



Proceedings of
International Conference on Literature
and Environment, Wuhan, 2008

2008 文学与环境

武汉国际学术研讨会
论文集

聂珍钊 陈 红 主编

Edited by Nie Zhenzhao and Chen Hong



华中师范大学出版社

2008 文学与环境武汉国际
学术研讨会论文集
Proceedings of International Conference on Literature and
Environment, Wuhan, 2008

聂珍钊 陈 红 主编

Edited by **Nie Zhenzhao** and **Chen Hong**



华中师范大学出版社
中国·武汉

Huazhong Normal University Press
Wuhan, China

新出图证(鄂)字 10 号

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

2008 文学与环境武汉国际学术研讨会论文集/聂珍钊,陈红主编. —武汉:华中师范大学出版社,2010. 12

ISBN 978-7-5622-4734-0

I. ①2… II. ①聂… ②陈… III. ①文学研究—国际学术会议—文集
IV. ①I0-53

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2010)第 250902 号

2008 文学与环境武汉国际学术研讨会论文集

© 聂珍钊 陈 红 主编

选题策划:刘晓嘉

责任编辑:高华骏

责任校对:罗 艺

封面设计:罗明波

编辑室:第五编辑室

电话:027—67867364

出版发行:华中师范大学出版社

社址:湖北省武汉市珞喻路 152 号

电话:027—67863426(发行部) 027—67861321(邮购)

传真:027—67863291

网址:<http://www.ccnpublish.com>

电子信箱:hscbs@public.wh.hb.cn

印刷:武汉中远印务有限公司

督印:章光琼

字数:867 千字

开本:787mm×1092mm 1/16

印张:36.75

版次:2010 年 12 月第 1 版

印次:2010 年 12 月第 1 次印刷

印数:1—1000

定价:69.00 元

欢迎上网查询、购书

目 录

生态批评理论与实践

充满希望的生态批评	斯格特·斯洛维克 (1)
有关生态批评的评述	特里·吉福德 (15)
生态批评的新发展	西蒙·埃什托克 (27)
全球化时代的地方意识	黄逸民 (45)
文学视角下的城市空间认知与实践	周 婕 谢 波 鲍 颖 (57)
生态文学批评的知识形态批判	王轻鸿 (63)
生态批评:一种历史文化批判——兼论生态批评的基点、定位与出路	赵淑琴 苏 晖 (71)
生态批评的内涵建构与批评方法	陈茂林 (82)
生态文学创作:从生态审美体验到文学表达	郭茂全 (88)
论生态女性主义之“和而不同”思想	季君君 (94)
中西传统诗学中的自然观	朱黎航 (99)

美国文学与生态批评

对人与土地关系的哲学审视——论凯瑟早期小说《啊,拓荒者!》中的生态思想	陈妙玲 邹建军 (106)
经典重读:《睡谷的传说》的生态启示	李 玲 (114)
评美国经典文学作品中的溪水与河流	曾 莉 (121)
传承与超越——梭罗与爱默生自然观的异同分析	崔朝晖 (128)
《白鲸》中的工业文明批判	郭海平 (134)
《秘密花园》的生态思想解读	祝 贺 (140)
《大主教之死》的生态女性主义文本解读	杨海燕 (146)
薇拉·凯瑟短篇小说《邻居罗西基》的生态女性主义解读	谭晶华 (153)
薇拉·凯瑟对于二元对立之解构的生态女性主义阐释 ——以《啊,拓荒者!》与《我的安东妮亚》为例	李 晶 (160)
先锋写作与伦理关怀:评格特鲁德·斯泰因的《三个女人》	刘红卫 (178)
人与自然的博弈:读史蒂文斯的《坛子轶事》	周 昕 (185)
庞德《诗章》中的生态智慧	杜予景 (189)
论杰弗斯诗歌的生态蕴含	徐江清 (196)
《押沙龙,押沙龙!》中的生态伦理观	蔡 俊 (204)
海明威的密歇根:《两代父子》中自然生态困境的探讨	刘 炜 (210)

约柯:生态失衡的象征	程细权(214)
构建新型文化范式的神话编造者、冥想者、实践者	
——论加里·斯奈德对诗人作用的追寻	宁 梅(220)
女性·身体·自然——托妮·莫里森小说《宠儿》的生态女性主义解读	涂慧琴(232)
生态女性主义视阈下的《钟形罩》	赖 艳(240)
希特勒的毒气室与《白噪音》中的毒气云	戴 欣(247)
和谐共荣、充满爱的美丽新世界——艾丽丝·沃克《紫色》精神生态思想解读	王冬梅(252)
《与狼共舞》的生态主题评析	姚桂桂(259)
论谭恩美小说《接骨师之女》中的生态伦理思想	夏 楠(265)
人·自然·生态:析《狼群中的朱莉》的生态思想	张 颖 单建国(271)
从《销毁文件》看达纳·斯皮奥塔对二元论的解构	张 甜(278)

英国文学与生态批评

“伟大的生生不息的宇宙连续统一体”:依附与自传

.....	戴维·帕克(285)
“诗歌织结/森林知解”:托马斯·克拉克诗歌中的艺术与生态	达尼埃拉·加藤(292)
莎士比亚戏剧的生态批评	肖四新(304)
布莱克生态思想的哲学表达	郭 峰(311)
华兹华斯遗产:保护湖区本土生态美	谢海长(317)
简析华兹华斯诗歌中的生态思想	刘 慧(327)
新历史语境下《弗兰肯斯坦》的生态伦理学解读	陈礼珍(332)
迷失的“自我”:希刺克里夫形象解读	韩 霞(339)
埃格敦荒原上的人与自然	张一鸣(346)
生态批评视阈中哈代的威塞克斯	肖徐彧(351)
生态关怀背后的道德忧思——康拉德丛林小说的生态取向管窥	王晓兰(359)
人与自然的混响——弗吉尼亚·伍尔夫《海浪》的生态主义解读	杜 娟(366)
生态批评视角下的《查泰莱夫人的情人》	魏 蔚 卢 敏(375)
自然、生命与美——劳伦斯的生态思想在《查泰莱夫人的情人》中的体现	李漫萍(383)
《查泰莱夫人的情人》的生态解读	冯伟珍(390)
从生态批评视角解读《恋爱中的女人》	余巧云(403)
三位一体的文学环境——以艾略特诗歌为例	丛滋杭(409)
“水里的死亡”——对《荒原》的生态解读	安 安(417)
《藻海无边》的生态女性主义解读	胡敏琦(427)
摧残它类与摧残同类——对《蝇王》的生态批评解读	郭晶晶(434)
生物、生态、环境——菲利普·拉金诗歌的生态伦理	陈 晔(442)
失落的伊甸园——看拉金式的风景	吕爱晶(449)
小说《裂缝》的象征意义与莱辛的女性主义意识	张 颂 田祥斌(456)

哈代悲剧艺术中的自然和谐与社会和谐:以《远离尘嚣》为例	刘茂生(462)
论《草原日出》中自然的反抗	柏 灵(467)
朴实无名,大音稀声——品特戏剧的生态伦理学研究	曹步军(475)

其他国家文学与生态批评

和解之桥:石牟礼道子的重建之梦	布鲁斯·艾伦(483)
“母亲带着我们定居在荒原”——论伊藤比吕美解构诗歌中的自然环境与性	森田敬太郎(497)
《太平狗》的“不太平”——一个农民工与他的狗面临的生存危机	杨 梅(505)
守卫凌霄的人——解读《云彩擦过悬崖》中的自然属性	刘 娅(511)
动物文学与生态伦理观建设——以《被捕杀的困鲸》为例	黄开红(518)
科技的“宠儿”或“弃儿”——《羚羊与秧鸡》中的生态预警	姜兆霞(527)
飘逸和谐的绿色旋律——《温沙森林》的生态解读	马 弦(534)
在困境中徘徊的孤独灵魂——《变形记》的生态伦理解读	曹山柯(542)
库普林小说中的生态伦理思想	高建华(549)
试论济慈《希腊古瓮颂》中生态伦理的诗意建构	刘富丽(558)
生态观念现代化的伦理思考	邓年刚(565)
生态批评视野下的英国“湖畔派”	颜红菲(571)

CONTENTS

The Theory and Practice of Ecocriticism

The Hopefulness of Ecocriticism	Scott Slovic (1)
Critiques of Ecocriticism	Terry Gifford(15)
New Directions in Ecocriticism	Simon C. Estok(27)
A Sense of Place in the Age of Globalization	Peter I-min Huang(45)
Recognition and Practice of Urban Space from the Perspective of Literature	Zhou Jie Xie Bo Bao Ying(57)
A Critic of Configuration of Knowledge in Contemporary Ecocriticism	Wang Qinghong(63)
Ecocriticism: A History-culture Criticism—On Basis, Evaluation and Future of Ecocriticism	Zhao Shuqin Su Hui(71)
On the Theoretical Connotation and Critical Methods of Ecocriticism	Chen Maolin(82)
Creation of Ecological Literature: From Ecological Aesthetic Experience to Literary Expression	Guo Maoquan(88)
On Hybridity Thinking in Ecofeminism	Ji Junjun(94)
Views on Nature in Chinese and Western Poetics	Zhu Lihang(99)

American Literature and Ecocriticism

Philosophic Analysis of Relationship between Human Beings and Land: Ecological Thoughts in Cather's Early Novel <i>O Pioneers!</i>	Chen Miaoling Zou Jianjun(106)
Classic Rereading: Ecological Inspiration from <i>The Legend of Sleepy Hollow</i>	Li Ling(114)
Comments on the Creeks and Rivers in American Literary Classics	Zeng Li(121)
Inheritance and Transcendence—On Thoreau's and Emerson's Views on Nature	Cui Zhaohui(128)
Ecocriticism of Industrial Civilization in <i>Moby-Dick</i>	Guo Haiping(134)
An Ecocritical Approach to <i>The Secret Garden</i>	Zhu He(140)
<i>Death Comes for the Archbishop</i> : An Ecofeminist Text	Yang Haiyan(146)
An Ecofeminist Interpretation of Willa Cather's short story "Neighbor Rosicky"	Tan Jinghua(153)

An Interpretation of Willa Cather's Deconstruction of Binarisms in the Perspective of Ecofeminism—Taking <i>O' Pioneers!</i> & <i>My Antonia</i> as Examples	Li Jing(160)
On the Avant-garde Writing and Ethical Consideration in Gertrude Stein's <i>Three Lives</i>	Liu Hongwei(178)
An Ecocritical Interpretation of Wallace Stevens' "Anecdote of the Jar"	Zhou Xin(185)
Ecological Wisdom in Ezra Pound's <i>The Cantos</i>	Du Yujing(189)
Ecological Thoughts in Jeffers' Poetry	Xu Jiangqing(196)
Ecological Ethics in <i>Absalom, Absalom!</i>	Cai Jun(204)
The Ecological Predicaments in Hemingway's "Fathers and Sons"	Liu Wei(210)
Jocko: Symbol of Ecological Unbalance	Cheng Xiquan(214)
A Mythographer, Meditator and Practitioner Toward a New Cultural Paradigm—Gary Snyder's Quest for the Role of a Poet	Ning Mei(220)
Women, Body and Nature—An Ecofeminist Reading of Toni Morrison's <i>Beloved</i>	Tu Huiqin(232)
A Study of <i>The Bell Jar</i> from the Perspective of Ecofeminism	Lai Yan(240)
Hitler's Gas Chamber & Cloud of Noxious Chemicals in <i>White Noise</i>	Dai Xin(247)
A Beautiful New World Full of Harmony, Love and Prosperity—on Alice Walker's Eco-spirituality in <i>The Color Purple</i>	Wang Dongmei(252)
On the Ecological Theme of <i>Dances with Wolves</i>	Yao Guigui(259)
A Study on Amy Tan's <i>The Bonesetter's Daughter</i> in the Ecocritical Perspective	Xia Nan(265)
Man, Nature and Environment: <i>Julie of the Wolves</i> from the Ecocritical Perspective	Zhang Ying Shan Jianguo(271)
On Deconstruction of Dualism in <i>Eat the Document</i> by Dana Spiotta	Zhang Tian(278)

British Literature and Ecocriticism

"The Great Living Continuum of the Universe": Attachment and Autobiography	David Parker(285)
"What the poem weaves / the forest will unravel": Art and Ecology in the Poetry of Thomas A. Clark	Daniela Kato(292)
Shakespeare's Dramas from the Ecocritical Perspective	Xiao Sixin(304)
The Philosophical Expression of Blake's Ecoconcern	Guo Feng(311)
Wordsworth's Heritage: Preserving the Native Beauty of the Lakes	Xie Haichang(317)
A Brief Introduction to the Ecological View of Wordsworth's Poems	Liu Hui(327)

Mary Shelley's <i>Frankenstein</i> in the 21st Century Historical Context: an Ecoethical Perspective	Chen Lizhen(332)
A Lost "Selfhood": Interpretation on the Image of Heathcliff	Han Xia(339)
Man and Nature on Egdon Heath	Zhang Yiming(346)
Thomas Hardy's Wessex in the Perspective of Ecocriticism	Xiao Xuyu(351)
Ecological Orientation and Moral Concern in Joseph Conrad's Jungle Novels	Wang Xiaolan(359)
Symphony of Human and Nature: An Ecological Approach to <i>The Waves</i>	Du Juan(366)
An Ecological Reading of <i>Lady Chatterley's Lover</i>	Wei Wei Lu Min(375)
Nature, Life and Beauty: A Study of Lawrence's Ecological Ideas in <i>Lady Chatterley's Lover</i>	Li Manping(383)
An Ecological Reading of <i>Lady Chatterley's Lover</i>	Feng Weizhen(390)
An Ecocritical Reading of <i>Women in Love</i>	Yu Qiaoyun(403)
The Three-in-One Literary Environment—T. S. Eliot as examples ...	Cong Zihang(409)
Death by Water—An Ecocritical Interpretation of <i>The Waste Land</i>	An An(417)
An Ecofeminist Reading of <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i>	Hu Minqi(427)
Slaughter of Other Beings and Slaughter of Human Beings —An Ecocritical Interpretation of <i>Lord of the Flies</i>	Guo Jingjing(434)
Lives, Ecosystem and Environment —The Ecological Ethics in Philip Larkin's Poems	Chen Xi(442)
The Lost Eden: Larkin's Landscapes	Lü Aijing(449)
Symbolism of the Natural Environment in <i>The Cleft</i> and Lessing's Feminism	Zhang Song Tian Xiangbin(456)
Harmony of Nature and Society in Hardy's Writings: A Case Study of <i>Far from the Madding Crowd</i>	Liu Maosheng(462)
Nature's Defiance in Lessing's "A Sunrise on the Veld"	Bo Ling(467)
Virtue Simple Has No Name, the Greatest Sound Is Silent —An Ecoethical Perspective on Harold Pinter's Plays	Cao Bujun(475)

Literature of other Countries and Ecocriticism

Bridges to Reconciliation: The Restorative Vision of Ishimure Michiko	Bruce Allen(483)
"Mother Leads Us to the Wasteland Where We Settle Down" —The Natural Environment and Sexuality in Hiromi Ito's Deconstructive Poetry	Keitaro Morita(497)
Disharmony seen from "A Dog Named Harmony" —Life Crisis Facing A Rural Migrant Worker and His Dog	Yang Mei(505)

- The Man Safeguarding the Clouds: the Natural Attribute in "The Clouds
Skimming Over the Cliffs" Liu Ya(511)
- Animal Literature and the Construction of an Ecoethics Perspective:
Taking *A Whale for the Killing* for Instance Huang Kaihong(518)
- From the *Beloved to the Abandoned*: the Ecological Apocalypse in
Oryx and Crake Jiang Zhaoxia(527)
- A Harmoniously Elegant Green Tune:
A Reading of *Windsor Forest* from Ecological Point of View Ma Xian(534)
- Solitary Soul Wandering in the Nightmare-haunted House:
A Comprehension of *The Metamorphosis* from Ecoethical Angle of View
..... Cao Shanke(542)
- The Ecological Ethics in Kuprin's Novels Gao Jianhua(549)
- On the Poetic Construction of Ecological Ethics in John Keats' *Ode on a
Grecian Urn* Liu Fuli(558)
- Ethical Perspective of Modern Ecological Concept Deng Niangang(565)
- A Eco-critical Approach to "Lake Poets" Yan Hongfei(571)

The Hopefulness of Ecocriticism

Scott Slovic

Abstract: Given the direness of the planet's environmental crises, it is perhaps ironic that the disciplines of environmental writing and ecological literary scholarship should be so routinely hopeful. Following Mitchell Thomashow's 2002 distinction between "hopefulness" and "optimism", I suggest that ecocritics, in particular, frequently express a hopeful disposition in their work, even though they tend not to be optimistic about the future of humanity and the biosphere. This hopeful state of mind is an essential catalyst for the discipline's energetic activity during recent decades. In this paper, I survey several of the important statements on hope by environmental writers including Henry David Thoreau, Bill McKibben, and William J. Lines, and then I consider four reasons to be hopeful with regard to the continuing vitality of the field of ecocriticism: 1) the inescapable importance of language in all environmental discussions and ecocriticism's unique role in analyzing environmental discourse; 2) ecocriticism's essential pluralism (its embracing of multiple approaches and perspectives, and its increasingly international scope); 3) the increasing sense of political urgency that motivates many ecocritics; 4) the multi-generational aspect of the field, including the participation of many young and old writers and scholars.

Key words: hopefulness; optimism; environmental literature; ecocriticism

Author: Scott Slovic is professor of literature and environment at the University of Nevada, Reno, USA. The founding president of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) from 1992 to 1995, he has edited the journal *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* since 1995. His most recent book is *Going Away to Think: Engagement, Retreat, and Ecocritical Responsibility* (2008).

题目: 充满希望的生态批评

内容提要: 在世界环境恶化的大背景下,环境写作与生态文学研究这些学科表现出的乐观态度似乎显得颇具讽刺意味。米切尔·托马修在2002年提出了“充满希望”与“乐观主义”在概念上的区别,据此,我建议生态批评学者们在他们的作品中表现“希望”,即便他们对人类和生态的前景并不乐观,因为正是这种充满希望的状态,促进了近十几年来这一学科的蓬勃发展。本文回顾几位重要的环境作家对“希望”的论述,其中包括亨利·大卫·梭罗、比尔·麦吉本、威廉·莱恩斯,并提出我对生态批评的持续生命力充满希望的四大理由:1)语言在所有环境讨论中毋庸置疑的重要作用和生态批评在分析环境著作中的独特功能;2)生态批评的多元性本质(它融合了多种方法与视角,并且越来越国际化);3)促使许多生态学

者行动起来的日益强烈的政治紧迫感;4)生态批评跨越不同的年龄层次,吸引了青老年作家和学者的广泛参与。

关键词: 希望;乐观主义;环境文学;生态批评

作者简介: 斯格特·斯洛维克,美国内华达大学环境与文学系教授。文学与环境学会创始人,并于1992—1995年担任该学会主席。1995年开始担任ISLE(环境与文学跨学科研究)杂志的主编。最新作品题为《走出去思考:入世、出世及生态批评的职责》(2008)。

I suppose this might be said of almost any branch of humanities scholarship, particularly those branches dedicated to social transformation, but I feel compelled to emphasize my sense that ecocriticism is fundamentally a hopeful scholarly and pedagogical enterprise. That is, even in the face of vast and daunting challenges, even in light of daily news about the deepening ecological crises(plural) faced by the planet, ecocritics do their work—their reading and analysis of environmental literature and art, their teaching of students at all levels, their lobbying with local and distant organizations and governmental officials, their monitoring and adjustment of personal lifestyles—with a desire to make things “better.” This may sound ridiculously vague and naive. What does it mean for ecocritics to be “hopeful” and why is it necessary to bother pointing this out?

First, it seems important to note that there have been several forceful critiques of ecocriticism during the past decade, discussions of the aims, methodologies, and general tone of the field that have taken individual scholars to task and suggested a rather bleak prognosis for the discipline. As I discussed in the essay “Ecocriticism on and after September 11,” published in the 2008 book *Going Away to Think*, such works as T. V. Reed’s essay “Toward an Environmental Justice Ecocriticism”(in the 2002 collection *The Environmental Justice Reader*), Dana Phillips’ *The Truth of Ecology*(2003), and Michael P. Cohen’s “Blues in the Green: Ecocriticism under Critique”(2004) purport to offer constructive critiques of standard ways of practicing ecocriticism, but such commentaries, it seems to me, display a strong tendency to “throw out the baby with the bathwater.” Reed argues that most early modes of ecocriticism, from the late-1970s through the mid-1990s (before the advent of “environmental justice ecocriticism”), tended to neglect the human implications of environmental degradation and were thus inferior and problematic modes of literary analysis. Phillips, picking up on some of the themes emphasized in Simon Estok’s 2001 article, “A Report Card on Ecocriticism,” frets about the anti-theoretical aspects of early ecocriticism and particularly condemns the devotion to realist aesthetics evident in ecocritical scholarship, a tendency that Estok seems to recognize as a side effect of the field’s desire to gain traction on actual social and environmental issues in the world and not to become lost in the fog of theoretical jargon and nit-picking. Cohen, for his part, is particularly critical of what he calls the “praise-song school” of ecocriticism, the inclination of scholars to note and celebrate the eloquence and insights of particular authors, from Henry David Thoreau to Annie Dillard, and not to offer enough hard-headed critique of the

flaws and misguidedness of such writers.

In his essay, Estok quotes Richard Kerridge's explanation of why ecocriticism "has had problems in getting its theoretical footing":

[U]nlike feminism, with which it otherwise has points in common, environmentalism has difficulty in being a politics of personal liberation or social mobility . . . environmentalism has a political weakness in comparison with feminism: it is much harder for environmentalists to make the connection between global threats and individual lives. (2,6)

However, as Estok has shown in much of his own recent work, there are profound and readily evident points of connection between large patterns of environmental destruction and the lives of individual writers and readers, such as the meaning of our daily eating habits, particularly vegetarianism versus the eating of meat. At this point in literary and cultural history, with so much emphasis on the implications of individual lifestyles for the broader movement of environmental sustainability, we have a strong sense of individual culpability and empowerment when it comes to causing and responding to the world's environmental problems. Teasing out and illuminating these personal connections, far from being a weakness of ecocriticism and environmental art, have become strengths of the environmental humanities. It is worth recognizing, too, the inherent limitations of too much focus on individual lifestyle practices at the cost of neglecting large-scale systemic reform. Activist-author Derrick Jensen articulates this concern eloquently in the opening paragraph of his 2009 article "Forget Shorter Showers: Why Personal Change Does Not Equal Political Change":

Would any sane person think dumpster diving would have stopped Hitler, or that composting would have ended slavery or brought about the eight-hour workday, or that chopping wood and carrying water would have gotten people out of Tsarist prisons, or that dancing naked around a fire would have helped put in place the Voting Rights Act of 1957 or the Civil Rights Act of 1964? Then why now, with all the world at stake, do so many people retreat into these entirely personal "solutions"? (18)

But it is the role of the environmental humanities to explore the communication strategies—such as Bill McKibben's eye-opening technique of telescoping back and forth between global and personal dimensions of climate change and human reproductive issues in such books as *The End of Nature and Maybe One*—that enable us to understand the intersections and disconnections between personal behavior and political action. The focus on individual lifestyle changes may not be enough to launch large-scale cultural reform, but often the appreciation of the implications of our own daily actions serves as the fulcrum

that inspires action on a larger scale.

Toward the conclusion of his 2001 essay, Estok asserts that “Ecocriticism at its best seeks understandings about the ways that dynamics of subjugation, persecution, and tyranny are mutually reinforcing, the ways that racism, sexism, homophobia, speciesism, and so on work together and are... interlocking.” Few ecocritics would deny the importance of exploring and critiquing the harmful tendencies in individual human psychology and in social systems. In fact, the extent to which such analysis might inspire reform of individual lives and broader systems and policies should certainly be regarded, I think, as a *hopeful* aspect of the discipline—it is important to recognize the darkness in our own nature in order to prod ourselves toward improvement, toward change. And yet, I would also argue, that *inspiration* itself is essential to the effectiveness, the sense of mission, that has resulted in the rapid growth of ecocriticism around the world during the past three decades (especially since the early 1990s). Ecocriticism’s potential to offer trenchant social critique is a hopeful sign. But hopefulness itself, as a state of mind for practitioners of ecocriticism, is perhaps the single most important catalyst, the most important source of energy, within the field.

What exactly is “hopefulness” and where can it be found? One of the more useful articulations of this concept in recent environmental writing is Mitchell Thomashow’s 2002 statement about the distinction between “hopefulness” and “optimism” in *Bringing the Biosphere Home*. He writes:

You don’t have to be optimistic to be hopeful. You can’t predict the future by virtue of a trend that you sit squarely in the middle of. And you can never assess the long-term impact of your thoughts and actions. (18)

This book urges readers to use their own skills of observation and cognition to examine the world from wherever they happen to be, the daily experiences of their local lives, as a way of coming to terms with the larger patterns of “biospheric change,” from extinction to global warming. Given the vast predicaments that we now face on earth, Thomashow imagines that many of his readers will be inclined not to want to know what’s going on—to remain happily ignorant and innocent. What good would it be, in other words, to recognize and worry about these destructive processes at work in the world today, especially because each of us is powerless to produce significant changes on a planetary scale. A college senior, after listening to me give a talk about ecocriticism and environmental writing to an entire group of graduating students at St. Bonaventure University in upstate New York, once asked me, “Why should I care?” And in response to her despairing question, I offered Thomashow’s statement, his suggestion that it’s possible to be *hopeful* even if one is not optimistic, that one can live from day to day in a spirit of constructive, positive effort without necessarily believing that everything will work out in the end. As the author

suggests in this quotation, we don't really know where the world is heading, and it's actually quite possible that the future is grim—at least from an anthropocentric perspective—and may even entail the extinction of our own species. But it's still better to live in a hopeful, helpful state of mind—to do one's best to make a positive contribution to one's community and to the planet. At least this will enable one to live a more energetic and inspired life—and to do as much good as possible while alive. I believe many ecocritics, even the naysayers, actually live according to Thomashow's idea, even if they're not specifically aware of his phrase. Many in the field clearly understand how desperate our environmental predicament is, and yet most also strive to do their best, as scholars and teachers and simply as citizens, to have a constructive influence on the world.

Australian environmental essayist William J. Lines offers a rather different take on this subject in his essay titled "Hope" from his 2001 collection *Open Air: Essays*. After describing himself as a fundamentally hopeful person ("I was born sanguine. I rarely feel desperate or depressed" [178]), Lines argues that foolish hopefulness is what politicians and others content with the dismal status quo offer naively credulous citizens. He writes:

Hope-fortified armies overwhelm the truth-tellers. Evidence alone will not dislodge hope.

For years powerful people ignored the facts about global warming—melting icecaps, thawing permafrost, rising oceans, lengthening northern hemisphere summers—because they made sense only outside hope-constructed frames of reference. . . . Current hopes—constantly replayed by politicians and the media—render any idea that our economic activity is fundamentally mistaken and at odds with life itself incomprehensible and repugnant. (179)

The challenge, therefore, for those of us born hopeful and for others who are simply uncritical in receiving information from the powers that be, is to develop a sense of when hope is warranted and when it simply blinds us to realities we find difficult to swallow. One might argue that writers and literary scholars—and others working in the environmental arts and humanities—are not well suited to discern and describe the crucial realities, good and bad, of our current environmental condition. We have not been trained in the natural sciences, in most cases, and therefore it may seem that we should leave authoritative announcements of the planetary condition to people better prepared to do so. But to do this—to stand back and abdicate statements about how contemporary society should respond to environmental problems to engineers, natural scientists, economists, and others with "practical training"—would represent a failure to appreciate the importance of the arts and humanities in environmental discussions. Our disciplines—including ecocriticism—are especially well suited to understand the *human* dimension of environmental problems: to explore why human societies (and individuals) act in particular ways, to consider the

psychological processes by which we develop our ideas about what's meaningful and valuable and re-shape our values in response to new information, and to show how important various communication strategies are in making sense of technical ideas in various fields, from law to ecology. Lines' critique of unwarranted hope is reasonable and appropriate, but his own ability to articulate the distinction between foolish hope and having an essentially hopeful view of life is a very important contribution to environmental writing—a set of guidelines, in a way, for all of us toiling in this hopeful discipline.

For American journalist Bill McKibben, “real hope implies willingness to change.” In his 1995 book *Hope, Human and Wild*, McKibben responds to Gregg Easterbrook (author of *A Moment on the Earth*) and other environmental “brownlashers,” who became infamous in the 1990s for uttering don't-worry-be-happy messages, arguing that extinctions and global warming and many other dire environmental occurrences are simply “natural processes” and do not require radical remediation on the part of human beings. Like Lines, McKibben is clearly the sort of writer who wishes his work to contribute to social reform and environmental improvement—he is an activist writer, not simply a neutral reporter (if there is such a thing). And yet he has to tiptoe around the use of the word “hope” in order to avoid seeming like an apologist for the brownlashers of the 1990s who were quickly co-opted by conservative political forces and by industry:

... I hesitate to admit my hope, for the word has been debased—as “hope” is used in the context of the environment, people always seem to hope that the scientists are wrong, hope that their warnings are just “doom and gloom,” hope that we'll “muddle through.” Such is the message of the currently fashionable crop of “environmental optimists.” But that's not hope—that's wishing. Real hope implies real willingness to change, perhaps in some of the directions suggested by this volume. (3)

While Thomashow makes a special point to distinguish between a hopeful statement of mind and a basic optimism about the fate of our species and the planet, McKibben parses the distinction between “hope” and “wishing.” In his inspiring book that offers stories of community efforts to achieve cleaner, more sustainable environments in India, Brazil, and the United States, McKibben seeks to ground his enthusiastic vision of the future—his *hope*—in narratives that demonstrate how other people in other places might achieve similar improvements. Skeptical of mere “wishes,” he seeks to use the language of story—just as ecocritics might use their analysis of other writers' stories—to promote positive social reform. Fundamental to the hopefulness of ecocriticism and environmental writing in general is what McKibben calls “real willingness to change”—that is, willingness to change who we are and how we live and willingness to use our work as a tool to change our students, our professions and institutions, and our societies.

In the spirit of McKibben's use of concrete examples of communities around the world

that have demonstrated through their actions—such as transforming cities from automobile-based transportation systems to urban designs that emphasize public mass transit—the possibility of achieving constructive change, I would like to offer four particular reasons that I find ecocriticism to be a particularly hopeful academic enterprise. I'm sure one could come up with additional reasons, but these are several examples that I find especially heartening.

First, ecocriticism helps us to appreciate the special importance—the *particular* power—of words, of language. Language is essentially connected to how we think about everything in our lives, and our discussions of environmental topics certainly involve very delicate uses of language. Many powerful people in the world—including politicians, corporate and military leaders, and even natural scientists—assume that the “bottom line” (the most important aspect) of any discussion is the economic message. Ultimately, what we most care about is the cost of taking this action or that action—or of not doing something. But William Lines, whom I quoted above, has also articulated quite eloquently the flaw at the heart of such thinking—and in doing so he highlights the monumental importance of language in our discussions about the natural world. Lines writes in his essay “Money”:

People exploit what has a price or what they conclude to be merely of value; they defend what they love. Love cannot be priced. But to defend what we love we need a particularising language, for we love what we particularly know. The abstract, objective, dispassionate, and dissociative language of economics and science... cannot replace and cannot become the language of familiarity, reverence, and affection by which things of worth ultimately are protected and conserved. (26)

In this essay, the author argues that exploitative and destructive approaches to the natural world are inevitable as soon as we accept the discourses of economics and science as the necessary ways of discussing environmental decisions. As I travel around China, I often meet students and other people who have moving personal stories about how their hometowns have been changed—usually degraded—as a result of industrialization. “My hometown used to have a very clean lake nearby,” the stories often begin. “When I was growing up, I could drink directly from the lake. I could swim in the water. And then a factory was built near the lake. There are now more jobs for the people in the town, but we can't use the water from the lake any more. So how should we, here in China, find a proper balance between economic development and environmental protection?” Lines would argue, I think, that as soon as we begin using “abstract, dispassionate, and dissociative language” to discuss this dilemma, the odds are stacked in favor of environmentally destructive policy—policy that supports economic development in a way that nullifies the importance of environmental protection. The role of ecocritics—and others in the