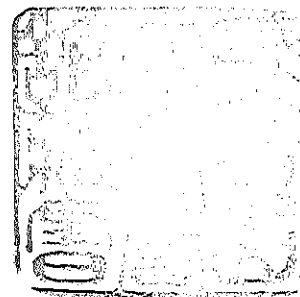


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Postcolonial Ecologies

Literatures of the Environment

Edited by
Elizabeth DeLoughrey and
George B. Handley



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For Edouard Glissant, in memoriam

Introduction

Toward an Aesthetics of the Earth

Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George B. Handley

For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity.

Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 9

If there is anything that radically distinguishes the imagination of anti-imperialism, it is the primacy of the geographical in it. Imperialism after all is an act of geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted, and finally brought under control. For the native, the history of colonial servitude is inaugurated by the loss of locality to the outsider; its geographical identity must thereafter be searched for and somehow restored. . . . Because of the presence of the colonizing outsider, the land is recoverable at first only through imagination.

Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 77

Writing in 1961 at the tail end of the Algerian War of Independence, Martinican author Franz Fanon identified the land as a primary site of postcolonial recuperation, sustainability, and dignity.¹ A generation later, the Palestinian scholar Edward Said argued that the imagination was vital to liberating land from the restrictions of colonialism and, we might add, from neocolonial forms of globalization. Here Said framed postcolonial writing ecologically, positioning it as a process of recovery, identification, and historical mythmaking "enabled by the land" (78). While he

foregrounds the vital role of the literary imagination in the process of decolonization, Said doesn't elaborate on the challenges such imaginative recovery inevitably confronts: How can an author recover land that is already ravaged by the violence of history? How can nature be historicized without obscuring its ontological difference from human time? Moreover, what becomes of this need for a renewed sense of place when colonialism and globalization deny local land sovereignty, and when pollution, desertification, deforestation, climate change, and other forms of global environmental degradation remind us, so forcefully of the ecological interdependencies of any given space?

Said's work helps us to see that to speak of postcolonial ecology is to foreground a spatial imagination made possible by the experience of place. Place has infinite meanings and morphologies: it might be defined geographically, in terms of the expansion of empire; environmentally, in terms of wilderness or urban settings; genealogically, in linking communal ancestry to land; as well as phenomenologically, connecting body to place. In emphasizing the production of history in the making of the global south, postcolonial studies has utilized the concept of place to question temporal narratives of progress imposed by colonial powers. As Guyanese author Wilson Harris has observed, "a civilization which is geared towards progressive realism cannot solve the hazards and dangers and the pollution which it has inflicted upon the globe" within the same epistemological framework ("Fabric" 73). Place encodes time, suggesting that histories embedded in the land and sea have always provided vital and dynamic methodologies for understanding the transformative impact of empire and the anticolonial epistemologies it tries to suppress.

Historicization has been a primary tool of postcolonial studies and, as Said and Fanon imply, it is central to our understanding of land and, by extension, the earth. In order to engage a historical model of ecology and an epistemology of space and time, Harris suggests that we must enter a "profound dialogue with the landscape" (75). This historical dialogue is necessary because the decoupling of nature and history has helped to mystify colonialism's histories of forced migration, suffering, and human violence. Following Harris's model, we foreground the landscape (and seascape) as a participant in this historical process rather than a bystander to human experience. Engaging nonhuman agency creates an additional challenge because nature's own processes of regeneration and change often contribute to the burial of postcolonial histories.² A postcolonial ecocriticism, then, must be more than a simple extension of postcolonial methodologies into the realm of the human material world; it must reckon with the ways in which ecology does not always work within the frames of human time and political interest. As such, our definition of postcolonial ecology reflects a complex epistemology that recuperates the alterity of both history and nature, without reducing either to the other.³

I. COLONIALISM AND THE "OFFENCE AGAINST THE EARTH"

Although it has been suggested that some postcolonial writers have not been attentive to nature, there are many examples from the mid-twentieth century of authors who were grappling with the relationship between landscape and colonization. Nearly a half a century before Said's observations about the geographical imperative of postcolonial literature, the Guyanese author and decolonization activist Martin Carter published in 1951 a poem about "Listening to the Land," which stressed the importance of paying heed to the histories of colonial violence embedded in the earth. The narrator repeatedly describes how he "bent" and "kneeled" down, in anticipation of listening, but confesses that "all (he) heard was tongueless whispering/as if some buried slave wanted to speak again" (89). Written in an era of decolonization and postcolonial nationalism, Carter's poem suggests both the *recuperative* role of place, defining land via relations of property rather than as "earth" or "landscape," while also demonstrating the impossibility of fully *translating* place because of the historical violence that produces "tongueless whispering." He foregrounds the discursive paradox of recovering a "tongueless" land and history, highlighting the poetic tensions of postcolonial ecology. We might say, then, that the imagination Said describes as necessary must be a poetic, world-making one, in which the human relationship to the more-than-human world and to a buried past must be reached for and conceived even if this nationalist recovery risks being romantic (Said *Culture and Imperialism* 78). Carter's postcolonial ecology, however, is hardly a bucolic pastoral, which would pose a landscape outside of the relations of property, or would idealize the relations of human labor and land.⁴ Harris has observed that the Caribbean is "a landscape saturated by traumas of conquest" (*Whole Armour* 8). Instead of a pastoral or wilderness narrative, we see in Carter's poem that the land is a witness to the ongoing legacy of the plantocracy, a history that is vital to understanding modernity and yet seems without voice. Has the slave lost his or her tongue due to the alienation of the Middle Passage or by the violence of a master? Is the whispering "tongueless" because the relationship between human and land, or poet and place, lacks a common language? The poem's final line, that the "buried slave wanted to speak again," stimulates the reader's desire to connect the past and present through a natural (but not ahistorical) representation of land even while acknowledging the discursive limitations of that desire.

In his 1950 New World epic of a postcolonial imaginary in *Canto General*, Pablo Neruda writes of a tree of life that is "nutrido por muertos desnudos, / muertos azotados y heridos [nourished by naked corpses, / corpses scourged and wounded]" (478/71). Unlike Genesis, the tree's life stands in dialectical relation to the colonial destruction that has preceded it:

sus raíces comieron sangre
y extrajo lágrimas del suelo:
las elevó por sus ramajes,
las repartió en su arquitectura. (478)

its roots consumed blood,
and it extracted tears from the soil:
raised them through its branches,
dispersed them in its architecture. (72)

Neruda's poem, like Carter's and many other postcolonial works, foregrounds an ancestral relationship to place and the challenges posed by its discursive recuperation. This representation of place is symbolized by a nature nurtured by the violated bodies of colonial history, a literal engagement with what Harris refers to as "the living fossil of buried cultures" (*Explorations* 90). This is a genealogical claim, however, that has no illusions that ancestry provides an unambiguous and exclusive claim to land as territory. Instead, it admits that what is buried can never be recovered, thereby humanizing the landscape through death while also sacralizing it for the secular historical project of decolonization.

In the same era, Nigerian author Chinua Achebe emphasized the radical ontological shift in understanding place that occurred through the process of European colonialism and Christian missionization in his well-known 1958 novel *Things Fall Apart*. Although this is rarely if ever cited as an ecocritical text, Achebe's inscription of the transition from Igbo to British colonial rule in West Africa anticipates Said's description of the need for the imagination in responding to "the loss of locality to the outsider." In describing the community's burial ground, Achebe's narrator comments, "the land of the living was not far removed from the domain of the ancestors. There was coming and going between them. . . . A man's life from birth to death was a series of transition rites which brought him nearer and nearer to his ancestors" (122). This dynamic model of land extends genealogically from the past to the future; women hoping to become pregnant visit an "ancient silk-cotton tree which was sacred" that holds the "spirits of good children . . . waiting to be born" (46). Achebe's representation of the ontology of land is not an idealization of tradition; the novel repeatedly demonstrates how patriarchal privilege and forms of exclusion are also locally embedded and naturalized. Thus attachment to the land or localism itself is not an inherently ethical or ecological position.⁵ Nevertheless, we might describe his novel as one that evidences how deeply the community's language and being are constituted by the land and how that dynamic relationship shifts radically according to the social, cultural, and linguistic force of empire. What Édouard Glissant has called the "language of landscape" (*Caribbean Discourse* 146) is manifested by the paradox of Achebe writing in English to describe the way indigenous language is produced through the lived experience of ancestral land.

When one character asks, "does the white man understand our custom about land?" the other retorts, "How can he when he does not even speak our tongue?" (176). In the Caribbean context of transplantation and diaspora, Glissant has argued that "the individual, the community, the land are inextricable in the process of creating history. Landscape is a character in this process. Its deepest meanings need to be understood" (*Caribbean Discourse* 105–6). The postcolonial ecology of *Things Fall Apart* is evident in the way that language develops in a long historical relationship to a particular environment and culture and becomes integral to the process of recuperation, even if this recuperation is necessarily limited.

Over the course of Achebe's novel, the villagers move from an ancestral conception of belonging to the land embedded in language and cosmology toward an abstract and delocalized Christian god imported by colonialism. This is reminiscent of what environmental historian Donald Worster describes as a Christian imperialism that "stripped from nature all spiritual qualities and rigidly distanced it from human feelings—promoting a view of creation as a mechanical contrivance" ("Nature's Economy" 29). Achebe's villagers are forced into a new ontological relation in which "the justice of the earth goddess" (125) and other deities of the natural world are dismissed by Christian missionaries as "gods of deceit" to be replaced by "only one true God" who controls "the earth, the sky, you and me and all of us" (146). Certainly there are signals in the novel that suggest that the protagonist Okonkwo has betrayed the community's ethic of natural justice before the arrival of the missionaries. But the final violent break from a natural justice embedded in ancestral landscape to the imposition of a foreign colonial court is symbolized in the novel's final devastating scene, in which Okonkwo hangs himself, an act understood by Igbo to be "an offense against the Earth" (207). In response, the colonial commissioner orders all of the witnesses to be brought to colonial court (208) and imagines documenting Okonkwo's death as "new material . . . not a whole chapter but a reasonable paragraph" for his book, chillingly titled *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger* (209). Achebe's bleak vision of the possibilities of recuperation is evident in the novel's narrative shift in the final paragraph to a colonial perspective. This self-reflexive commentary about the limitations of an English-language recuperation of the precolonial past likens the distanced colonial view of Igbo ecology in *The Pacification* to the novel *Things Fall Apart*. Like Carter, Achebe foregrounds the difficulties in recovering subaltern oral histories in the realist mode of written English, additionally highlighting how language embeds the legal structures of colonial dispossession. By extension, Achebe's novel calls attention to the failures of mimesis—the direct apprehension and imitation of the physical world. Instead mimesis becomes a postcolonial poetics, an activity of self-reflexive and self-conscious world making.⁶

The impossibility of recuperating nature and the precolonial past—two forms of alterity that in these examples are analogous—reminds us of

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's gloss on deconstruction as critiquing that which we cannot not want ("Woman" 45). Building upon Spivak, Donna Haraway has described the concept of "nature" as "that which we cannot not desire. Excruciatingly conscious of nature's discursive constitution as 'other' in the histories of colonialism, racism, sexism and class domination of many kinds, we nonetheless find . . . something we cannot do without, but can never 'have'" ("Promises of Monsters" 296). Haraway insists that we "find another relationship to nature besides reification and possession" (296), which is a way of saying that we need to establish another relationship to alterity itself. Demanding an imagination of a totality and an otherness that nevertheless cannot be possessed marks the central common ground between ecocritical and postcolonial critique.⁷

In beginning with these literary examples, written in a mid-century era of intense global decolonization, we hope to foreground the ways in which material, discursive, and ontological relations with the land are mutually constitutive. These texts also suggest that since the environment stands as a nonhuman witness to the violent process of colonialism, an engagement with alterity is a constitutive aspect of postcoloniality. Addressing historical and racial violence is integral to understanding literary representations of geography, particularly because the land is "saturated by traumas of conquest" (Harris *ibid*). Glissant argues that this is why a postcolonial ecology cannot be interpolated as a pastoral but rather an untranslatable historical record of a "fight without witnesses" (*Discours antillais* 177). Since it is the nature, so to speak, of colonial powers to suppress the history of their own violence, the land and even the ocean become all the more crucial as recuperative sites of postcolonial historiography. Nature, in Beverly Ormerod's analysis, is the past's "only true guardian . . . history waits, latent, in Caribbean nature, which is filled with sorrowful reminders of slavery and repression" (*French West Indian* 170), a point invoked by poets like Derek Walcott who turn to the sea to recover the suppressed bodies of colonial violence. This makes the process of conservation and sustainability all the more ontologically powerful, because a gesture of destruction against land and sea, then, simultaneously becomes an act of violence against collective memory.⁸

In the opening of this collection, we've drawn from earlier works in postcolonial literature to suggest that the global south has contributed to an ecological imaginary and discourse of activism and sovereignty that is not derivative of the Euro-American environmentalism of the 1960s and '70s. Most of the recent scholarship theorizing the development of ecocriticism and environmentalism has positioned Europe and the United States as the epistemological centers, while the rest of the world has, for material or ideological reasons, been thought to have arrived belatedly, or with less focused commitment, to an ecologically sustainable future. Certainly there are important distinctions, for example, between what Lawrence Buell has famously called the "environmental imagination" as it has been produced by privileged subjects in the northern hemisphere, and the

"environmentalism of the poor" (Guha and Martinez-Alier *Varieties of Environmentalism*) associated with the global south.⁹ These distinctions have been articulated in recent years during a remarkable turn in which ecocritical methodologies have been adapted for rethinking postcolonial literature as well as a recognition on the part of mainstream American ecocritics of the need to engage in more globally nuanced terms. Our interest here is to briefly outline how these epistemological differences may have been produced and to advance the conversation by highlighting where these disparate fields have shared concerns and goals.

While we recognize the differences between the varied forms of ecocriticism and postcolonialism, we are concerned that the production of a discourse of irreconcilable differences between these fields serves to relegate postcolonial literatures and methodologies to the footnotes of mainstream ecocritical study and tends to homogenize the complexity of ecocritical work. In fact, adopting one genealogy of ecocriticism as the normative one that is blind to race, class, gender, and colonial inequities tends to marginalize the long history of precisely this critique articulated by indigenous, ecofeminist, ecosocialist, and environmental justice scholars and activists, who have theorized the relations of power, subjectivity, and place for many decades. As Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin point out in their recent book *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*, "[t]he easy assertion, for instance, that the postcolonial field is inherently anthropocentric (human-centred) overlooks a long history of ecological concern in postcolonial criticism; while any number of examples could be mustered to fend off the counter-charge that eco/environmental studies privileges a white male western subject, or that it fails to factor cultural difference into supposedly universal environmental and bioethical debates" (3). Our hope in *Postcolonial Ecologies* is to outline a broader, more complex genealogy for thinking through our ecocritical futures and a turn to a more nuanced discourse about the representation of alterity, a theorization of difference that postcolonialists, ecofeminists, and environmental activists have long considered in terms of our normative representations of nature, human and otherwise.¹⁰

II. ENVIRONMENT AND EMPIRE: UNCOVERING ROOTS

It has been over a decade since the *New York Times* declared the "Greening of the Humanities," a remarkable shift that highlights the role of literature in mediating environmental knowledge and in articulating a poetics of place in the alienating wake of globalization. This change has revitalized the humanities, offering a methodology for thinking through the complexity of environmental histories and imagining new directions for our ecological futures. While this ecocritical turn in literary studies has produced an innovative body of scholarship, including an international conference association and multiple journals,¹¹ scholars have lamented that the dominant discourse of the field continues to be marked by an

Anglo-American and a national framework rather than engaging broader contexts. In fact, in commenting on this celebratory *New York Times* article, Rob Nixon points out that all of the two dozen or so "green" authors cited are American. He finds this to be a peculiar emphasis since it was written precisely at the moment when the international community was mobilizing to prevent Ken Saro-Wiwa and his Nigerian colleagues from being sentenced to death for their resistance to what the Ogoni leader called "ecological genocide" perpetuated by oil companies in the Niger Delta.¹²

Paradoxically, as American ecocriticism expands and gains increasing relevance in the context of our global environmental crisis, its major narrative threads are producing a more narrow and nationalist genealogy of origin. This general lack of engagement with postcolonial methodologies and contexts is peculiar because an ecological approach to literature by definition is not restricted by geopolitical borders, language, and nationality. By insisting on the vitality and even necessity of a postcolonial ecocritical frame, our collection foregrounds literature's engagement with the globalization of the environment, a process that has been formulated by a long and complex history of empire. Colonialism must not be understood as a history relegated to the periphery of Europe and the United States, but rather a process that also occurred within and that radically changed the metropolitan center. The ongoing refusal to see the interdependent histories of metropole and colony implicitly relegates postcolonial ecocriticism to the margins of Euro-American discourse.¹³ Similarly, to deny colonial and environmental histories as mutually constitutive misses the central role the exploitation of natural resources plays in any imperial project. We see Worster's basic argument, for example, that rivers tell us much about "the flow of power in history" as one model of postcolonial ecology that brings these relationships back into focus (*Rivers of Empire* 17). In sum, our collection begins with the premise that postcoloniality has not come belatedly to the discourse of ecology because of the inextricability of environmental history and empire building.

There is ample scholarship demonstrating that Western discourses of nature and the environment have been shaped by the history of empire. Generally speaking, historians are more conversant with these global connections than literary scholars. The eighteenth-century European mania for plant collecting, particularly New World flora, enabled the production of Carolus Linnaeus's binomial plant taxonomies and developed into a hierarchy of species backed by an emergent Enlightenment science. Mary Louise Pratt observes that "Linnaeus' system alone launched a European knowledge-building enterprise of unprecedented scale and appeal" (25). This represented a radical new mapping of global space through one common language (Latin), bringing into being a new European "planetary consciousness" (9). This eighteenth-century homogenization of the natural world has been addressed in Jamaica Kincaid's wry gloss:

These countries in Europe shared the same botany, more or less, but each place called the same thing by a different name; and these people who make up Europe were (are) so contentious anyway, they would not have agreed to one system for all the plants they had in common, but these new plants from far away, like the people far away, had no history, no names, and so they could be given names. And who was there to dispute Linnaeus, even if there was someone who would listen? (*My Garden (Book)*: 122)

Our entire planet has been biotically reconfigured due to this long history of what Richard Grove calls "green imperialism," a process that foregrounds the etymological definition of diaspora as the spreading of seeds, and destabilizes our association of flora and fauna with a natural (read: autochthonous) landscape. The binomial taxonomy of all the flora and fauna of the globe, an empirical and imperial project, has been likened by Vandana Shiva to the current practice of patenting life forms and appropriating indigenous knowledge for transnational corporations, something that produces a "monoculture of knowledge" (*Biopiracy* 9). Having created a taxonomy for that which is visible, science in the service of transnational capitalism now charts and patents a microscopic map of life. Shiva observes, "capital now has to look for new colonies to invade and exploit for its further accumulation. These new colonies are, in my view, the interior spaces of the bodies of women, plants, and animals" (*Biopiracy* 5).

Of course, biopiracy is a material as much as a discursive practice; Michel Foucault reminds us that "the theory of natural history cannot be disassociated from that of language" (*Order of Things* 157). Although Foucault overlooked the structures of colonialism, Kincaid does not. She observes, "this naming of things is so crucial to possession—a spiritual padlock with the key thrown irretrievably away—that it is a murder, an erasing" (*My Garden (Book)*: 122). This legacy of capturing and renaming nature leaves the postcolonial writer in the position of having to renegotiate the terms of taxonomy, struggling to articulate new relationships and new meanings in the tired language of empire. This process tends to render language more ironic, self-reflexive, and unstable, as we've seen in our previous literary examples. This self-conscious process of renaming and revisioning is a subversion of the colonial language of taxonomy, discipline and control, and a key element in postcolonial literary production.¹⁴

Just as the British Museum and Kew Gardens were constituted by the flora, fauna, and human knowledges extracted from the colonies, the discourse of natural history was articulated in terms of biotic nations, kingdoms, and colonists, reflecting the "language of expansionist power" (Browne "Science" 468).¹⁵ Paradoxically, the construction of a taxonomy produces homogenization and difference. As Foucault observes, "for taxonomy to be possible . . . nature must be truly continuous, and in all its plenitude. Where language required the similarity of impressions, classification requires the principle of the smallest possible difference

between things" (*Order* 159). Thus these new taxonomies of flora and fauna instituted a hierarchy of human species through this episteme of difference, contributing to biologically determinist discourses of race, gender, and nature. Although European Enlightenment thought was diverse and often contradictory, to different extents philosophers such as Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, David Hulme, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Immanuel Kant all articulated some form of climatic determinism, asserting that the peoples of the tropics were unable to attain the moral and cultural heights of northern Europe and to produce history.¹⁶ As such, the determinist discourse of colonial (tropical) place was often used to justify the practice of slavery and the denial of citizenship and subjectivity to non-Europeans. This also led to the colonial classification of indigenous peoples as fauna rather than as human beings, notably in Australia until as late as 1967.¹⁷

Since the material resources of the colonies were vital to the metropolitan centers of empire, some of the earliest conservation practices were established outside of Europe. As Grove has shown, tropical island colonies were crucial laboratories of empire, as garden incubators for the transplantation of peoples and plants and for generating the European revival of Edenic discourse. Eighteenth-century environmentalism derived from colonial island contexts in which limited space and an ideological model of utopia contributed to new models of conservation (*Green Imperialism* 229–30). By the mid-eighteenth century, tropical island colonies were at the vanguard of establishing forest reserves and environmental legislation (266).¹⁸ These forest reserves, like those established in New England and South Africa, did not necessarily represent "an atavistic interest in preserving the 'natural' or the ancient and primeval" but rather a "more manipulative and power-conscious interest in constructing a new landscape by planting trees or, conceivably, marking out reservations" (280).

In sum, European Enlightenment knowledge, natural history, conservation policy, and the language of nature—the very systems of logic that we draw from today to speak of conservation and sustainability—are derived from a long history of the colonial exploitation of nature, as well as the assimilation of natural epistemologies from all over the globe. As such, this in turn diversifies our understandings of the genealogy of European knowledge as it expanded, adapted, borrowed, and outright stole from distant cultural and material contexts. This complex history plays an integral part in our current models of ecological sustainability. As Grove's history of ecological thought demonstrates, the environmental sciences that tell us that we can no longer afford to ignore our human impact on the globe are an ironic by-product of a global consciousness derived from a history of imperial exploitation of nature. In fact, if we turn to this deeper history, we see how colonial violence was mystified by invoking a model of conserving an untouched (and often feminized) Edenic landscape. Thus the nostalgia for a lost Eden, an idealized space outside of human time, is

closely connected to displacing the ways that colonial violence disrupted human ecologies.¹⁹

To speak of postcolonial ecology is to foreground the historical process of nature's mobility, transplantation, and consumption. The new material resources of the colonies literally changed human bodies and national cultures as New World foods such as tomatoes, potatoes, maize, chili peppers, peanuts, cassava, and pineapple were transplanted, naturalized, and creolized all over the globe, while Asian and African crops such as sugarcane and coffee became integral to the plantocracies of the Americas. The early colonial transplantation of American food crops, what Alfred Crosby terms the "Columbian exchange," doubled the populations of parts of Africa, Asia, and Europe, directly contributing to their industrialization and expansion. In some colonial contexts, these food introductions also catalyzed the rise of monocrop agriculture, susceptibility to drought, and pestilence; dependence upon singular staples triggered severe famines in the British colonies of Ireland and India.²⁰ This rapid global agricultural change was an important antecedent to the twentieth-century "green revolution" in which the introduction of genetically modified seeds, agrichemicals, and a fossil-fuel based monoculture was expected to eliminate starvation in developing nations, but in many cases contributed to malnutrition, famine, social instability, and large-scale ecological problems.²¹ Tracing out these histories of nature is vital to understanding our current era in which a "new green revolution" is radically changing postcolonial ecologies, particularly evident in the recent "African land grab" by countries seeking to fuel the expanding ethanol industry and to replace territory that may be lost through global climate change.²²

We are all products of this long process of "ecological imperialism," a term Crosby uses to describe the "portmanteau biota" of plants, animals, and pathogens that enabled the expansion of Europe and radically transformed the globe. Although Crosby tends to emphasize European male agency over other subjects of history and almost reiterates the biological determinism of the colonial past, his scholarship is also a useful reminder of the ways in which biotic agents were participants in human history and the radical ecological changes wrought by empire.²³ His work and that of many other environmental historians has helped to underscore the biological dimensions of human history that both shape and are shaped by human agency, thus helping us to come to understand human choices in broader and more ecological contexts. Edward Said has drawn from Crosby's discussion of ecological imperialism to consider how this history might be adopted by the anticolonial poet. He concludes that "a changed ecology also introduced a changed political system that, in the eyes of the nationalist poet or visionary, seemed retrospectively to have alienated the people from their authentic traditions" (Said 77). As such, we see that biotic and political ecologies are materially and imaginatively intertwined, and that one vital aspect of postcolonial ecology is to reimagine this displacement between people and place through poetics.

III. GENEALOGIES OF ECOCRITICISM: RHIZOMATIC ROOTS

Given the ample body of scholarship on nature and empire, we must ask, why are environmental concerns often understood as separate from postcolonial ones? Why are they perceived to have emerged as parallel rather than as interrelated disciplines? Part of the answer lies in the recent intellectual genealogies of ecocriticism, which configure postcolonial concerns and methodologies to be secondary developments, a "second wave" to an unmarked American origin.²⁴ Yet as we have demonstrated, there is an ample body of work in both the history of empire as well as postcolonial ecocriticism to suggest that there is no lack of available literature and scholarship.²⁵ So why doesn't the history of empire or postcolonial studies appear in dominant discourses of ecocriticism? While ecocritical genealogies have different forms and may be written along the lines of chronology, thematics, epistemologies, and pedagogies, we find that most are organized around American (and to a lesser extent English) texts.²⁶ The *Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism's* 2005 entry on "Ecocriticism," for instance, focuses almost entirely on American authors, drawing upon the important work of Aldo Leopold, Cheryll Glotfelty, and Lawrence Buell. Although the entry is written as a chronology, scholars who question the normative ecological subject and his/her relation to place (including nation) appear in the tail end of the essay, despite the fact that these publications predate the other critics. Thus the work of ecofeminists who have theorized the naturalizing discourse of gender and empire such as Annette Kolodny, Carolyn Merchant, and Val Plumwood appear in the conclusion, while the scholarship of Donna Haraway, which has consistently engaged postcolonial studies, does not appear at all.²⁷ The author acknowledges that "ecocritical practice appears to be dominated by American critics and an ever-solidifying American ecocritical canon," yet postcolonial studies is mentioned only once in the final paragraph as a "new area" without any references (Milne n.p.). Ursula Heise's important essay, "The Hitchhiker's Guide to Ecocriticism," published a year later, reiterates a similar genealogy and while providing an engaging and nuanced intellectual profile of the field and calling attention to the process by which these genealogies are written, generally sidesteps ecofeminist and postcolonial approaches in theorizing the human relationship to place.²⁸ At American ecocritical conferences and in recent publications, we see an increasing tendency to naturalize a dominant American origin for ecological thought, and by extension a displacement of postcolonial, feminist, ecosocialist, and environmental justice concerns as outside the primary body of ecocritical work, even in the cases where they predate later, more mainstream forms. As we know, the discourse of nature is a universalizing one, and thus ecocriticism is particularly vulnerable to naturalizing dominant forms of environmental discourse, particularly those that do not fundamentally engage with questions of difference, power, and privilege.²⁹

Part of this intellectual streamlining derives from the conflation of environmental texts, such as Rachel Carson's 1962 *Silent Spring*, with ecocriticism, the literary methodology that developed in the 1990s. Most introductions to the field, like Greg Garrard's important volume *Ecocriticism*, attribute modern environmentalism to Carson's influential book (1). While Garrard's work is helpfully organized around environmental tropes, a methodology that presses the linearity of strict chronologies, American ecocriticism in general is backdated and often streamlined by many scholars in ways that obfuscate its complex, multidisciplinary, and even contradictory strands. Moreover, the single genealogical emphasis on Carson overlooks other foundational sources, such as the ecosocialist Murray Bookchin's previously published book about pesticides entitled *Our Synthetic Environment*, as well as the environmental activism coordinated by Puerto Rican poet Juan Antonio Corretjer against pesticide use by American agribusiness, discussed by Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert later in this volume. We recognize the need for field synopses and do not advocate drawing a hard line between environmental and ecocritical methodologies because they have developed in conversation and reflect intrinsically hybrid discourses.³⁰ Nor do we question the important legacy of Rachel Carson. However, we do want to call attention to an implicit production of a singular American ecocritical genealogy that, like all histories, might be reconfigured in broader, more rhizomatic, terms. A founding narrative of modern environmental ethics could just as well include Mahatma Gandhi, whose early to mid-twentieth-century publications about the necessities of local sovereignty, limited consumption, equality for all sentient life, compassion, ecological sustainability, and satyagraha were an inspiration to many, including the 1970s Chipko movement against logging in the Himalayas (Shiva *Staying Alive* 69–70). Although Gandhi's philosophy represented a turn to the self-sufficient village rather than the wilderness (Arnold and Guha 19), his work was extremely influential upon the Norwegian founder of deep ecology, Arne Naess—who wrote his PhD dissertation on Gandhism—and inspired many other theorists of environmental ethics (Guha *Environmentalism* 8, 19–24).³¹ In fact if we are taking on a larger context of environmental thought we might also consider the important developments of ecotheology, which has been centrally concerned with the ethical and ecological implications of reading, interpreting, and transmitting foundational stories. Although ecotheology is a formal and institutional development since the 1970s that includes concerns raised recently by world religious leaders, it draws its inspiration from ancient thinkers, indigenous and non-Western traditions, and from foundational sacred texts of the major world religions.³²

If we continue to expand our definitions and genealogies of ecocriticism, we see that there are other philosophical models that are closely aligned with the methods and concerns of postcolonial theory, a body of work that is complex in itself. For instance, most genealogies of ecocriticism neglect

the long history of socialist ecology, which draws from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel's nineteenth-century theorization of the political economy under capitalism and its exploitation of nature. The Frankfurt School's critique of the ideology of Enlightenment reason and domination over nature also has close theoretical ties to postcolonial thought.³³ In shifting from the Marxist focus on class to a framework that examined nature as an internal and external figure of conflict for the modern subject, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's 1945 *Dialectic of Enlightenment* theorized how the domination of nature translates into the domination of other humans. Writing amidst the horrific state violence of World War II, their work was crucial to outlining the relationship between concepts of alterity and power. Their discussion of the ideological production of dominance over the other and their destabilization of the Enlightenment discourse of reason have been tremendously influential upon the generations of Marxist, postcolonial, and/or ecofeminist scholars to follow. Our intention here is not to replace one singular founding figure or methodology with another, but rather to broaden the historical, theoretical, and geographic scope of contributions to ecocritical thought. We wish to foreground the ways in which, to borrow from Said, ecocritical discourses are "traveling theories" rather than national products, and are irreducible to one geographical, national, or methodological origin.

In short, critiques of capitalism, technology, neoliberalism, modernization, biopiracy, and empire demonstrate that environmental concerns are not the exclusive prerogative of the privileged north. In fact, given the history of international models of development that restructure national space, postcolonial subjects have not had the luxury of being oblivious to environmental pressures. Modernization schemes enforced by the IMF and World Bank such as the construction of hydroelectric dams, the use of agricultural fertilizers and patented seeds, as well as other resource extraction initiatives like deforestation, mining, and the liberalization of internal markets have all radically altered postcolonial environments. The concept of the environment, as David Harvey notes, is an impossibly large term to define and varies radically between peoples and places; therefore we must not expect that dominant American articulations of ecocriticism are immediately conversant with postcolonial ones. Ecology as a concept always demands multiple acts of translation, from nature to human, and from human to human. While we want to foreground the fact that postcolonial environments are already internally complex and demand a necessarily flexible approach, generally speaking we could argue that postcolonial ecology's concerns are differently inflected than mainstream American environmentalism and tend to emphasize access to arable land and potable water, public health, the threats of militarism and national debt, and reflect social planning for cultural, economic, and national sovereignty.³⁴ Postcolonial and decolonizing nations have debated these particular issues for decades in ways that firmly place the human in nature, a significant difference from dominant Anglo-American environmental trajectories. Moreover, postcolonial ecology has presented some of the most important

critiques of American empire, positioning, as do Huggan and Tiffin, the U.S. as "a country that has actively and aggressively contributed to what many now acknowledge to be the chronic endangerment of the contemporary late-capitalist world" (*Postcolonial Ecocriticism* 1).

Although rarely commented on by American ecocritics, the "chronic endangerment" posed by the United States to other countries derives from excessive consumption, pollution, and waste as well as neocolonial forms of globalization, militarism, and development. Since the 1960s, ecological modernization has been a hotly debated issue as the roles of newly formed state agencies, NGOs, the World Bank, and international organizations were brought into a dialogue over this emergent concept of "human ecology."³⁵ Faced with progressive models of development from the colonial metropole, many emergent nations retrospectively turned to precolonial ecological models to help chart their futures. In fact, the impulse of postcolonial nationalism to recuperate precolonial (and often precapitalist) modes of thought and practice provides a compelling argument for the depth and complexity of non-European models of ecological sustainability.³⁶ This turn to precolonial models for guiding the future of the modern postcolonial state was apparent in Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's keynote address to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972. She argued:

People who are at cross-purposes with nature are cynical about mankind and ill-at-ease with themselves. Modern man must re-establish an unbroken link with nature and with life. He must again learn to invoke the energy of growing things and to recognize, as did the ancients in India centuries ago, that one can take from the earth and the atmosphere only so much as one puts back in them. (Quoted in Singh et al. *The World Charter for Nature* xiv)³⁷

This was an era of extensive global discussion and activism about the fate of the planet, resulting in the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (the Stockholm Declaration), which called attention to how technology was changing the earth, the necessity for resource conservation and placing limits on pollution, the close relationship between economic development and quality of life, and encouragement for postcolonial nations to pursue courses of development while asking industrialized nations to lend technology and expertise to ensure global equity in social and environmental stability.³⁸ With rising concerns about depleting the ozone layer and global warming, this UN discourse on the environment catalyzed a series of subsequent meetings throughout the 1970s on renewable energy, technology, food security, water access, and climatic desertification, and other topics which radically changed the "post-war perception of an open global space . . . to an inter-related world system" (Sachs "Environment" 27). Importantly, this global discourse was always rooted in a *human environment*, and while anthropocentric, it suggested that there should be no decoupling of humanity from the natural

world and it provided an international—albeit legally nonbinding—mandate for global environmental security.

Samar Singh has argued that this particular 1972 conference was a catalyst for a global response to environmental sustainability, a charge taken up by President Mobutu Sésé Seko of the Republic of Zaire (later renamed Democratic Republic of the Congo) during the 1975 UN General Assembly for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, which was hosted in Kinshasa. He advised:

The seas, the oceans, the upper atmosphere belong to the human community . . . one cannot freely overuse (such) international resources. . . . I would suggest the establishment of a Charter for Nature . . . If we were asked to be a pilgrim for environmental protection, this we would be willing to be. (Quoted in Singh et. al. *World Charter* xvi)

By 1982, the UN established the World Charter for Nature, modeled largely on the UN Declaration on Human Rights, an important albeit ironic history if we consider Seko's dictatorial legacy. Like the Stockholm Declaration, the World Charter for Nature (WCN) declared all life forms as unique and deserving respect and emphasized resource conservation, the interdependence of humanity and nature, and the need for environmental education. The WCN differed, however, in its insistence on the inherent value of nature "regardless of its worth to man," in its call for a moral code to guide natural resource use, in linking warfare directly to natural resources, in explicitly calling for the preservation of nature from military degradation, and in stating that individuals have a right "to redress when their environment has suffered" degradation by others.³⁹ While the WCN received strong support from postcolonial nations, objections were raised over the fact that the document did not sufficiently distinguish between the environmental challenges of developed countries versus those of newly decolonized and developing nations.

Similar to the debates over the concept of globally shared environmental governance during the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea (1973–1982), reservations were expressed in the WCN meetings that emergent postcolonial nations would be forced into environmental policies that would limit their economic development.⁴⁰ This question about the economics of human ecology has been a vital historical aspect of postcolonialism, yet has been largely overlooked by dominant forms of Anglo-American environmental thought. Indeed, biologist Wangari Maathai and many others have argued persuasively that national debt to "first-world" agencies such as the IMF and World Bank is one of the biggest obstacles to environmental sustainability in postcolonial nations today.⁴¹ Discussions over what characterizes postcolonial ecological concerns can be traced back through these international debates over environmental, economic, and state sovereignty. Far from being oblivious to environmental issues, postcolonial subjects have had to mitigate and contest what Larry Lohman has described as "Green Orientalism," which he defines as a "postwar

narrative of 'development' that "sets up and enforces, in fine Orientalist style, a dichotomy between hungry, expectant, tradition-shackled Southern peoples and a modern, scientific, democratic North under whose progressive leadership they will gradually be freed for better things" (202). This binarism is implicitly foundational to the discourse of ecocriticism as an exportable American intellectual development.

Since nearly 100 new nations were established between World War II and the ratification of the WCN and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, we need to recognize this particular era as ushering in an unprecedented global discourse on the environment and the global commons. Yet the discourse of these new and still emergent nations has been largely submerged by economic powers that have redefined the concept of nature as merely an "environment" that can be "managed" (Sachs "Environment" 34), a post-World War II turn in which the global became "defined according to a perception of the world shared by those who rule it" (Escobar "Constructing Nature" 51). In this process the poor have been admonished for their presence, euphemistically called "overpopulation,"⁴² or for their "lack of environmental consciousness" ("Constructing Nature" 51), a legacy that is visible in dominant ecocritical studies today. Strikingly, this purported lack of environmental consciousness was increasingly positioned as the fundamental *cause* for global degradation and thereby justified economic schemes of modernization and progress. By 1983 the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Report), was turning to capitalist development as a global model for the ecological future (Sachs "Environment" 29). This is how capital, rather than being called into question, enters an "ecological phase," to incorporate new spaces and knowledges of nature (Escobar "Constructing" 47).⁴³ In this naturalization of capitalism, a transnational corporation such as Shell Oil might refer to itself, without irony, as a "responsible energy" business, a "greenwashing" that erases the fact that its gas flaring in Nigeria, along with ExxonMobil and Chevron Corporation, contribute disproportionately to global warming.⁴⁴

Certainly postcolonial ecology must engage the complexity of global environmental knowledges, traditions, and histories in a way that moves far beyond the discourses of modernization theory on the one hand, which relegates the global south to a space of natural poverty, and the discourse of colonial exploitation on the other, which relegates the global south to a place without agency, bereft of complicity or resistance. Our conviction that dominant ecocritical methodologies that make universalist claims (from the unmarked Anglophone viewpoint of the United States) must address colonial legacies and postcolonial contexts is in concert with critics who have cautioned against turning to indigenous and postcolonial ecologies to simply provide moral, spiritual, or financial redemption for the capitalist metropole. Donna Haraway has warned of the "cannibalistic western logic that readily constructs other cultural possibilities as resources for western needs and actions" (*Primate Visions* 247).

While we argue for the necessity to map the diversity of ecological discourse and its representations of alterity, an uncritical turn to other spaces of natural knowledge can also produce "environmental orientalism" (Sawyer and Agrawal). This tendency often arises from the ways in which dominant American forms of ecocriticism have sidestepped questions of empire and privilege in the fashioning of a sense of place. Without considering these structural, historical, and methodological issues, a shallow green transnationalism may romanticize "primitive ecological wisdom" as a ready substitute or displacement of "the hues of radical red" (Moore, Pandian, and Kosek 39).

As we have tried to emphasize in this section, the mutually constitutive relationship between nature and empire over the past few centuries has produced a rich legacy of interpretive lenses for postcolonial ecology, and a long global conversation about how to define and attain environmental sovereignty at local, regional, national, and planetary scales. To separate the history of empire from ecocritical thought dehistoricizes nature and often contributes to a discourse of green orientalism. This is unfortunate not only for its misrepresentation of the past, but also for our ecological futures, as we all have much to learn from this long and complex history. Consequently, our intention here is not to fall into the trap of constructing rigid national and geographical differences, but rather to point to how postcolonial and other aligned methodologies of ecocriticism provide a rich and nuanced discussion of the normative ecological subject and that subject's relation to environmental history, economics, and politics.

IV. POSTCOLONIAL ECOCRITICISM: BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

In 2004 the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Wangari Maathai for establishing the Green Belt Movement, a predominantly women's grassroots organization that, commencing with World Environment Day 1977, has planted millions of trees in Kenya and beyond to stop desertification and the process of what Rob Nixon calls "slow violence." This momentous event inspired hopes that European and Anglo-American ecocritics would engage more thoroughly with global environmental dialogues and would broaden the language and practices of our ecological stewardship.⁴⁵ Those hopes have not been entirely realized for the reasons we've already outlined—the segregation of the history of empire from concepts of nature, the tendency to homogenize ecocritical genealogies, and the differently inflected concerns of postcolonial ecology such as debt and the threat of U.S. militarism, unlike mainstream American environmentalism which focuses on wilderness and conservation. This communication barrier between the realm of the "postcolonial" and the field of "ecocriticism" might also be attributed to the predominantly national framework for literary studies in general, the persistence of a lingering insular and/or exceptional vision of American Studies, and a difficulty in reconciling

poststructural methodologies, utilized in many postcolonial approaches, with ecocritical models.⁴⁶ In this section we turn to postcolonial critiques of Anglo-American environmental thought to query these epistemological gaps and to suggest that these critiques, while important for a preliminary engagement, have also homogenized the complex body of ecocriticism itself.

Much has been made of the irreconcilable differences between postcolonial concerns and the environmentalism of the privileged north in terms of their approaches to issues such as the economy, development, conservation, biopiracy, sovereignty, consumption, militarism, and (over)population. This segregation of postcolonial studies and its allied scholarship from the dominant story of ecocriticism is not particularly surprising when we consider the extent of mutual critique. Since hierarchical notions of nature were key to justifying colonial expansion and the repression of nonnormative others, postcolonialists have been understandably wary about calls to "return to nature," or attempts to collapse the concern with the human inequalities that resulted from colonialism into a universalizing focus on the future of the nonhuman environment. This has generated a debate between those who tend to prioritize the environment over all human needs, like many deep ecologists, and those in the social justice movement who insist that human equity must precede green conservation and preservation.⁴⁷

This debate has become a flashpoint for those exploring the connection between postcolonial and ecocritical thought, tracing back to historian Ramachandra Guha's 1989 article which outlined the central divisions between the fields. Guha critiqued Arne Naess and the deep ecology movement for their biocentricity, their emphasis on wilderness preservation, and their romanticism of Asian religious traditions. He contended that deep ecology demonstrated a "lack of concern with inequalities *within* human society," dehistoricized nature (72), and overlooked more pressing environmental issues such as global militarization and the growing "overconsumption by industrial nations and by urban elites in the Third World" (74).⁴⁸ Guha pointed out that the biocentrism/anthrocentrism dualism, as adopted by Project Tiger and the World Wildlife Fund in South Asia to conserve animals and their habitats, contributed to the displacement of poor communities who happened to live in the targeted conservation wilderness areas. As recent scholarship has demonstrated, international pressure on postcolonial states to conserve charismatic megafauna has catalyzed human alienation from the land, notoriously in the case of the Marichjhapi massacre in the Indian Sundarbans, an event inscribed by novelist Amitav Ghosh and explored by Jonathan Steinwand later in this volume.⁴⁹ Guha points out that the construction of pristine (read: nonhuman) wilderness areas benefits elite tourists rather than local peoples, and positions "the enjoyment of nature (as) an integral part of the consumer society" (79) rather than challenging the capitalist logic of consumption that creates the need for conservation to begin with.

He concludes, "despite its claims to universality, deep ecology is firmly rooted in American environmental and cultural history and is inappropriate when applied to the Third World" (71).⁵⁰

Guha's critique of deep ecology has been a touchstone and catalyst for scholars seeking to bring postcolonial and ecological modes of thought into dialogue. While not detracting from his argument, which we support, we find the terms of this twenty-year-old debate have not deepened substantially until very recently. Because northern environmental discourse in this dialogue has become synonymous with deep ecology (which itself does not represent mainstream environmentalism), it has become difficult to foreground the complexity of environmental thought in Anglo-American discourse, and to highlight other modes such as ecosocialist, ecofeminist, and environmental justice approaches, which are often in concert with the concerns of postcolonial ecology. Here we'd like to encourage a broader range of participation for postcolonial engagement and critique beyond the thorny issue of wilderness conservation.

We seek to foreground here that ecocritical discourses, as they have been produced in the United States, are exceedingly complex and have taken on critiques of capitalism, the normative production of the ecological subject, and the segregation of culture and nature. The work of Patrick Murphy, for instance, has long questioned normative models of American ecological thought through an ecofeminist lens, and his edited collection, *Literature of Nature: An International Sourcebook* (1998), is perhaps the earliest collection of ecocritical essays with a truly global scope. There is also a neglected body of ecocritical scholarship that has responded to Guha's critique of American environmentalism. For instance, Deane Curtin's *Chinnagounder's Challenge: The Question of Ecological Citizenship* (1999) has directly engaged Guha's work to argue for the "disastrous consequences" of first-world claims to the universality of natural and conservation discourse (5) and has outlined epistemological assumptions held by dominant Euro-American modes of environmental thought that are not easily applicable to communities in the global south such as the "universalism of ethical claims," the individualism of the ethical subject, and notions of progress that uphold an ethically "neutral" model of reason (10).⁵¹ Building upon Guha and Curtin's call for a more globally engaged ecological citizenship, Graham Huggan has turned to South Asian and African texts to counter the assumption that "ecocriticism, at present, is a predominantly white movement, arguably lacking the institutional support-base to engage fully with multicultural and cross-cultural concerns" ("Greening" 703). He has argued that "postcolonial criticism . . . offers a valuable corrective to a variety of universalist ecological claims—the unexamined claim of equivalence among all 'ecological beings' (Naess), irrespective of material circumstances" and the presumption "that global ethical considerations should override local cultural concerns" (720). In doing so, he has also pointed to the complexity of ecofeminist, ecosocialist, and even deep ecology's

approaches to the entanglement of nature and culture, suggesting that postcolonial critiques "of First World environmental practice suffer from similar tendencies toward overstatement."⁵²

In fact, we might turn to Rob Nixon's 2005 article "Environmentalism and Postcolonialism," which details four epistemological gaps between these fields that have contributed to the mutual lack of engagement and "reciprocal mistrust" and build upon them to suggest new directions for the future. In drawing comparisons between methodologies, Nixon has argued that the vast body of postcolonial theorists from Homi Bhabha to Glissant foreground hybridity and cross-cultural exchange as constitutive of history and literary discourse, whereas mainstream American ecocritics often emphasize a desire for a primordial natural purity in the wilderness, a retreat from the social and environmental pollution of modernity. This is an argument that builds upon Guha's important critique of deep ecology and reflects some general trends. However, we might reconsider this division by foregrounding the complexity of other forms of American ecocriticism, particularly ecofeminist and environmental justice movements that have critiqued or avoided discourses of wilderness and natural purity and have turned particularly to poststructural, urban, cybernetic, and even microscopic spaces of the ecological imaginary.⁵³ Or we might consider the ways in which postcolonial texts, from novels such as Patricia Grace's *Potiki* and Indra Sinha's *Animal's People* to Ken Saro-Wiwa's nonfiction *Genocide in Nigeria*, all strategically rely upon some type of discourse of precolonial purity and unity that was eroded through exposure to modernization, capitalism, colonialism, and/or toxic pollutants. Thus we might note that hybridity and purity may not be mutually exclusive nor are their political meanings inflexible. In both American and postcolonial texts, appeals to an uncomplicated concept of nature might often serve the rhetorical function of a critique of modernity, even when the texts themselves might belie, consciously or not, history's hybridizing effects.

Second, Nixon has argued that postcolonial frameworks focus on the diaspora and displacement created through colonialism and globalization, whereas ecocriticism generally foregrounds human continuity and the ethics of place and belonging.⁵⁴ While this has contributed to their lack of sustained dialogue, we can see that both positions are integral to speaking about the history and phenomenology of the environment. In fact, this helps explain why ecocriticism has been far more attentive to indigenous literatures than postcolonial studies has been. If we reflect back upon the postcolonial literary texts that opened this essay that demonstrated that "the land is recoverable at first only through imagination" (Said), we might foreground the ways in which the longing for that continuity might also demonstrate a constitutive element of the literatures of postcolonial ecology.

Third, Nixon points out that postcolonial studies is embedded in cosmopolitan discourses of the city and in the production of transnational

literatures, whereas mainstream ecocriticism favors wilderness narratives and national literary frames, particularly of the United States. While again we would agree that this is largely accurate, we would like to follow the lead of Raymond Williams and Leo Marx to suggest a dialectic between city and country, culture and nature, and metropole and colony. We might turn to the many postcolonial coming-of-age narratives from Tsitsi Dangaremba's *Nervous Conditions* (Zimbabwe) to Merle Hodge's *Crick Crack, Monkey* (Trinidad) that suggest that migration from rural to urban space replicates the alienation of the postcolonial subject from a naturalized homeland, and that while urbanization offers educational opportunities to the protagonist, the very spatial structures of the city often replicate the alienating racial hierarchies of colonialism itself.

Finally, Nixon points out different models of historiography in which postcolonialists have focused on excavating the precolonial past and have sought to expose the machinations of colonialism and its attendant historical erasures,⁵⁵ whereas mainstream ecocritics often employ a "timeless history" of nature that supersedes human hierarchies. We agree that any formulation of an environmental ethic that is not attentive to history is problematic but would add that so is any conception of history that is not contextualized by deep time. Aldo Leopold's famous dictum to "think like a mountain" is not necessarily incompatible with postcolonial concerns and with the task of historicizing the earth. Indeed, in Leopold's discussion of the axe as a method of reading tree rings, he insists that an environmental ethic begins with nature's previous human history. Grounded in the layering of history, Leopold's call for a land ethic can be invoked to temper the anti-ecological tendencies of Western individualism and presentism that are often associated with the pastoral and the picturesque. In sum, Nixon's distinctions are exceedingly useful in pointing us toward general differences between postcolonial and ecocritical methodologies, but we can interpret a land ethic in ways that are not irreconcilable with a historicization of nature.

We feel a sustained dialogue is needed between postcolonial and ecocritical studies, particularly as these questions of representation are vital to our current environmental crisis as well as to the discursive contours of literary studies as a whole. While we recognize epistemological gaps between the two fields, we foreground four important areas of overlap. First, an ecological frame is vital to understanding how geography has been and still is radically altered by colonialism, including resource use, stewardship, and sovereignty—issues that have been crucial to independence movements and their constitutive literatures. As explained earlier, by turning to precolonial epistemologies of place, postcolonial studies is well suited to explore how these knowledges survive and are transformed and translated through narrative, particularly in modern genres such as the novel. Second, Enlightenment dualisms of culture/nature, white/black, and male/female were constituted through the colonial process, and postcolonialists (and ecofeminists) have long been engaged

in disentangling the hierarchies that derive from these interpellations of non-European nature. Thus the "cultivation" that presumably constituted the post-Enlightenment European male subject was increasingly distanced from women, the poor, and peoples of color. Likewise, these naturalized others were likened to a construction of nature that was increasingly seen to require masculine European management. Therefore we suggest that this turn to nature is not so much an epistemological break in postcolonial studies as a continuity with the historical scrutiny of social hierarchies that has characterized the field. As Huggan observes, "postcolonial criticism has effectively renewed, rather than belatedly discovered, its commitment to the environment" (Greening 702).

Third, the ecocritical interrogation of anthropocentrism offers the persistent reminder that human political and social inequities cannot be successfully and sustainably resolved without some engagement with the more-than-human world and with deep time. Although this challenge to anthropocentrism is often assumed to directly challenge the human social concerns of postcolonialism, both fields have made it clear that sustainability is a mutual enterprise that pertains as much to human social well-being as to the health of the physical world. If they are at odds, it is only because of our failure to consider their interdependencies. Although it is never clear how we know if we have escaped our anthropocentrism, ecocritical postcolonialism attempts to imagine something beyond the confines of our human story, an imagination that is essential to modes of sustainability.

Finally, the field of postcolonial studies has long been engaged with questions of agency and representation of the nonspeaking or subaltern subject, foregrounding the ways in which narrative and language effectively displace the production of difference and alterity. Consequently, postcolonial ecocriticism importantly theorizes the question of who can "speak for nature" or speak for the subaltern subject in a narrative mode that does not privilege dualist thought or naturalize the hierarchies between the human and nonhuman.

V. PLANETARITY AND THE "AESTHETICS OF THE EARTH"

Postcolonial ecocriticism has a challenge to find a way to speak in ethical terms about the global and the local without reducing difference and without instituting old structural hierarchies; indeed we might say that this is the same challenge posed by global climate change. Global climate justice asks us how to move toward radical corrective measures while maintaining the delicate balance between global and local difference. While approaching a global ethics might be fraught with risk, the extent of our current crisis motivates thought that goes beyond simple dualisms in the interest of the survival of a new collectivity, even if that collectivity has been threatened disproportionately by American consumption, emissions, and waste. Just as we can no longer afford to eschew the concept of the global, neither can we risk erasing local particulars or bypassing a

recognition of the alterity of human and nonhuman others. Global climate change is an all too threatening reminder to American critics, activists, and consumers that they can no longer afford to dismiss postcolonial concerns about the environment, or to argue that these concerns do not exist. Although postcolonial nations are the lowest in terms of carbon emissions, they are the most vulnerable to climate change, a point made all the more poignant by the prime minister of the Republic of Maldives, who hosted his 2009 cabinet meeting under the ocean to highlight the fate of this island nation which will be uninhabitable by 2100 due to sea level rising.⁵⁶ Virtually every model of global climate change indicates that the global south is particularly vulnerable to the predicted increases in weather extremes, such as more prolonged droughts, more intensified but less frequent rainfall and flooding, rising sea levels, shifting migrations of flora and fauna due to temperature increases, and even earthquakes.⁵⁷ For this reason, Michael Northcott argues that the ethics of climate change must respond to our modern history of colonial relations that have created "structural injustices and forms of economic coercion resulting in extreme poverty and even famine" (*Moral Climate* 58). A recent report of the UN's Global Humanitarian Forum, for example, calculates that global climate disruption causes 300,000 deaths a year due to increased drought, flooding, and other environmental consequences, a figure that will dramatically increase if mitigation against climate change is not pursued. Ninety-eight percent of all such deaths are occurring in postcolonial nations; in stark contrast, only one of the twelve least vulnerable nations is a developing country. Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and the island states of the Pacific and Indian Oceans have been specifically identified as the most at risk.⁵⁸

As William McKibben and others have argued, global climate change has raised the stakes for modernity. McKibben explains that because the effects of global climate change and other global environmental degradation are sometimes difficult to distinguish from natural processes and because they nevertheless have a direct impact on the environment, we can no longer trust in the Enlightenment division that places nature outside of human history and experience. This new era of human impact on the globe known as the Anthropocene has made it possible for countless individual perpetrators of environmental wrong to hide their actions in the midst of the complexity and collectivity of global processes and thus escape accountability. Nevertheless, global climate science suggests that despite the claims of the Enlightenment, nature is not outside of modernity and that Western thought can no longer afford the freedom from accountability that a facile nature/culture dualism affords. Adorno and Horkheimer, like the ecofeminists who followed, presciently argued that the Enlightenment bifurcation between internal and external nature was a rhetorical and ideological method for sustaining humanity's domination of the material world as well as provoking nature's eventual revolt. Our era of global climate change, then, presents a challenge and an opportunity that a postcolonial ecology is well suited to address.

Since postcolonialism is already familiar with the challenge of articulating otherness without reinforcing the very binaries that undergird hegemony in the first place, speaking of global climate change does not present an entirely new problem. Indeed, we can consider Michel Serres's articulation of this dilemma as a restatement of postcolonial principle. Serres writes that global climate change calls for new epistemologies that no longer imagine themselves as separate specializations because we need a "collective ethics in the face of the world's fragility" (78). Serres describes a kind of restoration of banished knowledges as a response to this challenge, one that understands the importance of the local while acting in response to the important ecological demands of the global. He writes, "Never forget the place from which you depart, but leave it behind and join the universal. Love the bond that unites your plot of earth with the Earth, the bond that make kin and stranger resemble each other" (50). This ethic of care has been extensively theorized in feminist philosophy and ecotheology and remains an important component of postcolonial and ecocritical thought.⁵⁹

Serres's approach here echoes the "poetics of Relation" that Glissant describes as a way of responding to the fragmentations of history by "conceiv[ing] of totality but willingly renounc[ing] any claims to sum it up or to possess it" (*Poetics of Relation* 21). This poetics of Relation has particular importance for a postcolonial ecology. With Renée Gosson, in *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture*, we built upon Glissant's contention that the Caribbean's violent "irruption into modernity" (*Caribbean Discourse* 146) created a schism between nature and culture in the region that its literature sought to bridge. We noted that Glissant called for an "aesthetics of the earth" that moved beyond an "obsolete mysticism" of place (*Poetics* 150) and engaged a form of "ecology" that criticized homogenizing models of consumption, "exclusiveness," and "territorial thought" (146). He suggests that "passion for the land where one lives is a start, an action we must endlessly risk" (151). We are particularly struck by his use of the word "risk" here. Passion for land is a risk because if internecine conflicts over land teach us anything, it is the ease with which devotion to the local can lead to exceptionalism and violent expulsion of difference. So why the imperative? Because without undying passion for place, the values of the global and the "affective standardization of peoples" and nature will encounter no resistance and local ecology, no allies (148). At the same time, however, this aesthetics must resist the reactionary and "obsolete mysticism" of much environmentalism, which yearns for the sacred root, or the "sectarian exclusiveness" of atavistic cultures (147). An "aesthetics of the earth" for Glissant rises to the challenge of appreciating beauty even when the land and sea have been ravaged by colonial violence. The seeming inappropriateness of aesthetics in the context of waste and rupture can enable a regenerative response. By reorienting a people to a "love of the earth so ridiculously inadequate or else frequently the basis for sectarian intolerance," Glissant

hopes that literature can teach the political force of ecology (151); that is, literature can recapture ecology's radical articulation of "the relational interdependence of all lands, of the whole Earth" (147). In this sense, it's an "aesthetics of disruption and intrusion" the homogenizing market of consumption itself (151).

Glissant raises the specter of the reader's incredulity, asking "an aesthetics of the earth? In the half-starved dust of Africa? In the mud of flooded Asia? . . . In city sewers? . . . In mud huts crowning gold mines?" (151). His questions anticipate ecocritical challenges to whether "an environmentalism of the poor" might provide both an aesthetics and a politics that we might draw from as a model of postcolonial ecology. Yet by foregrounding the "aesthetics of rupture and connection" (151) as constitutive parts of ecology (particularly chaos theory, which he borrows from), Glissant critiques the discourse of totality that drives the homogenizing reach of globalization.⁶⁰ Like Spivak's theory of "planetary," an approach that shifts away from the all-knowing discourse of globalization in order to "embrace an inexhaustible taxonomy" of alterity through multiple figures, including nature (*Death* 77), Glissant argues that "not knowing this totality is not a weakness" (154). He contends that we must turn to a poetics that not merely thinks of the other, addressing alterity, but rather creates "the other of Thought," a more radically transforming move that through "an aesthetics of turbulence" (155), creates change of thought and generates action, which in turn generates more change and more action.

Our intention in this collection is to foreground this complex theory of an "aesthetics of the earth"—a discourse of transformative self-conscious disruption that calls attention to the universalizing impulses of the global—as a key aspect of postcolonial ecocriticism. We must note that any effort to shift ecocritical discourse toward a more global framework, particularly for us writing from the United States, is fraught with dangers. We hope to heed Susie O'Brien's warning that ecocritical models should not replicate the consumptive drive of empire, in which the "environmentalist expertise emanating from the United States outward," reproduces an "implicit imperialism in this globalizing move" ("Garden" 168). Thus a postcolonial wariness of "globalizing impulses" is necessary to ensure that "the global and local come together, not by way of simple synecdoche . . . but in a way such that each interrupts and distorts the other" to refuse homogenization (O'Brien "Articulating" 143). Similar to the poetics of Relation Glissant and Serres articulate between the particular and the general and between the local and the global, O'Brien argues that foregrounding the limitations of representation and translation, and engaging the local and often inassimilable aspects of culture and history, help to uphold a sense of alterity while still engaging a global imaginary.

We already know enough about the dangers of a discourse that ignores the specificities of the local. Stopping global environmental degradation,

for example, requires more than a "one-size-fits-all" approach to sustainability. However, a planet so thoroughly humanized by the forces of modernity requires a recognition of the ways in which place has already been conditioned by global processes of change. This is much the same way that a postcolonial poetics attends to the fragmented conditions of colonial displacement or diaspora without either idealizing fragmentation or yearning nostalgically for wholeness; it is instead an exercise in imagining relations in new ways in order to forge new epistemologies. This postcolonial exercise relies on the power of figural language to describe and redress the fragmentation of memory. In such strategies, identity is not static or predetermined but poetically created by the imagination's virtual and cross-cultural journey across geographies of difference. These methods avoid facile generalizations about the world's diverse peoples and places that a collective ethos might otherwise produce, but they also don't shy away from the task of seeking a culture's imagined relation to the global. We would argue that this tempering of a postcolonial environmental imagination is part of its strength and is one reason that postcolonial ecologies can stimulate an adequate and collective response to the challenges global environmental change poses.

The subaltern historian Dipesh Chakrabarty argues that global climate change "spell[s] the collapse of the age-old humanist distinction between natural history and human history," a distinction upon which postcolonial critiques of capitalism and globalization have relied ("The Climate and History" 201). This necessitates for Chakrabarty a more nuanced consideration of how we can critique the logic of capital and act in the interest of better futures while also being aware of how our evolution in deep time renders our knowledge contingent. A truly ecological postcolonialism, in other words, must be assiduously critical and rigorously aware of the dangers that lie ahead but also aware of our always contingent grasp on the role we play in predicting and determining a knowable future. He suggests that we still need the hermeneutics of suspicion that postcolonialism offers but that we must not conclude that our human experience and our human responsibilities can be reduced to the self-understanding that historical knowledge produces for us. This is because knowledge of our role as "geological agents" capable of disrupting the climate of the planet is not phenomenological but is rather the vision that deep historical and evolutionary explanations of human existence have produced. In other words, because our role as geological agents is not always readily discernable to us even if it is no longer deniable, a more contingent, collective, and cautious hermeneutics becomes necessary, one that emphasizes the importance of our agency and accepts the limits of what we can know—contra Hegel—about universal human experience. While it is obvious that science often still aspires to a totalizing and explanatory narrative that seeks to replace previous mythologies of universal human experience, Chakrabarty wishes to push the contingent and interdependent implications of these new ecological narratives. Similar to Glissant's notion of the

poetics of Relation, Chakrabarty calls for an acceptance of our belonging in "a negative universal history," one which we accept that we are irrevocably a part of but which we can never know in its totality (222).

VI. POSTCOLONIAL ECOLOGIES: LITERATURES OF THE ENVIRONMENT

In mapping the always-shifting terrain of postcolonial ecologies, we've chosen to organize this volume into four thematic sections. The first, "Cultivating Place," foregrounds the ways in which colonialism created a complex history of displacement and exile and how contemporary postcolonial writers have sought to establish an aesthetics of belonging through language and literature. Since our relationship to place is often mediated by metaphysical concepts of soil and roots, particularly the plants that we often assume are natural and prior inhabitants, the first section disentangles the relationship between place, soil, belonging, and displacement across multiple genres such as the novel, poetry, and the visual arts. Our contributors Jill Didur and Elaine Savory turn to the European history of plant collecting and exchange between the colonies and the ways in which this history has connected the global south, particularly as this has been imagined in Kiran Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss* and in the poetry of St. Lucian Derek Walcott. Didur argues that the British "hill stations" of the Himalayas were depicted by colonials as Gardens of Eden, jumbled colonial spaces that were tamed through form, most notably through the picturesque and the sublime. Desai transforms these representations in her 2006 novel to provide a "counterlandscaping" (Casid 241) of colonial fantasies as well as the separatist demands of the Gorkha National Liberation Front. She positions the Himalayan landscape as a generative and hybrid botanical space, an alternative to the Anglophilia of elite South Asian and expatriate communities, the Hinducentrism of the Indian state, and the patriarchal identity associated with the GNLF movement. This queering of the landscape cultivates a postcolonial ecology in terms of a contingent model of community. Savory explores creolized landscapes in her close reading of Walcott's poem "The Bounty" and explores how he inscribes the Caribbean relationship to plants, arguing that the garden has become globalized through British trade networks and continues to have relevance to the region's construction as an Edenic refuge for tourists. By turning to the work of English poet John Clare, an important influence on Walcott, Savory demonstrates that an environmental imagination not only informs Walcott's thematic concerns as a poet but, more importantly, so profoundly shapes his aesthetic strategies that for Walcott the work of metaphor is necessarily an ecopoetics. LeGrace Benson shifts the focus from literature to the visual arts in her analysis of how the tremendous environmental and economic devastation of Haiti has been refracted through, paradoxically, the ubiquitous trope of the Edenic garden in which local artists merge African and New World ecologies in their visual

mapping of place. Although the rise of these idealized landscape paintings is closely tied to global tourism in Haiti, Benson outlines the ways in which these works encode sacred epistemologies of place derived from both Christian and Vodou traditions that were also central influences on the literary production. Her argument shows an emergent syncretic theology that is telluric and earthbound in its ethical orientation. All of the essays in this section engage with the representation of the garden as a hybrid space of nature and culture, historicizing the ways in which European colonialism configured utopian narratives of floral abundance in a dystopian era of slavery and exploitation.

Ecocritical literature has often inscribed the forest wilderness as a geographical and imaginative space where the Western individual subject might retreat from the social pressures of urbanization and modernity (see Garrard). In our second section, "Forest Fictions," our contributors demonstrate the intense human acculturation of the forest in postcolonial histories, particularly the ways in which these literatures complicate the representation of a "natural" or primordial forest outside of modernity. Elizabeth Paravisini-Gebert draws from an extensive body of Caribbean literature and history in the major language areas of the region (Spanish, English, and French) to demonstrate how the forest has been a site of multiple power struggles over time and how it has shifted significance. In the early colonial days forests represented spaces of fear, but in more recent times the forest and rural spaces in general have been recuperated as sites of refuge for the escaped slave and places of folk authenticity in nationalist movements. In an essay that ranges from the travel narratives of Sir Walter Raleigh and Bartolomé de Las Casas to the environmental activism of Puerto Rican poet Juan Antonio Corretjer, whose work on ecological toxicity predated Carson's *Silent Spring*, Paravisini-Gebert traces out the ways in which forests and spaces outside the plantation complex signify the cultural continuities of diasporic and indigenous populations in the Caribbean.

Jennifer Wenzel examines the Bengali writer Mahasweta Devi and her inscription of arboriculture in India, drawing from Vandana Shiva's argument that the privatization of natural resources under the mantle of economic development means the "exclusion of the right to survival"—or "genocide"—for a significant section of India's population. Devi's short stories have long been concerned with the privatization of the forest and its impact on India's indigenous and subaltern communities, particularly women. In her reading of how Devi depicts the exchange of trees and women's bodies for capital, Wenzel posits sex work as the rationalized equivalent to the privatization of nature and as the alternative to its genocidal consequences. Wenzel suggests that nature's complete indifference to the protagonist's plight at the end of the story allows us to move beyond the expected trope of pathetic fallacy to the more pressing question of how an absence of the register of ecological crisis works to dilate the temporal relationship between cause and effect, foregrounding our persistent

misreading and even naturalization of crisis. George Handley turns to the literature of the Americas, examining Alejo Carpentier's novel *The Lost Steps* to suggest that Carpentier's theory of the New World Baroque, derived from his experiences in the Amazonian interior of Venezuela, undermines the anthropocentric assumptions of much cultural theory while also interrogating facile assumptions about biocentrism. Although Carpentier's encounter with the tropics is fraught with the various masculinist and neocolonial impulses of the West, the indeterminacy of his aesthetics suggests how ecology might serve to deconstruct the colonial order.

Our third section, "The Lives of (Nonhuman) Animals," shifts from this discussion of place and figures of natural belonging to examine the relationship between human and nonhuman animals. Animal studies and postcolonial studies have developed a close relationship in recent scholarship. As Martha Nussbaum has written, "the pursuit of global justice requires the inclusion of many people and groups not previously included as fully equal subjects of justice" such as women, the poor, and marginalized religious and ethnic groups. "But a truly global justice requires. . . the other sentient beings with whose lives our own are inextricably and complexly intertwined" ("The Moral Status of Animals" B6). The contributors to this section expand the relationship to animal studies to encompass postcolonial questions of justice, representation, conservation, and biomythic narratives. Rob Nixon considers the temporal and spatial contradictions of the postapartheid game reserve as a place of managed stasis on the one hand and, on the other, a place of transnational transit for tourists and human migrants, particularly Mozambican refugees. Examining how African wildlife functions as a sign of the "ecological archaic," Nixon examines how black tourists at the game reserve trouble the racial politics of what he terms "ecological spectatorship." Turning to South African writers like Njabulo Ndebele and Nadine Gordimer, he focuses on the Kruger National Park as a buffer zone between South Africa and Mozambique and between the human and the animal.

Jonathan Steinwand explores the notable emergence in postcolonial literature of inscribing the relationship between humans and charismatic megafauna such as whales in the novels of Amitav Ghosh (India), Linda Hogan (United States) Witi Ihimaera (Aotearoa/New Zealand), and Zakes Mda (South Africa). In shifting our attention from the land to the sea and its propensity for universalizing metaphors, his essay examines how recent postcolonial novels press our conceptual boundaries of bioregional ecologies. The large body of work produced by postcolonial writers about the sea (or the land-sea relationship) suggests that ecocriticism's reliance on a "land ethic" might be reconfigured to include maritime spaces.⁶¹ Steinwand draws upon the ecofeminist work of Mette Bryld and Nina Lykke to demonstrate that this cetacean turn is in a large part a post-Cold War exploration of "extraterrestrial" space and yet also tied closely to postcolonial concerns in which biomythic narratives that position

nonhuman animals as ancestors or companion species are crucial to resisting the disenchantments of secular modernity.

Allison Carruth turns to the ethics of animal domestication in the novels of J. M. Coetzee (South Africa), particularly the way the human treatment of animals reflects on a larger discourse of citizenship and rights. Her analysis of Coetzee's recent fiction, particularly his novel *The Lives of Animals*, suggests that the human compassion necessary to act on behalf of other animals might come at the expense of human affinities with other human beings. Because animals in these novels are almost always consumed, Coetzee foregrounds a vital component of postcolonial ecocriticism: that of the human consumption of the other-than-human world and, by extension, human complicity in perpetuating those systems. Pablo Mukherjee examines Indra Sinha's *Animal's People* (India), a novel that tests the human/animal divide by representing one of the children poisoned and disabled by the Union Carbide Corporation's 1984 gas leak in Bhopal as a self-professed "Animal." In foregrounding the lack of medical, legal, and financial compensation and treatment for the hundreds of thousands of Bhopalis who were poisoned by the pesticide leak, the novel calls into question the uneven distribution of universal human rights in the global south and "the spatial politics of environmental toxicity." Mukherjee argues that this turn to the animal reconfigures our ideas about communality, relationality, and universality, and that paradoxically, the very postcolonial context that allowed Union Carbide to create environmental toxicity with impunity will be utilized as the catalyst for an ethics of resistance.

Our final section examines "Militourism," a term coined by American Indian writer Louis Owens and theorized by Teresia Teaiwa to explain the mutual constitution of the tourist and military industries, particularly in the island tropics, and how "the tourist industry masks the military force behind it" (Teaiwa "Reading" 249). The stereotype of the peaceful and exotic Pacific Islands has been created through centuries of colonialism and a tourist industry that has mystified the region's militarization and nuclearization. In her important work on the displacement of Pacific nuclearization by the sexualized two-piece garment, Teaiwa asks, "what does the word bikini evoke for you? . . . A bikini-clad woman invigorated by solar radiation or Bikini Islanders cancer-ridden by nuclear radiation?" ("bikinis" 91). The irradiation of the Marshall Islands, paradoxically, has been generative to ecological thought. Elizabeth DeLoughrey's essay traces out how the field of ecology was constituted by the Atomic Energy Commission in its radiological surveys of the Pacific Islands, suggesting that concepts of global ecology are derivative of the literal fallout from the Cold War, and positioning solar and military forms of radiation as key indicators of globalization. Exploring how atomic discourse was naturalized by likening nuclear weapons to the sun, her essay demonstrates how natural figures of solar radiation have been used in Pacific Island literature to articulate a heliocentric global modernity. In connecting radiation

to ecological thought, her essay foregrounds the close connections between militarism and ecological violence and their representation by indigenous writers of the Pacific. Dina El Dessouky builds upon these questions of sovereignty in the era of military neocolonialism in her examination of contemporary indigenous literatures from Hawai'i and Tahiti, turning to literary representations of the fifty years of U.S. military weapons testing on Kaho'olawe and the thirty-year French nuclear weapons testing program on Moruroa and Fangataufa atolls. Drawing from the work of Chantal Spitz and Michou Chaze, she argues that these authors articulate island space in terms of the indigenous body, advocating a discourse of inalienable rights for human and nonhuman ecological communities.

Anthony Carrigan examines the work of Chandani Lokugé (Sri Lanka) to explore the ways in which the wartime violence of Sri Lanka bolsters the gendered and racialized hierarchies of the tourist trade, and asks how imaginative portrayals of tourism and disaster might shed light on interdisciplinary debates concerning more sustainable cultural, environmental, and economic futures. He turns to how the social and environmental legacies of the 2004 tsunami are anticipated in Lokugé's pre-tsunami novel *Turtle Nest*, which depicts links between child sex tourism and animal abuse, highlighting the fact that ecological disasters are never isolated but are part of the ongoing crises of civil war, chronic poverty, and ecological degradation.

Byron Caminero-Santangelo similarly critiques the neocolonial presumption of economic well-being that tourist development in South Africa brings. In the novel *The Heart of Redness*, by Zakes Mda, Caminero-Santangelo sees an interrogation and revision of the concept of bioregionalism, offering a postcolonial paradigm that avoids the pitfalls of what Rob Nixon has called "ecoparochialism." Mda shows the effectiveness of a nuanced and dynamic understanding of the interpenetration between urban and rural, local and global, regional and national differences that allows for an ethics of place within spaces compromised by globalization.

Postcolonial Ecologies: Literatures of the Environment is the first collection of essays to engage literatures from Africa, the Caribbean, South Asia, and the Pacific Islands in their postcolonial constructions of the environment. We position postcolonial ecology as a critical engagement with an "aesthetics of the earth," which, as Glissant explains, is also an imagining of alterity, a politics, and an impossible "aesthetics of chaos" (*Poetics* 155). As we have become increasingly dependent on epistemologies of the social and hard sciences that offer the often misleading reassurance of reliable and measurable outcomes, global environmental degradation and the disproportion of that degradation suffered by the world's poor would seem to suggest the need to put more faith in the performance of such inexact sciences as listening, interpretation, reading, and ethics. In other words, we need to recover an appreciation for the relevance of the humanities in the face of the global environmental

challenges of the twenty-first century, something we very much hope this volume helps to accomplish.

NOTES

1. Later in the book Fanon would argue "imperialism . . . sows seeds of decay here and there that must be mercilessly rooted out from our land and from our minds" (181), a point that connects the land directly to the psychological impact of colonialism.

2. In Ghosh's inscription of the dynamic tidal country of the Sundarbans, he writes, "the speciality of mangroves is that they do not merely recolonize land; they erase time. Every generation creates its own population of ghosts" (*Hungry Tide* 43).

3. In this sense we follow Lorraine Code's model of "ecological thinking" which "reconfigures relationships all the way down: epistemological, ethical, scientific, political, rational, and other relationships between and among living beings and the inanimate parts of the world" (47).

4. See Williams, *The Country and the City*.

5. Plumwood argues, "'Living close to the land' may under the right conditions help generate knowledge of and concern for ecological effects of production and consumption within a local community, but neither this closeness nor the local ecological literacy it might help generate is sufficient to guarantee knowledge of ecological effects and relationships in the larger global community or even a larger regional one" (*Environmental Culture* 77).

6. For more on ecomimesis, see Morton's *Ecology without Nature*, especially chapter 1.

7. This work on human and nonhuman alterity/otherness has been explored by ecofeminist critics such as Haraway in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, and Murphy, *Literature, Nature, and the Other*.

8. These points are expanded in our introduction to *Caribbean Literature and the Environment*. Our thanks to Renée Gosson for her work on this argument and Glissant's translation.

9. See also Martinez-Alier, *The Environmentalism of the Poor*.

10. See Murphy, *Literature, Nature, and Other*, and Escobar, "Difference and Conflict in the Struggle over Natural Resources."

11. ASLE: The Association for Study of Literature and Environment sponsors a biannual conference and the journal *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies of Literature and the Environment*. More recent journals have been established such as the *Journal of Ecocriticism: Nature, Society, Literature*. A substantive list can be found here: <http://www.asle.org/site/papers/manuscripts/journals/>.

12. See the PMLA discussion in the Forum on Literatures of the Environment. See Parini, "Greening the Humanities," Nixon, "Environmentalism and Postcolonialism" (233-34), and Saro-Wiwa, *Genocide in Nigeria*.

13. To engage postcolonial ecocriticism is to recognize that, for example, the western landscape of the United States that has become a vital site of wilderness discourse has also been constituted by European expansion and white-settler nation building. See Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land*, Alaimo, *Undomesticated Ground*, and West, "Wallace Stegner's West: Wilderness and History." For a poststructural approach to the construction of western wilderness, see Cronon's "The Trouble with Wilderness or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature."

14. See Foucault's *The Order of Things*.

15. See also Brockaway, *Science and Colonial Expansion*, Grove, *Green Imperialism*, Miller and Reill, *Visions of Empire*, Drayton, *Nature's Government*, and Cañizares-Esguerra, *Nature, Empire, and Nation*.

16. Arnold, *The Problem of Nature*, Livingstone, "Tropical Hermeneutics," Stepan, *Picturing Tropical Nature*, Browne, *The Secular Ark*, Moore, Pandian, and Kosek, "Introduction: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nature," Eze, *Race and the Enlightenment*.

17. The Australian Flora and Fauna Act was finally changed in the 1967 referendum, which granted citizenship to aboriginal peoples.

18. For a different history, see Rajan, *Modernizing Nature*.

19. See also Carolyn Merchant, who connects the rise in nostalgia for a feminized and passive Eden to the mechanization of industrial capitalism in *The Death of Nature and Reinventing Eden*.

20. See Arnold, *Famine*.

21. The shift to "green" is a deliberate deflection from the social revolution of the "red." William Gaud, Director of the U.S. Agency for International Development, famously coined the term in 1968 by commenting: "Developments in the field of agriculture contain the makings of a new revolution. It is not a violent Red Revolution like that of the Soviets, nor is it a White Revolution like that of the shah of Iran. I call it the Green Revolution" (Gaud). See Shiva, *The Violence of the Green Revolution*, and Peet and Watts, *Liberation Ecologies*.

22. See von Braun and Meinzen-Dick, "'Land Grabbing' by Foreign Investors in Developing Countries."

23. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange and Ecological Imperialism*. See also Tiffin, "Introduction," *Five Emus to the King of Siam: Environment and Empire*, xii.

24. See, for instance, Lawrence Buell's *The Future of Environmental Criticism*, which argues that to "first wave ecocriticism" the environment meant "the natural environment" (21) while only later "second wave ecocriticism" challenged this "organicism" (22). If one includes the work of ecofeminist, environmental justice, and postcolonial scholars from the very beginning, this genealogy is not possible.

25. While scholars such as Murphy and Curtin have consistently contributed to postcolonial ecocriticism, more recent collections on the topic include DeLoughrey, Gosson, and Handley, *Caribbean Literature and the Environment* (2005); the special issue of *Interventions* (9.1), on "Green Postcolonialism," edited by Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin (2007); the special cluster on postcolonial ecocriticism in *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies of Literature and the Environment* 14.1 (2007), edited by Cilano and DeLoughrey; the special double issue of the *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies*, on postcolonial studies and ecocriticism (13.2 and 14.1: 2007). See also recent books by authors in this collection such as Pablo Mukherjee's *Postcolonial Environments: Nature, Culture and the Contemporary Indian Novel in English* (Palgrave, 2010) and Anthony Carrigan's *Postcolonial Tourism: Literature, Culture, and Environment* (Routledge, 2011). Forthcoming books include Byron Camerino-Santagelo's coedited volume with Garth Myers, *Environment at the Margins: Literary and Environmental Studies in Africa* (University of Ohio Press) and Rob Nixon's *Slow Violence and Environmental Time* (Harvard University Press).

26. Nixon observes, "Lawrence Buell, Cheryll Glotfelty, Harold Fromm, Daniel Payne, Scott Slovic, and many others . . . canonize the same self-selecting genealogy of American writers: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Edward Abbey, Annie Dillard, Terry Tempest Williams, Wendell Berry, and Gary Snyder" ("Environmentalism" 234).

27. Ecofeminism remains strangely absent from much ecocritical scholarship and its legacies have been largely ignored, in a large part because it has been incorrectly reduced to a dated essentialist methodology. See Sturgeon, *Ecofeminist Natures*, for a compelling genealogy of the multiple and complex strands of thought that contribute to ecofeminist critique, and the work of Haraway, Merchant, Plumwood, Code, Mies and Shiva, and Shiva, for ecofeminism with a particularly global and anticolonial approach. See Young, *Postcolonialism*, 100–108, for a discussion of ecofeminism and postcolonialism.

28. Heise's recent book makes an important call for an "ecocosmopolitanism" that strikes a more nuanced balance between localism and globalism, even though it does not engage postcolonial literature as part of this globalizing move.

29. On nature and universalizing discourse, see Tsing, "Transitions as Translations," Sturgeon, *Ecofeminist Natures*, O'Brien, "Articulating a World of Difference."

30. On this interdisciplinary influence, see Cohen, "Blues in the Green."

31. See discussion in Misra, *Environmental Ethics: A Dialogue of Cultures*, Guha, *Environmentalism: A Global History*, Hill; and South Asia: *An Environmental History*, and Young, *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction*, 100–105, one of the few texts to address ecofeminism in relation to postcolonial studies. See also Curtin's discussion of Gandhi in *Environmental Ethics*, 98–130.

32. See, for instance, Berkes, *Sacred Ecology: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Resource Management*; and Gottlieb, *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, and the Environment*. See also the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology, <http://fore.research.yale.edu/>.

33. The field of ecosocialism is enormous. Merchant's *Ecology: Key Concepts in Critical Theory* gives an excellent overview of both Marxist ecology and the Frankfurt School and includes extracts from key thinkers. Bookchin's *Our Synthetic Environment*, published just before Carson's *Silent Spring*, examined the impact of pesticides and radiation, whereas his later work, *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy* (first published in 1982) turned to social hierarchies, including patriarchy, and their impact on nature. See also the work of O'Connor, *Natural Causes: Essays in Ecological Marxism*, and Foster, *Ecology against Capitalism*, and the archives of the journal *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*. In addition to Merchant, other scholars who have drawn from the Frankfurt school include Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*.

34. See Martinez-Alier, *The Environmentalism of the Poor*, all the works of Vandana Shiva, Maathai's *The Challenge for Africa*, and Peet and Watts, *Liberation Ecologies*.

35. The First Commonwealth Conference on Development and Human Ecology was hosted in Malta in 1970; see Bowen-Jones, *Human Ecology in the Commonwealth*.

36. Some have argued that the ideology of the Chipko movement can be traced back for hundreds of years in Indian history. See Pal, "Chipko Movement Is 300 Years Old," in Misra, *Environmental Ethics*, who cites a communal protest against tree felling in Rajasthan in 1720.

37. At the Non-Aligned Conference in 1983 she argued, "some people still consider concern for the environment an expensive and perhaps unnecessary luxury. But the preservation of the environment is an economic consideration since it is closely related to the depletion, restoration and increase of resources" (quoted in Misra, *Environmental Ethics*, 16).

38. The Stockholm Declaration is available here: <http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=97&ArticleID=1503>.

39. See <http://www.un-documents.net/wcn.htm>.
40. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and its impact on postcolonial literature has been discussed in DeLoughrey, *Routes and Roots*.
41. See Maathai, *The Challenge for Africa*, 83–110. See Taylor and Buttel, who argue that debt, "the South-North capital drain, and the international monetary order (the World Bank and IMF)" are "fundamental contributors to environmental degradation" (412). See also Martinez-Alier, *The Environmentalism of the Poor*.
42. See Amartya Sen, "Population: Delusion and Reality," and Curtin, *Environmental Ethics*, 74–97. Zygmunt Bauman argues that the construction of human waste, termed "overpopulation," is a byproduct of modernity. "Rich nations can afford a high density of population because they are 'high entropy' centres, drawing resources, most notably the sources of energy, from the rest of the world, and returning in exchange the polluting, often toxic waste of industrial processing that uses up, annihilates and destroys a large part of the worldwide supplies of energy" (*Wasted Lives* 43).
43. Escobar, "Constructing Nature: Elements for a Poststructuralist Political Ecology," 46–68. In this development discourse, poor nations are also reprimanded for their overpopulation, a discourse initiated by the Club of Rome reports such as *The Limits to Growth* (1972).
44. Shell was admonished for "greenwashing" by the British Advertising Standards Authority, http://www.asa.org.uk/asa/adjudications/Public/TF_ADJ_43476.htm. For more on the Nigerian context, in addition to Saro-Wiwa, see *The Curse of the Black Gold*, by Kashi and Watts. For more on natural capitalism, see Plumwood, *Environmental Culture*.
45. See Mwangi, "Nobel Prize: A Shot in the Arm to African Ecocriticism." On Maathai's contribution to environmental discourse, see Nixon, "Slow Violence, Gender, and the Environmentalism of the Poor" which foregrounds Maathai's "intersectional environmentalism" that interlinks human, women's, and environmental rights (23). This might be linked to other ecojustice writers such as Vandana Shiva, who argues powerfully for what she terms "earth democracy."
46. There has been a vigorous discussion of the role of post-structural thought in environmental and ecocritical studies. In addition to Escobar, see Conley, *Ecopolitics*, and Zimmerman, *Contesting Earth's Future*.
47. Some ecocentric frameworks have alienated postcolonialists, such as Edward Abbey's stance against Mexican migration to the United States (Nixon, "Environmentalism" 236). Critiques of deep ecology have come from many quarters, including ecosocialists, ecofeminists, and the postcolonialists discussed here.
48. This division, Plumwood argued in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, generally overlooked feminist thought and thereby missed a third epistemological position between social ecologists and deep ecologists (*Feminism* 2; see also her *Environmental Culture*). See also Code, *Ecological Thinking*. The Guha and Naess debate is explored in Curtin, *Chinnagounder's Challenge*, and also in Cilano and DeLoughrey.
49. Guha, "Radical American Environmentalism," and Mallick, "Refugee Resettlement in Forest Reserves."
50. See Naess's response, "The Third World, Wilderness, and Deep Ecology."
51. Plumwood points out that Western classical logic with its emphasis on instrumental reason produces a hierarchical dualism in which the concept of reason provides the unifying and defining contrast for the concept of nature (*Environmental Culture* 5). For more on otherness and the decentering of humanism, see Head.

52. Huggan cites Guha and Martinez-Alier's *Varieties of Environmentalism* as an example of this tendency toward overstatement. See Head "The (Im)Possibility of Ecocriticism." Cilano and DeLoughrey, in a special postcolonial cluster of the journal *Isle* (2007), also used Guha's critique as a starting point to examine the contested ground between dominant American conceptions of ecocriticism and postcolonial critique, arguing that:

postcolonial topics should not be viewed as entirely *new directions* in the field of ecocriticism as much as they represent *increased visibility* to a western-based audience who is rethinking the limitations of U.S. national frameworks that had occluded other perspectives. To suggest that *postcolonial ecocriticism is new* is to give a normative status to ecocriticism's institutional origins without questioning the limitations of its foundational methodologies and focus. (73)

53. See, for instance, the work of Haraway, Code, Conley, and Bullard. Although the body of environmental justice work is immense, we recommend two of the more globally inclined collections: Filomina Chioma Steady's *Environmental Justice in the New Millennium* and Joni Adamson, Mei Mei Evans, and Rachel Stein's *The Environmental Justice Reader*.

54. See also Buell, who remarks on the "xenophobic stigmatization of outsiders and wanderers" (*Future* 68).

55. See, for instance, Nandy and Chakrabarty.

56. See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/may/29/1>.

57. See the online scholarship at the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC), <http://www.caricom.org/jsp/community/ccccc.jsp?menu=community>.

58. "Global warming causes 300,000 deaths a year, says Kofi Annan thinktank," <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/may/29/1>. The source is the Global Humanitarian Forum: <http://ghfgenova.org/Media/PressReleases/tabid/265/EntryId/40/Climate-Change-responsible-for-300-000-deaths-a-year.aspx>.

59. Aldo Leopold, for example, in 1949 called for "an extension of the social conscience from people to land" and noted that "we can be ethical only in relation to something we can see, feel, understand, love, or otherwise have faith in" (214). This need for nature as a kind of subjective presence is one reason why ecotheology has paid so much attention to the ways in which nature can be construed to have what Northcott calls "intelligible order and moral value" (254). One of the earliest feminist theorizations of an ethic of care, which foregrounded relationships as a constitutive component of ethical behavior was Gilligan's *In A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (1982). See also Held, *The Ethics of Care*, and Merchant, *Earthcare: Women and the Environment*.

60. Chaos theory has played an important role in theorizing ecology in the humanities. Worster has argued that ecology has shifted to become "a study of disturbance, disharmony, and chaos" (*Wealth of Nature* 158). The deeper we venture into the operations of complexly interconnected systems, we learn that "change is without any determinable direction and goes on forever, never reaching a point of stability" (162). See also Zimmerman, *Contesting Earth's Future*, Conley, *Ecopolitics*, and Prigogine and Stengers, *Order Out of Chaos*.

61. See note 40 and Cilano and DeLoughrey's "Against Authenticity" on the land-sea relationship in postcolonial ecocriticism.