal savagery" (170). In *Power,* Ama's prosecutor asks her if she adheres to the traditional belief that Taiga people are closely related to the panthers. When she answers, "Yes. We are," the prosecutor attempts to entrap her, accusing her of cannibalism by asking, "Would you kill your own kinfolk?" Ama replies, "No sir." (134). Huggan and Tiffin here point to the hypocrisy of the white people who condemn the killing of a wild animal but are completely insensitive to the lives of the millions of animals that are killed in industrial animal farming, animals whose flesh they consume daily.

Power critiques animal killing in the context of a Native American who kills

an endangered animal to end its suffering and thus is scapegoated by non-Native Americans when Hogan writes that "Ama is a scapegoat"(167). Before their law, United States federal law, she is rejected as an animal: "the jurors study her, a woman so unlike them as to exist in another world, another time. She is their animal" (136). As Hogan makes clear, for Ama, there is no moral hierarchical difference between the human and the animal as there is no moral hierarchical difference between non-Native American and Native American peoples. When it comes to suffering and vulnerability, there are no boundaries between humans and non-humans. Ama both loves and worships the panther she kills. As Wolfe might argue, Derrida's concept of vulnerability would support the argument that when we recognize the vulnerability and the finitude that we share with the other of "the animal," we will no longer see it as "the other." On the other hand, as Morton argues, it is important to recognize the radical difference of "the other" because not to do so destroys it. *Power* does not end with much hope with regard to this issue. Omishto remarks: "we are no longer close to the big lake because it's been drained and stolen" (234). Yet, there is some hope. Omishto still feels the wind. It "stirs in the trees" and "someone sings the song that says the world will go on living" (234-5).

Works Cited

Garrard, Greg. *Ecocriticism.* London: Routledge, 2004.

Hogan, Linda. *Power.* New York: Norton, 1998.

Huggan, Graham & Tiffin, Helen. *Postcolonial Ecocriticism.* London: Routledge, 2010.

Morton, Timothy. *Ecology without Nature.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2007.

Wolfe, Cary. *What Is Posthumanism?* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2010.

责任编辑：柏　灵

Ethics and Aesthetics in W. B. Yeats's Poetry

Young Suck Rhee
Department of English, Hanyang University
Seoul, 133-791, Korea
Email:ysrhee@hanyang.ac.kr / ranjongrhee@hotmail.com

Abstract One of Yeats's most reliable biographers, Ann Saddlemyer, after spending years editing the letters of Yeats and his wife George, gives an insight into Yeats's character. When Yeats died in 1939, George was 46 and left alone to care for two teenage children. She would always miss Yeats, "the strange, chaotic, varied and completely unified personality," "with whom she had shared so much .... " It is a precise and definite character analysis.Yeats had had many Romantic involvements, and, like Picasso, his works change with different friendships with women: from early fairies to real women and to final fictional women; generally and chronologically, the thematic and technical aspects developingfrom the ethereal poetry to the symbolic, and to the realistic and post-Modernistic poetry. The paper will make an attempt to read some of his representative poems in order to know whether they are ethical, aesthetical, or both. This is not a simple question, because Yeats claims that poetry is to make things happen, whereas in fact they look pure for most readers. This reading will help define the nature of his poetry by studying his representative poems.[1]
Key words Maud Gonne; Yeats; form; complexity; simplicity; ethics; aesthetics

I

One day a Miss Maud Gonne arrived in a hansom at Bedford Park, where the Yeats family lived.[2] She visited John Yeats, father of W. B. Yeats, and was to remain a muse and love for the poet until he died in 1939. The poet seemed to fall in love with her the moment he met her, as described in his book *The Trembling of the Veil* (1922):

> [She] brought an introduction to my father from old John O'Leary, the Fenian leader. She vexed my father by praise of war, war for its own sake, not as the creator of certain virtues but as if there were some virtues in excitement itself. I supported her against my father, which vexed him the more, though he might have understood that, … , a young man … could not have differed from a woman so beautiful and so young. To-day, with her great height and the unchangeable

> lineaments of her form, she looks the Sybil …, but in that day she seemed a classical impersonation of the Spring, the Virgilian commendation "She walks like a goddess" made for her alone. Her complexion was luminous, like that of apple blossoms through which the light falls, and I remember her standing that first day by a great heap of such blossoms in the window. (Yeats, *The Autobiography of William Butler Yeats* 82)

In fact, Yeats had been so enamored of Maud Gonne for such a long time that he could not find any other woman: for 29 years he had proposed to Maud Gonne many times until the age of 52, without success, and when he finally gave it up and proposed to her daughter, Iseult Gonne, who had earlier proposed to him but now rejected him, he turned to Georgie Hyde-Lees, 25 years younger than he. But even after he married Georgie, he could not forget Maud Gonne, and his newly wed wife George had to keep his attention away from her and onsomething else, and for seven years George (Yeats changed Georgie to George) performed automatic writing with her husband. Looking back upon the relationship between Yeats and Maud Gonne, Yeats seems to have been destined to meet her but never to marry her: it seems to have been Heaven's will to make him the greatest love poet of the 20th century. But the truth is the love poems are not simply love poems, but something bigger than that.

Yeats wrote more than 24 poems for Maud Gonne (1866-1953), not to mention the plays for her; and nine poems for her daughter, Iseult Gonne (1900?-1954); ten for Lady Gregory (1852-1932); seven for his wife George Yeats (1892-1968); six for Olivia Shakespear (1870?-1938); four for Margot Ruddock (Margot Collis) (1907-1951); three for Constance Gore-Booth (1863-1927). He wrote a total of 63 poems for the women he had relations with in his life. They may be compared with the portraits Picasso did in his life. If we analyze these "portrait" poems, we could understand not only what he thinks of the woman he is depicting and of what his notions of women are, and of the society he is in. More importantly, many of them are both about the specific women he was involved with and about something else: for example, a feminist critic, Elizabeth Cullingford, "notes that how many of Yeats's poems are simultaneously personal love lyrics and political treatises, citing 'Easter, 1916'" (Neigh 154).

This is the very thesis the present paper is to offer of Yeats's love poetry in general. Literature and art originate in human interaction with its environments, or its society and nature. They are the production of man, and therefore, it is not possible to imagine that his work is separate from the tradition of history. They are not only dependent on it, but also promote it. But for the Modernist Yeats, art is an expression, self-sufficient and fulfilling, similar to Walter Pater's notion of art for art's sake. But

if we look back, art has always been for practical purposes, while today's art and life stay separate. Yeats has worked throughout his life to resolve this contradiction. At age seventeen, Yeats said that a poet should have a new religion, poetry, which is a new dogma of poetry as religion, which Wallace Steven is also to declare later on. Yeats says:

> I was unlike others of my generation in one thing only. I am very religious, and deprived by Huxley and Tyndall, whom I detested, of the simple-minded religion of my childhood, I had made a new religion, almost an infallible church of poetic tradition, of a fardel of stories, and of personages, and of emotions, inseparable from their first expression, passed on from generation to generation by poets and painters with some help from philosophers and theologians. (Yeats, *Autobiographies* 115-6)

We should first of all notice that Yeats did not mean to create a new religion *per se*, but new poetry, "a fardel of stories, and of personages, and of emotions, inseparable from their first expression." What he means by the first expression is something that is original, constant, from generation to generation, which is to become the very backbone of his poetics.Then,we also need toknowwhoshould practice this "new religion": poets and painters, that is, he is talking about poetics and aesthetics in general. But Yeats's poetics is unique in that he has for a long time been immersed in mysticism and occultism, which is what we may call a religion of some kind, thus, religion serves as a metaphor for his poetry.

At this juncture, another Modernist poet, T. S. Eliot's position on poetics and aesthetics may be comparable:

> Walter Pater's doctrine of art for art's sake drew his [Eliot's] attention because it was a doctrine of ethics as well as of aesthetics. Indeed, in its own domain alone it was remarkably weak, expressing either a truism (writers must be committed to their craft) or else a patent falsehood (readers must read only for aesthetic effect). The minute it became a statement about life, however, Pater's doctrine gained a cogency that at least lent it a certain dignity. Eliot wished, of course, both to contest this doctrine and to demote its influence…. (Kearns 78)

Eliot takes up Walter Pater's position to develop his own idea of ethics and aesthetics by "differ[ing] from a preceding position in matters cultural" (Kearns 78). In Yeats's case, he takes up poetry that is constant from generation to generation. It is certainly "a patent falsehood." But Yeats is to overcome this falsehood, writing poetry that not

only makes sense but is supremely beautiful based on what looks like an untenable position on poetry.

II

Two companion poems are founded on this poetics, a theory that embraces both ethics and aesthetics: "Sailing to Byzantium" and "Byzantium." In ancient Byzantium, to Yeats, art aims at religion and practicality, so the poet now as an old man longs to sail to Byzantium where art and life are one and the same: art is at once self-sufficient and practical in Byzantium, whereas art is in conflict with life in this world, or in Ireland. The two poems:

> Once out of nature I shall never take
> My bodily form from any natural thing,
> But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
> Ofhammered gold and gold enamellings.
> ("Sailing to Byzantium," qtd. in Albright 240)

Yeats's Byzantium is where …"I could find in some little wine-shop some philosophical worker in mosaic who could answer all my answers, the supernatural descending nearer to him than to Plotinus even, for the pride of his delicate skill would make [religious truths] show as a lovely flexible presence like that of a perfect human body" (qtd. in Albright 629). So, what he wants to be is a form (golden bird) which Grecian goldsmiths make: metaphorically, he wishes to be a poet like that goldsmith, who can both be a poet and philosopher, and a practical mosaic maker. He wants to be a poet who is like the Byzantine mosaic maker that is more like a philosopher than the great philosopher, Plotinus, and who is more a religious man that is near to the supernatural.

But in "Byzantium" the poet goes further than being in Byzantium, scorning all that is natural:

> Miracle, bird or golden handiwork,
> More miracle than bird or handiwork,
> Planted on the starlit golden bough,
> Can like the cocks of Hades crow,
> Or, by the moon embittered, scorn aloud
> In glory of changeless metal
> Common bird or petal
> And all complexities of mire and blood. (qtd. in Albright 298)

Here Yeats is not just a Romantic poet singing the beauty of the world. He deals with the world in his poetry, in a different way than other poets. His poetry is both on poetry and on the poetics of poetry at the same time.

Yeats hardly states in his poetry (in prose he talks about political issues as senator, for example) his views of the current political situations directly. "Easter, 1916" is probably one of the strongest statements of his political views, but even in this poem, it is not clear what he is saying; not only that, he is talking about a woman he has long loved: Maud Gonne. The poem is enabled to achieve a new dimension by way of a stone metaphor in the river. It is strategically located in the middle of the poem, between the second and the fourth stanzas, except the first introductory stanza. The poem's central imagery hinges upon the depiction of the natural phenomena, indirectly saying first that "Hearts with one purpose alone/ Through summer and winter seem/ Enchanted to a stone/ To trouble the living stream." Definitely this stone metaphor refers to the woman, Maud Gonne, who has fought for Ireland, and to the patriotic fighters who rose against Britain; at the same time he is calling to the universal law of nature: whatever it is in Nature, it is to repeat itself[3]:

> The horse that comes from the road,
> The rider, the birds that range
> From cloud to tumbling cloud,
> Minute by minute they change:
> A shadow of cloud on the stream
> Changes minute by minute;
> A horse-hoof slides on the brim,
> And a horse plashes within it;
> The long-legged moor-hens dive,
> And hens to moor-cocks call;
> Minute by minute they live:
> The stone's in the middle of all. (qtd. in Albright 229).

"The stone's in the middle of all, as in the river, in your/ our heart hardened like a stone." This poem is one example that succeeds in realizing in it the typical ethics and aesthetics of Yeats. In this respect, he is both a Romantic and (post-)Modernist poet as well.

III

Likewise, "Leda and the Swan," one of Yeats's best poems, is so complex a poem,

though it looks straightforwardly simple and clear at a glance. For some it is certainly unethical; for some it is not, because the poet makes full use of mythology. Ethics and mythology are values and norms of tradition; if it is seen as unethical, all mythological poetry could be thought of as unethical, disregarding and not recognizing mythology. Mythology is based on human values and norms, and Yeats relies on it, not simply to avoid criticism, but he has used it from the very beginning of his poetic career, under the influence of William Blake and occultism he was involved in. The origin of the poem is politics; an editor asked Yeats to write a poem on the current political situation:

> [Yeats] thought "after the individualist, demagogic movement, founded by Hobbes and popularized by the Encyclopaedists and the French Revolution, we have a soil so exhausted that it cannot grow that crop again for centuries." Then I thought "Nothing is possible but some movement, or birth from above, preceded by some violent annunciation." My fancy began to play with Leda and the Swan for metaphor and I began this poem; but as I wrote, bird and lady took such possession of the scene that all politics went out of it, and my friend tells me that "his conservative readers would misunderstand the poem."[4]

Usually Yeats begins a poem at a personal level — another poem is "The Sorrow of Love" — and elevates it to a universal dimension. This is another instance of how he treats ethics, morals, values, norms in his poetry. I am about to discuss two readings of the poem by two critics. One reads it from a Feminist perspective; another reads it by reading sources of the idea of power versus knowledge Yeats may have been exposed to in his time.

First, Janet Neigh reads this poem from a feminist and Deconstructionist perspective.[5] She thinks "The Tower[, in which this poem is included,] provides an excellent symbolic context that has the tower representing, among other things, civilization, monument, structure, loss, and the phallus" (149). The poem itself has a crucial image of the tower, as an image of manhood and as an image of civilization being ravaged by war:

> A shudder in the loins engenders there
> The broken wall, *the burning* roof and *tower*
> And Agamemnon dead.(italicsmy emphasis; qtd. in Albright 260)

What is interesting in this reading is that the poem being highly visual and concrete, this reading makes the poem highly abstract and fluid to such an extent that she

concludes her reading as follows:

> I suggest a politics of reading from the drop where one pursues the fluidity of one's identification with texts. A drop is momentary, like a drop of water, which collects for a moment before it falls. For an instant new ways of being hold together before they splatter on the ground and we attempt to trace the memory of the drops' fleeting holding pattern. (Neigh 158)

The reading of which is certainly that of a Decontructionist reading.

The last concluding three lines have been hotly discussed by critics:

> Being so caught up,
> So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
> Did she put on his knowledge with his power
> Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?(qtd. in Albright 260)

The readers are fascinated by the poem's clarity and power, which excite them, making them read in their own ways: so simple a poem stirs so complex an imagination in the readers, making them respond so differently. Many of his poems have this profound dual aspects: ethics and aesthetics in them, which find superb expression in poems, to cite a few poems, "The Sorrow of Love," "The Cap and Bells," "The Wild Swans at Coole." The poems' simple beauty is not that simple, and each is, like Yeats the man, a "strange, chaotic, varied and completely unified personality." All of the poems here resulted from his relations with women, generally and chronologically the thematic and technical aspects developing, from the ethereal poetry to the symbolic and to the realistic and post-Modernistic poetry.

Whether it is his early or late poetry, what is common is that there is complexity beneath the simplicity of it, not only in form but in substance. It is so complex. In today's world, people claim that ethics has little to do with art or poetry. But Yeats was one of the first poets to point out that it is certainly wrong to say that ethics and aesthetics are two different things. But it is also true that Yeats was not a priest of religion but an artist. Although he was deeply concerned with moral or ethical ways of life, he was an artist, who was sincere, devoting himself to seeking truth in poetry. A poem is, however, a work of art made by a man, and Yeats is a product of an age, his work also resulting from his age.

IV

Considering his attitude to his poetry, it seems to be paradoxical that his poetry shows

values, norms, truths, though at first glance it looks neither concerned with morals or ethics. As poet, he follows his instinct and conscience: his work is always serious, for instance, even when a play of his arouses the audience's laughter. Not interested in making people laugh, he was dead serious; he was deeply interested in uncovering human nature in a perfect form of art and making us identify with his work. To exemplify this, we can look at "The Sorrow of Love." Bloomfield, in his review of a monograph by Roman Jakobson and Stephen Rudy, says:

> The simpler the surface of a complex poem, the greater the class between inner and outer, and the greater the joy. Jakobson is perfectly justified in regarding complexity a major (although not the only) value in itself, especially a complexity which is not perceived at first sight and which needs a keen eye, ear and intelligence to discover. (409)

Not only the form of this poem, but also the content looks simple. Let us look at the poem itself to see how simple it is at first glance, though Jakobson uses a space of 77 pages. Here is the poem:

> The brawling of a sparrow in the eaves,
> The brilliant moon and all the milky sky,
> And all that famous harmony of leaves,
> Had blotted out man's image and his cry.
>
> A girl arose that had red mournful lips
> And seemed the greatness of the world in tears,
> Doomed like Odysseus and the laboring ships
> And proud as Priam murdered with his peers;
>
> Arose, and on the instant clamorous eaves,
> A climbing moon upon an empty sky,
> And all that lamentation of the leaves,
> Could but compose man's image and his cry.(October 1892; 1925; qtd. in Albright 61)

This is both a poem of Maud Gonne, a poem of mythology, and human history and nature as well. How simple and how complex it must have been to Jakobson.[6]

Thus, by reading another poem, we can conclude that Yeats is a great artist, making his own kind of poetry, both ethical and aesthetical, serve as a model for later

writers and artists.

Notes

1. This work is supported by the research fund of Hanyang University [HY-2013-N].

2. See Albright, lv-lvi. The meeting took place on 30 January 1889, when he was 23 (He was born in Sandy mount Avenue, Dublin, on 13 June 1865).

3. See Young Suck Rhee, "Multifariousness in Form and Substance of 'Easter, 1916.'" *The Yeats Journal of Korea* 41 (2013): 145-161.

4. See Giorgio Melchiori, *The Whole Mystery of Art*, 73-114 and Norman A. Jeffares, *A New Commentary on The Poems* of W. B. Yeats, 247.

5. See Janet Neigh, "Reading from the Drop: Poetics of Identification and Yeats's 'Leda and the Swan.'"

6. I also deal with this poem in depth. See "The Sorrow of Love," treated as one of "Maud Gonne Poems" in my dissertation "The Poetics of Etherealization: Female Imagery in The Work of W. B. Yeats. " Ph. D Dissertation, University of Nebraska, July 1985, 81-96.

Works Cited

Albright, Daniel. *W. B. Yeats: The Poems*. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd, 1990.

Yeats, W. B. *The Autobiography of William Butler Yeats*. Collier Books: New York, 1974.

---. *Autobiographies*. London: Macmillan and Co Ltd, 1970.

Jeffares, Norman A. *A New Commentary on The Poems of W. B. Yeats*. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1984.

Bloomfield, Morton W. Bloom. "A Review: *Yeats's 'Sorrow of Love' Through the Years.*"*Poetics Today, Special Issue: Literature, Interpretation, Communication* 1: 1/2(1979): 409-410.

Melchiori, Giorgio. *The Whole Mystery of Art: Pattern into Poetry in the Work of W. B. Yeats*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1961.

Neigh, Janet. "Reading from the Drop: Poetics of Identification and Yeats's 'Leda and the Swan.'" *Journal of Modern Literature* 29 (2006): 146-160.

Kearns, Cleo McNelly. "Religion, Literature, and Society in the Work of T. S. Eliot." *The Cambridge Companion to T. S. Eliot*. Ed. A. David Moody. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994. 77-93.

责任编辑：柏　灵

The Role of Ethics in Literature: An Approach

Knut Brynhildsvoll
Centre for Ibsen Studies, University of Oslo
Langemyrveien 16, 1715 Yven, Norway
Email: knut.brynhildsvoll@ibsen.uio.no

Abstract This article deals with questions concerning the relationship between literature and ethics, in particular paying attention to different kinds of genres and artistic expressions, which aim at obtaining a moral effect and a mental change. It takes as its point of departure the ancient theater's notion of catharsis, which connects the impact of the dramatic plot on the audience with mental purification. The article shows that questions of good and bad can be related to both the content and form of literary works. Most common is that moral awareness is revealed on the level of a literary work's content, but ethical questions may be attached to the work's formal structure as well. The work is good as far as it meets the requirements of the contemporary aesthetical standards, it is bad if it does not. (By the way, quite opposite to modern reception theory, which claims that a work of art need transcend the expectation horizon in order to be considered pioneering.) The article underlines that what I call the ethics of aesthetics do not do justice to the serious catastrophes of our time, which calls for a new ethical turn in artistic writing.
Key words catharsis; moral perfection; value vacuum; the novel of education; didactic conceptions; the morality play; the ethics of aesthetics; tendency literature; the ethical turn

Aesthetics is usually considered to be the theoretical framework of art and literature. If you, on the contrary, deny the priority of aesthetics in the field of artistic expression in favor of ethics, you risk facing considerable contradictions. In order to elaborate criteria, due to which one may judge the role of ethics in literary texts, it is recommended to pay attention to the history of literary reception. It is obvious that questions concerning the intention of artistic writing have been discussed long before the introduction of modern reception theory. In his *Poetics,* Aristotle launched the concept of purification or catharsis; hence, the function of the tragedy consists in releasing the spectators from fear and compassion brought about by the dramatic conflicts. The artistic presentation has, in keeping with the catharsis idea, a psycho-

hygienic impact because the purification or "purgation" of the excessive passions triggers the ideal of mental balance. Among the authors who have emphasized the ethical function of the catharsis impact belongs the German Gothold Ephraim Lessing, who in his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* declares that catharsis entails "a transformation of passions into virtuous skills" (Stück 78). He explains: "Men are sometimes too much addicted to pity or fear, sometimes too little; tragedy brings them back to a virtuous and happy mean" (Lucas 23). The idea of catharsis has even survived in Hegel's philosophy of art. Following Aristotle, he, in his *Aesthetic,* ascribes to art as its main intention the property of purifying the passions in order to achieve moral perfection (75). Due to Hegel, all kinds of art aim at elaborating standards that enable the recipient to separate impure passions from clean ones, and in so doing draw guidelines for ethical behavior. On the reception level, Hegel complies with Horace's notion expressed in the sentence *fabula docet*, which means it is the function of artistic writing to advise and instruct. When the plot succeeds in achieving this mental effect it paves the way for what Hegel calls "moral improvement" (78), which he looks upon as the first step on the way to "moral perfection," in which advice and purification collaborate in bringing about "the truly moral good" (78). It is actually noteworthy that an aesthetic principle serves as a stimulus to reach ethical consequences. The nature of art is in my opinion not primarily ethical, but art is always able to produce not only ethical effects, but through its capacity of releasing emotions to show that feelings have a cognitive function.

Of course, it is useless to look upon literature independent of its respective context. Obviously there are certain literary periods during which moral questions are predominant and must be considered the primary concern of literary expression. Nobody has emphasized this opinion more precisely and with more appropriate arguments than Nie Zhenzhao, who through his stimulating articles and publishing activities has inspired numerous colleagues and students to collaborate on the theoretical expansion of ethical criticism. According to his understanding of literature, Nie Zhenzhao underlines that "the practical aim of artistic writing is moral enlightenment" (1, 6) and consequently that "literature is a product of morality in a given period of history" (3). The temporal restriction is important; otherwise, one may risk that there will be" conflicts between ethics of the past and ethics of today" (9). The theoretical viewpoint is historicism; because "all the literature in different periods has its own ethical situation and ethical context," "any changes of its ethical environment… will lead to misreading and misjudgement" (9).

In a study on ethics and existence in Ibsen's last play, *When We Dead Awaken,* Tom Eide considers literature and ethics as complementary disciplines, which illuminate the same phenomena from different viewpoints, and thereby contribute

to a more complete recording of them. The aesthetical approach to ethics enables a supplementary insight. Martha Nussbaum in *Love's Knowledge* (1990) emphasizes that moral philosophy needs literature, as there are ethical problems which one can hardly express with a comparable differentiation in the analytical language of philosophy. It is obvious that literature offers a narrative or dramatic strategy, which does not intend to understand ethical issues in the light of rational arguments, but in the light of narratives and stories. Thus it makes sense to speak about the narrative character of ethics. Wayne C. Booth in his book *The Company We Keep* (1988) explains it in the following statement: "The ethics of narrative is inherently a universal subject: in the beginning and from then on, there was a story, and it was largely in story that human beings were created and now continue to recreate themselves" (39). Booth seems to share Martha Nussbaum's opinion that literary texts are more proper for elaborating ethical complexity than are philosophical analysis (288). Nonetheless, both discourses overlap each other in a way which has induced Hillis Miller to maintain that "ethics and narration cannot be kept separated," thus indicating that "there is a peculiar relation between the affirmation of universal moral law and storytelling" (2).

In the following, I want to concentrate on questions related to genre concepts, text reception and ethical evaluation. First of all: are there special kinds of literary texts that are considered favorable for dealing with ethical problems? If a writer's primary concern is to highlight moral questions, he of course can make use of artistic conceptions. In so doing art serves as a midwife for intentions that are considered to be superior to the expressive act itself. This means that art declines to a formal framework, which helps to transmit the ethical message. In so far it makes sense to assert that the ethical message of literary texts achieves a primary function in cases when the literary form submits to the content and itself absorbs as less attention as possible. In the following, I will pay attention to three different genres of literary expression, in which moral awareness, ethical education and didactic instruction require a primary role. By far the most essential category of ethical literary writing is the novel of education or the novel of development, which was a very widespread and popular genre during the Romantic period in European literature, especially in Germany. The term was used for the first time by Wilhelm Dilthey in the Hölderlin-essay in *Erlebnis und Dichtung* (*Poetry and Experience*). Hereby he understands the monumental form of the German novel in the Classical and Romantic periods. Some of the most typical features of this genre are to be found in Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (*Wilhelm Meister's years of apprenticeship*), in which a group of congenial souls join and constitute a community called "the pedagogical province," whose members in a constantly ongoing process of self-transcendence strive for an increase of their humanitarian qualities. Proceeding from one level to the next, they move forwards

on an ascending course in the direction of the ideal and perfect embodiment of the human spirit. The aim of their efforts is to realize the highest form of humanity, which is only accessible through education. Shaftesbury, whose works appeared in German translation in 1738, defines 'Bildung' as "formation of a gentle character" and "innere Bildung" as "inward form." The individual concept of education gradually obtains an ethical dimension through its integration in a social context. The efforts of the pedagogical community are directed towards an enhancement of immanent abilities and at the same time a development of inter-personal and inter-cultural competence that meet the requirements of the highest human ideal.

As far as the author of the novel of education succeeds in depicting the ideal community or at least the outline of it, he has reached his primary intention, which is an ethical one. In this case it may be reasonable to draw the conclusion that within the frames of fiction the proclamation of the idea of humanity and its moral roots overshadows the importance of formal skill and aesthetic articulation. There are, however, also reasons to maintain that ethics and aesthetics participate equally in the representation of the human ideal, and that one should not forget that the education and practice in the field of aesthetical disciplines in the novel of education is part of the ethical process of human growth and perfection. It makes a difference if aesthetics is regarded as the organizing principle of a work of art or as one subject among several, which has to be dealt with during the building of the ideal ethical personality. Whereas the novel of education endeavors to unite aesthetical and ethical components and combine individual and social elements in order to present a complete representation of the single members of the ideal community and their interrelations, other educational genres pay attention to more limited aspects of pedagogical intentions.

One of the most influential writers of modern drama, the German playwright Bertolt Brecht, wrote in the time between the two world wars a great many didactic plays that intended to change the audience's attitude of comprehension from consumption to reflection. The spectator should not identify emotionally with the actors and the plot, but develop a critical view of what happens on the stage. Only from a distant perspective is he enabled to judge the stage actions and draw the intended conclusions regarding the abandonment of social injustice and exploitation of the outside world. Brecht's dramatic concept owes a great debt to Karl Marx, who demanded changing activities from philosophy. "The philosophers have so far interpreted the world," he wrote and added: "now it is time to change it" (12). In one of his most successful plays in the didactic genre, *The Good Person of Szechwan*, Brecht applies Marx' suggestion to a dramatic plot, in which the old Greek Gods Zeus and his son Hermes are descending to the Chinese province in order to test the

question whether it is possible to live on the earth and at the same time to be good. Not surprisingly, the answer is No: under the current capitalistic or former feudal society it is not possible. Brecht's intention is to show that the lack of ethical standards results in a system where you need to be bad if you want to survive. 40 years before Brecht, the Swedish playwright August Strindberg dealt with the same problem in his drama *A Dream Play*. The Goddess Indra visits the earth in order to test how life on earth is, and she returns with the same conclusion: the condition of humanity is a great pity! But unlike Brecht's ideological intention of ethical change, Strindberg affirms the *status quo*, implying that we cannot change anything through artistic writing.

The baroque morality play is another genre, which may contribute to throw light on the role of ethics in literature. Without mentioning this category of plays, Nie Zhenzhao yet approves the moral purpose of this kind of play, while underlining that "the primary purpose of literature is not to provide entertainment but to offer moral examples for human beings to follow…" (6). The morality plays, among them the English *The Summoning of Everyman* from the late 15th century and the Flemish *Elckerlijk*, use allegorical characters in order to dramatize the conflict between good and evil. Hugo von Hoffmannsthal's Austrian version of the morality play called *Jedermann* has been performed annually at the Salzburg festival since 1920. The subtitle of this morality play, *The Play about the Death of the Rich Man,* indicates ethical conflicts emerging from the threat of sudden death. Interesting from a Chinese point of view is Frederic Franck's modernized version drawing on Buddhist influence.

Strindberg's view is certainly a very pessimistic one, leaving out the consideration that there is a possibility of transition from the world as it is to a world as it ought to be. No hope, no change for the better, no future. This standpoint ignores what is said to be the link between moral law and poetry, wonderfully expressed in Goethe's poem *The Divine*: "Noble be the man/helpful and good!" (249) Please notice that through the use of subjunctive the meaning is not that the man is noble, but that he ought to be noble. The moral law within him leads him to act according to the divine intentions. Due to this understanding ethics is a normative discipline, based on metaphysical, religious or *a priori* principles deeply rooted in man. In his book *The Phenomenology of Moral Experience* (1955), Maurice Mandelbaum states that "among most contemporary philosophers it now passes for an obvious truth that ethics is not to be regarded as having a descriptive or explanatory function; it is held that its task, being normative, is to deal with not "what is," but "what ought to be" (13). Nevertheless, in the wide field of literature there are numerous texts that "describe" ethical concerns without linking them to *a priori* systems. Connecting to Goethe's notion of nobility I would like to draw attention to Ibsen's drama *Rosmersholm*, in which the main male figure, Johannes Rosmer, introduces the idea of establishing an

association of what he calls "free noblemen," whose members are meant to cultivate the lofty idea of a humanism void of institutional traditions. This attempt, even if it fails, shows the strong need for reestablishing a moral identity hereby filling the ethical gap left open after Rosmer as a priest has broken with his Christian faith.

There is a gap between these two different options of literary intentions. There are writers who only want to throw light on existing conditions, without having any ambitions of changing them, and others who are writing in order to leave behind them a better world. In the history of European literature from the 19th century, I just want to give one example. Two of the most distinguished writers of the naturalistic school, Emile Zola and Henrik Ibsen, have been accused of having completely contradictory intentions behind their literary projects. The following differentiation is said to be typical concerning their intentional efforts. Whereas Zola is descending into social and individual shit in order to take a bath, Ibsen is doing the same in order to clean the shit. This distinction may give the impression that both of them were occupied with the misery of the human crisis, but Ibsen hereby was the one who, governed by an ethical impetus, shows ways out of the crisis and in so doing shapes a link to the notion of catharsis in the old Greek tragedy. It is important to notice, however, that Ibsen is establishing this link in an indirect way. The most illuminating example is his play *Ghost*, which is regarded to be the drama that comes closest to a modern tragedy. Osvald, the son of chamberlain Alving and his wife Helene, suffers from a deadly venereal disease brought upon him by his father's dissolute sexual practice. He himself is completely innocent in his terrible faith; he is simply the victim of a moral decline which he cannot escape. Ibsen's message seems to be: unless you do not change the moral codes you will not be able to restore a "clean" society based on mutual respect and ethical responsibility.

From a philosophical point of view the problem focused upon in Ibsen's play is the relation between determination and free will. If somebody like Osvald Alving is deprived of having a free will, how could he ever perform the ethical claim? I have so far discussed ethics on the level of literary content. This is a very common approach. Literary theories have always described the connection between ethical norms and the function of literature, thus making artistic writing a battlefield where the powers of good and bad are fighting against each other. This concept has been questioned because working with oppositions which do not consider the intermediate states of mind, there has been a widespread tendency to blame the followers of ethical criticism for dealing with pre-modern texts. It is truly remarkable that many researchers during postmodernity refrained from participating in discussions about ethics and evaluation for fear of being considered old-fashioned. Now-a-days times have changed and one has recognized that there is a need for an ethical reconsideration. Frank Raymond

Leavis, who asserted that there cannot be great literary art without serious moral purpose, rejected the notion of New Criticism that only the text-immanent analysis represented a scientific method, whereas an interpretation based on trans-textual, moral criteria was taboo. Leavis connected aesthetic and moral questions and saw in the great novel tradition a relevant medium for a moral approach to the central questions of life. He considered the quoted novels as moral fables with a topical significance for the understanding of the present time. The renewed interest for the ethical concern of literature was a response to the loss of moral orientation and the decline of ethical values in the late 20th century. The dissemination of postmodern and post-structural writing had left a value vacuum, which promoted the rise of ethical criticism as a new discipline in literary research. Especially in America, this new field of literary research has gained much attention. J. Hillis Miller has endeavored to find what he, in reference to Immanuel Kant, calls universal ethical values, a generally accepted moral law, but this has, as he admits, proved to be impossible, and so he ends up with a very pessimistic conclusion, due to which the ethics of reading after all shows the unreadable character of all literary texts. Because of the continual suspension of meaning in verbal expression language will never arrive at a final goal. Ethical concepts as well as the act of a final constitution of meaning within the linguistic signification process are subject to constant adjournments which prevent a final statement.

You risk being confronted with the same difficulty if you choose the content of a literary work as value criteria. The ethical status of all kinds of trans-textual subjects implemented on a wide scale, from political to love stories, constantly changes in accordance with the changing cultural and time-space contexts. This fact makes it a problem to draw valid conclusions regarding universal ethical judgments from the contents of literary texts. You may of course object to my assertion and argue that every human being independent of time, space and generation has an innate capacity to distinguish between good and bad, a theme which is often discussed as a point of departure in the so-called theodicy problem: when God is almighty, why does the bad exist? Since the bad came into the world it attacks the good and intensifies a conflict, which ever since has been part of world literature.

It may however prove more profitable to take one's point of departure in Emmanuel Levinas' philosophy of dialoguing, in which he revives a philosophical tradition, due to which the self requires the Other to define itself. This "primary philosophy" is an "ethical philosophy," not about what is, but about what ought to be. The face-to-face encounter with the Other makes the human being a moral subject, which reveals himself in his otherness. Unlike the ontological concepts of Husserl and Heidegger, Levinas receives his impulses from the exterior world

beyond philosophical introspections. It is central to Levinas to respect the otherness of the other and take steps to avoid mixing together the Other and the Same. Levinas' rediscovering of Otherness as a constituent element in a philosophy of ethics may serve as a theoretical door-opener in literary disputes about moral questions, but ethical criticism arrives at its limits in texts dealing with the loss of Otherness, in cases when literary figures suffer from solipsism, autism or madness, and what you face when face-to-face is the absence of the Other as an intact vis-à vis.

During the Romantic age this conflict between good and bad tended to turn inward and manifest itself in disintegrated figures whose minds are disrupted and in a state of mental disorder. Accordingly the romantic writers have a predilection for all kinds of doubles and revenants. Goethe's *Faust* is confessing that "two souls live in my breast," (41) Edgar Allan Poe's *William Wilson* lodges a double next to himself, whom he cannot escape. Maybe the most dazzling case of psychical dissociation is found in Robert Louis Stevenson's story *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886). From a young age, Jekyll has been aware of his disjunct nature and has in vain tried to suppress the negative parts of his character. Later, as a medical doctor, he is fascinated by the idea that he could solve the problem if he succeeds in isolating the two contradictory dispositions by placing them into two different bodies. As a result of his experiments he transforms by the help of chemical substances the bad part of his character into the separate person Mr. Hyde, who commits terrible crimes including murder. As Mr. Hyde gains more and more power over his creator, Dr. Jekyll makes up his mind and decides to destroy both of his identities thus liberating the world from a monster. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are in reality two designations for good and bad, and the story tells about the oscillation between these two states of mind. It is obvious that Mr. Hyde is the "hidden" part of Dr. Jekyll, his invisible *alter ego*. Dr. Jekyll makes a big mistake when trying to get rid of him. Instead of removing him, it would have been more promising to educate him and make him more Jekyll-like. If you emphasize an ethical reading of the story, it is important to underline that only the assimilation of the two antagonists into a Jekyll-like personality would have met the requirements of ethical criticism. It is by far, according to Hegel, insufficient to argue that "you need to know the evil and the sin in order to act morally" (78).

If we change the perspective from the ethical content of literary texts and turn to the aesthetical values we face a meta-textual level of the literary object. It is a matter of evaluating the elements of literary constructions and their internal relations. First of all, it is a simple truth that literary texts *per se* neither are valuable nor not. They obtain these qualities when one relates them to value standards and asks to what extent they meet these demands. Literary research has developed standards of literary evaluation, which are drawn from aesthetical norms related to formal,

structural, rhetorical, and linguistic aspects of literary expression. In keeping with these evaluation criteria it is understandable that the designation used for literature is in France *belle-lettres*, in Germany *schöne Literatur*. That means if you ask whether a literary text is good or bad, the answer is to be given on the level of aesthetics. It is good as far as it has adjusted the text to the requirements of the changing literary standards; it is bad if it has failed to do so. However, if you restrict literary quality to the successful use of literary techniques, you limit literature to the level of formal skill and make it a matter of *l'art pour l'art*. This reduction will meet the expectations of those who enjoy literature as an excellent performance of *artistique brilliance*. Such a receptive attitude is however contradictory to the ideas of the Enlightenment, due to which the main idea of literature is to achieve change according to the Horatian doctrine *utile dulce*, to combine the useful with the pleasant.

Ethical concepts of literature seem to me to flourish in times when there is a need for enlightenment and writers engage in the correction of social and human errors and wrong ways of progress. Andreas Brenner explains the ethical turn in contemporary philosophy with the threat emerging from a possible collapse of the eco-system which has given rise to numerous forms of "ecological ethics" (37-55). Obviously the increasing interest in ethical criticism in literary research is not least a response to the ethical boom in modern philosophy and in a lot of neighboring disciplines. Many of the topics and problems dealt with in bio-ethics, medical ethics, juridical ethics, social ethics, political ethics, ethics of the multimedia, etc., are subject to discussions and analysis in different kinds of modern literary writing. If such forms of ethical writing will be successful, there must be a close interaction between the ideas of production and reception. If the primary concern of artistic writing is to obtain an ethical impact, the author can reach this intention within different ways of expression. If he intends to warn against the threat of global heat, he may do so in many genres and media. He can write a documentary text, a newspaper comment, a research study, a scientific essay, etc., and he can publish it in print or electronic media, on the internet or on Facebook. However, if he decides to realize his ethical approach in the field of belletristics, he depends upon making use of a literary language, which through its structural features and rhetorical forms differs from the communication language of everyday life. According to the influential conceptions of the Prague circle the most important mark of the literary discourse is its literality. Roman Jakobson asked: "What makes a lingual utterance a work of art?" and his answer was "its literality." Hence the subject of literary research is not literature itself, but the literary as the artistic procedure through which the literary text comes into being. Manfred Frank, one of the leading experts in the field of literary research in Germany, agrees and underlines the fact that literary studies beyond the limits of interpretation face problems which

tend to be repressed because of a one-sided focus on the content of literary texts. This may explain why literary researchers, when explaining their methods, to a considerable degree prefer text-materials from pre-modern writing or from the wide field of realistic narrative literature. This focus is due to Frank problematic because it ignores that "modern literature articulates a protest against the categories of narrative coherence and semantic availability" (138).

Through the numerous literary theories which have been launched during the last decades, we know a lot more about the constitution, the function and the internal organization of the literary work of art. By the predominant focus on structural and morphological characteristics there was after the decline of Marxian literary studies a tendency to neglect the trans-textual references of literature, all questions related to the meaning and purpose of belletristic articulations. You may look upon ethical criticism as a reaction to the disobliging patterns of postmodernity and a rediscovery of belletristics as an instrument in the service of mental and ideological change. This turning towards an instrumental conception of literature was furthered through the increase of ecological and humanitarian catastrophes and the spreading of ethnical and religious conflicts. When you start using literature as a way and means to achieve moral improvement and change of aggressive attitudes, you give priority to ethical preferences. When you look upon literature from this point of view, it may make sense to maintain that ethics is prior to aesthetics and that aesthetics is a mid-wife who helps accomplish the idea of ethical criticism.

In order to make this a little bit more concrete, I want to draw attention to a master piece of Norwegian novel art, written by Alexander Kielland and published in the year 1883. The name of his novel is *Poison* and it is a central work of the so called tendency literature in the second part of the 19th century. In his novel, Kielland attacks the traditional Latin schools and their one-sided preference for the Latin Language to the disadvantage of teaching the mother tongue. The intention of the novel is to argue for the abandonment of classical languages and their replacement with modern Norwegian. Kielland's attempt was successful. Through his novel he paved the way for a school reform, which decreased the role of Latin and favored the study of Norwegian history and language in the country's high schools. In Kielland's opinion, the numerical majority of Latin classes poisoned the students' minds and kept them away from the acquisition of more useful knowledge. His novel complies with the expectations of an ethical project because it aims at bringing about a spiritual decontamination, and as such it is part of a nation-building concept.

In all kinds of tendency literature, the ethical change is the primary incentive, in so far it makes sense to consider the successful performance of this intention as the primary concern of the novel. The novelist then has to decide which means of

presentation are most helpful to realize these demands. Not surprisingly, Kielland makes use of satire, as satire is a weapon well-suited to destroy its object in order to create the presuppositions for a new deal and a renewed growth.

Satire is akin to caricature. Both genres can, by means of confrontation between norm and irregularity, serve the idea of ethical change because their internal disproportion makes the gap between idea and reality striking. Both satire and caricature are important categories in what Karl Rosenkranz in his famous book from 1853 called *The aesthetic of ugliness*. The twisted figures of satiric and cartoonist presentations violate the norms of beauty and deviate from the idea of ethical balance. Nevertheless, through their lack of symmetrical appearances they pay attention to the absence of harmony and cause a need for a reinforcement of an ethical counter-current.

In the future discussions about concepts of ethical criticism, I think it would be favorable to include texts from the time of early modernism, as during the short period between 1890 and 1924 western writers developed different kinds of literary expression, which have been called revolutionary. It would have been of utmost interest to explore to what extent ethical criticism is a relevant path-way to the comprehension of the new literary paradigms. In any case it will be a challenging matter. Common for the constitution of new forms of artistic expression is that they respond in a radical way to social, technological, psychological and optical renewals and to the decline of common sense poetry to non-sense and Dada-esque expressions. I am not sure, but I doubt that it will be possible to apply ethical criticism to the imaginations of cubist art and literature, accept for the case of an internal evaluation of the formal skill of the presentation. In his well-known book, *The Loss of the Centre,* German art historian Hans Sedlmayr notes that cubist art deals with the consequences of the deconstruction of the central perspective of the artistic object, which was decomposed and shown simultaneously in its multi-perspective appearance. The idea behind this is to grasp the complexity of the artistic subject and get access to all its aspects, which remain hidden in the mono-perspective description. Thus the intention of the cubist concept is to improve the image of the human being through a simultaneous presentation of all dimensions of his figure in a single design. If complete is better than incomplete, does this mean that there is an inherent moment of ethics in the cubist theory of art? Or in all kinds of art? And does this mean that ethical criticism is limited to the judgment of the aesthetical qualities of a literary work of art? If this is right, you could replace the term ethical criticism through the designation the ethics of aesthetics.

However this limitation of the field of ethical criticism does not do justice to the needs of the conflicts, crisises and catastrophes of our time, which call for a new

ethical turn in artistic writing. Bertolt Brecht once brought this requirement to the point in his poem *An die Nachgeborenen* (*To Those Who Follow in Our Wake*):

> What times are these, in which
> A conversation about trees is almost a crime
> For in doing so we maintain our silence about so much wrongdoing! (158)

The poem invites the reader to avoid speaking about trees because this may prevent him from fighting the "wrongdoing," whose executers are the members of the fascist movement in Adolf Hitler's Germany. Now-a-days, the threat has changed. It is no more "almost a crime to speak about trees," it is, on the contrary, "almost a crime not to speak about trees," because the deforestation among other environmental devastations has made the turning of this process a presupposition for the survival of mankind. This is in my opinion the reason why writers rediscover their ethical responsibility and in their works draw attention to the current "wrongdoing" and in so doing legitimize ethical criticism as a field of engaged interference which understands literature as a medium of ethical change. In this way, I agree with Nie Zhenzhao that "within certain historical periods moral enlightenment is the primary function of literature" (1).

Works Cited

Brecht, Bertholt. *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* (The Good Person of Szechwan). 1938/42

---. "An die Nachgeborenen" ("To those Who Follow in Our Wake", 1939) *Gedichte und Lieder*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1961.

Brenner, Andreas. "Ökologie-Ethik." *Angewandte Ethik*. ed. A. Pieper/U. Thurnherr. München: Eine Einführung, Verlag C. H. Beck, 1998.

Booth, Wayne C. *The Company We Keep. An Ethics of Fiction*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Eide, Tom. *Ibsens dialogkunst. Etikk og eksistens I Når vi døde vågner*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2001.

Franck, Frederick. *EveryOne: the timeless Myth of «Everyman» reborn*. London: Wildwood House Ltd., 1979.

Frank, Manfred. "Textauslegung." *Erkenntnis der Literatur. Theorien, Konzepte, Methoden der Literaturwissenschaft*. Ed. Dietrich Harth and Peter Gebhardt. Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler Verlag, 2000.

Goethe, Johan Wolfgang von. *Das Göttliche* (*The Divine*) Qtd and trans. Carl Otto Conrady. Ed. Das grosse deutsche Gedichtbuch. Kronberg /Ts: Athenäum Verlag, 1977.

Goethe, Johan Wolfgang von. *Faust, erster Teil.* Qtd and trans. Erich Trunz. Ed. *Faust I.* Hamburg: Christian Wegener Verlag, 1957.

Hegel, G.W.F. "Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik" *Theorie Werkausgabe* 1(1970): 32-33.

Jakobson, Roman. "Linguistics and Poetics" *Style in Language*. Ed. Thomas A. Sebeok. Massachusetts: The Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1960.

Kielland, Aleksander. *Gift* (*Poison*). Copenhagen: Gyldendal Forlag, 1883.

Leavis, Frank Raymond. *The Great Tradition*. London: Chatto and Windus , 1948.

Lessing, Gothold Ephraim. "Hamburgische Dramaturgie." *Illustrierte Werkausgabe* bd. 2. Ed. Heinrich Laube. Leipzig, Prag: Verlag von Sig. Bensinger, Wien, 1890.

Levinas, Emmanuel. *Totalitet og uendelighet* (*Totalité et Infini, 1961*), København: Hans Reitzel Forlag, 1996.

Lucas, F.L.. *Tragedy in Relation to Aristotle's Poetics*. London: Hogarth, 1928.

Nie Zhenzhao. "Towards an Ethical Literary Criticism: Its Fundamentals and Terms" *Foreign Literature Studies* 32.1(2010):12-22.

Nussbaum, Martha. *Love's Knowledge. Essays on Philosophy and Literature*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Mandelbaum, Maurice. *The Phenomenology of Moral Experience*. Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1955.

Marx, Karl. "Thesen über Feuerbach(1845)"*Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der klassischen Deutschen Philosophie,* in *Die neue Zeit*, issues 4 and 5, Stuttgart, Verlag von J.W.H.Dietz, 1888.

Miller, J. Hillis. *The ethics of reading: Kant, de Man, Eliot, Trollope, James, and Benjamin*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.

Poe, Edgar Allan. "William Wilson," *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*. (2)1839: 32-33. .

Rosenkranz, Karl. *Ästhetik des Hässlichen* (*The aesthetics of Ugliness*). Königsberg: Verlag Bornträger, 1853.

Sedlmayr, Hans. *Der Verlust der Mitte* (*The loss oft he Centre*). Salzburg: Otto Müller Verlag, 1948.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Harlow: Longman Green & co., 1886.

Strindberg, August. *Et drömspel* (*A dreamplay*). Stockholm: Bonniers Förlag, 1901.

责任编辑：刘富丽

Activist Ecocriticism: An Introduction

Simon C. Estok
English Language and Literature, Sungkyunkwan University
53 Myeongnyun-dong 3-ga, Jongno-gu, Seoul 110-745, South Korea
Email:estok@skku.edu

> What good is interpreting the world if we are not changing it in material ways?
> — Nicholas Hengen Fox

We're still trying to figure out what academic activism means. In a recent *PMLA* article, Randy Martin begins with the diametrically opposed, if tendentious, *OED* definitions of "academic" and "activism," the former defined as "unpractical" and the latter as "practical." Positioned as "not leading to a decision," what is "academic" stands "opposed" to "activism," defined as tending "to outward action" (Martin 838). Yet, it is academia out of which much activist involvement in contemporary affairs grows, as Martin explains: "There is a long history of universities as sites of student activism and political ferment" (841). Moreover, that the reactions to voices from academia "are so strident" (844) strongly suggests that "activist voices" from academia require a re-thinking of what is meant by the term "activism." The four articles in this Special Issue address the matter of activist intervention, a topic that has been both a key motivation and one of the most enduring issues for ecocriticism from the beginning. In very different ways, these four authors address what it means have measureable material effects on the environmental problems we are increasingly creating.

All of the articles included in this Special Issue share several things. Among these is a commitment to feminist principles. Discussing climate change narratives, Greta Gaard asks "what impetus toward increased understanding and action can ecocriticism — and specifically, feminist ecocriticism — contribute?" In part, her answer is that

> A feminist environmental justice perspective can restore analysis of . . . climate change root causes and effects by expanding the genres and geographies of ecocritical analysis to include artists of color and of diverse sexualities, as well as by including the practices of animal food production and consumption that are

> exacerbating climate change. A feminist restor(y)ing of climate change narratives is one of ecocriticism's best strategies for confronting the root causes of climate change and suggesting solutions with real potential for enacting climate justice.

Gaard's position is consonant with Patrick Murphy's "calls for more comprehensive intersectional analysis, including ecofeminist, postcolonial, and comparatist approaches," with Serpil Oppermann's emphasis on "feminists, queers, and mothers from all walks of life," and with Iris Ralph's understanding that environmental derogation is "ideologically linked to the subordination and oppression of women and violence against women under patriarchal conceptual frameworks and institutions." Each of these articles and their respective emphases on the feminist principles underlying ecocritical theory and activism reiterate the importance both of remembering ecocritical roots and of recognizing, supporting, and exploiting ecocritical solidarities. Feminist activism and environmental activism have overlapping goals. They also have overlapping dangers.

A veteran of the struggle to articulate (and, as importantly, to keep included) feminist voices in ecocritical discourse, Gaard is well aware of the dangers of such work, the constant threats of marginalization, trivialization, and even violence. While there are obvious physical dangers to environmental activism (as poignantly captured by Oppermann's inclusion of the image of "the woman in red" from the Gezi Park Resistance Movement), there are also less immediate material dangers. Among these is simply exclusion.

In the CFP for the panel entitled "Relocating the Limits of Activist and Academic Coexistence" at the 2013 ASLE (Association for the Study of Literature and Environment) Tenth Biennial Conference, Chris Lawrence wonders

> . . . what of the fundamental activist sensibilities that served as the impetus for a community of philosophically-oriented scholars to seek outreach-oriented endpoints within the realm of the humanities classroom? (Lawrence http://interversity.org/lists/asle/archives/Sep2012/msg00087.html)

That panel and this Special Issue confront the daunting task of persisting in something that sometimes seems passé and perhaps even just plain irritating. While a Special Issue such as this one, and the several panels on activism at the 2013 ASLE meeting in Kansas, each in their own ways suggest that we are ready to discuss the frustratingly elusive topic of what activism means or can mean, it was not so long ago when people who insisted on the importance of recognizing the activist roots of ecocriticism were accused of "hectoring" (a word used by Greg Garrard just a few years ago). It is not

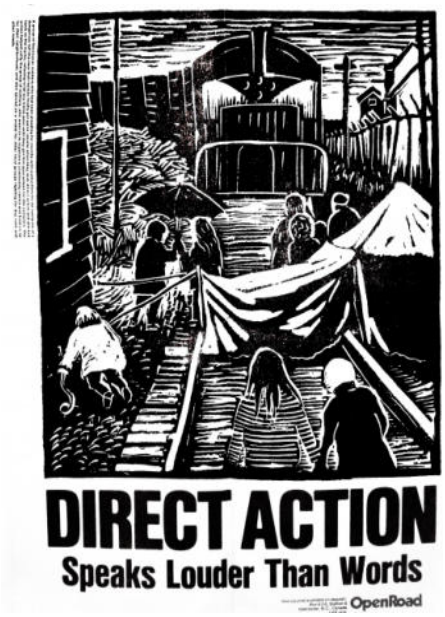
just the irritation that people like Garrard feel with people like us who hector on about activism; there are people out there threatening to take theorists out to the woodshed, to douse them, and to hit them with a big stick (see Robisch). Indeed, doing activism, as Iris Ralph usefully notes in her contribution to this Special Issue, can mean having "to face very real and serious risks." Karen Kilcup similarly notes in a *PMLA* article that "activism presents formidable difficulties for many students today [and] . . . often seems infeasible or dangerous" (848). Marc Bekoff, meanwhile, has stressed the importance of resisting fears of these dangers and argues that it is important "to appeal to people who don't agree with me, rather than to preach to the converted, because this is where change occurs" (Bekoff 11). Perhaps this is at least one place where activism is to be found. One thing is certain: with all of the discussion about theory and activism in ecocriticism these days, we are not stagnating. While even a few ASLE Biennials ago, it was (or seemed, at any rate) still necessary to argue about the need for recognizing the activist roots (and growing them), sometimes in the face of resistance and professional ridicule, there is increasingly less doubt that the work in which we toil as ecocritics is politically engaged.

This said, however, "'engagement' is a vague term that does not in itself earn the label 'activism'" (6), contend Linda Dittmar and Joseph Entin in the 2007 issue of *Radical Teacher*. Dittmar and Entin's accusation of vagueness is well-taken, and part of what we are attempting to do here in this Special Issue as theorists and scholars is to get rid of at least some vagueness. Theory is about defining, and part of the now famous resistance to *theory* that characterized early ecocriticism was less a resistance to theory than a resistance to abstraction. Abstraction is inconsonant with the kinds of material embodiment perceived as integral to activist engagement (which ecocriticism has always sought). Carolyn Dever's book *Skeptical Feminism: Activist Theory, Activist Practice* makes precisely such a point about how "abstraction concerns a detachment from the material sphere" (6) — and her larger argument is that feminist theory has, by and large, been skeptical toward abstraction. I like the word skepticism, but I also like the word ambivalence: it is rather an odd and ambivalent position that we are in, here, *theorizing* about activism (which is one of the points Randy Martin makes in his discussion of "academic activism").

Defining "activism" is a key issue in the articles that follow. Patrick Murphy takes up the matter very directly in his discussion about the differences between "propaganda" and "agitation" and argues that while the actions of Greenpeace or Earthfirst! are certainly direct in their activist roles, "more indirect efforts at persuasion and the effecting of change" are obviously vitally important in how change happens. Murphy goes on to note that

the direct-action American organization EarthFirst! was deeply inspired by Edward Abbey's novel, *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, which romantically and comically chronicles environmentalist sabotage by a small group of individuals, and which gave rise to the term "monkey wrenching" for various forms of protest, such as destroying logging machinery or tree spiking.

For literary works to have the effect of direct action is possible, as when "President [Clinton] held up a copy of [Terry Tempest Williams's] *Testimony* and said, 'This made a difference '" (Satterfield and Slovic 14), but physical action is more often more direct than the less physically interventionist written word. As Murphy explains in this volume, "literary works, cultural products, and criticism, then, cannot be considered activism in [the] . . . narrow sense [of a Greenpeace or an EarthFirst!], even when they narrate a story of activism that includes in that plot line a call to action." A spread in a 1984 issue of the British Columbia underground newspaper *Open Road* captures this sentiment well (see below). The paper was reporting on direct actions of a group of five Vancouver men and women that had become a very topical issue in British Columbia.



In 1981 and 1982, the five Vancouver activists carried out a series of direct material campaigns aimed at shutting down several operations: a Litton factory in Toronto that produced guidance systems for American cruise missiles, the environmentally destructive Dunsmuir BC Hydro Substation (on Vancouver Island), and a string of video stores in the Lower Mainland that distributed pornographic snuff films (snuff films are motion pictures in which a person or persons are actually killed). In

January 1983, these five activists were arrested. Support for the Vancouver Five was immense. So was the opposition. It was an unprecedented event in Canada, and the media coverage was also unprecedented. There was outrage on the streets — from both sides. The issues had become a material reality in the lives of average people who hadn't previously cared. It was a moment that could, like the Arab Spring, have caused change.

At the same time, though, the issues (the environment, the peace, and the women for whom these men and women had raised their voices) became lost in the crowd of words that filled the media — words manufacturing consent, stifling resistance, and telling lies. The material implications of stories are powerful and suggest, as materialist ecocriticism has recently been showing, that our ethical positions toward matter register strongly in and are reproduced by how we represent matter. Some may even argue, as indeed Judith Butler has suggested, that a question residing at the very centre of representation is about "what ethical obligation is and how it is conveyed."

For some, temporal distance diminishes the effect of ethical attachment, obligation, and effect. "Looking back, who cares now? It was all for nothing," Alyn Edwards (former reporter for BCTV) exclaims in a 2005 interview in the documentary *The Squamish Five* about the Wimmin's Fire Brigade (also known as "Direct Action," and "the Vancouver Five"). But this does not seem an entirely accurate assessment. The narrativizing of the Five — their histories, their acts, their trials, their convictions, and their legacy — continues (the interview Edwards gave was in 2005, a solid two decades after the actions), as do the material implications of such narrativizing. Vancouver's CKNW Radio Broadcaster John Ashbridge seems naïve indeed when, in an interview about the Five, he talks in *The Squamish Five* about media neutrality: "I would hate to think that the media would be biased. I would hate to think that the media would have some sort of preconceived notion of what these people are all about." I used the words "manufacturing consent" earlier, borrowing from the title of Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky's book about what they call mass media (what I prefer to call mainstream media), and I'd like to borrow another few words from this important book, as it seems to me very accurate when Herman and Chomsky claim that "the 'societal purpose' of the media is to inculcate and defend the economic, social, and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and the state" (298). Ashbridge, with his nonsense about media neutrality, is nauseating and ridiculous. But media neutrality (or the lack of it) is the least of the issue here. Narrativizing itself — whatever the angle — has important implications for theorizing activism.

We see in the media representations (both mainstream and underground) a fierce, almost desperate, and certainly frenetic will to power and control over the

whole matter of activist intervention. Competing for establishing their versions of power as the accepted history, the narratives of mainstream and underground media representations offer opposing ideological positions on activism that speak volumes on the moment in Canadian history that, in some ways, saw the birth of a new chapter in environmental ethics, an ethics entering the mainstream but vigorously resisted, an ethics first recognizing democratic rights of material, of material agencies that displace the human from its place of ontological primacy, rights The Five voiced and fought to safekeep.

The success of the mainstream media in presenting a relatively unified body of material *against* the activists has to do with what is going on in the reports with presuppositions about agency — and there *is* something going on with presuppositions about agency here: it has to do with the enthymematic assumption of the reportage that it is ultimately the human (not the nonhuman natural) that takes ethical and ontological priority and that has agency. An enthymeme is an informally stated syllogism with an implied premise. The implied premise in the mainstream media is that humanity takes ontological priority over nonhuman nature, that this is such an obvious *given* that it need not be graced with even the remotest of attention.

The material implications of 1980s Direct Action in Canada may have faded, but the activism itself was both material and symbolic (a point made by the Five themselves). This is not, however, the same as saying "It was all for nothing." Among the many questions raised but finally abandoned (as the sentences played out for each of The Five in the various institutions in separate regions across Canada to which The Five were sent) was about definitions. Exactly what constitutes activism? What is violence? What is terrorism? John Dowler, in a June 22, 1984 letter to *The Vancouver Sun*, presents one of the few statements published in the mainstream media — right beside a letter that condemns these "terrorist miscreants" (Alexander A5) — voicing "protest [to] the media's continuing fondness for the term 'terrorist'" (Dowler A5).

The *OED* defines terrorism as the use of violence and intimidating measures to achieve political ends. All of the activists have rejected the idea that their intents were to intimidate or to terrorize. Justice Samuel Toy of the BC Supreme Court calls them "common criminals" (Sarti A10) on the one hand, and terrorists on the other. Clearly, the one hand doesn't seem to know what the other is doing. These five people cannot be both terrorists *and* common criminals: terrorism is, by definition, political — not the work of common criminals. Nor, however, is it a case that they are either one or the other: the very framing of this as a dichotomy is the effect of what is really a media melee, one that effaces, obscures, and misrepresents the stated activist aims of the group. Yet, most academics probably have difficulty accepting bombs as a viable route for activism, believing that it is better to encourage change through persuasion

than to force it with explosions. One of the answers for what qualifies as activism[1] for academics, therefore, has been the trickle-down theory (what we might call "slow activism"), where the seed we plant today may end up watered and, somewhere in the increasing haze and smog of the future, may bear fruit.

As academics (and if you are reading this, then you *are* an academic), such an answer has to carry a lot of weight, but it is not the only answer. Of the many kinds of activism, one thing common to each — and it seems painfully obvious to say it — is that something is shared with other people that may evoke change. Thus, when Ruzy Suliza Hashim suggests that "social activism can be defined as attitudes and actions that challenge to persuade the social delivery of status, power, and resources" (90), the definition does seem entirely sufficient: it is difficult to see how "attitudes" constitute activism; moreover, there is a bit of a tautology in arguing that actions define activism.

This said, though, it seems clear that what Hashim is trying to get at is that we might consider as activist things that seek to change the status quo. Such a broad and inclusive understanding of activism is useful for our purposes here because it allows us to talk about the primary work in which we engage: teaching, writing, and conferencing, primarily to students and other academics. We generally do not reach the average person on the street; we generally reach individuals more likely to attain positions of social and political influence than the average construction worker or beautician. Indeed, the work we do as scholars has a profound potential to effect change (and on this there is little room for dispute). Hashim powerfully articulates such a position in her claim that "it is imperative that the literature classroom is not just for teaching and learning of literary mechanics, but to provide an avenue to inculcate a degree of social responsibility which would allow them to become social activists in the future, even if it is only within the domain of the family or immediate community" (97).

Yet, we can't in our pedagogy force activism on students. What we can do is gently take the "opportunity to reinvigorate the teaching and study of literature, and to help redirect literary criticism into a significant, widely relevant social and public role" (Love 561). We also have (and should seize) the opportunity to question the very methods of teaching and researching that we employ — and let's face it: however activist we may want to be, however much we may rail against elitism and hierarchy and class disparities, it remains a fact that all of us who go on conferences (and let us also remember that conferencing itself is a flagrantly unsustainable pedagogy) willingly place ourselves in an elite venue, not a park setting where admission is free to all and sundry or a public square where we are likely to rile revolutionary masses, but a university, an institution at which most of our neighbors *don't* work. How academics participate in these hierarchies will in part determine the fate of what

Greta Gaard describes below as "the ground-zero victims of global climate change, the activist citizens who are leading the battles for climate justice." The fact that the realities of academic activism conflict with so many of the ideals that Western academics profess may encourage us to wonder just *how* "activist" we really are. Aimee Carrillo Rowe has just cause to observe that activism simply "may not be an identity we might easily claim" (801).

There is ample reason to be wary of the unfettered optimism that might come with, as Nicholas Hengen Fox puts it, "wearing the cap of teacher-activist": as Fox explains, wearing this cap "makes us feel good at the end of the day," but the danger in believing "that teaching is a kind of activism [is that it] only aides [*sic*] the disconnect between the classroom and the streets." His solution is to teach "texts as tactics," wherein "rather than focusing on what a text says, students focus on how it has been — and could be — used in the world beyond the classroom" (15). What this means for Fox is that "rather than polishing histories of struggle or massaging ideologies, teaching texts as tactics aims to pursue political and social change in the present" (16). The key here, to borrow again from Gaard's article, is that such work "energizes its audiences and invites movement toward action and activism alike."

What Murphy calls the "unanticipated impact" of art "is precisely where the role of criticism can come into play in an extremely valuable way." It does so, Murphy argues, by making "explicit that which may be implicit or immanent but unacknowledged and even unrecognized by the author and the characters invented." This echoes a sentiment that I have made (see "Theorizing" 217) that theorizing ecocriticism can potentially take us toward the activism that has long characterized ecocriticism. Highlighting, for instance, links among meat, environment, and sexuality in *Timon of Athens* or the ethical and environmental implications of human flesh as meat in *Titus Andronicus*, to take two unlikely texts, ecocriticism draws out things of significant activist import that might otherwise remain unseen. As Murphy is right to argue, whether they are intentional or not, whether the characters or the author sees them or not, ecocriticism's strength is that it can bring them to view.

After all, "if we do not teach students how to move from interpreting the world to changing it, our practice of politics is hardly a practice at all" (Fox 22). Exemplifying such an activist pedagogical practice, Iris Ralph explains below, in a compelling analysis of the resonance for contemporary forests of the Old English literary masterpiece *The Dream of the Rood*, that "pedagogical literary environmental activism engages with literature in order to address very real environmental crises that affect us in almost every aspect of our lives today." Ralph's argument — and the implied position of all of the articles in this Special Issue — is that there is an important relationship of literature to the natural environment. Such is not an argument that

we may take for granted. Even such an important and persuasive voice as Lawrence Buell's has suggested something different, that "literature always lead(s) us away from the physical world, never back to it" (Buell 11). It is not a position that seems an entirely plausible one, since one literary genre in particular has been understood to do precisely the opposite of what Buell says: poetry has long been both perceived and imagined as a vehicle that takes us closer to the physical, material world — hence, the perception of the ecological character and contestatory potential of Romanticism that we see first in Jonathan Bate, who argues that "there is a special kind of writing called poetry, which has the peculiar power to speak 'earth'. Poetry is the song of the earth" (251). Canadian poet Susie O'Brien explains that poetry is all about connecting with the material world — if ecocritical history is any indication. Desires for (and sometimes a naïve belief in the possibilities of) unmediated and authentic encounters with the natural world go a long way to explaining the generic preferences of ecocriticism for poetry. It is not surprising that ecocriticism should prefer poetry, O'Brien maintains, since it has the "capacity to produce the illusory impression of an unmediated reflection of the world" (184).

In the provocatively entitled 2009 book *Can Poetry Save the Earth*, John Felstiner talks about the "urgent hope" that characterizes much of what has come to be known as "nature poetry." The imagined or perceived proximity and access of poetry both to the senses and to the real is among the main bases of the activist thrust behind the ecocriticism that analyzes such poetry. Whether or not poetry or ecocriticism can save the earth, though, is perhaps not a question to be answered in these pages, but in not answering, each author proceeds on the assumption that Bill McKibben's comments about poetry work for the entire field of ecocriticism: while "it may not save the earth . . . it will surely help." It is a belief in this capacity of the written word to help that each of the contributors to this Special Issue share.

We each share the belief that relocating the limits of activist and academic coexistence means taking to heart the importance of the work that we do, the budging of the mindset that is unsustainable, the constant hammering away at the problems — even if it means, which it need not necessarily, with a shot-in-the-dark ("it might hit something") or a "slow activism" trickle-down ("it might grow") goal — and with trust in the fact that the arguments and connections we are making are right, and that every single person we teach or reach is one more person behind us. As Karen Kilcup movingly argues, "Practicing environmental criticism may not mean that as individuals we can safeguard coral reefs or ensure environmental justice, but it might mean that we cultivate enough hearts and minds, and spark enough action, to help accomplish such goals together" (853).

Note

1. This is precisely the question that our authors address in their contributions to this Special Issue, a question Amber Dean puts simply and succinctly in an article entitled "Teaching Feminist Activism": she asks "what qualifies as activism?" (354).

Works cited

Alexander, Irene. "Social Justice Best Achieved Non-violently." *The Vancouver Sun* 22 June 1984: A5.

Bate, Jonathan. *The Song of the Earth.* London: Picador, 2000.

Bekoff, Marc. *The Animal Manifesto: Six Reasons for Expanding our Compassion Footprint*. Novato: New World Library, 2010.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1995.

Butler, Judith. "Precarious Life: The Obligations of Proximity." The Neale Wheeler Watson Lecture 2011.

Nobel Museum, Svenska Akademiens Börssal, 24 May 2011. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJT69AQtDtg>

Dean, Amber "Teaching Feminist Activism: Reflections on an Activism Assignment in Introductory Women's Studies."*Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 29.4 (2007): 351-369.

Dever, Carolyn. *Skeptical Feminism: Activist Theory, Activist Practice*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2004.

"Direct Action Speaks Louder than Words." *OpenRoad* (Spring 1984), Vancouver, BC: center-fold.

Dittmar, Linda, and Joseph Entin. "Introduction: Jamming the Works: Art, Politics, and Activism." *Radical Teacher: A Socialist, Feminist, and Anti-Racist Journal on the Theory and Practice of Teaching* 89 (2010): 3-9.

Dowler, John. "A Terrorist Society." *The Vancouver Sun* 22 June 1984: A5.

Estok, Simon C. "Theorizing in a Space of Ambivalent Openness: Ecocriticism and Ecophobia." *ISLE* 16.2 (Spring 2009): 203–225.

Felstiner, John. *Can Poetry Save the Earth? A Field Guide to Nature Poems*. New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2010.

Fox, Nicholas Hengen. "Teaching (is not) Activism." *Radical Teacher: A Socialist, Feminist, and Anti-Racist Journal on the Theory and Practice of Teaching* 94 (2012): 13-23.

Garrard, Greg. "Ecocriticism." *The Year's Work in Critical and Cultural Theory* 19 (2011): 46–82.

Hashim, Ruzy Suliza. "Inculcating Social Activism in the Literature Classroom." *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies* 17: 89-97.

Herman, Edward S. and Noam Chomsky. *Manufacturing Consent: the Political Economy of the*

Mass Media. New York: Random House, 1988.

Kilcup, Karen L. "Fresh Leaves: Practicing Environmental Criticism." *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association* 124.3 (2009): 847-55.

Lawrence, Chris. "Relocating the Limits of Activist and Academic Coexistence." *CFP for 2013 ASLE Conference Panel* (28 September 2012): <http://interversity.org/lists/asle/archives/Sep2012/msg00087.html>.

Love, Glen. "Ecocriticism and Science: Toward Consilience?" *New Literary History* 30. 3 (1999): 561-76.

Martin, Randy. "Academic Activism." *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 124.3 (May 2009): 838-846.

O'Brien, Susie. "'Back to the World': Reading Ecocriticism in a Postcolonial Context." *Five Emus to the King of Siam: Environment and Empire.* Ed. by Helen Tiffin. Amsterdam. New York: Rodopi, 2007. 177–199.

Robisch, S.K. "The Woodshed: A Response to 'Ecocriticism and Ecophobia.'" *ISLE* 16.4 (2009): 697–708.

Rowe, Aimee Carrillo. "Romancing the Organic Intellectual: On the Queerness of Academic Activism." *American Quarterly* 64.4 (2012): 799-803.

Sarti, Robert. "The 20-Year Sentence Has Made Me Stronger." *The Vancouver Sun* 9 June 1984: A10-A12.

Satterfield, Terre and Scott Slovic. "Introduction: What's Nature Worth?" *What's Nature Worth?* Eds. Terre Satterfield and Scott Slovic. Salt Lake City, Utah: U of Utah P, 2004. 1-17.

The Squamish Five. Dir. Dylan Baker. Burnaby, Canada: Something Retro Media, 2005.

责任编辑：杨革新

“What’s the Story? Competing Narratives of Climate Change and Climate Justice”

Greta Gaard
Department of English, University of Wisconsin
410 S. 3rd Street, River Falls WI 54022 USA
Email: greta.gaard@uwrf.edu

Abstract Climate change narratives in the United States have appeared in many genres: literary fiction and science fiction, literary nonfiction, children’s environmental literature and film, environmental documentary films and science fiction films. Yet by shaping their narratives primarily with techno-science analyses and solutions, these narrative genres have not inclusively portrayed the additional facts of climate change — namely, the underpinnings of colonialism, neoliberalism, speciesism, and gendered fundamentalisms--and thus the activist and systemic solutions they present are partial and ineffective. Moreover, mainstream U.S. ecocriticism has failed to notice the raced, classed, and gendered perspectives in these climate change narratives.A feminist environmental justice perspective can restore analysis of the additional features of climate change root causes and effects by expanding the genres and geographies of ecocritical analysis to include artists of color and of diverse sexualities, as well as by including the practices of animal food production and consumption that are exacerbating climate change. A feminist restor(y)ing of climate change narratives is one of ecocriticism’s best strategies for confronting the root causes of climate change and suggesting solutions with real potential for enacting climate justice.
Key words climate change narratives; feminist ecocriticism; climate justice narratives; climate justice activism

Melting glaciers, shrinking ice sheets, fewer snow days; rising ocean temperatures, heat waves and droughts.Species relocations, vanishing coral reefs, and warmer climates for exotic diseases — ebola, malaria, dengue fever. The signs of earth’s warming have become a mantra, repeated from the mouths of environmentalists such as Bill McKibben, politicians from John McCain to Al Gore, NASA scientist James Hansen, and the United Nations-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a group of over 300 scientists and government officials whose reports

in 1990, 1995, 2001, 2007, and 2013 confirm the fact that anthropogenic (human-created) greenhouse gas emissions could, if left unchecked, raise global average temperatures by as much as 5.8 degrees Celsius (or 10.4 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of this century. Yet the United States business, government, and media have resisted these warnings, and global climate change is still the most pressing issue on the international environmental agenda.

In this context, what impetus toward increased understanding and action can ecocriticism — and specifically, feminist ecocriticism — contribute? I suggest this standpoint can illuminate the strengths and shortcomings of literary narratives in analyzing the problem of climate change from a (masculinist) technological-scientific perspective, exploring the rhetorical strategies in operation, and suggesting alternative rhetorics and narratives of climate justice and gender justice. Provided with a more complete restor(y)ing of climate change causes and effects, ecocritics have a greater potential to shape and contribute to activist and policy-making discourses around climate justice. Our work begins by noticing the disciplinary contexts of climate change discussions.

Ecocritics have already observed the disjunction between the environmental sciences and the environmental humanities (Buell; Garrard, *Ecocriticism*), noting the dominance of environmental sciences in defining environmental problems and controlling the discourse around their solutions. These enviro-science analyses offer incomplete descriptions without the perspective of the environmental humanities: fields such as ecopsychology, public health, environmental philosophy, environmental politics, environmental economics and ecocriticism provide critical information that augments and often transforms our understanding of environmental problems — particularly in the case of climate change. To illustrate my argument, I explore a variety of climate change narratives.

Climate Change Fiction and "Cli-fi"Science Fiction

Currently, the best representative of climate change fiction is T. C. Boyle's *A Friend of the Earth* (2000), its title a reference to the U.S.-based international organization, Friends of the Earth, founded in 1969 by David Brower. Set somewhere around Santa Barbara, California, in the year 2025, this fictional narrative suggests that global warming is a consequence of economic, cultural, and political forces that have produced unsustainable population growth, irreversible loss of biodiversity, deforestation, species extinction, and an end to social supports such as health care and social security. Although the narrative ends on a comedic note, promising recreation of the heteronuclear family and thus the perpetuation of the human species, the overwhelming tone of *A Friend of the Earth* is one of cynicism and despair: its

narrative solution is withdrawal from society, since civic engagement hasn't worked. Boyle's analysis of global warming includes the ecological, social, cultural, economic, and political causes and consequences, though with a focus on the white middle class; the book omits discussion of diversity such as gender, race, sexuality, and nation when addressing climate change problems or solutions. The presumed message is that ultimately, climate change is an equal opportunity disaster.

In science fiction — sometimes called "cli-fi"[1]to emphasize the pseudo-science beneath the writing — the message is sometimes reversed: according to skeptic Michael Crichton's *State of Fear* (2004), climate change is a hoax produced by environmentalists so determined to promote fear of climate change that they use exotic technologies to start natural disasters (crumbling a massive Arctic glacier, triggering a tsunami), and are willing to see innocent people die, just to make their case. Crichton's narrative portrays the "experts" — which include Ph.D.'s, scientists, intellectuals, and feminists — as spectacularly corrupt and terribly wrong. His heroic skeptic, John Kenner, is companioned by a trusty Nepalese sidekick, Sanjong, echoing the racist and not-too-subtle homoerotic pairing of John Wayne and Tonto from U.S. Westerns of the 1940s that celebrated the epic myth of Euro-American colonialism. In Crichton's novel, the pair work together to provide charts, graphs, and other "hard" data to disprove global warming. By the novel's conclusion, one environmentalist has been fed to cannibals, and the skeptics have become suddenly irresistible to women, all in nine days. If the narrative itself isn't sufficiently alarming, ecocritics may find the book's popularity with the uncritical and unscientific public even more disturbing, and appalled by its use as a textbook for the honors seminar, "Scientific Inquiry: Case Studies in Science" at SUNY-Buffalo.[2]

Kim Stanley Robinson's climate change trilogy — *Forty Signs of Rain* (2004), *Fifty Degrees Below* (2005), *Sixty Days and Counting* (2007) — is a welcome counterpoint to Crichton's polemic, at least from an ecocritical standpoint. The first text in the series sets up the problem of global warming when Washington, D.C. is hit hard with two days of rain, portions of the city are flooded, and animals are released from zoos so they don't drown. The second text shows the more developed consequences of global warming: the Gulf Stream has stalled, causing frigid winter temperatures in the Eastern United States and Western Europe. As people starve, multinational corporations find ways of making a profit. Antarctica's ice shelves collapse, and low-lying nations sink under the waters. In Washington, D.C., environmental scientists must overcome government inertia to put in place policies that may save the world.

While the second novel focuses on the market failures of capitalism and democracy in the west, the third novel's narrative suggests that the world would be

better if scientists took over politics. Scientists fill the White House, but the book does not explore the benefits and drawbacks of a scientocracy (science's false claims of objectivity and its universalizing tendencies, as well as the corporate control of science being chief among them), and seems to promote the idea that everything would be better if only the right *man* were President. Indeed, all of Robinson's main plots revolve around men, the main characters are men, and the proposal that a male-centered ecosocialist scientocracy will solve problems of climate change without addressing problems of social injustice, not to mention simple gender parity, seems limited at best.

A spate of "cli-fi" novels has appeared in the years 2011-2013, effectively defining this new genre. A review essay by Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow (http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/cli-fi-birth-of-a-genre) discusses seven of these novels, and a website on "Cli-Fi Books" (http://clifibooks.com/about/) run by a British Columbia micropress, Moon Willow, was launched in August 2013. Recent feminist ecocritical analyses of climate change narratives include Christa Grewe-Volpp's discussion of Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (1993) and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006) as climate change post-apocalyptic novels, and Katie Hogan's "queer green" analysis of climate change references in Tony Kushner's apocalyptic play, *Angels in America* (1994). As this ecocritical scholarship shows, these cli-fi narratives remain confined within the apocalyptic failure of techno-science solutions, and uninformed by the global climate justice movement. After reading such narratives, cli-fi readers take home the message that climate change is a failure of technology and science, not a failure of species justice or environmental justice, and thus their actions after reading these books might focus on individual carbon footprint reduction rather than lobbying for systemic eco-justice change.

Climate Change Nonfiction Writing

In the field of literary nonfiction, texts such as Tim Flannery's *The Weather Makers* (2006) and Elizabeth Kolbert's *Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change* (2006) provide narratives that make environmental sciences more accessible through the lens of environmental literature, yet offer little information about environmental politics, sociology, climate justice, or ecosocial strategies for response. Flannery's volume contains 36 short essays on the consequences of global warming, and in the final third of the book he poses solutions that involve individual, national, and international actions to reduce carbon dioxide. The core of his message explores how we can shift from fossil fuels to a hydrogen-based economy, and while he acknowledges that the U.S. administration has been influenced by coal-industry donations to the Republican party, thereby undermining political action, Flannery's

environmental science solutions obscure the powerful influence of environmental economics, politics, and culture.

In refreshing contrast, Elizabeth Kolbert's work returns again and again to the view that human politics are at the core of our responses to climate change.Her essays provide international snapshots of how global warming is affecting people, places, and species. She interviews scientists and skeptics, bringing scientific data to a humanities audience, and exposing the fallacies of global warming skeptics. Yet her conclusion to the final chapter on the "Anthropocene" (a geological epoch) offers no solutions but despair: "It may seem impossible to imagine that a technologically advanced society could choose, in essence, to destroy itself, but that is what we are now in the process of doing" (187). While there is a wealth of nonfiction handbooks countering Kolbert's despair with suggestions for "what YOU can do to stop global warming," these too are limited by their focus on individual actions in the absence of environmental context: they fail to address strategies for countering the power of multinational corporations overriding democratic decisions at the level of community, state, and nation.

Children's Climate Change Narratives

As I have argued (Gaard, "Toward an Ecopedagogy of Children's Environmental Literature"), children's environmental literature has tremendous potential for communicating messages about ecosocial justice, community empowerment, and strategies for ecodefense. As of 2013, children's climate change literature has not caught up to this potential. Several texts focus on climate change effects in the Arctic (Bergen; Rockwell; Tara), using polar bears or penguins as protagonists, and building on children's cross-species empathy to instill awareness. The solutions offered range from empathy to action, yet they articulate only environmental science's approach to climate change (i.e., switch energy sources, plant trees, bicycle, reduce consumption, and "write representatives in Congress" — but the letters' content is unspecified). And there is an eco-skeptic presence in children's literature as well. Holly Fretwell's *The Sky's Not Falling: Why It's OK To Chill About Global Warming* (2007) assures children that human ingenuity combined with an "enviropreneurial" spirit will lead to a bright environmental future, not one where people ruin the earth.

Children's films with climate change themes have not fared much better. Both "Happy Feet" (2006) and "Wall-E" (2008) use the narrative trajectory of heterosexual romance to tell stories framed by the consequences of climate change. In "Happy Feet" climate change and its root cause, elite humans' overconsumption of nature, manifest not just through ice cracking, but also through the absence of fish, the presence of garbage in the Arctic, and the fact of humans overfishing. In "Wall-E" the earth is completely covered with garbage, and the romance between robots Wall-E and

Eve begins when the human spaceship sends a probe to see if earth can be reinhabited by the refugee population of humans who have become obese chair-bound consumers, ruled and pacified by a single corporation. In both narratives, children are invited to identify with childlike and disempowered male heroes who succeed in ecodefense and heterosexuality alike. In both films, the human change of consciousness is magical — the penguin simply confronts the overfishing, garbage-throwing humans with the plastic ring from a six-pack; Wall-E befriends the chair-bound consumers' obese leader, who "speaks truth to power" and inspires the populace to return to earth. In fiction, simply learning the facts about environmental devastation is sufficient to inspire action; in reality, rationalism is rhetorically insufficient, climate change facts are distorted by narrative manipulation and a masculinist techno-science framework, and planetary elites (sometimes including ecocritics and our readers) are invested in current colonialist and neoliberal economic benefits and thus seem apathetic or reluctant to change.

Climate Change Documentary and Film

In Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth" (2006), a narrative synthesis of rationalism and empathy succeeded in bringing the topic of climate change to a popular audience. The film's impact can be seen in the fact that President Bush mentioned climate change in both his 2007 and 2008 State of the Union addresses, but not in 2006; and an internet search for the term "global warming" yielded only 129 articles for 2005, the year before the film's release, but 471 articles for 2007, the year after the film was produced (Johnson 44). Laura Johnson attributes Gore's popular success to his capacity for moderating apocalyptic rhetoric with scientific rationalism and constructions of audience agency: at the same time that Gore gestures toward present and future climate change disasters, he simultaneously endorses new technologies and political activism. His message offers no images of either the global elites and economics responsible for global warming, the ground-zero victims of global climate change, or the activist citizens who are leading the battles for climate justice; he makes no connections between a meat-based diet and its environmental consequences; thus, the film avoids invoking oppressor guilt, though still encouraging action. From a feminist and environmental justice standpoint, Gore's analysis is woefully incomplete. While narratives that inspire environmentally-minded action are surely laudable, Gore's limited solutions will not address or rectify all climate injustices.

Science fiction films build on Gore's apocalyptic tenor, but without its rhetorical balance, they actually undermine the credibility of climate scientists. "Waterworld" (1995), "The Day After Tomorrow" (2004), "Artificial Intelligence" (2001), and "Elysium" (2013) depict white male heroes working to restore life or love against a

backdrop of climate change consequences (i.e., rising seas covering the earth, the next Ice Age, out-of-control scientific advances coupled with human alienation to create cyborg identities, or an impoverished and overpopulated earth colonized by elites living on a Biosphere II-satellite). The Mariner hero of "Waterworld" battles with evil pirates and eventually succeeds in his quest to bring an orphan girl, her female caretaker, and a male hydroelectric power expert, among others, to "Dryland" (Mt. Everest) while the Mariner returns to the sea/frontier; on "Dryland," one assumes, the mundane tasks of sustaining life are unsuited to heroic actions characteristic of the Mariner (aptly cast as Kevin Costner). "The Day After Tomorrow" offers a similar narrative of father-figure rescuing child, as paleoclimatologist Professor Jack Hall tries to save the United States from the effects of climate change and its rapidly returning Ice Age while also trying to save his son Sam, who has taken refuge in the New York Public Library, far north of the line of projected safety from freezing.[3] Both films present climate change consequences as too far-fetched to be credible: the entire planet flooded? the next Ice Age, in a week?

The more complicated films of the four also seem more eerily plausible. "A.I." (for Artificial Intelligence) offers an eleven-year-old cyborg boy as a hero whose primary quest is to regain a mother's love. The film raises questions about human identity in a future affected by climate change, and suggests readings of humans as cyborgs, the earth as a rejecting mother, and climate change as the ultimate rejection from the earth/mother — a new twist on mother-blaming. "Elysium" provides a white male hero (Matt Damon) living on the impoverished Earth (crowded and overpopulated largely by people of color), whose poverty and romance with a Latina single mother compel him to infiltrate the elites on the Earth-satellite Elysium, to download the entire operating system for the elites' instantaneous health care, and through his suicide transferring that health care to an open democratic access that will save not only those suffering on earth, but immediately heals the dying daughter of his beloved Latina. The unabashed irony of all these narratives is their race and gender reversal: around the world, it is poor women, rural women, and women of color who are most affected by global climate change effects, and it is women who are working as grassroots heroes to mitigate and adapt to the results of a global environmental crisis created by the world's elites, largely, white men (Women's Environmental Network).

Has ecocriticism been unable to contribute to ongoing conversations about global warming, simply for a lack of worthy literary and cultural artifacts? The few ecocritics who have explored global warming believe so. "Literary writing has not kept pace with the developments in science and public policy pertaining to climate change, peak oil, population pressure, and the food crisis," writes Patrick D. Murphy

(14). "American fiction writers have a rather dim track record on the topic of climate change," Scott Slovic concurs (109). But I wasn't ready to give up so easily. Still seeking narratives with an awareness of intersectionality, and an approach that could bridge the environmental sciences and the environmental humanities, I turned to ecofeminist theory, environmental justice analyses, critical animal studies, and feminist ecocriticism.

Getting the Full Story: From Environmental Sciences to Environmental Humanities and Feminist Ecocriticism

From the aforementioned intersectional standpoints of feminist environmental justice ecocriticism, climate change can be seen as an environmental justice problem with material consequences for the environmental sciences. In her essay, ecofeminist and vegan activist Marti Kheel develops her theory of the truncated narrative, a theory that foregrounds the rhetorical strategy of omission: "Currently, ethics is conceived as a tool for making dramatic decisions at the point at which a crisis has occurred. Little if any thought is given to why the crisis or conflict arose to begin with" ("From Heroic to Holistic Ethics: The Ecofeminist Challenge" 256). In Western ethics, values are debated on an abstract or theoretical plane, and problems are posed in a static, linear fashion, detached from the contexts in which they are formed: "we are given truncated stories and then asked what we think the ending should be," Kheel explains ("From Heroic to Holistic Ethics: The Ecofeminist Challenge" 255). Creating "ethics-as-crisis" conveniently creates an identity for the ethical actor as hero, an identity well-suited to what Val Plumwooddefines as the Master Model. "Western heroic ethics is designed to treat problems at an advanced stage of their history," Kheel argues, and "run counter to one of the most basic principles in ecology — namely, that everything is interconnected. …By uprooting ethical dilemmas from the environment that produced them, heroic ethics sees only random, isolated problems, rather than an entire diseased world view. But until the entire diseased world view is uprooted, we will always face moral crises of the same kind" ("From Heroic to Holistic Ethics: The Ecofeminist Challenge" 258-59). As an alternative to truncated ethical narratives and heroic ethics, Kheel proposes retrieving "the whole story behind ethical dilemmas," uncovering the interconnections of social and environmental perspectives, policies, economics, and decision-making, including all those affected by the ethical "crisis." With the whole story restored, we can work more effectively for solutions to current ecosocial problems, and prevent others in the future, thereby eliminating the need for heroes — though as Kheel wryly observes, "prevention is simply not a very heroic undertaking" ("From Heroic to Holistic Ethics: The Ecofeminist Challenge" 258).

Kheel's theory describing truncated narratives helps illuminate the "story" of

climate change causes and solutions — stories that surface in the popular media, in science, literature, and culture. Upon initial inquiry, the stories we receive about the causes of climate change are narrated by the environmental sciences, which suggest that climate change is primarily a problem of transportation and energy production; on further inquiry, environmental sciences and environmental politics reveal climate change is a problem exacerbated by processes of industrialized animal-based agriculture, as documented by the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Association report, "Livestock's Long Shadow"(Steinfield et al.). From environmental politics, we then learn the "subplot" of both these "cover stories"[4] is the deeper problem of first-world industrialized nations' overconsumption and waste of global nature and all those associated with nature — indigenous people, the "two-thirds" (or "developing") nations, nonhuman animals and ecosystems.An embedded subplot to the first-world/ two-thirds-world narrative is the powerful presence of multinational corporations, whose economic force and global trade agreements have the capacity to overpower democratic decisions made at all levels — city, state, and nation. Finally, at the bottom of these narrative hierarchies lie the inequalities of gender, race and species, which are present at almost every level of society and nation.[5] Inspired by Kheel's theory, I have compiled "Facts That Restore the Truncated Narrative of Climate Change."

Facts That Restore the Truncated Narrative of Climate Change

*Transportation, Energy Production, Animal-based Agriculture.*Independent environmental scientists and the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) describe climate change as produced by an excess of greenhouse gases, primarily carbon dioxide, emitted as a byproduct of human industrialized activities — burning fossil fuels in cars, and creating energy with coal-fired power plants.The well-known focus on the social problems of transportation and energy production often obscures the fact that methane, another greenhouse gas that is twenty-three times stronger than carbon dioxide, also contributes to climate change, with industrialized animal agriculture playing a significant role in its production.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (Steinfield et al.) and the popular U.S.-based journal *Scientific American* (Fiala) concur that industrialized animal-based food production ("factory farming") contributes significantly to climate change. Moreover, industrial food production has hidden environmental costs in its use of insecticides and fertilizers, deforestation, water pollution and water consumption, feed given to cattle, fuel for farming, transportation and refrigeration. *Scientific American* (Fiala) concluded that worldwide meat production of beef, chicken, and pork emits more greenhouse gases than all forms of global transportation or industrial processes. The FAO report suggests that giving up the average 176 lbs.

of meat consumed annually, per person in developed countries, is one of the greenest lifestyle changes individuals can make. "Why is vegetarianism still considered a personal lifestyle decision when it has such enormous global ramifications?" asks Marti Kheel ("Communicating Care: An Ecofeminist Perspective" 49). She concludes, "the impact of diet on the environment is the *inconvenient truth* that Gore and other environmentalists fail to voice."

Industrialized vs. Developing Nations. An environmental politics perspective emphasizes that climate change is a global environmental problem predominantly produced by industrialized nations, and suffered primarily by developing nations, along with the poorer classes, marginalized within the industrialized nations. For example, with only four percent of the world's population, the United States emits 25% of the world's carbon dioxide (Center for Progressive Reform). Yet climate change talks have been repeatedly stalled by finger-pointing and foot-dragging, as the more industrialized nations each refuse to lead the way in greenhouse-gas reductions. No one wants to be first in reducing what the elites see as their rightful standard of living.

While climate change will affect the entire global environment, its impacts will be felt hardest by those least able to make adaptations for survival. People living in poverty are more likely to live in unplanned, temporary settlements, which are erected on unsuitable land-prone to the risks of flooding, storm surges, and landslides. Most eke out a precarious economic existence through subsistence farming or fishing, and have no savings or assets to insure them against external shocks. Often, they lack sanitation and their limited access to clean water, poor diet, and inadequate health-care provisions undermine their resistance to infectious diseases. Moreover, their lack of social status and the informal nature or remoteness of their settlements means that they do not receive adequate warnings of impending disasters, and relief efforts are least likely to reach them. Lack of education and official neglect means that they have little alternative after disasters but to remain in or return to the same disaster-prone areas, with diminished assets, and await the next, calamitous event.

Inequalities of Genders and Sexualities. A feminist environmental perspective confirms that women are the ones most severely affected by climate change and natural disasters due to social roles, discrimination, and poverty. Around the world, women's gender roles restrict women's mobility, impose tasks associated with food production and caregiving, and simultaneously obstruct women from participating in decision-making about climate change, greenhouse gas emissions, and decisions about adaptation and mitigation. In developing countries, women living in poverty bear the burden of climate change consequences, as these create more work to fetch water, or to collect fuel and fodder — duties traditionally assigned to women. As

rural areas experience desertification, decreased food production, and other economic and ecological hardships, these factors prompt increased male out-migration to urban centers with the promise of economic gain and wages returned to the family; these promises are not always fulfilled. In the short-term, and possibly long-term as well, male out-migration means more women are left behind with additional agricultural and household duties, such as caregiving. These women have even fewer resources to cope with seasonal and episodic weather and natural disasters.

Gender inequalities mean that women and children are 14 times more likely to die in ecological disasters than men (Aguilar; Aguilar, Araujo, & Quesada-Aguilar). For example, in the 1991 cyclone and flood in Bangladesh, 90% of the victims were women.The causes are multiple: warning information was not sent to women, who were largely confined in their homes; women are not trained swimmers; women's caregiving responsibilities meant that women trying to escape the floods were often holding infants and towing elder family members, while husbands escaped alone; moreover, the increased risk of sexual assaults outside the home made women wait longer to leave, hoping that male relatives would return for them. Similarly in the 2004 Tsunami in Aceh, Sumatra, more than 75% of those who died were women. The deaths of so many mothers leads to increased infant mortality, early marriage of girls, increased neglect of girls' education, sexual assaults, trafficking in women and child prostitution.Even in industrialized countries, more women than men died during the 2003 European heat wave, and during Hurricane Katrina in the US, African-American women — the poorest population in that part of the country — faced the greatest obstacles to survival (Aguilar et al.).

Transgendered persons and gay/lesbian/bisexual/queer persons (GLBTQ) already live on the margins of most societies, denied rights of marriage and family life, denied health care coverage for partners and their children, denied fair housing and employment rights, immigration rights and more. Climate change exacerbates pressures on marginalized people first, with economic and cultural elites best able to mitigate and postpone impacts; as a global phenomenon, homophobia infiltrates climate change discourse, distorting our analysis of climate change causes and climate justice solutions, and placing a wedge between international activists. For examples: at the First Worldwide Peoples' Conference on Climate Change and Mother Earth held in Cochabamba, April 19-22, 2010, Bolivian President Evo Morales claimed that the presence of homosexual men around the world was a consequence of eating genetically-modified chicken: "The chicken that we eat is chock-full of feminine hormones. So, when men eat these chickens, they deviate from themselves as men" (ILGA). This statement exemplifies a dangerous nexus of ignorance, speciesism, and homophobia that conceals the workings of industrial agribusiness. A second

example is the invisibility of GLBTQ people in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, an unprecedented storm and infrastructure collapse which occurred just days before the annual queer festival in New Orleans, "Southern Decadence," a celebration that drew 125,000 revelers in 2003 (ecesis.factor).The religious right quickly declared Hurricane Katrina an example of God's wrath against homosexuals, waving signs with "Thank God for Katrina" and publishing detailing connections between the sin of homosexuality and the destruction of New Orleans. It is hard to imagine GLBTQ people not facing harassment and discrimination during and after the events of Katrina, given the fact that Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi lack any legal protections for GLBTQ persons and would have been unsympathetic to such reports. Yet in statements of Climate Justice to date, there is no mention of the integral need for queer climate justice — in a climate that is simultaneously material, cultural, and ecological.

The 27 Bali Principles of Climate Justice (2002) redefine climate change from an environmental justice standpoint, using as a template the original 17 Principles of Environmental Justice (1991) created at the First National People of Color Environmental Summit. These principles restore many of the missing components of global warming's truncated narrative, connecting the unsustainable consumption and production practices of the North (first-world industrialized countries) and the elites of the South (two-thirds world, "developing" countries) with the environmental impacts felt most harshly by those in the South and the impoverished areas of the North. The principles address the categories of gender, indigeneity, age, ability, wealth and health; they provide mandates for sustainability in energy and food production, democratic decision-making, ecological economics, gender justice, and economic reparations to include support for adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts on the world's most vulnerable populations. The missing pieces from this statement — the role of industrialized animal agriculture, and the specific climate justice impacts on LGBT people — still need inclusion. With these two additional elements completing the story by correcting its heterosexism and speciesism, the intersectional analysis provided by the Bali Principles offers the best articulation for restoring the truncated narrative of climate change.

Climate Justice Narratives: A Feminist Ecocritical Perspective

With the Bali Principles in hand, I pondered the absence of women, people of color, and eco-queers as authors of the literary and cultural narratives I had surveyed (though white women do figure more prominently as authors of children's books). To date, ecocritics have failed to ask this question: if global warming narratives in fiction, nonfiction, science fiction and film alike have been largely the domain of white men,

what genre are queers and artists of color using to address global warming? In climate justice documentaries, short stories, music videos and popular songs, ecocritics may discover more inclusive and intersectional narratives of global warming, along with strategies for mitigating the effects of climate injustices.

Perhaps the first climate justice documentary to reach a global audience, "The Island President" (2011) offers an environmental justice (humanities) counterpart to the "inconvenient truth" of Al Gore's environmental science. This film traces President Mohamed Nasheed of the Maldives as he fights to compel industrialized nations to face up to the impact of their climate-changing emissions on the most low-lying countries in the world. While the people of the Maldives visit neighboring island countries to seek refuge and resettlement possibilities, Nasheed meets with global dignitaries who attend the Copenhagen Climate Summit in 2009 where, at the last moment, he makes a speech that salvages an agreement. Though the Copenhagen summit is widely regarded as a failure, it was the first time that India, China, and the US had agreed to reducing emissions. This documentary is all the more stirring in light of the fact that in February 2012, President Nasheed was forced to resign under threat of violence, in a coup d'etat perpetrated by security forces loyal to the former dictator, and the dictator's half-brother won the Presidential elections in November 2013. The links between democracy and climate justice are clear not just in the Maldives, but throughout the Two-Thirds world.

In the short story "Cayera" (2007) by Filipino writer Honorio Bartolomé de Dios, a gay beautician, Bernie, and her friends join a movement against logging operations and the construction of an industrial plant in the agricultural village of San Martin. Although the town's elite know Bernie as a trusted aide, her inclusion in the movement is questioned on the basis of her sexuality. Although she and her friends are mocked by the eco-heterosexual marchers in the rally, Bernie later transforms her beauty parlor into a hiding place for rebels, whom she transforms into women to protect them from the military. "Pageantry and performance thus become sites of resistance," Nina Somera (83) concludes, arguing that climate change "aggravates longstanding inequalities and peculiar situations that strike one's layers of identities — as a tenant farmer, industrial worker, lesbian mother, landless widow, indigenous woman and so on."

Marvin Gaye's 1971 popular hit, "Mercy, Mercy Me (The Ecology)" was remade in 2006 by the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, giving the song a New Orleans jazz flavor, and an album cover depicting a solitary, naked man pulling a canoe through a flooded urban landscape, unmistakably targeting this song to the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina. Gaye asks, "What about this overcrowded land? How much more abuse from man can she stand?"[6] In the context of global warming catastrophes and climate

justice, Gaye's lyrics gain new resonance. Hurricane Katrina was an event that made visible the arrogance of culture's attempt to control nature, along with the indifference of urban planners and engineers to the structures of safety allegedly protecting poor people and people of color — particularly women of color (Seager 2-3) and the ways these social hierarchies affect the land, water, and nonhuman animals.

Another exemplary artist, India Arie produced two songs on her "Testimony" Volume 2 album (2009) that address global warming from an intersectional, climate justice perspective. The first song, "Better Way," contrasts the government's response to Hurricane Katrina and the politically-motivated war in Iraq against the media manipulation and sheer indifference of elected politicians, particularly then-President George W. Bush: "Is it democracy or is it the oil? It's in the news every day, we're a paycheck away, and the President's on the golf course."[7] In the tradition of black spirituals, Arie (like Martin Luther King) positions herself as both Moses figure and feminist lyricist with her refrain, "Let my people go!" Her proposed solution to these and other problems of social, environmental, and climate injustice is a reconception of human identity as interdependent, with inclusivity and care presented as the sole strategy for human survival: "I know there's gotta be a better way, and we gotta find it — we gotta stand together, or we can fall apart."

Another song on Arie's album,"Ghetto" argues for an interdependent self-identity that makes connections across nationality, class, and race. Her work persuasively articulates the problems of global justice to first-world listeners (the "you" of the lyrics) by exposing the third-world within the first-world: "to be hungry in L.A. is just like starving in Bombay. Homeless in Moracco is a shelter in Chicago." Contrasting definitions of the ghetto as "a place of minority, and poverty, and overpopulation," Arie insists

> We live on this earth together,
> ain't no separation.
> When you're looking down,
> From outer space
> We're just a human race
> and the world is a
> Ghetto...
> Do you see your brother when you
> Look around?
> It's a small world after all.

Arie's lyrics playfully reverse the white supremacist erasure and commodification

of difference through the Disneyland "small world" metaphor, and the disembodied "eye in the sky" techno-science metaphor of space exploration, whereby the blue ball of earth equalizes (and erases) all social hierarchies; instead, she uses these same metaphors strategically to draw listeners together , mindful of difference.

Another climate justice music video, Kool Keith's ("Dr. Octagon") "Trees Are Dying" (2007) presents an African-American boy age 11 or 12 as its rap narrator, dressed as a schoolteacher in a white shirt, black plaid bow tie, red plaid suspenders, white pants and converse high-tops. The boy poses as teacher and newscaster, standing in front of a blackboard where a map of the United States is chalked over with heat-wave temperatures — 186 to 202 degrees Fahrenheit — and a hurricane spiral marking the Gulf of Mexico. The blackboard bursts into flames and his back catches on fire. As he dances and narrates, we see other women and children costumed as trees, stiffly marching through a field of clear-cut stumps, falling backwards against headstones, and dancing a ring-around-the rosy circle of death in front of nuclear reactors spewing steam into the skies. A crew of children dressed as scientists mix smoking fluids and pour them into a planet earth bubble that explodes and rolls away; a frenzy of cars drives across the screen and onto a six-lane freeway, each car with a bull's horns strapped to the hood. A white, high-heeled shoe stamps down a building, introducing a robotic white woman wearing a business suit, acting the role of Godzilla; she attempts unsuccessfully to jam a tree branch into a copier machine, as children in white scientist coats mill around her working at other copying machines, and papers fly in the air. Significantly, the majority of the actor-dancers are black pre-teen children, the landscape and sky are persistently gray, and refrains such as "apathy kills" and "car-car-carbon dioxide" and "like the elephants, trees are dyin'" repeat in lyrics and in superimposed text. The music video's rich metaphorical twists on popular culture make clear connections among species extinction, deforestation, unsustainable transportation and energy production, corporate-driven colonization of nature, white supremacy, adult supremacy and an apathetic gerontocracy.

Along with an intersectional analysis of the root causes of climate change in social, economic, and global injustices, these hip-hop lyrics and music video offer a sensory reconnection that is unavailable via other media such as literature and cinematic narrative: they make viewers want to dance. In contrast to the immobilizing sense of futility, apathy, or denial often inspired by informational overkill from environmental science and cli-fi literature alike, climate justice musical narratives offer a more inclusive and a more popularly-accessible medium, one that energizes its audiences and invites movement toward action and activism alike.

Feminist Ecocritical Responses to Global Warming

A recent branch of environmental feminist theory — variously called "material feminism" (Alaimo & Hekman), "eco-ontological feminism" (Blair), and "eco-ontological social/ist feminist thought" (Bauman) — offers a strategy for building on key contributions of ecological feminist and environmental justice perspectives: the centrality of an interdependent self-identity and the value of embodied knowledge, present in issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, age and ability, as well as issues of environmental health. According to this branch of environmental feminist thought, the essentialism-social constructionism debates of the 1990s and the ascendancy of social constructionism have misrepresented ecofeminism and essentialism as synonymous categories, denouncing and discarding both in order to emphasize the shaping forces of culture in organizing human identity and experiences.[8] Twenty years later, feminists are acknowledging that the suspect term was *essentialism*, and are now arguing for a "feminist politics of the-body-in-place . . . founded in an affirmation of our dependence on the earth" (Mann 129). Material feminism, write Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman, explores "the interaction of culture, history, discourse, technology, biology, and the 'environment,' without privileging any one of these elements" (Alaimo and Hekman7). Thus, "the potential for us to respond meaningfully to climate change," writes Jennifer Blair, will "depend on a re-conception of subjectivity and a re-conception of the ways in which humans perceive and effect change in the material world" (Blair 319). The problem is that "no matter what information about global warming the media communicates, people seem to need to feel the heat themselves in order to respond to the phenomenon in meaningful, change-driven ways" (Blair 320). I suggest that climate justice documentary, literature, and music offer narrative media capable of putting people in motion *and* feeling the heat.

What are ecocritics *doing* about climate change? Certainly, we are bringing our position as educators to serve the larger work of connecting literature with contemporary environmental issues, problems, and solutions. In our scholarship, our essay-writing and presentations, we can also address the truncated narratives of climate change, provide narrative data that bridge the environmental sciences with the environmental humanities to fill in these omissions, and interrogate western culture's preference for heroes and crisis over everyday citizen action and apocalypse-prevention. In our classes, we can expand our range of genre and media, ensuring that we include texts by women, eco-queers, and artists of color when we read narratives of global climate change and climate justice, and encouraging practices from service learning to creative writing exercises as avenues for students to gain experiential education that reconnects them with the beauty, the danger, and the ecosocial contexts influencing our material embodiment.

As environmentalists and ecocritics have noted, if everyone must experience the

effects of global warming first-hand in order to take meaningful action, our actions will come too late to make a difference. In this context, narrative offers a powerful potential for creating an "entangled empathy" (Gruen 213-233), the affective mode that offers an avenue for understanding across differences. When the narratives of climate change are presented not just as a techno-science story but also as a matter of environmental justice that explicitly includes differences of gender, sexuality, and species with differences of race, class, and nation, our readers will have a more complete story of climate injustices, and a more effective road map for activist responses.

Notes

1. A spate of "cli-fi" novels has appeared in the years 2011-2013, effectively defining this new genre, although at this point in time, their narratives remain confined within the apocalyptic failure of techno-science solutions, and uninformed by the global climate justice movement. A review essay by Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow (2013) discusses seven of these novels, and a website on "Cli-Fi Books" (<http://clifibooks.com/about>) run by a British Columbia micropress, Moon Willow, was launched in August 2013. Recent feminist ecocritical analyses of climate change narratives include Christa Grewe-Volpp's discussion of Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (1993) and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006) as climate change post-apocalyptic novels, and Katie Hogan's (2013) "queer green" analysis of climate change references in Tony Kushner's apocalyptic play, *Angels in America* (1994).

2. Clyde Freeman Herreid reports on his use of Crichton's *State of Fear* as a primary text for his honors seminar in "Scientific Inquiry: Case Studies in Science" (10-11). The fact that Crichton's novel is a work of science fiction, not researched fact, does not preclude it from use in Herreid's University Honors Program course at The State University of New York, Buffalo.

3. There are some enjoyable moments to the film, from a progressive ecocritical standpoint: the students in the library are burning Nietzche's books to stay warm; there's a President who refuses to listen to global warming science, and a Vice President who says action will cost too much.

4. By "cover story" I mean the story that is on the cover of a rather thick stack of narratives about the causes and solutions to global warming. I do not mean that the "cover story" is covering all the narratives, only that it has gained so much prominence that it functions to obscure other intersectional narratives that are also accurate descriptions of experiential fact.

5. I qualify this claim about the omnipresent inequalities of gender and sexualities with the word "almost" to acknowledge the presence of traditional indigenous societies whose gender role differences are unmarked by differential valuations. Such societies are already quite marginalized in the global economy.

6. The complete lyrics to "Mercy, Mercy Me" can be found at <http://www.metrolyrics.com/mercy-

mercy-me-lyrics-marvin-gaye.html>

7. Complete lyrics to India Arie's "Better Way" can be found at <http://www.lyricsmode.com/lyrics/i/indiaarie/better_way.html>

8. There are many branches of ecofeminist theory (Gaard, *Ecological Politics*; Sturgeon; Merchant), including branches that are liberal, socialist, anarchist, radical feminist, womanist, and cultural feminist; the latter is the branch most often charged with essentialism. Vegan and vegetarian ecofeminists are now arguing that the anti-essentialist backlash against ecofeminism is motivated by a deeper backlash against ecofeminism's defense of inter-species justice (Gaard "'Ecofeminism' Revisited.").

Works Cited

A.I. Artificial Intelligence. Dir. Steven Spielberg. Dreamworks, 2001.

Aguilar, Lorena. "Women and Climate Change: Women as Agents of Change." International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).December.Accessed January 14, 2014.<http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/climate_change_gender.pdf>

---. Ariana Araujo and Andrea Quesada-Aguilar."Fact Sheet on Gender and Climate Change." International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Fact sheet presented at the UNFCCC COP 13, held in Bali in December 2007. Accessed January 14, 2014 at <http://www.genderandenvironment.org>

Alaimo, Stacy, and Susan Hekman. eds. *Material Feminisms.* Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2008.

An Inconvenient Truth: A Global Warning. Dir. Davis Guggenheim. Paramount, 2006.

Arie, India. "Better Way" and "Ghetto." *Testimony* 2 (2009).

Bali Principles of Climate Justice. 29 August 2002. Accessed January 14, 2014.<http://www.ejnet.org/ej/bali.pdf >.

Bauman, Whitney A. "The 'Eco-ontology' of Social/ist Ecofeminist Thought." *Environmental Ethics* 29. 3 (2007)279-98.

Bergen, Lara. *A Story About Global Warming.* New York: Little Simon/Little Green Books, 2008.

Blair, Jennifer. "Media on Ice." *Feminist Media Studies* 8. 3 (2008): 318-23.

Boyle, T. Coraghessen. *A Friend of the Earth.* New York: Viking, 2000.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

Center for Progressive Reform. "International Environmental Justice and Climate Change." Accessed January 14, 2014 <http://www.progressivereform.org/perspintlenvironJustice.cfm>

Crichton, Michael. *State of Fear.* New York: HarperCollins, 2004.

The Day After Tomorrow. Dir. Roland Emmerich. 20th Century Fox, 2004.

De Dios, Honorio Bartolomé. "Cayera." *Ladlad 3: An Anthology of Philippine Gay Writing.* Ed. J. Neil Garcia and Danton Remoto. Pasig: Anvil Publishing, 2007.

Ecesis, Factor. "Just a Draft: Queer Justice, Climate Justice: Contemplating the Invisible Dimensions of Disaster in Hurricane Katrina." December 8. Accessed January 14, 2014 at <http://ecesisfactor.blogspot.com/2011/12/just-draft-queer-justice-climate.html>

Fiala, Nathan. "How Meat Contributes to Global Warming." *Scientific American.* February 4, 2009. Accessed

January 14, 2014.<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=the-greenhouse-hamburger>.

Flannery, Tim. *The Weather Makers.* New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006.

Fretwell, Holly. *The Sky's Not Falling!Why It's OK to Chill about Global Warming*. Los Angeles, CA: World Ahead Media, 2007.

Gaard, Greta. "'Ecofeminism' Revisited:Rejecting Essentialism and Re-Placing Species in a Material Feminist Environmentalism." *Feminist Formations*23. 2 (2011): 26-53.

---. "Toward an Ecopedagogy of Children's Environmental Literature." *Green Theory & Praxis* 4. 2 (2009): 11-24.

---. *Ecological Politics: Ecofeminists and the Greens.* Philadelphia, PA: Temple UP, 1998.

Garrard, Greg. *Ecocriticism*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Grewe-Volpp, Christa. "Keep Moving: Place and Gender in a Post-Apocalyptic Environment." *International Perspectives in Feminist Ecocriticism.* Eds. Greta Gaard, Simon Estok, and Serpil Oppermann. New York: Routledge, 2013. 221-234.

Gruen, Lori. "Navigating Difference (again): Animal Ethics and Entangled Empathy." *Strangers to Nature: Animal Lives and Human Ethics.* Ed. G. Zucker. New York: Lexington Books, 2012. 213-233.

Happy Feet. Dir. George Miller. Animal Logic/Warner Brothers, 2006.

Herreid, Clyde Freeman. "Using Novels as Bases for Case Studies: Michael Crichton's State of Fear and Global Warming." *Journal of College Science Teaching* 34.7 (2005): 10-11.

Hogan, Katie. "Queer Green Apocalypse: Tony Kushner's Angels in America." *International Perspectives in Feminist Ecocriticism.*Eds. Greta Gaard, Simon Estok, and Serpil Oppermann. New York: Routledge, 2013. 235-253.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). N.d. "The IPCC Assessment Reports." Accessed January 12, 2014 at<http://www.ipcc.ch/>.

International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA). "Bolivian President: Eating Estrogen-Rich Chicken Makes You Gay." April 25, 2010. Accessed January 12, 2014at <http://ilga.org/ilga/en/article/moGN2RJ1vA>.

"The Island President." Dir. John Shenk. Afterimage Public Media, 2011.

Johnson, Laura. "(Environmental) Rhetorics of Tempered Apocalypticism in 'An Inconvenient Truth.'" *Rhetoric Review* 28.1 (2009): 29-46.

Kheel, Marti. "From Heroic to Holistic Ethics:The Ecofeminist Challenge." *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature.* Eds. Greta Gaard, et al. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1993. 243-271

---. "Communicating Care: An Ecofeminist Perspective." *Media Development*February (2009): 45-

50.

Kolbert, Elizabeth. *Field Notes From a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change.* New York: Bloomsbury, 2006.

Kool Keith. "Trees Are Dying."2007. Accessed January 12, 2014 at<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtsdtNdk5ao >

Mann, Bonnie. *Women's Liberation and the Sublime: Feminism, Postmodernism, Environment.* New York: Oxford UP, 2006.

Merchant, Carolyn. *Earthcare: Women and the Environment.* New York: Routledge, 1995.

Murphy, Patrick D. "Terraculturation, Political Dissolution, and Myriad Reorientations." *Tamkang Review* 39.1 (2008): 3-18.

Plumwood, Val. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature.* New York: Routledge,1993.

"Principles of Environmental Justice." 1991. Accessed January 12, 2014 at< http://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html >

Robinson, Kim Stanley. *Forty Signs of Rain.* New York: Bantam, 2004.

---. *Fifty Degrees Below.* New York: Bantam, 2005.

---. *Sixty Days and Counting.* New York: Bantam, 2007.

Rockwell, Anne. *Why Are the Ice Caps Melting? The Dangers of Global Warming*. New York: Collins, 2006.

Seager, Joni. "Noticing gender (or not) in disasters." *Geoforum* 37.1 (2006), 2-3.

Slovic, Scott. "Science, Eloquence, and the Asymmetry of Trust: What's at Stake in Climate Change Fiction." *Green Theory & Praxis: The Journal of Ecopedagogy*. 4.1 (2008): 100-112.

Somera, Nina. "Que[e]r[y]ing the Climate Debates." *Women in Action* 2 (2009): 81-84.

Steinfield, H. et al. *Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options*. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2006. Accessed January 12, 2014 at <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/010/A0701E/A0701E00.pdf>.

Sturgeon, Noel. *Ecofeminist Natures: Race, Gender, Feminist Theory and Political Action*. New York: Routledge, 1997.

Tara, Stephanie Lisa. *Snowy White World to Save.* Dallas, TX: Brown Books Publishing Group, 2007.

Tuhus-Dubrow, Rebecca. "Cli-Fi: Birth of a Genre." *Dissent* (Summer 2013). Accessed January 12, 2014 at <http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/cli-fi-birth-of-a-genre>*Wall-E.* Dir. Andrew Stanton. Pixar Animation Studios, 2008.

Waterworld. Dir. Kevin Reynolds. Universal Pictures, 1995.

Women's Environmental Network (U.K.). Women's Manifesto on Climate Change. May 15, 2007. Accessed January 12, 2014 at<http://www.wen.org.uk/climatechange/resources/manifesto.pdf>.

责任编辑：尚必武

The Question of Aesthetic Praxis: If Literature and Art are Propaganda, What is Ecocritical Analysis?

Patrick D. Murphy
Department of English, University of Central Florida
12790 Aquarius Agora Dr. Orlando, FL 32816, USA
Email: patrick.murphy@ucf.edu

Abstract This essay considers the relationship of literary production and environmental activism through the lens of the theories of propaganda and agitation developed by Frederick Engels, V. I. Lenin, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Alain Locke in terms of critical praxis. Using these concepts it analyzes the literary production of a variety of writers, including Edward Abbey, Margaret Atwood, Paolo Bacigalupi, Patricia Grace, Ishimure Michiko, Barbara Kingsolver, Kim Stanley Robinson, and Indra Sinha. It briefly treats the debate within ecocriticism about the role of theory in the analysis of nature-oriented literature. And, it addresses the early debate within the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) about whether a literary studies organization should also be an activist organization, as well as recent decisions by ASLE to support financially member projects that work directly with activist organizations.
Keywords praxis; propaganda; agitation; activism; ecocriticism

Upon entering a landscape shaped by a theme relating ecocriticism and activism, a person is quickly confronted with a series of questions. Is one looking at ecocriticism as a form of activism, what some theorists would define as praxis? Is one exploring the ways that ecocriticism might analyze and critique activism? Can or should aesthetic productions be analyzed as a form of activism? Is consideration of activism, or representations of activism, a possible task or a necessary responsibility for ecocritical theory and criticism?

In the development of literary ecocriticism and green studies in the U.S. and Europe, initially there seemed to be far more debate about what the objects of study ought to be rather than being about how these objects ought to be studied. As I have rehearsed elsewhere, in the U.S. at least, the field of literary ecocriticism began with

a focus on literary nonfiction and a relatively narrow range of novels and stories. And so, the fiction-nonfiction divide had to be addressed. Such was not the case elsewhere, say, where poetry was a primary object of study for ecocriticism and a role for theory less questioned. The debate about theory seems to be taking place almost exclusively in the United States, the land of unacknowledged pragmatism, while in some other countries, such as China, the debate seems to be more one of pitting foreign theories against Chinese ones, particularly those drawn from the classics.

The issue of critical practice as a form of activism has never been directly addressed as a question to my knowledge. Over the past few years, in the pages of *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* there has been a strident argument about whether academic-based theories are another symptom of modern society's being the anti-environmental enemy, now widely known as the Estok-Robisch controversy. As Louisa MacKenzie and Stephanie Posthumus note, "It hardly bears repeating to readers of this journal [*ISLE*] that 'theory' broadly understood has often been seen as mutually exclusive to activism, to science, and to ecology itself" (757).

Their essay explicitly defends the necessity of studying theories and being theoretical as part of engaging in ecocriticism, but whether or not literary and cultural criticism and developing the theories on which it would consciously be based constitute types of activism, a guide to activism, a supplement to activism, or a complement to activism, seems to remain unresolved. For example, in their conclusion they remark that "We privileged few especially must react to ecological crisis, and we believe that ecocriticism can play a real and active role" (771). But clarification of its role in what and as what could benefit from additional elaboration.

Early on there was a fractious debate in ASLE-U.S. about whether or not the organization should engage in activism, such as passing resolutions about environmental issues or engaging in support for specific environmentalist actions, which arose specifically in relation to the slaughter of bison who roamed beyond the confines of Yellowstone Park. At the time, the decision was made by the organizational leadership and much of the membership to avoid that kind of engagement while the organization was still in the process of achieving academic recognition and respectability. At the same time, some members speculated rather loudly that gaining academic respectability might very well be a demonstration of the organization's irrelevance and impotence in relation to real world issues, as if universities were somehow not part of the real world, even as they are increasingly yoked to the interests of the military-industrial complex and demoted to the role of job training centers. More recently, however, the leadership of ASLE — U.S. has decided to support directly environmental activism through funding mechanisms. Specifically,

> The ASLE Outreach Committee is soliciting proposals for projects that will help build connections between the environmental humanities and place-based environmental organizations working outside the academy. Projects will foreground the intersection between local efforts to address issues of environmental degradation and injustice and the role of representation and rhetoric. We are especially interested in projects enabling ASLE to connect with the environmental struggles of biennial conference localities. Funds may be used to cover the costs of public presentations or exhibitions (permanent or temporary), informational materials, literary and artistic productions, or interactive digital projects. (*ASLE News* Winter 2014)

While the inclusion of the phrase "the role of representation and rhetoric" maintains a veneer of academic analysis, it seems obvious with the use of the word "struggles" that the focus will squarely fall on support for efforts at social intervention and change. Clearly, also, the funding of activities of "public presentations or exhibitions," "informational materials" and the like means that ASLE-U.S. will be funding propaganda, in the neutral denotative sense of that word and not with the negative connotative sense emphasized in American discourse. While not definable as an activist organization, like, say, the Environmental Defense Fund, ASLE-U.S. has clearly become an organization supporting activism and, through advertising its grant program in its newsletter and on its website, promoting local direct action.

So, an organization for ecocriticism has begun to intervene in local environmental "struggles" to change behavior and thought by financially supporting activist groups, and thereby has made activism an inclusive area of its purview and moral consideration, or what in the business world is defined as "corporate social responsibility." It would seem quite possible also that at least some of the organizations likely to obtain funding are ones in which ASLE members are already involved. If that is the case, are other activities of this organization a form of activism, such as holding academic conferences, funding seminars on specific ecocritical issues, or including environmental justice as an academic field of analysis? That depends on how one chooses to define "activism." The phrase "academic activism" hardly rolls off the tongues of university professors with any frequency, and in some countries where scholars are practicing ecocriticism such a label could threaten their job security if viewed as a form of adversarial politics. A few years ago, the senior American scholar Stanley Fish went so far as to give speeches in the US and author a book with the title, *Save the World on Your Own Time*, specifically calling for a separation of professional intellectual endeavors and classroom teaching from the

ethical positions and engagements of faculty members.

Defining activism requires a consideration of two concepts more abstract than that of "activism," although no less materially affective forms of intellectual intervention: "propaganda" and "agitation." A related and crucial question for ecocriticism is that of whether or not art is propaganda.

The intellectual African American activist, W.E. B. Du Bois, who was also a novelist, gave a speech at the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) annual conference of 1926, on the occasion of the awarding of the Twelfth Spingarn Medal. It is useful to note that the recipients of this award, which continues to be made annually by the NAACP for "outstanding achievement," frequently consist of authors, artists, and performers. In his speech Du Bois proclaimed that "The apostle of Beauty thus becomes the apostle of Truth and Right." And further, in a statement that would elicit significant controversy ever since, declared that

> Thus all Art is propaganda and ever must be, despite the wailing of the purists. I stand in utter shamelessness and say that whatever art I have for writing has been used always for propaganda for gaining the right of black folk to love and enjoy. I do not care a damn for any art that is not used for propaganda. (573)

He then published a version of his speech in *The Crisis*, the official magazine of the NAACP, in October of 1926 and it has been reprinted frequently since in the U.S., including more recently in anthologies of literary theory and criticism.

In contrast, in 1928, Alain Locke, Philosophy Professor and father of the Harlem Renaissance of African American literature, wrote an editorial for the new journal *Harlem*, titled "Art or Propaganda?" Many scholars have considered it a rebuttal to Du Bois. But that is not quite the case upon closer examination. He objects to what he labels propaganda because of its "monotony and disproportion. . . . For it leaves and speaks under the shadow of a dominant majority whom it harangues, cajoles, threatens or supplicates." But he argues that does not mean that "Our espousal of art thus becomes no mere idle acceptance of 'art for art's sake,' or cultivation of the last decadences. . . . It is the art of the people that needs to be cultivated, not the art of the coteries. Propaganda itself is preferable to shallow, truckling imitation." In the end, then, Locke does not disagree with Du Bois that art always represents an ideology and favors the class or national interests of one group or another.

Rather, Locke criticizes art that V.I. Lenin would have considered not "propaganda" so much as "agitation" or even a "call to action." It is also clear that Locke does not object to art that the artist perceives as serving the role of propaganda

as long as it does not eschew aesthetic achievement or deny individuality and self-representation. He is Jamesian in the sense that he prefers art, and more narrowly literature, that shows rather than tells. But he too is looking for art that will uphold beauty, the aesthetic, without disregarding that "Surely we must take some cognizance of the fact that we live at the centre of a social problem." While Locke here speaks of racial oppression in the United States, a similar kind of remark can be made about environmental art and the subjects of ecocriticism, which invariably "take some cognizance of the fact that we live" amidst a global environmental crisis. Appreciation of nature, then, is no mere form of aesthete entertainment for a leisure class, but a stance that is overtly ideological and implicitly, when not explicitly, political.

There are those who would believe and contend that activism is only represented by direct actions, picket lines, monkey wrenching, and following the calls to action of a Greenpeace or an EarthFirst! But it would not seem that revolutionary and reformist intellectuals would agree with such a narrow conception or that they would wish to see direct action boxed off from more indirect efforts at persuasion and the effecting of change. After all the direct-action American organization EarthFirst! was deeply inspired by Edward Abbey's novel, *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, which romantically and comically chronicles environmentalist sabotage by a small group of individuals, and which gave rise to the term "monkey wrenching" for various forms of protest, such as destroying logging machinery or tree spiking, which prevents loggers from felling trees that may have spikes nailed into them because they represent a threat to safe cutting.

In like manner, Upton Sinclair's novel, *The Jungle*, was commissioned by *An Appeal to Reason*, a newspaper of the Socialist Party of America, to expose the unsafe working and environmentally degrading conditions in the meatpacking industry. The public uproar it caused upon publication led to the passage of federal food safety legislation, having a greater impact as an agitational piece in terms of actual results than other forms of protest at that time. At the same time, *The Jungle* represents the lack of direct correspondence between intentions and results or even between the focus of agitation and propaganda and the focus of attention in direct action influenced by them. Sinclair was focused on working conditions in his novel and wanted legislation to change that, but instead the legislation that was passed focused on food safety, which directly benefited the general public but only indirectly benefited the meatpacking workers.

It seems quite likely that many of the early ecocritics in the U.S. preferred literary nonfiction as the subject for ecocritical analysis because it was more overtly referential and generically realist, more frequently reflected the thoughts and behaviors of activists, and more easily incorporated explicit or implicit calls to

action than did either fiction or poetry, rather than only championing it because of its omission from the canon. Certainly, Lawrence Buell's efforts in *The Environmental Imagination* to trace the lineage of American nature writing back to Thoreau had this kind of emphasis. Yet, more overtly didactic texts are not necessarily the measure of good literary propaganda according to some of its most famous practitioners.

Frederick Engels provided the following analysis in an 1885 letter to Mina Kautsky on this point:

> The modern Russians and Norwegians, who produce excellent novels, all write with a purpose. I think however that the purpose must become manifest from the situation and the action themselves without being expressly pointed out and that the author does not have to serve the reader on a platter the future historical resolution of the social conflicts which he describes. . . . Thus the socialist problem novel in my opinion fully carries out its mission if by a faithful portrayal of the real conditions it dispels the dominant conventional illusions concerning them, shakes the optimism of the bourgeois world, and inevitably instills doubt as to the external validity of that which exists, without itself offering a direct solution of the problems involved, even without at times ostensibly taking sides. (Marx and Engels 88)

That is to say, not only does the author need not reveal his own intentions or position on the environmental issues, the attitudes of characters toward the more-than-human world, or the actions taken to address a specific crisis or event, but neither does he or she need to provide a call to action in order to be encouraging action. The text suffices to be progressively propagandistic if it only serves to expose, reveal, and draw attention to the reality of the current human environmental predicament. At approximately the same point in time, then, both Engels and Henry James, political polar opposites, demonstrated a preference for authors to show rather than tell in order to interest their audiences. In 1888 Engels remarks in a letter to Margaret Harkness, "The more the opinions of the author remain hidden, the better for the work of art" and then goes on to praise Balzac, a politically conservative author, over Zola, an explicitly socialist one (Marx and Engels 91).

It would seem that V. I. Lenin, the Russian revolutionary who led the Bolsheviks to power, also saw the value of a literature that might show and thereby intellectually stimulate an audience being told through other forms of discourse, such as polemic and calls to action, about the need to transform society. Lenin wrote numerous letters to Maxim Gorky seeking to align him with the Bolsheviks and to submit work by him and other writers to revolutionary newspapers and magazines. In February of

1908, Lenin wrote to the famous novelist and playwright on the need for a foreign newspaper published in exile to be the revolutionary party's political organ, and remarked, "Why shouldn't literary criticism be included in it?" (*On Literature* 169). And a week later wrote again to him, "I have in fact been dreaming of making the *literature and criticism* section a permanent feature in *Proletary"* (*On Literature* 172). Two weeks later, he followed up with another letter, "Now it really will be splendid if little by little we draw in fiction writers" (*On Literature* 187).

So, with the example of *The* Jungle in mind, it can be said that while propaganda and agitation cannot be reductively represented as a cause that produces a specific desired social change or course of action pursued by activists, it cannot be disassociated from them either. At the same time, if it fulfills a more general propagandistic function of exposing flaws, injustices, and crises within a particular political economic system, it need not lead readers to any specific ideas about activism, but exerts its influence at a more general level of ideological reorientation. My two examples, however, clearly fall into the category of works in which the authors are consciously and explicitly concerned about social and environmental issues and do intend for their aesthetic products to have an effect in the world and are not written merely for entertainment or aesthetic virtuosity. Certainly that was the case for Gorky's writings as well. A specific ideological intention, however, is not a requirement for art to be propaganda. Du Bois and Engels write about literature written with a purpose beyond entertainment, but Lenin in his discussions of Tolstoy also writes of literature as propaganda not due to any authorial intentionality but as a result of its sincere representation and its unanticipated impact on the world (*On Literature* 54-55). And here is precisely where the role of criticism can come into play in an extremely valuable way.

Ecocriticism provides theories and methods for analyzing the ideologies at work in literature and other forms of cultural activity in terms of their positions on human-rest of nature relationships, environmental science, hierarchy and heterarchy, ethics and behaviors. On the one hand, ecocriticism does not turn a work into propaganda, in the sense that it does not inject an ideology into the text from the outside. Rather, it makes explicit that which may be implicit or immanent but unacknowledged and even unrecognized by the author and the characters invented. On the other hand, though, through promoting the reading or teaching of a particular text, it elevates it as propaganda for the position of which the critic approves; or the critic alters its reception in the minds of readers as an ideological intervention in the individual and social interpretation of that text. If art is propaganda, whether of a progressive or reactionary kind — criticizing or defending contemporary social reality — then criticism that draws attention to specific artistic works or cultural artifacts

and practices in opposition to or in hierarchical comparison with other ones must unavoidably be propaganda as well.

But propaganda here remains too broad and too vague to suffice for understanding the relationship of ecocriticism and activism or for determining whether or not a theoretical formulation or a critical practice ought to be considered an activist instance. To further refine thinking about these relationships, one can turn to the early writing of Lenin. In *What Is To Be Done?*, originally drafted in February of 1902, after addressing the need for theoretical development, he makes a distinction among propaganda, agitation, and a call to action. A "propagandist"

> must present "many ideas", so many, indeed, that they will be understood as an integral whole only by a (comparatively) few persons. The agitator, however, speaking on the same subject will take as an illustration a fact that is most glaring and most widely known to his audience . . . and utilising this fact, known to all, will direct his efforts to presenting *a single idea* to the "masses", e.g., the senselessness of the contradiction between the increase of wealth and the increase of poverty. . . . to single out a third sphere, or third function, of practical activity, and to include in this function "the call upon the masses to undertake definite concrete actions", is sheer nonsense, because the "call", as a single act, either naturally and inevitably supplements the theoretical treatise, propagandist pamphlet, and agitation speech, or represents a purely executive function. (409-10)

While distinguishable one from another, in Lenin's taxonomy all of these aspects can be perceived as part of a larger whole: the effort to effect fundamental change in the entire system of relations and behaviors among the members of a society. The reverse is the case, however, in that all of these aspects can also be used to deter, delay, or prevent fundamental change. In the environmental sphere, climate change denialism is the most salient example and it is carried out on all of these levels simultaneously, from challenging the science at a theoretical level, to disputing the motivations for the conducting of climate science, to agitating around a specific event, such as "climategate" or a specific revision of one piece of a United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, to calling for the relaxation of environmental regulations at every opportunity, such as the ongoing drought in California or the Keystone pipeline project.

Lenin remarks later in *What Is To Be Done?* that "Calls for action, not in the general, but in the concrete, sense of the term can be made only at the place of action; only those who themselves go into action, and do so immediately can sound such

calls" (414). That is what is usually thought of as activism and that is what ASLE-U. S. now appears to be committed to supporting financially. And when we look at an organization such as Greenpeace or EarthFirst!, one sees that they carry out both agitation around specific issues and engage in direct action and calls for action at specific places, for specific issues, at specific points in time. Literary works, cultural products, and criticism, then, cannot be considered activism in this narrow sense, even when they narrate a story of activism that includes in that plot line a call to action. The literary work can, however, draw attention to such calls to action with the effect of making readers more sensitive and more considerate of them when they hear specific appeals being made. Among written works, the essay is certainly more congenial a literary form for agitating in direct connection to a call to action because of its potential to be more timely through more rapid publication than a longer work or one requiring more aesthetic styling. Poems can serve this function as well in those countries where poems can still be published quickly in newspapers. Online forums reduce the time to social impact considerably without the delays of print publication, but crafting a novel takes a considerably longer period of time, distancing it from a specific event, than sending a tweet.

Barbara Kingsolver's latest novel, *Flight Behavior*, is worth consideration in this regard. The plot focuses on the plight of Monarch butterflies, whose "flight behavior" reflects their being confused by the effects of climate change and the resulting loss of habitat, temperature variations, and the shifting onset of seasonal cycles. As such it fits the Leninist definition of agitation and this plight is revealed through narration of events and dialogue about why the butterflies are wintering in the wrong part of North America. There is, though, a secondary plot, one that could be considered more propaganda than agitation. That plot focuses on the complex web of reasons for why people engage in "flight behavior," i.e., running away from scientific evidence about climate change and its implications for their daily lives and responsibility for their behaviors. Varied episodes, characters, and reasons address this plot line in the novel. *Flight Behavior* does not issue a specific call to action. But if readers have been affected by its propaganda and agitation effects then they may be more sensitive to, and conscious of the reasons for, calls to action that they subsequently hear.

Ecocritical analyses of *Flight Behavior* could easily opt to focus more on one of these plots than another, while intersectional analysis would contend with the class, gender, and national dimensions of Kingsolver's narrative. It is often the case that the cumulative effect of several agitational articles on the same text written from different theoretical orientations gradually generates a more propagandistic reading of a novel and why edited collections of essays on the same work provide a valuable diversity of opinions and richness of scope. One might also argue that calls for more

comprehensive intersectional analysis, including ecofeminist, postcolonial, and comparatist approaches, which has certainly enriched ecocritical practice, constitute precisely a recommendation to generate more criticism that would meet the criteria of propaganda than those of agitation. At the same time, I would suggest that recognition of this distinction and the utility of both practices might protect readers and critics alike from expecting any one literary or cultural studies article to deliver more than it promises.

But is all art really propaganda in Du Bois' sense of the term? Let's hold that question in suspension and consider another proposition: all art, like all forms of human semiosis, is ideological and to the degree that it reflects, implicitly or explicitly, one ideological orientation or another, contributes to the promoting or critiquing of values and beliefs by readers and viewers who engage such art. Consider a less subtle example of semiosis: the slogan. Here are three: cure cancer: donate to the American Cancer Society; cure cancer: stop ingesting carcinogens; cure cancer: stop the transnational production and distribution of known carcinogens. The first is the variety Americans hear most in relation to cancer. It is a call to action, but it does much more ideological work than that. By making the recipient of the requested donations the American Cancer Society, it emphasizes the idea that the "cure" will come from scientific research and technology, and casts individuals as patients who must passively wait for the experts to achieve a breakthrough. Additionally, it focuses on treating the symptoms of cancer and genetic predispositions toward cancer. It contains virtually no political or economic agitation, but does reinforce the pharmaceutical-medical complex emphasis on expensive treatment carried out by experts.

The second slogan shifts the focus from treating to preventing and identifies the primary cause of cancer as external carcinogens rather than internal predispositions, but it limits its focus to what Americans deem to be "lifestyle choices." It is basically agitational at the level of freedom of choice, personal discipline, and self-education. The third slogan, however, shifts the emphasis to the sources of carcinogens and the need to halt their production. One cannot after all refuse to ingest carcinogens if they are floating in the air that people must breathe and the water that they must drink. That is why air and water pollution are often the focal point of public outcries over pollution. The addition of the terms "transnational" and "distribution" generate the opportunity to broaden the propaganda work of the slogan by raising the specter that it is not only the production of carcinogens that must be addressed, but also the ways in which they are disseminated, including hazardous recycling activities, and the reality that pollution does not respect national borders. Since "transnational" is most frequently used as a modifier of "corporation" this third slogan also points attention

to the foundation of industrial economics. The propaganda that would evolve from the third slogan still has to be teased out from its implicit discourse to make those implications explicit through critical analysis.

Such teasing out is often what literary and cultural criticism will do whether reading Ishimure's Michiko's *Lake of Heaven*, Indra Sinha's *Animal's People*, or Patricia Grace's *Potiki*, just to name three texts that provide varying content amenable to either agitational or propagandistic criticism. With *Lake of Heaven*, for instance, critics can focus on the issue of excessive dam building and the destruction and displacement of agrarian communities, which could be tied in with other novels that address this same singular topic. Or, critics can take up the multifaceted issues raised in the novel of sense of place, destruction of habitat, sonic pollution, urban homogeneity, conflicting community-economic systems, and spiritual versus secular orientations toward the rest of nature. *Animal's People* and *Potiki* have both been read through the lens of postcolonial criticism and postcolonial ecocriticism, with important differences in the aspects highlighted when the ecological issues are brought to the fore. As with *Lake of Heaven*, *Potiki* has a spiritual theme that clarifies an inhabitational sensibility that is sometimes ignored if a narrow topic focus is chosen for critical attention, while displacement necessarily needs to be handled differently due to the historical discussion in *Potiki* of native struggles to regain ownership of traditional land seized by the colonizers.

Cautionary tales are a useful form of narrative to consider here. After all, a tale can only serve the function of being cautionary if an author believes that literature can alter consciousness and affect behavior. Often such stories engage in propaganda over agitation because they contain a significant amount of contextual development, including in science fiction world building, or explanations of various systems, weather or climate, technology, or social relations. Often such tales require a multi-volume narrative to develop the plot with all of the contextual apparatus that the story lines require. Two examples of such cautionary tales are the trilogies by Margaret Atwood and Kim Stanley Robinson, *MaddAddam* and *Science in the Capitol* respectively. Or we have lengthy single volume works, such as Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl*. The post-carbon consumption world established as its setting functions as cautionary propaganda, as does the main plot line about transnational corporations trying to control the global seed market. Although the story is set in the future, the plot describes events occurring in the world today and exposed by numerous nonfiction authors and activists, such as Vandana Shiva and Abby Kinchy. There is also a clearly agitational post-colonial resistance movement to globalization promoted by the novel as well, particularly as seen by the successful resolution of the plot at novel's end.

If aesthetic praxis is thought of as the complementary interaction of literary,

artistic, and cultural artifactual production and its criticism, then it can be understood as partisan creation, dissemination, or analysis and critique of literary and other forms of artistic production with the purpose of effecting a change in dominant ideological formations and social awareness. Its ideological underpinnings may be revolutionary, reformist, or reactionary, but not ideologically neutral. Ecocriticism is a form of aesthetic praxis that is in itself not a form of activism in the narrow sense of direct, immediate, and local actions, but by being propagandistic and agitational contributes to the potential success of activism through its effect on social consciousness. Such aesthetic praxis does not depend on the ideological self-consciousness, intentionality or motivational awareness of the artists themselves, although certainly for the addressing of environmental issues it provides a strongly persuasive complement.

While much of American and European ecocriticism is thematically and ethically oriented in its attention, in other parts of the world there are other emphases, such as those on semiotics or ecoaesthetics. Some might wish to argue that an ecoaesthetics is not environmentalist or political, that it is not propaganda. But certainly any form of literary and cultural criticism that encourages an appreciation for wild nature, for notions of "harmony" and "balance," for looking back to Daoism and Confucianism, for instance, functions culturally as a counter narrative to dominant global models of development and consumption economics and implies some kind of environmental ethic. Ecoaesthetics rather than an explicitly thematic or ethical criticism may just be a form of environmentalist persuasion by other means and seen as related to E. O. Wilson's concept of biophilia, which he perceives as an ecologically-based perception. Perhaps what all forms of ecocriticism, whether agitation or propaganda, and the theories from which they are consciously or unconsciously derived, seek to do is to promote the idea that biophilia could overcome or supersede culturally induced ecophobia? If so, then we might see how this very possibility upends the hierarchical binary that privileges so-called rational, compartmentalized ideas over intuition, emotion, and sensibilities, those very aspects of the human condition that literature and art affect so deeply and evoke in each reader and viewer to enable fundamental reorientations.

Works Cited

Abbey, Edward. *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. 1975. New York: HarperPerennial, 2000.

ASLE News. Association for the Study of Literature and Environment. Winter 2014.

Atwood, Margaret. *MaddAddam*. New York: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 2013.

---. *Oryx and Crake*. New York: Nan A. Talese, 2003.

---. *Year of the Flood*. New York: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 2009.

Bacigalupi, Paolo. *The Windup Girl*. San Francisco: Night Shade Books, 2010.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1995.

Du Bois, W.E.B. "Criteria of Negro Art." 1926. Rptd. in *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. 3rd ed. Ed. David H. Richter. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's 2007. 569-74.

Estok, Simon. "Theorizing in a Space of Ambivalent Openness: Ecocriticism and Ecophobia." *ISLE* 16.2 (2009): 199–201.

Fish, Stanley. *Save the World on Your Own Time*. New York: Oxford UP, 2008.

Grace, Patricia. *Potiki*. 1986. Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 1996.

Ishimure, Michiko. *Lake of Heaven*. Trans. Bruce Allen. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008.

Kinch, Abby. *Seeds, Science, and Struggle: The Global Politics of Transgenic Crops*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2012.

Kingsolver, Barbara. *Flight Behavior*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2013.

Lenin, V.I. *On Literature and Art*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970.

---. *What Is To Be Done? Collected Works*. Trans. Joe Fineberg and George Hanna. Ed. Victor Jerome. Vol. 5. 45 vols. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975. 347-529.

Locke, Alain. "Art or Propaganda?" 1928. Rptd. National Humanities Center Resource Toolbox. The Making of African American Identity: Vol. lll, 1917-1968. Web.

Marx, Karl, and Frederick Engels. *On Literature and Art*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976.

Mackenzie Louisa, and Stephanie Posthumus. "Reading Latour Outside: A Response to the Estok–Robisch Controversy." *ISLE* 20.4 (2013): 757-77.

Robisch, S. K. "The Woodshed: A Response to 'Ecocriticism and Ecophobia'." *ISLE* 16.4 (2009): 697–708.

Robinson, Kim Stanley. *Fifty Degrees Below*. New York: Bantam, 2005.

---. *Forty Signs of Rain*. New York: Bantam, 2004.

---. *Sixty Days and Counting*. New York: Bantam: 2007.

Shiva, Vandana. *Stolen Harvest: the Hijacking of the Global Food Supply*. Cambridge: South End Press, 2000.

Sinclair, Upton. *The Jungle*. 1906. New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2003.

Sinha, Indra. *Animal's People*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007.

Wilson, E. O. *Biophilia*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1984.

责任编辑：尚必武

Ecocritical Forms of Engagement with Nature and Texts

Serpil Oppermann
Department of English Language and Literature, Hacettepe University,
06800 Beytepe, Ankara, Turkey
Email: opperman@ada.net.tr

Abstract This essay critically examines eco-activism as commitment to various forms of engagement with the earth, and with literary narratives that feature often romanticized conceptions of nature and contemplations of place attachment, environmental awareness, and ecological values. The argument is that activism, as in the case of the Occupy Gezi Movement in Istanbul, would be more effective if supplemented with theory. Activism in ecocriticism is also associated with thematic interpretations of literary-environmental texts according to which experience articulates nature. The essay contests this idea that nature finds its best expression in texts that supposedly transparently reflect human experience in natural surroundings. It proposes instead a material ecocritical way of integrating ecocritical activism with its theoretical dimension to complete the activism-theory circle in a meaningful way. Thus, theory emerging from material expressions entails a new understanding of activism as part of theorizing, and theory as part of activism in a complex world of interrelations and border-crossings.
Key words ecocriticism; activism; theory; new materialism

What is the significance of activist component of ecocriticism? Asking this question today may seem dated, but although ecocriticism is now replete with a multitude of theories, activist sensibilities still play a vital role in the field. Being the moral impetus behind ecocriticism, activism in the broad sense means commitment to various forms of engagement with the earth, and with literary narratives that feature often romanticized conceptions of nature and contemplations of place attachment, environmental awareness, and ecological values. Giving meditative and often personal accounts of allegedly pure and untouched natural landscapes, wilderness, and dramatic encounters between the human and the nonhuman world, nature-writing epitomizes such forms of narrative that seek to reverse our estrangement from the natural environments. Ecocritiiticism considers nature-writing — outdoor narratives,

or "environmental non-fiction in the tradition of Thoreau" (Clark 35) — highly important in creating perspicuous environmental perceptions. Ecocritical activism also involves ecopolitical forms of protest against environmental degradation caused by capitalist development such as hydraulic fracking and resource exploitation, protesting animal abuse, hunting, mining, as well taking ecopolitical action for remedying environmental injustices as demonstrated by feminist environmental justice actions. The "Occupy Gezi Park Movement" in Istanbul was, for example, one of the most conspicuous environmental activist movements in Turkey recently. On May 31, 2013, responding to the poignant call for protection of the trees that were going to be felled in Gezi Park in Istanbul in order to turn the area into a big shopping mall, the young protesters, known as the Y-generation, put up their tents in the park and their signature in a fast spreading social-environmental movement they called ResIstanbul. What transpired from the festive spirit the youngsters created in Gezi Park is not that the movement was homogeneous with the Y-generation, but that it is heterogeneous with other groups giving open support, such as movie stars, singers, hackers, lawyers, doctors, workers, left-wing revolutionaries, feminists, queers, and mothers from all walks of life. The trees had united these diverse groups in a mutual feeling of saving those remaining green spots from being turned into shopping malls. But, despite all the concerts, art shows, theater performances, book clubs, and tree planting that accompanied this ecopolitical activism, which spread to other cities' major parks in Turkey, the consequences were dire with shocking ecological casualties. The Swan Park in Ankara, for example, witnessed a carnivalesque display of resistance, but lost its beautiful symbols, the swans, to excessive use of gas the police used to disperse the protesters. Not only the swans died, but also many street cats and dogs and many birds were lethally affected. Although the Gezi Park Resistance Movement has exposed the capitalist greed for plundering, colonizing, and harassing the planetary ecosystems in the name of monetary interest, one cannot say that this activism has achieved much in saving the trees and protecting unsuspecting nonhuman lives. In what follows, I will argue that from the ecocritical perspective, activism may remain a major concern, yet it can hardly be the only one in challenging the anthropocentric cultural mindset. Thus, young Turks in Gezi Park shouting "We are only armed with flowers,""Green Strikes back," and "Leave the Trees Alone," were there to make a change, but it is unclear yet whether or not they were able to prevent the deep-seated capitalist greed set on translating fragile places into monetary terms. By the same token, the image of the woman in red[1] whose hair flying with close distance tear gas sprayed on her face may have become an international phenomenon, inspiring Italian women parliamentarians who appeared wearing red in solidarity, and Judith Butler's talk at MLA in Chicago in January 2014, but the effect of such eco-activist movements is short lived unless

they are endorsed by and transformed into adequate critical reflection and legitimate theoretical discourse. The argument is not that such concerted activism as we have seen in Gezi park is totally ineffective, but that if supplemented with theory its messages will be more efficacious. Significantly, activism in ecocriticism is also associated with thematic interpretations of literary-environmental texts, an argument which will also unfold in the second part of this essay. According to the thematic line of ecocritical argument, experience articulates nature. That is to say, nature finds its best expression in texts that supposedly transparently reflect feeling, doing and participating as constituents of human experience. First, however, we should consider the customary focus of early ecocritical inquiry on the significance of activist work as the only promising solution to initiate ecological attitudes and raise environmental awareness.

An activist agenda is inscribed in the very core of ecocriticism that unequivocally distinguishes ecocriticism from other literary theories. It is useful to remember, as Cheryll Glotfelty does in her "Introduction" to the landmark publication that she edited with Harold Fromm in 1996, *The Ecocriticisim Reader*, that "If we're not part of the solution, we're part of the problem" (xxi).Her question of how to "contribute to the environmental restoration, not just in our spare time, but from within our capacity as professors of literature" (xxi), was crucial for the literary profession because we felt compelled to respond to the global environmental crisis and its increasingly visible and world-wide effects.We could no longer sit back in our easy chairs and ignore the unprecedented environmental devestation. We did not want to reduce ourselves to the tragicomic position of Professor Jack Gladney in Don DeLillo's *White Noise*. Watching the environmental catastrophes on the evening news, he says:

> These things happen to people who live in exposed areas. Society is set up in such a way that it's the poor and the uneducated who suffer the main impact of natural and man-made disasters ... I am a college professor. Did you ever see a college professor rowing a boat down his own street in one of those TV floods? (114)

Though it seems unlikely for a literary scholar in fully industrialized nations to experience such things, the world is changing fast, and what seems unlikely today could easily happen tomorrow. Our connection with the natural world, however, remains tenuous as we continue to tamper with the environments for short term payoffs. Michel Serres's deliberation in 1992 in his influential essay "The Natural Contract" is still pertinent today concerning the urgency of finding long term solutions:

> Now we are confronting a problem caused by a civilization that has been in place for more than a century, itself engendered by long-lived cultures that preceded it, inflicting damage on a physical system millions of years old, fluctuating and yet relatively stable in its rapid, aleatory, and multisecular variations; we are facing a disturbing question whose principal component is time-in particular, a term of time that lengthens as we come to understand the size of the global system. For the waters of the oceans to mix, a cycle estimated at five millennia must be completed. But we only propose programs and solutions for the short term, because we live for immediate payoffs and from them we draw the essence of our power. (4)

Responding to the challenges posed by the inordinately polluted physical environments, and to "disturbing questions" thinkers like Serres have brought forward, ecocritics have been arguing for the necessity of reconnecting with the natural world and for urgent revisions of the dominant cultural conceptions of nature based on implacable anthropocentric visions. Scott Slovic, for example, proposes the notion of "ecocritical responsibility" in *Going Away to Think,* by which he means "various forms of engagement and retreat, in all pursuits of 'responsibility,' in quest of meaningful *response* to the world as I experience it and gather information about it" (3). As Michael P. Cohen has also stated, "by definition, ecological literary criticism must be engaged" (27). Similarly, underlining the notion of "engagement" in ecocritical inquiry, Lawrence Buell in *The Future of Environmental Criticism,* invokes the famous ecocritical insistence on "commitment deeper than professionalism" (97). Engaging with the world beyond the confines of academia, then, constitutes the main impulse in ecocriticism's developmental stages, making the central rationale of ecocriticism to "restore significance to the world beyond the page" (Rigby 154-55). Notably, the basic contention in the first phase of ecocritical inquiry was that unless environmental activism (as a form of effective engagement) is integrated into academic work, cultivating an awareness of environmental issues would be an almost impossible task. In his book *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*, Buell highlighted the activist component in his definition of ecocriticism, stating that ecocriticism is "conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis" (430). However, insistence on praxis as part of what defines ecocriticism has been a point of contention. Part of this contention was that ignoring "a theoretically informed" questioning of its disciplinary alliances, ecocriticism espouses a self-serving ecocritical responsibility which is at best a textual activism of the sort that "gathers itself around a commitment

to environmentality from whatever critical vantage point" (11), as Buell describes it in *The Future of Environmental Criticism.* Buell defines ecocriticism as "a concourse of discrepant practices" (11), which has produced a resolutely provisional, or hybrid scholarship. Contradictory though it may seem, this manifest hybridity reinforces a kind of enduring thematicism that privileges praxis over theory and thus constructs an artificial theory/praxis dichotomy. In the result of this conflict, literary representations of the environment are assigned high priority leading to what Dominic Head has called, "a misconceived notion of how environmental representation functions" (32). In this conjuncture, the emblematic emphasis on praxis/engagement/activism has entailed an imminent weakness of ecocritical project, turning it into more a symbolic fiction than a truly activist intellectual endeavor to make a change. It is important to note that the pronounced commitment to activism is often associated with such activities as hiking, climbing, canoeing, and getting to know the etymological roots of flower names. Dana Phillips playfully explains in his 1999 article, "Ecocriticism, Literary Theory, and the Truth of Ecology" that "Good intentions and a receptive attitude while out hiking, canoeing do not enable one to make ecological judgements. Enjoying a good read does not make one a literary critic. It should follow, then, that enjoying a good read about hiking and or canoeing and sharing one's enthusiasm in lecture or print does not make one an ecocritic" (582).

If Phillips stands out as chronicler of ecocritical satire, beneath this humor lies a discomfiting reminder of the self-inflicted limits of ecocriticism and a deep concern for the future of the field. Moreover, seeking advantage in uncritical politics and poetics of experiencing the world without the necessary tools of theory, at best produces what one can call a strong partisanship among ecocritics with one camp favoring activism and the other insisting on theory. In her 2009 article, "The Sound of a Robin after a Rain Shower," Sabine Wilkie articulates similar concerns: "For a newcomer to the field of environmental criticism in literary and cultural studies," she writes, "the debate about the relationship between the natural world and its literary representation raises a central question about the direction in which the discipline is developing" (90). She claims that there are two camps in ecocriticism that try to mediate among these questions; namely the nature camp of ecocritics, who explore the relationships between the natural and the cultural processes; and the constructionist camp, with its focus on the historical construction of nature. But as a newcomer into the field, she also admits that ecocriticism is dominated by the American tradition of nature writing. By critically reflecting on this line, Wilkie avers that the assumption that thematic approaches produce more environmentally conscious readings reduces ecocritical inquiry to "the level of content invocations," which accordingly emerges from a model that "thematically, and referentially . . . simply assumes the

unproblematic existence of an un(re)constructed nature as allegedly described by the sciences (94). Wilkie's point is important when she reminds the reader that "Texts do indeed present their meanings on levels other than plot and invocation — which is what deconstructive models of literary criticism have so eloquently pointed out over the years" (95). She concludes by suggesting that the nature camp "could discover aspects of the environment in and of a text without having to resort to pre-critical referential models of reading" (95).

Giving a more perceptive voice to this discontent in his 2009 article, "Theorizing in a Space of Ambivalent Openness: Ecocriticism and Ecophobia," Simon Estok better explains the present theoretical contingency:

> Certainly, if ecocriticism can be said to have begun to founder, it can be said to have done so for two man reasons: (1) its failures to theorize itself adequately and (2) its failures to live up to its initial activist promises […] Our continued failure to either deal theoretically or practically with the activist challenges of ecocriticism bode well neither for the field nor for the environment. We labor under the delusion that theory is incompatible with praxis, that theory cannot lead to changes in public policy, that theory is no good for the "real world." (206)

As I have argued in "Ecocriticism's Theoretical Discontents," written as a positive response to Estok's essay, "no ecocritic would want to hear the fact that so far, for example, no worldly grounding of ecocriticism has enabled any reduction of carbon emissions in the real world, or that no thematic readings of any literary text has motivated anyone to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle" (164). Dana Phillips too in his characteristic sharp style strikes against the ecocritical insistence to remain outside the theoretical community: "Too many ecocritics are fond of assuming the posture of the faux naïf, and while standing in that posture like to suggest, among other things, that environmental literature (and art) ought not to be *read* (or viewed or audited) in the critical sense of the term" ("Ecocriticism, Ecopoetics" 39). This is so because among the conservative ecocritics the suspicion of theory seems to prevail Louisa MacKenzie and Stephanie Posthumus, for example, maintain that Simon Estok's "Theorizing in a Space of Ambivalent Openness" **"**was sure to provoke debate, and it is still doing so" (758); and as they contend, "it is time to recast this debate not as an opposition, but asan invitation to *simultaneously* identify what we have in common and how our situated positions differ" (757).

Broadly speaking, the contest between theory and activism is a contest between "programmatic statements" (757) and "context-based studies" (757). In a way, whether we call it context-based, or thematic approach, this orientation is also

associated with activist work in the sense of direct engagement with reality,[2] as opposed to focusing on how language shapes that reality, producing programmatic statements. It is important to note here that, acknowledging the role of language in the meaning-making processes does not necessarily lead us to the prisonhouse of language, as the mainstream ecocritical opinion has advocated. Nor does it lead to the constructivist arguments that the world can only be viewed as a social or discursive construct; rather, it leads to the "constructedness of our concepts to their discursive character" (Bertens 202).

We know that reality does not speak without discursive mediations, and finding an extra-discursive ground for ecological interpretations of texts seems to be linguistically impossible. But there is a solution to this problematic issue. Serenella Iovino proposes that ecocriticism is "a 'cybernetics' of the text-world relationship: the text and the world are a complex information unit; they create a feedback loop consisting of the actions of the world on the text and, most of all, the possible action of the text on the world" (761). I have also opined that to "find rational remedies to the ecological challenges we need both theory and praxis, both activism and philosophizing... We should not forget that theory is always effective in constructing a cultural space that leads to political spaces for governments to take action as much as the impact of activist attempts to do so" ("Ecocriticism's Phobic Relations" 769). Conservative ecocriticism, however, separates theory and practice, choosing to argue only in terms of the material experience of the world and deliberately avoiding any mention of just how exactly our experience is translated into discourse. The postmodern theorist Linda Hutcheon provides a formidable argument about this point as she emphatically underlines the situatedness of all theoretical discourses in "a reflection on actual praxis and continue to derive their critical force from their conjunction with that social and aesthetic practice" (16).

The binary thinking, in contrast, denies much of the complexity of contemporary critical self-consciousness in its resistance to the philosophical conceptuality that allegedly comprehended it. Not being able to come to terms with this, the thematic approach in ecocriticism was designed precisely to let us think of reality independent of language, or rather independent of the discursive formulations of reality. Within this view, Scott Slovic has suggested that the only genuinely meaningful ecocritical engagement with the world can be achieved through "more explicit explanation of how and what environmental literature communicates" (Slovic 34), a goal which is not simply the equlibrium state of the texts and contexts, but a desire to privilege the context only, which Slovic calls narrative scholarship, or attending only to storytelling to understand "our existence in the physical world" (35). Therefore, "an appropriately grounded language" ('the language of stories) (35) is presumed by critics such as

Slovic to connect us better to the physical environment, and to better communicate our physical experiences. The model here is the familiar literary realism that is offered as an ideal way of connecting with the world. This approach claims that fiction takes its meaning from its situatedness in the world; thus what we need to do in order to make better contact is to analyze as literary critics the content of those stories that supposedly reflect the world unproblematically, which is "communication" in Slovic's words.

One of the representatives of this approach is Glen A. Love, who calls himself a "nature-endorser" in *Practical Ecocriticism* and condemns "nature-skeptics." Love asserts that the nature-endorsers "gain credibility in being drawn to real problems and in advocating and working toward analyses and solutions, while the nature-skeptics do not" (8). Love is simply wrong to assume that "to exclude nature except for its cultural determination or linguistic construction is also to accept the continuing degradation of a natural world that is most in need of active human recognition and engagement" (8). But it presents a telling example for the binary thinking in ecocriticism, which undermines its true potential, and goes against its spirit of inclusiveness. Love privileges the referential function of literature and condemns its alternative as nature's enemy. This is a deeply ingrained belief in the nature camp. For example, another nature-endorser, Robert Kern, mainstains that,

> One object of ecocriticism, as I see it, is to read in such a way as to amplify the reality of the environment in or of a text, even if in doing so we resist the tendency of the text itself (for our own conditioning as readers) to relegate the environment to the status of setting, so that it becomes a place chiefly interesting because of the human events that unfold in it, or to see its significance as primarily symbolic, so that it becomes essentially other than itself. (260)

Although this argument recognizes the symbolic significance of place in its literary interpretation, it is still grounded in the assumption that "ecological readings" can only be done if we resort to the refentiality of literary meaning. In *Ecocritical Explorations in Literary and Cultural Studies*, Patrick D. Murphy clarifies this manifest confusion by calling attention to the "dialogical concepts of answerability and anotherness," and claims that these Bakhtinian-based concepts help solve the referential versus textual problematic:

> …I want to claim that the dialogical concepts of answerability and anotherness provide a way of talking about how various movements within nature-oriented literatures ground their action and ground their readers in ethically referential

> situations aware of difference and responsibility.They do so without presuming that nonfiction equals fact and that facts are required for writing about nature. Thus the equation of nature writing = nonfiction = fact = truth that formed the dominant mode of literary criticism that privileged the nonfiction natural history essay over all other literary modes in the early years of American ecocriticism is cast aside for a recognition of the multivalent textual displays of the search for better ecologically ethical understanding. (33)

Even though, as Murphy compellingly explains, the thematic approach is replaced by a more interested focus on "textual displays," ecocriticism has yet to have a paradigmatic shift in terms of a serious theorization of its activist impulse always linked with nature-endorsement, and rethinking of its overemphasis on the ontology of nature outside of human reflection. But as Michael Rifaterre has demonstrated in his reading of Wordsworth's poem "Yew Trees," such a premise is a "referential fallacy." Citing Rifaterre in this context would be useful to understand the extent of which this fallacy marks ecocritical interpretations of texts:

> Referentiality of literary meaning is thus so basic an assumption that it involves the whole frame of interpretation and the very nature of descriptive poetry. I shall try to show that this postulate is a fallacy, and that the representation of reality is a verbal construct in which meaning is achieved by reference from words to words, not to things. (107)

Rifaterre maintains that the description of Yew Trees "refers to actual trees," there is no denying it (108), and that "a description is deflected from its surface meaning and makes the reader aware of a symbolic significance" (113). But he discerningly extends his contention to the concept of tree "with its various literal or metaphorical implications" (114), which provides the reader with an ideal model that opens up its semantic equivalences. According to Rifaterre, interpretation must involve these equivalences, not with the referentiality of the meaning of a tree:

> Yew-trees do grow singly or in small clumps, so this first trait would seem plainly referential. But only for a reader who already knows about yews; and the accuracy of the remark cannot justify the extremely heavy emphasis laid upon singleness. The isolation is a modality of 'descriptiveness' not because it coincides with a possible or common reality of the woods, but because it is an unavoidable fact of the text, because it is stated again and again in a cumulative sequence: with the proud 'strands single … as it stood over yore' (2-3), with

> 'solitary Tree,' with the underlining of an exclamation and the use of the capital letter. (115)

This kind of reading does not fix meaning; nor does it disrupt ecological value of the text. But by deconstructing the "self-present literal meaning," it unearths the poem's complexity and multiplicity of meanings with regards to both its semantic dimensions and the cultural discourses within which it is grounded. Recognition of this point would, in definitive ways, move ecocriticism from its self-defeating epistemological implications. In this precise sense, ecocriticism can critically reflect upon the human discourses that, as Hans Bertens points out, "govern our representations of nature" (203). But the way ecocriticism generally deals with representational issues, relegating them to the theme and content, ultimately subscribes the field to the limited standards of realist epistemologies that cannot help adequately and critically reflect upon ecocriticism's moral, cultural and political agendas. It must be remembered that this approach is, in the first place, primarily responsible for the anthropocentric conceptualizations of our relations with the world, thus for the crisis of knowledge and, by extention, for our environmental problems. It is common knowledge that it was through epistemological realism that the historically influential conceptions of nature were formulated. The defenders of realism then prescribe a strategy for ecocriticism that is fundamentally defective in view of its explanatory models. Ecocritics must not forget how the Newtonian mechanical order of nature, adapted to the political and social discourses by the materialist philosopher Thomas Hobbes, produced the dominant paradigm of economic progress and consequently the decline of the natural environments.

Since the time when Phillips punctually wrote about ecocritics' flight from theory, the abiding interest in nature's represented exteriority in texts continues, and the cultural foundations upon which such representations are grounded are not adequately examined. The underlying reason can be found in William Cronon's eloquently written chapter, "The Trouble with Wilderness," in his 1995 edited volume *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. Raising several "knotty questions" (85), Cronon goes a considerable way to demonstrating the cultural constructedness of our concepts of nature and the "very subtleties and complexities" underlying what he calls "the deceptive clarity of 'human' vs. 'nonhuman'" (85): "But the most troubling cultural baggage that accompanies the celebration of wilderness has less to do with remote rain forests and peoples than with the ways we think about ourselves" (85). It is this question of how we get to know the phenomenal world, and the ways we think of ourselves in our relations with the world that necessitates the conceptual tools of "theory" to be appropriated into the field of ecocriticism.

Although epistemological realism (always coupled with ecocriticism's activist sensibility) enabled ecocritics to take stronger moral and ecopolitical commitments, their insistence on the analysis of theme and content of texts initially placed them in a theoretically naive position. But if ecocriticism begins to look like nothing more than a self-sustaining referential subsystem trying to revive literary realism in defense of familiar humanistic ground, then the ecocriticial project itself looks like nothing more than an attitude which Dana Phillips describes as "curatorial and pedagogical" ("Ecocriticism, Ecopoetics" 37). The objections to theory does not stem from the fact that theory enables us to make sense of the world, or that theory is important in the sense that it invests in cultivating consciousness; rather it has to do with the complexity of language it employs to do so; that is to say, the objections mostly target the complexity of discursive formulations in which theoretical ideas operate. This is precisely why the activist orientation in ecocriticism has mistakenly pitted praxis against theory.[3] But, no matter how many "excursions into the wild ecocritics take," as Dana Phillips once again playfully writes in his 2013 article, "Ecocriticism's Hard Problems (Its Ironies Too)," "the issue at stake here is not the validity of personal experience, no matter how vitalizing and transformative" (456). In his characteristic style Phillips says, "you can no more be against theory these days than you can be for it," and continues his discussion which I will quote at length for the flavor of playful irony it inhabits:

> Yet in the US especially, many ecocritics are still spooked by literary theory and continue to resist the challenges it poses to the naive forms of realism central to the American nature writing tradition. A significant number of them have refused to acknowledge theory's importance outright, insisting that ecocritics need to set aside representations, especially theoretical ones: retreat from the quadrangle to the backcountry; put boots on the ground; and get real by, well, getting real and becoming more aware of the natural world. That sounds like fun, but it means whistling by the graveyard where all of ecocriticism's hard problems get buried on the way to the trailhead. It also means, or should mean, giving up on ecocriticism, which is as dependent on its hard problems — and on representations — as it is frustrated by them. For consistency's sake, as trail-bound erstwhile ecocritics vacate the premises they should probably cease to read American nature writing, too. (458)

This critique is pitched against the backdrop of an ongoing debate about activism versus theory.

Although it creates a disconcerting conceptual haziness, it is necessary to ask a

crucial question here in conclusion. Is it possible to use less words and more action in a scholarly discipline "whose primary materials and methods are exactly words" (2) as William Major and Andrew McMurry put it. Slovic offers a wise advice: "Encounter the world and literature together, then report about the conjunctions, the intersecting patterns. Analyze and explain literature through storytelling — or tell your own stories and then, subsequently, show how contact with the world shapes your response to texts" (28). In fact, encountering the world and literature together is another way of connecting stories and natures, ideas and natural-cultural practices about the-more-than-human world, which is at once a physical site and a rich terrain of imagination. Reading the world and texts through one another is also the diffractive method proposed by material ecocriticism that provides a palpable solution to the theory/praxis debate in ecocriticial studies. Its diffractive methodology results "from the intra-action between human interpreter and material textuality"(Iovino and Oppermann 6). As such, material ecocriticism opens" an interpretive horizon for the complex interrelations between discourse and matter"(2). As formulated by Serenella Iovino and myself, material ecocriticism "analyzes the interlacements of matter and discourses not only as they are re-created by literature and other cultural forms, but also as they emerge in material expressions"(6). But more importantly, material ecocriticism extends "the realm of textuality beyond the margins of canonical texts"(6). By focusing on the stories of matter and their narrative performance, "a dynamic process of material expressions seen in bodies, things, and phenomena" (7), material ecocriticism successfully integrates ecocritical activism, with its its theoretical dimension. Since it is the latest form of engagement with nature and stories, it completes the activism-theory circle in a meaningful way.

In conclusion, I would say that, seen from such a perspective, the woman in red in The Gezi Park Movement, mentioned earlier, becomes more than an icon of eco-activist protests. Her image captured when the policeman fired pepper spray directly into her face, sending her hair billowing upwards, transcends the boundaries of direct engagement with reality. This image is actually very useful in conceptualizing issues central to activism, theory, feminism, and politics, and thus showing "how discursive practices are related to the material world" (34), as Karen Barad would say. Her story is a concrete example of theory emerging from material expressions which entail a new understanding of activism as part of theorizing, and theory as part of activism in a complex world of interrelations and border-crossings.

Notes

1. Ceyda Sungur, known as the "woman in red," became one of the icons of the Gezi Park protests.

An academic at ITU (Istanbul Technical University), Sungur "was preparing a list of injured protesters who needed a medical assistance, along with university students." It is reported that "The scene in which she slowly walked away after tear gas was sprayed into her face marked an embryonic phase of the protests, increasing the outcry that would ultimately lead to them spreading across the country." See *Hurriyet Daily News* (January 16, 2014). http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/gezi-protest-icon-woman-in-red-cleared-of-provocation-charges.aspx?pageID=238&nID=61136&NewsCatID=341.

2. Although in his essay "The Question of Aesthetic Praxis" included in this special issue, Patrick Murphy objects to the argument that "activism is only represented by direct actions," which he says is a "narrow conception," I think this is a generally agreed-on position among many ecoactivists.

3. By saying "activist orientation pits praxis against theory," I am actually referring to the nature-endorsing camp that privileges realist conventions in literary texts which are allegedly more directly reflecting reality similar to activist engagements with the world.

Works Cited

Barad, Karen.*Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning.* Durham: Duke UP, 2007.

Bertens, Hans. "Ecocriticism."*Literary Theory: The Basics.* New York: Routledge, 2008. 195-209.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1996.

---. *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005.

Clark, Timothy. *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011.

Cohen, Michael P. "Blues in the Green: Ecocriticism Under Critique."*Environmental History* 9.1 (January 2004): 9-36.

Cronon, William. “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature.”*Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature.* Ed. William Cronon. New York: Norton, 1995. 69-90.

DeLillo, Don. *White Noise.* New York: Penguin, 1986.

Glotfelty, Cheryll. “Introduction: Literary Stıdies in an Age of Environmental Crisis.” *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1996. xv-xxxvii.

Estok, Simon C. “Theorizing in a Space of Ambivalent Openness: Ecocriticism and Ecophobia.” *ISLE* 16.2 (2009): 203–25.

Hayashi, Robert T. “Beyond Walden Pond: Asian American Literature and the Limits of Ecocriticism.” *Coming into Contact: Explorations in Ecocritical Theory and Practice*. Eds. Annie Merrill Ingram, Ian Marshall, Daniel J. Philippon, and Adam W. Sweeting. Athens: U of Georgia P, 2007. 58–75.

Head, Dominic. “The (im)possibility of Ecocriticism.” *Writing the Environment:Ecocriticism and Literature.* Eds. Richard Kerridge and Neil Sammells. London:Zed Books, 1998. 27-39.

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. New York, London: Routledge, 1990.

Iovino, Serenella. “Ecocriticism, Ecology of Mind, and Narrative Ethics: A Theoretical Ground for Ecocriticism as Educational Practice.” *ISLE* (Special Forum on Ecocriticism and Theory) 17.4 (Autumn 2010): 759-762.

Iovino, Serenella and Serpil Oppermann. “Introduction: Stories Come to Matter.” *Material Ecocriticism*. Eds. Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2014.1-7.

Kern, Robert. “Ecociriticism: What’s It Good For.” *The ISLE Reader*: *Ecocriticism, 1993-2003*. Eds. Michael Branch and Scott Slovic. Athens: U of Georgia P, 2003. 258-281.

Love, Glen A. *Practical Ecocriticism: Literature, Biology, and the Environment*. Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 2003.

Mackenzie Louisa, and Stephanie Posthumus. “Reading Latour Outside: A Response to the Estok–Robisch Controversy.” *ISLE* 20.4 (2013): 757-77.

Major, William and Andrew McMurry.” Introduction:The Function of Ecocriticism; or, Ecocriticism,What Is It Good For?” *The Journal of Ecocriticism* 4.2 (July 2012): 1-7.

Murphy, Patrick D. *Ecocriticial Explorations In Literary and Cultral Studies: Fences, Boundaries, and Fields.* New York: Lexington Books, 2009.

Oppermann, Serpil. “Ecocriticism’s Phobic Relations with Theory.”*ISLE* (Special Forum on Ecocriticism and Theory) 17.4 (Autumn 2010): 768-770.

---.“Ecocriticism’s Theoretical Discontents.” *Mosaic* 44.2 (June 2011): 153-169.

Phillips, Dana. “Ecocriticism, Literary Theory, and the Truth of Ecology.” *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory andInterpretation* 30.3 (Summer 1999): 577-602.

---. “Ecocriticism, Ecopoetics, and a Creed Outworn.” *New Formations*. (Spec. Issue on Earthographies) 64 (Spring 2008): 37-50.

---. “Ecocriticism’s Hard Problems (Its Ironies Too).”*American Literary History* 25. 2 (Summer 2013): 455-467.

Riffaterre, Michael. “Interpretation and Descriptive Poetry: A Reading of Wordsworth’s ’Yew Trees’.” *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*. Ed. Robert Young.London: Routledge, 1990. 103-32.

Rigby, Kate. “Ecocriticism.” *Introducing Criticism at the 21st Century*. Ed. Julian Wolfreys. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2002.

Serres, Michel. “The Natural Contract.” Trans. Felicia McCarren. *Critical Inquiry* 19.1 (Autumn 1992):1-21.

Slovic, Scott. *Going Away to Think: Engagement, Retreat, and Ecocritical Responsibility.* Reno: U of Nevada P, 2008.

Wilkie, Sabine. “’The Sound of a Robin after a Rain Shower’: The Role of Aesthetic Experience in Dialectical Conceptions of Nature.” *ISLE* 16.1 (2009): 91–117.

责任编辑：王　卓

Pedagogical Literary Environmental Activism and "The Dream of the Rood"

Iris Ralph
English Department, Tamkang University
Danshui (Tamsui) Campus, Taipei County, Taiwan
Email: irisralph@mail.tku.edu.tw

Abstract Ecocritics hired to deliver English language and literature courses in universities and other post-secondary education institutes confront at many junctures in their careers social and political imperatives to teach English language and literature by actively bringing into their teaching and research content that is related to environmental activism, or by committing to what will be called here pedagogical literary environmental activism. In this article, I discuss an ongoing project aimed at contributing to this kind of activism as the latter is reflecting the opening out of English language and literature to concerns that once were considered separate from these two subject areas. The project ecocritically relates work by environmental activists situated outside of English and the humanities to the work of scholars who analyze literary texts and it does so by addressing one of the most pressing issues confronting humans and other planetary species today: the loss of tree species and the ecosystems that they contribute to and depend upon. The literary text that is discussed is the anonymous Old English poem, "The Dream of the Rood" (ca. 700-1000 CE). I argue that it addresses deforestation in the specific ecological and environmental contexts of massive planetary deforestation caused by humans in the current so-called anthropocene era. In making this argument I draw on definitions of ecocriticism by Lawrence Buell, J. Scott Bryson, and Ursula K. Heise. I also make some brief but necessary remarks on ecofeminism and I refer to biosemiotic theory (Wendy Wheeler) and to an argument that Sharon O'Dair makes in defense of reading and teaching texts from "presentist" perspectives.

Key words "The Dream of the Rood"; biosemiotic theory; deforestation; ecocriticism; presentism

"Foot-bound uplooking at this lovely tree."
— Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Book XI

Ecocritics hired to deliver English language and literature courses in universities and other post-secondary education institutes confront at many junctures in their careers social and political imperatives to teach English language and literature by actively bringing into their teaching and research content that is related to environmental activism, or by committing to what will be called here pedagogical literary environmental activism. This kind of activism is widening the disciplinary boundaries of English in many instances and in many other cases it is drawing the disciplinary boundaries in around disciplinary-specific critical and theoretical questions about what is the natural world and about relations between the many species that populate the planet. In this article, I discuss an ongoing project aimed at contributing to this kind of activism as the latter is reflecting the opening out of English language and literature to concerns that once were considered separate from these two subject areas. The project ecocritically relates work by environmental activists situated outside of English and the humanities to the work of scholars who analyze literary texts and it does so by addressing one of the most pressing issues confronting humans and other planetary species today: the loss of tree species and the ecosystems that they contribute to and depend upon. The literary text that is discussed is the anonymous Old English poem, "The Dream of the Rood" (ca. 700-1000 CE). It is well known to scholars according to its identity as one of a small number of records that survive of an early dialect of the English language, spoken in the British isles in the early centuries of the first millennium of the Common Era when northern Germanic pagan culture and Judaic-Christian culture were still discernible as distinct cultures. The poem addresses the death of trees in the specific ecological and environmental contexts of massive ecocidal planetary deforestation caused by humans in the current so-called anthropocene era. This "presentist" ecocritical reading is provoked by reason especially of the representation of the poem's central character of "the Rood," a tree that talks and suffers and a being that tells the poem's human narrator how its life is figuratively and materially tied to the life of another (a human being henceforth worshipped as a god under the religion of Christianity). The larger central figure of the poem of the dismembered body of the Rood materially and figuratively bound to the broken body of a human, a cyborg and trans-species figure, is also one of the most recognizable and iconic figures of western culture and art.

Before launching into an ecocritical analysis of "The Dream of the Rood" and pedagogically, literarily, and actively forging ties between its content and environmental activists' efforts to halt and reverse the ongoing deforestation of the planet, I will briefly provide and comment on several definitions and terms associated with "ecocriticism" that have helped ecocritics to define the discipline of ecocriticism itself. They include foremost the term ecofeminism, a term and concept referring

to a particular critical practice of ecocriticism and indispensable to ecocriticism as a whole. As Greta Gaard, Simon C. Estok, and Serpil Oppermann point out in a recent essay, an introduction to an ecofeminist anthology entitled *International Perspectives in Feminist Ecocriticism*, ecofeminism, which as a term is more or less coterminous with "feminist ecocriticism" and as a practice intersects with or overlaps with feminist ecocriticism, has a substantial history (3). An early key figure in this history particularly as it refers to literary theory and criticism is Annette Kolodny who, in a 1975 study *The Lay of the Land* and a 1984 study *The Land Before Her*, "exposed the ways that the dominant perspective in environmental literary narratives had been that of the white, heterosexual male, who regularly feminized the land and used that feminization as a rationale for subordinating nature" (Gaard, Estok, and Oppermann 4). Slightly later figures include Cheryll Glotfelty, Patrick D. Murphy, Greta Gaard, Josephine Donovan, and Louise H. Westling. These figures are followed or joined by Val Plumwood, Rachel Stein, Karen J. Warren, Catriona Sandilands, and Stacy Alaimo.[1] What these writers emphasize in their ecofeminist projects is that the widespread speciesist dismissal of the belief (and evidence for the belief) that nonhuman species possess language, knowledge, capacity for suffering, and ability to empathize with members of their own species as well as members of other than their own species, is ideologically linked to the subordination and oppression of women and violence against women under patriarchal conceptual frameworks and institutions. It is also linked to longstanding assumptions about the inferiority of women. Their work prompts questions as to why the only or most common representational form given to the deity worshipped under Christianity is that of a male figure (as well as a human figure). Their work also draws attention to the question why, of the three god figures or "consubstantial persons" according to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, this particular figure, Christ, is represented in the most feminized (and corporeal) terms relative to the other two figures of the Trinity. The figure of God "the Father" is a masculinised and paternal figure; the figure of the Holy Ghost commonly is not given a human form at all. Christ is gentle. His body on the Cross is sinuous, and his figure is a bleeding figure. According to the logic of patriarchy, the male figure cannot be sacrificed even symbolically, or it must be feminized (and corporealized) in order for the symbolic sacrifice to be tolerated.

Lawrence Buell, another early scholar (along with Scott Slovic) to establish ecocriticism as a sub-discipline of English (Anglophone) literature especially as this literature was being taught in English departments in universities and other post-secondary education colleges in the United States, did so with the publication of *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (1995). He defines the term and concept "the environmental imagination" as a

kind of thinking, found in texts, in which

> 1. "the nonhuman environment is present not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history"
> 2. "the human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest"
> 3. "human accountability to the environment is part of the text's ethical orientation"
> 4. "some sense of the environment as a process rather than as a constant or a given is at least implicit in the text" (7-8)

Less than a decade later, in *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. and Beyond* (2001), Buell proposed another useful concept and term for the still new discipline of ecocriticism. Here, he referred to "environmental acts," or acts (namely textual acts) that

> 1. connect readers vicariously "with *others' experience, suffering, pain*: *that of nonhumans as well as humans*" [emphasis added]
> 2. connect readers "with places [to which] they have been" and send readers "where they would otherwise never physically go"
> 3. direct thought "toward alternative futures"
> 4. "*affect* one's caring for the physical world; *make it feel more or less precious or endangered or disposable*" [emphasis added] (2)

I note Buell's two definitions because they are well known or quite familiar to ecocritics today who came of age in terms of their academic careers in the 1970s and 1980s when ecocriticism was first emerging as a discipline, and because the definitions help to illustrate that between the time of Buell's first and second books (or time between the first drafts of Buell's first and second books, which were followed by a third book in 2005), a small but significant shift in ecocritical practice had taken place: from the call to ecocritically engage with literary texts and promote literary texts that carry a strong environmental message, to the call to use literary texts as stepping stones to real environments. In another ecocritical study, a collection of essays edited by J. Scott Bryson entitled *Ecopoetry: A Critical Introduction* (2002), published a year after Buell's *Writing for an Endangered World*, Bryson offers a definition of ecocriticism that reinforces Buell's call to reconnect with the worlds outside of texts by underscoring the "interdependent" relationship between those worlds and texts. Emphasizing earth-centered (ecocentric) as opposed to human-

centered (anthropocentric) perspectives, his definition also registered his and others' notice of technology and their criticism of the argument that technology can solve environmental problems that are inadvertently or deliberately caused by humans. Bryson defines ecocritical responses to and engagements with the world by the term "the ecocentric perspective." This perspective

> 1. "recognizes the interdependent nature of the world"
> 2. expresses "an imperative toward humility in relationships with both human and nonhuman nature"
> 3. holds "an intense skepticism concerning hyperrationality…indictment of an over technologized modern world and a warning concerning the very real potential for ecological catastrophe" (5-6)

Bryson's criticism of humans' over-confidence in technology is one that the U.K.-based ecocritic Greg Garrard also comments on in his monograph *Ecocriticism*. Garrard refers to the fundamentalist and ideological faith in technology as the "cornucopian" position (16). This position is often reflected in the arguments of free-market economists and demographers who insist that environmentalists exaggerate environmental problems and engage in "scare" tactics to limit individuals' freedom of choices and actions (Garrard 16). Cornucopians endeavor to persuade people that life on the planet Earth has greatly improved and will continue to do so because "human welfare, as measured by statistics such as life expectancy or local pollutions, has demonstrably increased along with population, economic growth and technological progress" (Garrard16-17). Garrard claims that this argument "suffers from a major inconsistency" in that it does not acknowledge that the increase in benefits to many people on the planet has been achieved not only by "moving damaging industries to developing countries" but also by "the political agitation of the environmental campaigners cornucopians now claim are obstructing economic and technological progress" (18).

As Simon C. Estok points out in an essay titled "Theorizing in a Space of Ambivalent Openness: Ecocriticism and Ecophobia," environmental activism, or what Garrard calls "political agitation of…environmental campaigners," was the main motivation for scholars who were practicing what is now called ecocriticism in the 1970s, but it lost steam in the 1980s at the height of poststructuralism, which divided scholars between those who argued that postructuralism denied material realities and imprisoned academics in language and those who defended poststructuralism as very productive for understanding the ideological formations and constructions that humans relied on to rationalize ethically questionable uses of the planet (Estok 204-

5).[2] A quarter of a decade or so later, environmental activism is again being taken seriously by many English language and literature ecocritics working in universities and post-secondary education institutes, in both their teaching and their research. We are obliged not only to know about the physical environments outside of the literary texts that represent these environments but also to actively defend many of these environments through our own work of pedagogical literary environmental activism. Ursula K. Heise, an ecocritic who has significantly contributed to ecocriticism under the broad interdisciplinary area of the environmental humanities, points to this obligation in her definition of ecocriticism. In a 2006 essay titled "Hitchhiker's Guide to Ecocriticism," she defines ecocriticism, in its origins a sub-disciplinary area of English literary theory and criticism, as "a field of inquiry and praxis" now extending across the humanities and the sciences and held together by "the triple allegiance to the scientific study of nature, the scholarly analysis of cultural representations, *and the political struggle for more sustainable ways of inhabiting the natural world*" (506, emphasis added).

Heise's definition asks a lot from ecocritics who work and live in regions of the world where to be branded as "political," "activist," or "political activist" is to face very real and serious risks including charges of criminality, imprisonment, rape, torture, and execution. The Nigerian environmental activist-writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, "Africa's first environmental martyr" (Nixon 233), was so-branded, and subsequently unfairly tried and executed in 1995 along with eight other Ogoni for his efforts to end both the political oppression of his people under the "tyrannical Nigerian state" (that aimed at "nothing less" than the extermination of the Ogoni people") and the environmental injustices against his people by the Nigerian-based multinational oil companies, principally SPDC (Shell Petroleum Development Company) and Chevron, which had caused "irreparable damage to Ogoni farmland and fishing waters" (Huggan and Tiffin 35). Notwithstanding the aforementioned kinds of risks, as well as the great odds that ecocritics come up against when prevailing upon their governments to implement stronger environmental laws, many ecocritics and the environmental rights organizations to which they belong or are affiliated with continue to engage in "the political struggle for more sustainable ways of inhabiting the world" (Heise 506). Many other ecocritics, including myself, do not face (at least not in the foreseeable future) the aforementioned risks but nonetheless recognize the urgency of the environmental problems for which others are risking their lives. They include such individuals as Jane Goodall, famous for her primatology research on chimpanzees in Tanzania and the founder of a recent "Roots and Shoots" program in Taipei, Taiwan, and a mobile phone recycling program in Melbourne, Australia; grass-roots activist Wangari Maathai', recipient of a Nobel Peace prize for her Green Belt

tree planting movement in Kenya; environmental justice activist and scholar Vandana Shiva, recognized for her prodigious environmental activism, including founding the Navdanya ("Nine Seeds") tree planting movement in India. Ecocritics who teach English literature and language today are finding it actually very difficult to teach any poem or prose writing without commenting on their and others' environmental activism, or without teaching poetry and prose as pedagogical literary environmental activism.

Goodall's "Roots and Shoots program" began in 1991 in Tanzania and now operates in 132 countries. In Taiwan, where it was started up in 2012 as a cooperative project between the Forestry Bureau and the Jane Goodall Institute, it encourages and supports students to plant indigenous plants on school campuses and to learn about nature conservation (I-Chia). It is now being implemented in twenty schools in the north of Taiwan (I-Chia). Goodall also recently started up a program in cooperation with the Melbourne Zoo in Australia to establish a mobile phone recycling program. The program seeks to bring public attention specifically to deforestation and gorilla poaching.[3] A far less famous but no less inspiring tree activist whom I recently became aware of from reports in the local news media is the Taiwanese tree-sitter activist, Han-chiang Pan. Inspired by the American environmental activist Julia Butterfly Hill, who lived in a redwood tree in Humboldt County, California for more than two years between 1997 and 1999 to protest logging of redwood and other old growth forests, Pan set up the Greater Taipei tree protection movement in Taiwan after joining and serving as deputy secretary-general for the Taiwan Environmental Protection Union in 2000 (Tu and Pan). The purpose of Pan's movement is to raise awareness of and save the few trees around the heavily urbanized Greater Taipei area. These trees are minimally or not at all protected under existing legislation. In an interview of Han-chiang Pan by the *Taipei Times* journalists Chu-min Tu and Jason Pan, (Han-chiang) Pan remarked, "I never understood why cutting down trees is only given a minor penalty, while those protecting trees are often found guilty of serious charges" (qtd. in Tu and Pan). Pan's activism is part of and supported by Green Party Taiwan and by many other organizations in Taiwan and mainland China including Greenpeace East Asia. He is far from alone in working to promote greater respect for trees and reverse relatively recent anthropocene-era assumptions about the right of humans as a species to use the planet Earth without giving adequate moral consideration or subject rights to its many other species.

The issue of humans' dismissal, oversight, and ecocide of trees ties to and is reflected by scholarly oversights of the ecocritical significance of the central "tree" figure, "the Rood," in the poem "The Dream of the Rood." More so perhaps than any other poem in the canon of English literature, it speaks for intertwined

relations between humans and trees in its extraordinarily unique representation and recounting of the story of the crucifixion of a major deity in Christian religion. As with the poem's more famous and until recently more frequently anthologized peer *Beowulf*, "The Dream of the Rood" is mostly introduced in anthologies as one of the few surviving written records of the clash between two civilizations and cultures between the fifth and ninth centuries in the British isles. A distant outpost of the Roman Empire up through at least the fifth century, the British isles were conquered and settled by northern European pagan peoples beginning in the fifth century and continuing up through the ninth century. Many converted to Christianity, a religion introduced into England in the first centuries of the first millennium by Roman soldiers, administrators, and missionaries when England (or Brittany as it was called by the Romans) was still a province of the Roman Empire. By the end of the seventh century, most people in England were Christian or were greatly influenced by it, a consequence largely due to the influence of St. Augustine, who in 1597 had been sent as a missionary to England by the papal authorities in Rome. Today "The Dream of the Rood" might be read, as I read it here, not only as a record of this pronouncedly human history, but also as a record of a history that is both human and environmental, especially so because in the poem, the cross (the Rood) is acknowledged as something that once was a tree. It also might be read as an "ecosemiotic" argument for language as an attribute, faculty, or condition that is not unique to humans, an argument that I will tie to the poem according to the central and powerful speaking part given to the Rood and taking up more than two-thirds of the poem, or 43 out of 156 lines (lines 28-121).

The first "first 'person'" narrator, a convert to Christianity, recounts a dream the central human event of which is the crucifixion of Jesus and the central environmental event of which is the felling of a tree for use as a gibbet. As noted by the editors of the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, the narrator's descriptions of the cross in the opening lines of the poem as "the most splendid tree looming aloft" and "That bright tree…covered with gold; gemstones gleamed / fairly fashioned down to its foot," possibly allude to an actual cross that the Roman emperor and Christian convert Constantine (306-337 CE) erected at the site of Jesus' death in the fourth century (Greenblatt 33, 4n). A similar description appears in lines 14-17: "I beheld Glory's trunk…all plated with gold… precious gemstones / had gloriously graced [it]." The first eight lines of the poem are as follows:

> Attend to what I intend to tell you
> a marvelous dream that moved me at night
> when human voices are veiled in sleep.

> In my dream I espied the most splendid tree.
> looming aloft with light all around,
> the most brilliant beam. That bright tree was
> covered with gold; gemstones gleamed
> fairly fashioned down to its foot…

In the early centuries of the Common Era, wooden crosses were a common sight. Known as "the Roman 'felon's gallows,'" they were thus used, as gibbets or gallows for executing criminals (Greenblatt 33, 4n). As the editors of the *Norton Anthology of English Literature* also note, by Constantine's act the original cross, "a symbol of ignominy and shame," was transformed into a "universal icon of Christian art" (33, 4n). Responding to Constantine's act from a contemporary anthropocene-era, ecocritical perspective, one could argue that Constantine's act represents an anthropocentric oversight of the cross as a sacrificed being; responding to the poem from the same perspective, one could argue that the poem functions as the foreshadowing of humans' ecocide of entire populations of trees, including so-called old growth trees or trees more than one hundred years old. This ecocide has been conducted on a scale such that there are few such populations of trees still standing in the world. Even if one includes the vast acreages of commercial plantations of trees that are harvested for their wood — cut down after reaching between ten and twenty years of age — tree coverage of the planet has greatly diminished in the last two hundred years or so. Their attrition might be illustrated by citing a recent study of trees conducted in Jerusalem. Researchers found that only sixty trees more than eighty years old still stand in this ancient city ("The Jerusalem Tree Survey"). Some of these trees are distant descendants of the trees that populated the surrounding region in the first millennium, trees that were perhaps used (because of their strength or height or both) as gibbets for the execution of criminals: the Jerusalem Pine (*Pinus halepensis*), the Mediterranean Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) (also known as the Italian, Tuscan, Graveyard Cypress or Pencil Pine), and the Olive Tree (*Olea europaea*).[4]

The speaking part given to the Rood, the second "first 'person' narrator," also draws attention to the poem as a text carrying extraordinary environmental significance with respect to Buell's definition of "environmental acts." The speaking part connects the reader "with others' experience, suffering, pain: that of nonhumans as well as humans" and it affects "one's caring for the physical world; make[s] it feel more or less precious or endangered or disposable" (*Writing for an Endangered World* 2). The Rood first begins to speak when it appears before the dreamer no longer as a "splendid" figure "decked in treasure" but as nightmarish figure "drenched with streaming blood" (lines 21-23). Addressing the dreamer, it explains:

> That was years ago — I yet remember —
> that I was cut down at the edge of the forest
> torn up from my truck. There powerful enemies took me,
> put me up to make a circus-play to lift up and parade their criminals.
> (lines 28-30)

In a equally affecting speech, the tree exhibits capacity for self-identification with another's suffering–in this case, that of the other-than-nonhuman being executed upon its (the tree's) own body. Here, the Rood uses both the first person singular nominative form ("I") and the first person plural or collective nominative forms "we" and "us" when it recounts the final moments of Jesus' death, feeling itself the suffering of the other-than-nonhuman being that is pinioned on it and being itself grieved by this being's suffering:

> They [soldiers] drove dark nails into me; the dints of those wounds can still be seen,
> open marks of malice; but I did not dare maul any of them in return.
> *They mocked both of us.*
> ...
> *I was badly burdened with grief*
> …
> *We, grieving there for a good while*,
> Stood still in place; the soldiers' voices
> Faded away. Finally men brought axes
> To fell us to earth. (lines 46-8; 59; 71-74; emphasis added)

Speaking nonhuman characters are common in ancient world literatures and ancient oral traditions including Greek and Roman myth. They also are common in Old English literature and Middle English literature; however, by the Middle English period, they mostly appear in beast fables and, as the name of this literary genre reflects, they typically are nonhuman animal characters.[5] Today, talking flora, or the notion that plants possess or use language, is being seriously addressed by all sorts of thinkers. Botanists, biosemioticians, ecologists, and so forth are finding that language is not limited to the speech and writing of humans. For ecocritics, one of the most important studies in this regard is Wendy Wheeler's *The Whole Creature: Complexity, biosemiotics and the evolution of culture*.[6] Wheeler argues that the "words and discourses" of human language, or humans' "articulate discourses" are very powerful

but "only one aspect of...communication amongst other, unconscious and 'gestural,'" kinds of human communication, and all of these aspects of human communication are "semiotic" and biologically based (17), or shared across other biological species. Her implied argument is that because human verbal language is biosemiotic, or inseparable from or constituted by the "biological language of the immune system and its conversations with the nervous system and the brain, and the endocrine system," it crosses over into other-than-human worlds or shares with the sign systems of other species (Wheeler 142). In giving an actual speaking part to the character of the Rood, is the poem's anonymous author remembering and preserving pagan beliefs in and respect for the speech of the nonhuman world including its trees? Also, in creating a dialogue between a human and a tree, is the anonymous author speaking for what in current biosemotic theory is recognized as the fundamental "social nature" of humans according to "an account of evolution that sees [sociality] as a process of symbio-genetic co-operative communication" (Wheeler 13)?

"The Dream of the Rood" can continue to be taught primarily as a text that is a record of one of our own species' unique and irreplaceable histories, identities, and languages (the introduction of Christianity to the British isles, the early English language of Anglo-Saxon preserved in a late tenth-century medieval manuscript found in Vercelli in northern Italy, the collision and reconciliation between Germanic and Christian culture in the British isles in the first millennium). However, it also can be read and taught based on ecocritical perspectives, either "historicist" or "presentist." When we use the latter, we acknowledge, or we should, that the authors of the texts to which we are applying our "presentist" approaches may not have invited or could not possibly have invited some of these approaches. But by reading texts according to problems or conditions that did not exist when the texts first appeared in oral or written form, we are not devaluing these texts. As Sharon O'Dair argues, presentist ecocritical readings are inspired not prohibited by these texts. She makes the case for presentism, specifically the case for teaching Shakespeare ecocritically by engaging with current or "present" environmental issues in an essay titled "Is it Shakespearean Ecocriticism if it isn't Presentist?"[7] Observing that "presentists" often are erroneously "coded as unscholarly," she argues that the most successful presentist scholars, as with their "purist" and "historicist" peers, are deeply committed to their area of disciplinary expertise and are deeply informed by and knowledgeable about it (75). She defines and focuses on one of two kinds of presentism. This presentism, "professional" (as opposed to "popular") presentism, "insists on a methodology by which scholars 'interpret…the past in terms of present concerns,' including race, gender, sexuality, imperialism, the environment, economic development, and so on" (O'Dair 72-3). As she also argues, "for all its hauteur, historicist Shakespeare rides

on the back of presentist Shakespeare" not by reason that scholars are "unavoidably situated in the present" but rather by reason that it is "presentist, not historicist Shakespeare that draws multitudes of undergraduates into these classes that are not required classes, classes that ensure our ability to pursue research, however we define or describe it" (73). As O'Dair also argues, new historicism and cultural materialism studies, which "liberated" the discipline of literature from "supposedly ahistorical (and thus arguably presentist) forms of new criticism," in turn were "subject to critique in the mid-1990s for indulging in" the same kinds of narcissistic scholarship that new historicists and cultural materialists accused the new critics (and before them the formalists) of displaying (74).Thus, she points out that the activity of being "scholarly" does not mean that one must be only "historicist": if one wants to be more "historical," one might want to consider dropping out of literature and pursuing history, the discipline that specifically trains scholars in historical methods (74).

Most ecocritics who engage in presentist approaches to literary texts do so primarily because of the urgency and graveness of environmental problems in the world today not because presentist scholarship is easier than historicist scholarship. Based on my own experience, I would claim that many ecocritics also probably jettison a great amount of their research when preparing it for publication not because it is not scholarly enough but because it is not presentist enough. Ecocritics also recognize the importance of teaching literary texts according to presentist perspectives that connect to local environmental issues. In East Asia, where I live and teach, tree loss is as serious a problem as it is in other parts of the world. Every two seconds today, an area of forest that is equal to the "the size of a football pitch" is lost to logging or destructive practices ("The Problems of Deforestation in Asia"). In China, only 2% of forests "remain intact," and only 0.1 percent of these surviving forests "are properly protected" ("The Problems of Deforestation in Asia"). Most of the intact forests are scattered throughout China: in the southwest (Western Sichuan, the Nu-Salween River valley, around the Myanmar border in Yunnan, and the Yarlung Tsampo River canyon); in the northeast (the Daxing'an mountains in northern Inner Mongolia); and in the northwest (the northernmost area of Xinjiang) ("China's Remaining Forests"). In Hainan and Yunnan, for example, indigenous trees are being logged "to make way for fast-growing eucalyptus plantations, which are used to make paper pulp" ("The Problems of Deforestation in Asia"). The demand in China for palm oil (widely used in cosmetics and as a vegetable oil in food products), soy, and beef also is contributing to the problem of global deforestation. China is now the world's second largest importer of palm oil (a commodity produced in Indonesia and other countries where old growth forests are being replaced with palm oil tree plantations) ("The Problems of Deforestation in Asia"). English literature and language

pedagogues in China and other countries in East Asia can teach texts such as "The Dream of the Rood" using ecocritical presentist perspectives in ways that contribute to other East Asian-based environmentalists' efforts to draw attention to local as well as global problems of deforestation, and they do so by respecting and promoting those texts not by slighting them.

Any literary text potentially can be addressed according to pedagogical literary environmental activism. For the project that I engaged in that included this present writing, I researched a small handful of poems including "Petrified Tree" by the contemporary Australian poet Miriel Lenore, "Native Trees" by the North American poet laureate W. S. Merwin, several lines from Book XI ("Cambridge and the Alps") of *The Prelude* by British Romantic William Wordsworth that memorialize an elm tree, "To Penshurst" from *The Forest* by Ben Jonson, and the anonymous Old English poem "The Dream of the Rood." These explicitly address the subject of trees. Thousands of other poems do not but they demand no less attention from ecocritics who are committed to teaching literature in ways that do not encourage students to passively interpret or accept texts as separate from the regions of the worlds where the texts are studied and read or dislocated from the social and political conditions under which the texts are studied and read. Pedagogical literary environmental activism engages with literature in order to address very real environmental crises that affect us in almost every aspect of our lives today. We may always put our species first but we are now beginning to recognize that when we elevate our species far higher than any other planetary species by completely disregarding and even decimating entire species, including entire tree species, we are ignoring or not recognizing that our relations as a species with other planetary species is informed by ethics. To abandon or dismiss the ethical, affective, and social component of our interactions as a species with other species is to cut off our own limbs and truncate our own selves as a species.

Notes

1. For an excellent annotated bibliography of these writers, see Gaard, Estok, and Oppermann.

2. Two ecocritics who might be used to represent this polarization in ecocriticism in the late decades of the last century are Leonard M. Scigaj and Mark Long, a scholar who is represented in Bryson's anthology. In *Sustainable Poetry: Four American Ecopoets* (1999), inspired by the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Scigaj argues that phenomenological theory is "the most promising philosophical response…to poststructuralism and philosophical dualism" (65) and he applies it to "ecological poets" (Gary Snyder, Wendell Berry, A. R. Ammons, and W. S. Merwin) who emphasize that consciousness is always "embodied" (66) and the "referential origin" of "all language" is "extralinguistic" (38, 36). Mark Long respectfully counters or mitigates this argument in an essay

titled "William Carlos Williams, Ecocriticism, and Contemporary American Nature Poetry."

3. The world's supply of coltan, a mineral used in the manufacture of mobile phones, is located mostly in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Legal and illegal mining of the mineral has decimated gorilla populations and the forests that are these animals' homes (Cauchi).

4. There are far fewer trees over a thousand years old in this region of the world. One incredible survivor from ancient times, the oldest surviving tree the Middle East and in all of Asia, is "the cypress of Abarqu," over 4000 years old.

5. By the fourteenth century, the beast fable had become an undistinguished genre, used mostly to teach Latin to schoolboys. Only a handful of writers including Geoffrey Chaucer (ca. 1343-1400) and Robert Henryson (ca. 1425-ca. 1500) would transform the "simplistic moralizing characteristic" of the fable tradition as it survived in Middle English into a sophisticated form (Greenblatt 500).

6. Critical studies that address trees as they appear in literary representation include, for example, Laura Auricchio, Elizabeth Heckendorn Cook and Giulia Pacini's edited collection, *Invaluable Trees: Cultures of Nature, 1660-1830* (2012); Diana Beresford-Kroeger's study *The Global Forest* (2010); and Robert Pogue Harrison's *Forests: the Shadow of Civilization* (1992). For a review of Auricchio, Cook, and Pacini's edited collection, see Lora E. Geriguis's essay published in *ISLE*.

7. As Simon C. Estok notes, Hugh Grady is one of the "leading voices" in the articulation of presentist concerns (*Ecocriticism and Shakespeare: Reading Ecophobia* 9). See Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes' edited collection entitled *Presentist Shakespeares.*

Works Cited

Auricchio, Laura, Elizabeth Heckendorn Cook, and Giulia Pacini, eds. *Invaluable Trees: Cultures of Nature, 1660-1830*. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2012.

Beresford-Kroeger, Diana. *The Global Forest*. New York: Viking, 2010.

Bryson, J. Scott. "Introduction." *Ecopoetry: A Critical Introduction*. Ed. J. Scott Bryson. Salt Lake City, Utah: The University of Utah P, 2002. 1-13.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1995.

---. *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. and Beyond.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2001.

Cauchi, Stephen. "Phone plan answers call to save gorillas." 22 March 2009. <http://m.theage.com.au/national/phone-plan-answers-call-to-save-gorillas-20090321-951m.html>.

"China's Remaining Forests." *Greenpeace Online*. 2012. Greenpeace East Asia. 15 March 2014. <http://www.greenpeace.org/eastasia/campaigns/forests/problems/china-remaining-forests/>.

"The Dream of the Rood." Anonymous. Trans. Alfred David. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Vol. 1.* 9th edition. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt. New York: W. W. Norton, 2012. 32-6.

Estok, Simon C. *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare: Reading Ecophobia.* New York: Palgrave

Macmillan, 2011.

---."Theorizing in a Space of Ambivalent Openness: Ecocriticism and Ecophobia." *ISLE* 16.2 (2009): 203-225.

Garrard, Greg. *Ecocriticism*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004.

Gaard, Greta, Simon C. Estok, and Serpil Oppermann. "Introduction." *International Perspectives in Feminist Ecocriticism*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013. 1-16.

Grady, Hugh and Terrence Hawkes, eds. *Presentist Shakespeares*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Huggan, Graham and Helen Tiffin. *Postcolonical Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*. London and New York: Routledge, 2010.

Geriguis, Lora E. "Rev. of *Invaluable Trees: Cultures of Nature, 1660-1830*." *ISLE* 20.2 (Spring 2013): 427-8.

Greenblatt, Stephen, ed. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Vol. 1*. 9th edition. New York: W. W. Norton, 2012.

Harrison, Robert Pogue. *Forests: the Shadow of Civilisation*. London: U of Chicago P, 1992.

Heise, Ursula K. "Hitchhiker's Guide to Ecocriticism." *PMLA* 121.2 (2006): 503-16.

I-Chia, Lee. "Forestry Bureau, Goodall start seed planning project." *Taipei* Times12 (Nov. 2012): 2. <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2012/11/12/2003547498>.

"The Jerusalem Tree Survey." <http://www.greenmap.org.il/content?lang=en&pageid=51>.

Lenore, Miriel. "Petrified Tree." *In the Garden*. Kent Town, South Australia: Wakefield Press, 2007. 12.

Long, Mark. "William Carlos Williams, Ecocriticism, and Contemporary American Nature Poetry." *Ecopoetry*. *Ecopoetry : A Critical Introduction*. Ed. J. Scott Bryson Bryson. Utah: The University of Utah P, 2002.58-74.

Merwin, W. S. "Native Trees." *The Rain in the Trees*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000. 6.

Nixon, Rob. "Environmentalism and Postcolonialism." *Postcolonial studies and Beyond*. Eds. Ania Loomba, Suvir Kaul, Matti Bunzl, Antoinette Burton, and Jed Esty. Durham, North Carolina: Duke UP. 233-51.

O'Dair, Sharon. "Is it Shakespearean Ecocriticism if it isn't Presentist?" *Ecocritical Shakespeare*. Eds. Lynne Bruckner and Dan Brayton. Vermont, USA: Ashgate, 2011. 71-85.

"The Problems of Deforestation in Asia." *Greenpeace Online*. 2012. Greenpeace East Asia. 15 March 2014. <http://www.greenpeace.org/eastasia/campaigns/forests/problems/>.

Scigaj, Leonard M. *Sustainable Poetry: Four American Ecopoets*. Lexington, Kentucky: The UP of Kentucky, 1999.

Tu, Chu-Min and Jason Pan. "Activist Calls for Adequate Tree Protection Regulations." *Taipei Times*8 (March 2014): 2.

Wheeler, Wendy. *T*he Whole Creature: Complexity, *Biosemiotics and* the *E*volution of *Culture*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2006.

责任编辑：王　卓

Ethical Literary Criticism: A New Approach to Literature Studies

Yang Gexin
School of Foreign Languages, Huazhong Agriculture University
No.1 Shizishan, Nanhu, Hongshan, Wuhan, Hubei 430070, China
Email: yanggexin9388@163.com

Abstract *Introduction to Ethical Literary Criticism* (2014), the crystal of ten-year painstaking efforts of professor Nie Zhenzhao, the founder of ethical literary criticism in China, offers a new approach to literature studies. The book, composed of two parts and appendixes including glossary and definition of ethical literary criticism, seeks to illuminate the working mechanisms of ethical literary criticism and its terminology and claims that literature takes its origin from ethics, and moral enlightenment or teaching is the primary function of literature. The first part discusses some basic theories and answers the feasibility and necessity of ethical literary criticism as a methodology. The second part demonstrates how ethical literary criticism works with his innovative reading of a series of literary classics. The appendixes are the list of terms and their definition and explanation. A striking merit of this book lies in its close combination of theory studies and critical practices.
Key words *Introduction to Ethical Literary Criticism*; Nie zhenzhao; literary criticism

Introduction to Ethical Literary Criticism (2014), the crystal of ten-year painstaking effort of professor Nie Zhenzhao, the founder of ethical literary criticism in China, offers a new approach to literature studies. The book, composed of two parts and appendixes, namely, basic theories of ethical literary criticism, the application of these theories to text analysis, and the list of its terms and their definitions and explanation, seeks to illuminate the working mechanisms of ethical literary criticism and its terminology such as ethical selection, natural selection, ethical taboo, ethical environment, ethical knot, ethical line, ethical identity, ethical confusion, Sphinx factor, human factor, animal factor, rational will, irrational will, natural will, free will, etc. A striking merit of this book lies in its close combination of theory studies and critical practices which sets a good example for those scholars to avoid getting themselves bogged down in “theoretical complex,” “preordained theme complex,”

and "term complex"(4).

In the first part Nie gives the answer to the question of what ethical literary criticism is. Beginning with the origin of literature Nie claims that literature is "a product of morality," or "a unique ethical expression in a given historical period" and it is "fundamentally an art of ethics," and then defines ethical literary criticism as "a critical theory that approaches literary works on the basis of their ethical essence and educational function from the perspective of ethics "(13). In order to make it clear Nie reads diachronically through the relationship between literature and ethics and compares ethical literary criticism with moral criticism on the differences between ethics in philosophy and that in ethical literary criticism. Unlike moral criticism laying much emphasis on "good or bad evaluation of a given literary work from today's moral principles"(128), ethical literary criticism is to uncover ethical factors that bring literature into existence, and the ethical elements that affect characters and events in literary works, thus examines the ethical values of a given work with reference to a particular historical context or a period of time in which the text under discussion is written. In distinguishing the differences Nie takes Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as an example to make his argument more convincing. According to moral criticism, the influential interpretations are a play about "character tragedy" and that about "Oedipus complex"(130). However, from the perspective of ethical literary criticism you will find that it is "a tragedy about ethical dilemma aroused by the change of Hamlet's ethical identity"(133).

A big breakthrough in the first part is the discussion about natural (biological) selection and ethical section. Nie points out "the biggest problem for mankind to solve is to make a selection between the identities of animals and the identities of human beings"(32). The theory of natural selection by Darwin and the argument of labor assumption by Friedrich Engels are regarded to be forceful in differentiating human beings from animals, while in Nie's view "both Darwin and Engels failed to make a fundamental distinction between man and animals though explained where human beings have come from"(34). In Nie's opinion, natural selection is only the first step to help human being to be who they are in a biological sense. "What truly differentiates human beings from animals is the second step, ethical selection"(35).

To make it more persuasive Nie resorts to the story of Adam and Eve from Bible. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve are human beings purely in biological sense. Despite of their being physically different from such creatures as livestock, insects and wild animals, so far as knowledge is concerned, there are no fundamental differences between them and the rest of other animals. Only after eating the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge has the man acquired knowledge about good and evil, which completes the distinction between man and the rest of other creatures. Viewed from

the perspective of ethical literary criticism, Nie claims that "The consequential ability acquired to tell good from evil from eating the forbidden fruit helps Adam and Eve to complete their ethical selection and become human beings not only in biological sense but also in ethical sense"(35). In other words, the ability to tell good and evil sets up a criterion of identifying human beings from animals. The story of Adam and Eve reveals the vital role played by ethical selection in human beings' liberation from herds of animals as well as in their realization of their difference from animals. "The nature of ethical selection lies in man's decision to be a human or an animal, and the precondition of this decision is the knowledge about man's self or about what distinguishes human beings from animals"(36).

Closely related to the argumentation of ethical selection is Nie's enlightening concept of Sphinx factor. Viewed from the light of ethical selection, the Sphinx Riddle can be interpreted as "an exploration of the mystery of why a man is such a being"(36). When human beings acquired their figures through natural selection, they also found that they still contain many animal features, such as the instinct to survive and to reproduce. The feature of Sphinx's combination of a human head and an animal body has two implied meanings: Firstly, the most important feature of human beings lies in its head, which stands for ration of human beings emerged in the evolutionary process; Secondly, it indicates that human beings evolve from animals and thus still contain some features belonging to animals. Nie names this feature "the Sphinx factor, which is composed of two parts — human factor and animal factor"(38). Human factor equals "ethical consciousness embodied by the human head", which results from human being's natural selection in their evolution from savage to civilization. Oppositely, animal factor is human being's "animal instinct, which is mainly controlled by their primitive desires"(39). To a large degree, the Sphinx factor is a key to understanding literature. Nie states that "the various combinations and alternations of human factor and animal factor generate a variety of ethical events and ethical conflicts in literary works, thus conveying different moral implications"(38). In this light, Sphinx Riddle is an ethical proposition for human beings to ponder over after they finished natural selection thus urges human being to go through another step of evolution — ethical selection.

In the second part Nie demonstrates how ethical literary criticism works with his innovative reading of a series of literary classics. When developing his ethical literary criticism, Nie aimed at "offering a new approach to the study of literature in China ..... [and] has achieved as much he has aspired, which is evidenced in his many new and well-recognized conceptions"(Shang 4). In his reading of *Hamlet*, he uses "incest taboo" and "ethical identity" as key words to uncover the reason of Hamlet's delay to revenge. According to Nie's view, when Hamlet's mother marries Claudius,

his ethical identity undergoes tremendous changes: He becomes Claudius's step son and his prince which makes him hesitate to take revenge, because he has to avoid the ethical taboo of patricide and regicide. So Hamlet's delay in revenge is mainly caused by his identifying the ethical relations between Claudius and him as father and son. The monologue "To be or not to be" therefore is not a question about life and death but about ethical dilemma.

In reading *Oedipus Tyrannos*, Nie challenges the arguments of "predestination" and "Oedipus complex" and then concludes that it's "an ethical tragedy resulted from the conflict between ethical taboo and Oedipus' intensifying ethical consciousness"(177). Sophocles makes a full use of incest story of Oedipus' killing his father and marrying his mother to explicate the tragic process of Oedipus' ethical selection. The reading of *The Old Man and The Sea* is also a fresh note Nie strikes. Without a doubt, the interpretation of Santiago as a symbol of "code hero" is universally accepted, yet Nie introduces the Jungle Law to his analysis of the old man and gains from his failure the insight that human beings should prevent themselves from ethical chaos to "avoid degenerating themselves into animal and shoulder the ethical responsibility to maintain a harmonious relation with nature other than grab rapaciously from it according to Jungle Law"(214). If readers go through all the parts they will find each reading of Nie opens a new horizon and delivers a new perspective to the work under discussion thus furthers the related researches. Even the appendixes are also an integral part of the book and offer readers a quick way to catch all the terms and their usages which are illustrated with brief analyses of characters and plots from literary classics.

Ten years ago Nie initiated ethical literary criticism in literature studies at the 2004 National Conference on Anglo-American Literature in Nanchang with the purpose to reiterate the close relationship between theory and practice as well as to correct the wrong inclination of Chinese scholars to engross so much in the import of western theories as to dumb themselves to voice their own theories and approached in literary criticism. Now with the publication of this book Nie not only establishes his discourses of criticism and systematic theory, but also sets up an example for Chinese scholar to make innovation in literature studies. As Nie notes that "ethical literary criticism is not to give a new name to its western counterpart and the traditional moral criticism, but to established its own terminology and critical mechanism "(10). It does not aim at making an over-simplified judgment about literature by saying it is good or bad, but attempts to unpack the ethical values of literature, and the truth about social life depicted in literature from an ethical perspective. Moral criticism examines and evaluates literature according to today's moral principles therefore often lacks objectivity, while contemporary western ethical criticism, though reviving in 1980s

and then becoming popularity, "fails to construct its systematic critical theory" thus loses its independence and gives way to other critical theory(Yang 24). For example, Wayne Booth's ethical criticism is more narratological than ethical while Martha Nussbaum's is inclined to "explain philosophical problem with analyses of literary works which are more or less marked with moral criticism"(Yang 24). Although Hillis Miller stressed on the change from the impossibility of reading to the ethics of reading, his ethical criticism is strictly a kind of "deconstructive close reading or a principle of reading(Yang 24)". In this sense Nie's ethical literary criticism betters its counterparts and moves the critical scholarship a step forward.

Works Cited

Nie, zhenzhao. *Introduction to Ethical Literary Criticism*. Beijing: Peking UP, 2004.

Shang, Biwu. "Ethical Criticism and Literary Studies: A Book Review Article about Nie's Work." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 15.7 (2013):1-6.<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol15/iss7/19>

Yang, Gexin. "Ethical Turn in Literary Studies and the Revival of American Ethical Criticism." *Foreign Literature Studies* 6(2013):16-25.

责任编辑：尚必武

Poetic Means, Ethical Ends: A Review of *On Alexander Pope's Poetry*

Shang Biwu
School of Foreign Languages, Shanghai Jiao Tong University
800 Dongchuan Road, Shanghai 200240, China
Email: biwushang@gamil.com

Abstract Ma Xian's *On Alexander Pope's Poetry* offers new insights on Pope based on thorough readings of his major works coupled with a new perspective on ethical literary criticism. In her engagement with Pope's poetry, Ma provides a comprehensive, invaluable survey and summary of scholarship, research, and problems that have been tackled by the previous scholars, which serve a strong critical point of departure of their critical work. The book is a wise and hopeful attempt to guide research in directions that will genuinely articulate and advance our knowing of Pope and his poetry. It is no exaggeration to claim that much of Ma's work has opened new areas of analyzing Pope and, in many respects, set the scholarly agenda for the rest of us in the field.
Keywords Alexander Pope; ethical literary criticism; concordia discors

Alexander Pope is considered as one of the most important English poets of the 18th century and has always remained a focus of scholarly investigation in the Western academics. The past decade witnessed an explosion of exploring Pope from multiple perspectives. To name a few, Paul Baines' *The Complete Critical Guide to Alexander Pope* (2001), Tom Jones' *Pope and Berkeley: The Language of Poetry and Philosophy* (2005), Pat Rogers'*The Alexander Pope Encyclopedia*(2004) and *The Cambridge Companion to Alexander Pope* (2007), etc.The most recent addition to that list is Ma Xian's *On Alexander Pope's Poetry* (2013), which is the single most ground-breaking works on Pope by a non-Western scholar. In addition to an insightful introduction and a thought-provoking conclusion, the monograph is composed of six chapters.

The introduction begins with a rather informative sketch of the social and cultural context of Pope's poetic creations.The author observes that tremendous changes underwent in the fields of politics, economy and culture in England. In Ma's opinion, the 18thcentury is typically marked by the enlightenment movement, John Lock's philosophy, and affective ethics by David Hume and Adam Smith, which, according to

Ma, exerts significant impact upon Pope. In Ma's words, "what Pope's poetry project is capitalist ethics and morality" (8), which accounts for her employing the toolkits of ethical literary criticism when doing research on Pope. In her book, Ma attempts to uncover the complexity of ethical thought in Pope's poetry, which is mingled with the poet's meditations on nature, reason, order, and mean.

Chapter one investigates "concordia discors" in "Windsor-Forest". As is known, "Windsor-Forest" is usually considered as a poem on nature by critics. Yet, Ma has penetrated into the subtext of the poem and revealed "order in variety" embedded inside. In Ma's opinion, Pope tries to convey a warning to the human beings through writing a variety of discordant, hybridized and irrational natural phenomena: breaking up the natural laws and order will endanger the harmony of society. Finding the connections between nature and the poet's affections for his nation, nature and history, order and variety, the author spares no pains decoding the symbolic meanings of the "metamorphosis", and those images like Lodona, Diana, Loddon, Nymph, and Thames in particular. Through her close reading of "Windsor-Forest", Ma concludes that Pope fully fleshes out his idea about "concordiadiscors" based upon three levels: natural scenes, mythology, and human history.

Chapter two proceeds to the discussion of harmony and nature in Pope's *Essay on Criticism*. In this chapter, the author mainly addresses the following questions raised in *Essay on Criticism*: what is the relationship between art and nature? How can nature and reason be united? What are the moral principles that a poet should follow? In Ma's opinion, Pope seems to believe that nature is the very criterion to evaluate art. Specifically, art not only imitates nature but also takes its origin from nature. In illuminating the correlations between "Wit" and "Judgment", "Rules" and "Nameless Graces", Pope lays much stress upon the complementarity between art and nature, which co-work to produce "consenting Poeans ring". In the same vein, Pope criticizes "Pride" of the critic on the one hand and calls for "right reason" on the other. To put it another way, what a critic needs to do is to combine "Good-Nature and Good-Sense". The most interesting part of this chapter is Ma's elaboration on the relationship between ethics and aestheticism. Reading Pope's arguments through his mentor and friend William Walsh, Ma examines the moral virtues enchanted by Pope and concludes that in his case, ethics offers a starting point for aesthetic appreciation.

Chapter three turns to the issue of morality and parody in Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*. Written in the form of Mock-Heoric, *The Rape of the Lock* mainly depicts four distinctive images of women: Gnomes, Salamanders, Nymphs, and Sylphs. Taking Gnomes and Sylphs as his foci of attention, Pope portrays the manners and behaviors of the upper class. In her examining Pope's portraitures of these women images, Ma discloses the moral implication conveyed by the poet: people need to

follow principles of "honesty" and "moderation" so as to maintain"good sense" and "order' in social activities. To concretize his ethical claims, Pope parodies the epic in almost every sense of the word, which is exemplified in such aspects as proposition, characterization, war, and gods. From Ma's perspective, the purpose of Pope's employment of parody is to drive his ethical aims home. By criticizing "fraud", "betray", "ravish", and "force", Pope attempts to raise people's awareness of value of "honor" and to maintain social norms based upon"order".

Chapter four centers on Pope's *An Essay on Man*, which is as equally important as his *Essay on Criticism*.This chapter mainly explores Pope's views on the order of the universe. Specially, it takes a close look at the ethical correlations between man and society, man and universe, as well as the happiness and the nature of human beings. In Pope's view, mankind is just one part of the "Vast chain of being". Therefore, it is essential for mankind to recognize their imperfections, which are partly caused by their "pride" and imbalance between "passion" and "reason". To realize a man's self-perfection in moral sense, according to Pope, is to follow the principles of "self-love" and "reason". In Ma's reading, the conflicts between"passion" and "reason" stand for the conflicts between"good" and "evil", which explains the importance for a man to know his position in society and to deal with his relations with others properly. In Pope's case, the means for a man to become an ethical being is to be a part of "chain of love", and to derive "great harmony" from "thinking right, and meaning well". By connecting "chain of being" with "chain of love", Ma grasps the essence of Pope's arguments about the order, reason, and harmony.

Chapter five focuses on Pope's *Moral Essays*, which is chiefly concerned about a fundamental moral principle — "mean." Ma scrutinizes Pope's arguments on "mean" from such aspects as complexity of characters of men, characters of women, fortune, and architecture. Specifically, Pope tries to make a full use of "Ruling Passion" to evaluate a variety of mankind's defects, among which is "Lust of Praise"; when revealing the "contrarieties" and "change" of female characters, he suggests that they should possess enough"Good Sense" and "Good Humor"; criticizing the two negative attitudes towards fortune — "Avarice or Profusion", he intends to ask people to adopt "The due Medium, and the true use of Riches" (194); taking "Palladian style" as an ideal model, he lays much emphasis upon "good taste" for architecture. Combined together, these arguments disclose the fact that Pope is a moralist who has a serious attitudes toward society, life and universe, on which I agree with Ma.

Chapter six makes an in-depth exploration of *The Dunciad*, which is one of the last pieces of work produced by Pope. In this part, Ma tries to reveal the ethical implications of Pope's mockery of Muse and his depiction of Dulness. In describing Dulness, Pope uses a lot of negative words to convey a sense of disorder in society,

such as dotage, idiot, grave, and anarchy. Additionally, Ma connects with Pope's seemingly despair with the ethical environment in which he strides for a world of harmony and order. Ma persuasively concludes that if Pope's idea on harmony and order were not concretized in reality, it has been fully fledged in the artistic world of poetry created by him.

What strikes me most impressively is the critical approach adopted by Ma throughout the book — ethical literarycriticism, which "attempts to read, interpret and analyze literature from an ethical perspectives" (Nie 13). According to Nie Zhenzhao, "literature is a unique expression of ethics and morality within a certain historical period", and "The primary purpose of literature is not to provide entertainment but to offer moral examples for human being to follow, to enrich their material life and spiritual life with moral guidance, and to achieve their self-perfection with moral experience" (13). In "Ethical Criticism and Literary Studies" (2013), I have pointed out that Nie's ethical literary criticism "exemplifiesthe best resource for the study of literature by facilitating new ways of engaging with literature and fostering new understandings of literary history" (Shang 5). Influenced and Trained by Nie, Ma has consistently used this critical approach to shed new light upon Pope's works.

In summary, this excellent book offers new insights on Pope based on thorough readings of his major works coupled with a new perspective on ethical literary criticism. In her engagement with Pope's poetry, Ma provides a comprehensive, invaluable survey and summary of scholarship, research, and problems that have been tackled by the previous scholars, which serve a strong critical point of departure of their critical work. This is a wise and hopeful attempt to guide research in directions that will genuinely articulate and advance our knowing of Pope and his poetry. Much of Ma's work has opened new areas of analysis and, in many respects, set the scholarly agenda for the rest of us in the field. On the whole, I must recommend this scholarly achievement for anyone doing research in 18th century English poetry, Pope in particular.

Works Cited

Ma, Xian. *On Alexander Pope's Poetry*. Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2013.

Nie, Zhenzhao. *An Introduction to Ethical Literary Criticism*. Beijing: Peking UP, 2014.

Shang, Biwu. "Ethical Criticism and Literary Studies."*CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 15.7 (2013):1-6. <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol15/iss7/19>

责任编辑：杨革新

世界文学研究论坛

ISSN 1949-8519
9 771949 851145 02