

Environmental Literature in English

英语环境文学选读

陈红 主编
鲁顺 方海霞 参编

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前言

Foreword

这本书的前身是我给上海师范大学中文系的同学们上课用的讲义,当时这门课的名称是“欧美生态文学”。我会在第一堂课上与学生讨论一些基础性问题,比如什么是通常意义上的“环境”?我们用“环境”可以组成哪些词组?在这些词组中,“自然环境”与“生态环境”是相互可替代的概念还是差别显著?待同学们思路开启后,我会简单地介绍一下西方学界围绕“生态”与“环境”在人文社科领域里的合理性所进行的争议,主要目的在于让学生们明白,这两个概念各有侧重,不存在绝对的优劣之别。之后,我会介绍某位中国学者提出的“生态思想”与“环境思想”的概念,以及建立在此基础上的“生态文学”与“环境文学”的定义。有意思的是,每次讲到这个部分,同学们会高度一致地认为,“生态思想”固然美好,但有过于理想化之嫌,如果照此理想去衡量现有文学作品,恐怕只有极少数能达到所谓生态文学的高度。我的意见也大抵如此。

正是出于上述考虑,加之英文中“生态文学”(ecoliterature)这一术语的使用远不如“环境文学”(environmental literature)普遍,因此我决定以环境文学来命名这本中英双语教材。当然,讲到类似术语,我们还有“自然文学”甚至“绿色书写”等可供选择,书中所选文本有些也的确可以归为其一,有些却不能被两者中的任何一个所涵盖。在我个人看来,在目前相关术语多杂且缺乏权威定义的情况下,我们对于这些术语的最终选择本身或许并不重要,重要的是让学生理解,不同术语或不同语言表述所包含的思想之间可能存在怎样的差异,同时也让他们明白,即便是那些因关注人与自然关系、关注环境或生态问题而被我们归为环境文学的作品,它们各自所达到的思想高度也有所不同。我相信,诸如此类的概念辨析和作品细读的活动,对于培养学生的思辨能力无疑是有意义的,如果再辅以现实环境状况与文学文本之间的对照,或以文本串联起全球生态危机与个人行为选择之间的某种因果联系,则会促使学生在一定程度上提高自身的认识水平,进而在日常生活中自觉采取于环境有益的生活方式。生态教育的目的不过如此。

这本书的结构编排,文本选择以及问题设计都是围绕着生态教育来进行的。



我作为主编承担了大部分工作。我的博士生鲁顺负责附录的译文部分,寻找合适的汉译版本或自行翻译,同时还负责本书与版权问题有关的工作。安徽理工大学的青年教师方海霞负责撰写作者简介部分。

陈 红

2018年初春于上海绿洲香岛

致 谢

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Chen Hong
Shanghai, March 28, 2018

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Section One

Place

Discussions of “place” from an ecocritical perspective are inevitably involved with the dialectical relationship between “the local” and “the global”. A new emphasis on the value of “the local” or local consciousness has important social, cultural, political and, above all, ecological significance in the global context of the present with no doubt. Interesting issues concerned here include: How is one’s loyalty to the land related to his or her loyalty to its people, history, and culture? How is conservation of the land (regardless of the negative implication attached to the word “conservation” nowadays) connected with protection of its tradition? How is local consciousness cultivated and reflected in aspects of our daily life such as food, housing and transportation? What is the advantage of local, nonprofessional knowledge as compared with professional knowledge or the expertise of an outsider? And, having acknowledged the benefits of local consciousness, what are its possible shortcomings or potential problems?

With regard to aspects of American culture concerning place-related ideas, Americans’ love of wilderness offers several issues worthy of serious consideration: How is “wilderness” related to as well as distinguished from “wildness”? Is love of wilderness equal to love of nature? What are the complexities in one’s love of nature or that of wilderness? How do the complexities change over time, as, for example, in the case of people’s craze for the wilderness under the influence of Thoreau?

Chapter One Knowing Your Place

Gary Snyder

b. 1930

Gary Snyder is a poet, essayist, travel writer, translator (from Japanese or Chinese to English), and environmental activist and hailed as “poet laureate of Deep Ecology”. Snyder grew up on a “stump farm” (land that was cleared of old-grown forest, with huge stumps remaining amid the fields) north of Seattle and was educated mostly in Portland, Oregon. During his teen years in high school, he worked sometimes as a camp counselor and went mountain climbing with the Mazamas youth group. That experience cultivated his life-long interest in climbing and also his interest in the Native American peoples, especially their traditional relationship with nature. In the following few summers after he graduated from Reed College with a dual degree in anthropology and literature, he worked in the forests and did various odd jobs at different locations as a timber scaler, a chokersetter (fastening cables to logs), a fire lookout, or a trail-builder. After living in California for some time and spending more than a dozen years in Japan during the 1950s and much of the 1960s, he finally settled with his family in the northern Sierra Nevada in the late 1960s, where he has continued to live, write, and work for the community till now.

Reflect and discuss:

“Kusiwoqqobi” is the Paiute (Native American tribe in California, Nevada and nearby) name for Jeffrey pine, a kind of tree that grows in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California. As a local resident, Snyder knows the tree very well, not only as part of the natural environment but also as part of the cultural tradition of the land. In what way does the poem show us the poet’s feeling for the tree? How does the poet link up this feeling with his knowledge of the place as a whole? Do you think it’s

important to know plants and animals of the land in order to really understand and appreciate the place? What other things are important as different but related parts of our knowledge of a place?

Kusiwoqqobi

Did it come from
The ice age lakes and streams?
Flows of liquid rock
The salt of seas,
Wind on hills for years,
This day's sun and trees?
Or this one nose?
The smell in the bark of Jeffrey Pine.

My nose poked in the bark
Went a million years —
Sweet smell of the pine.

Delicious! Like pineapple!
What did the Piute children think of,
Smelling *Kusiwoqqobi*,
What did they say?

Sun glittering on obsidian,
Wind on a hundred peaks,
Hugging a tree, smelling the bark,
I thought I heard "Kusiwoqqobi"
A soft voice from across,

From the dust, From the breeze.

VII 82, Trip with Kai down the east side near Mammoth



Ofelia Zepeda

b. 1952

Ofelia Zepeda is a renowned poet, linguist and cultural preservationist. A member of the Tohono O'odham (formerly Papago) Nation, she grew up in the rural farming community of Stanfield, Arizona and received her MA and PhD in linguistics from the University of Arizona where she is presently a Regents' Professor in Departments of Linguistics and American Indian Studies. She has been devoting herself to preserving Native American languages and to revitalizing tribal cultures. Zepeda's research and teaching interests as a linguist are reflected in her involvement in the American Indian Language Development Institute. In 1999 she was honored with the prestigious MacArthur Award for her contributions to American Indian language education, maintenance and recovery. As a poet writing in her native language, Zepeda is the Poet Laureate of Tucson Arizona. Deriving from tribal, family and personal memories, her poetry touches on the most subtle perceptions of the natural world and reveals an intense Tohono consciousness of nature in both its positive and negative manifestations.

Reflect and discuss:

Apparently Zepeda's poem tells a story about weather prediction, but it actually tells us more than that. Why do you think "someone" and "I" would disagree about the weather? Is it because one of them knows better than the other or because they come from different communities and therefore have different ways of knowing the weather? What would make you trust one more than the other?

It Is Going to Rain

Someone said it is going to rain.

I think it is not so.

Because I have not yet felt the earth and the way it holds still in anticipation.

I think it is not so.



Because I have not yet felt the sky become heavy with moisture
of preparation.

I think it is not so.

Because I have not yet felt the winds move with their coolness.

I think not so.

Because I have not yet inhaled the sweet, wet dirt the winds bring.

So, there is no truth that it will rain.

Ernest Hemingway

1899 – 1961

Ernest Hemingway is an American novelist, short story writer, poet and journalist and won Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954. Born in the Chicago suburb of Oak Park, Illinois, young Hemingway preferred to participate in competitive sports — football, boxing, swimming — and accompany his father on hunting and fishing trips. This love of outdoor adventure is reflected later in many of Hemingway's stories, particularly those featuring recurrent autobiographical protagonist Nick Adams. Hemingway started his career as a writer in a newspaper office in Kansas City. After the United States entered the First World War, he joined a volunteer ambulance unit in the Italian army and suffered severe shrapnel wounds. During the twenties, Hemingway became a member of the group of expatriate Americans in Paris, which laid a firm foundation for his literary career. Following his Paris years, Hemingway spent long periods of time in exotic and glamorous settings (including Key West, Sun Valley, Spain and Africa), which provides an opportunity for place making in his stories. In World War II, he again participated as a reporter for the U.S. First Army and was involved in several important battles including the Normandy landings. After the war Hemingway settled near Havana, and about 1958 moved to Ketchum, Idaho and died there of a self-inflicted shotgun wound on July 2, 1961.

Reflect and discuss:

Hemingway wrote the story “Big Two-Hearted River” in 1924 after he returned