

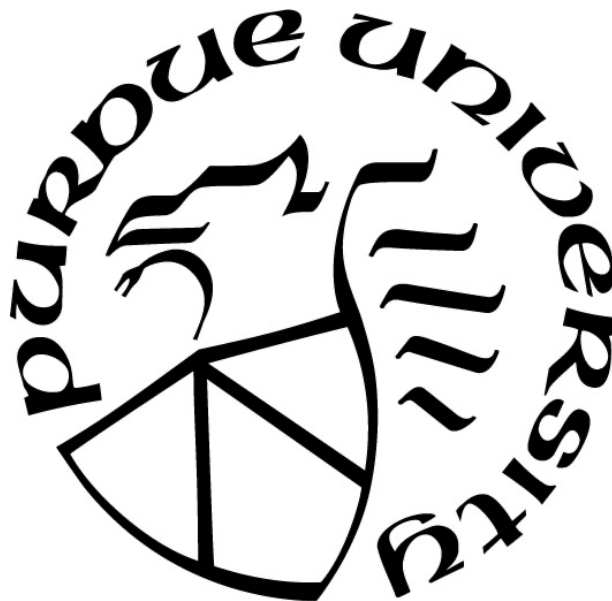
**THE FUTURES OF *HOMO ECOLOGICUS*:
AN ECOLOGICAL INQUIRY INTO MODES OF EXISTENCE FOR THE
ANTHROPOCENE IN SELECTED WORKS OF DANIEL DEFOE, TONI
MORRISON, AND ARUNDHATI ROY**

by
Geun-Sung Lee

A Dissertation

*Submitted to the Faculty of Purdue University
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of*

Doctor of Philosophy



Department of English
West Lafayette, Indiana
December 2021

THE PURDUE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL
STATEMENT OF COMMITTEE APPROVAL

Dr. Robert P. Marzec, Chair

Department of English

Dr. Alfred J. López

Department of English

Dr. Aparajita Sagar

Department of English

Dr. Daniel W. Smith

Department of Philosophy

Approved by:

Dr. S. Dorsey Armstrong

*This dissertation is dedicated to my mother Jeong-Ok Lee (1935-2015)
who has filled my life with continuous and unconditional love.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is with greater pleasure that I express my gratitude to the untold number of people without whose support and guidance this prolonged dissertation project would have never been viable. In the long process of embodying what has floated in my own imagination and placing it into this project, I have incurred many intellectual and emotional debts from my advisors, fellow colleagues and many others both in the United States and Korea. Of course, I have to say first that I have greatly benefited from the Purdue Graduate Assistantship, the Cornell School of Criticism and Theory Sponsored Fellowship, the Purdue Research Foundation Summer grants, and the English Department's travel grants.

I would like to begin by saying that I deeply appreciate my dissertation committee for their precious suggestions and helpful insights, not to mention their willingness to serve: Professors Robert P. Marzec, Alfred J. López, and Aparajita Sagar in the English Department; Daniel W. Smith in the Philosophy Department. I owe a heartfelt thanks to my dissertation chair and advisor, Professor Robert P. Marzec. During this dissertation project, he has always taught me and challenged me at every juncture, so that I could eventually envisage the ontological rationale for why and how the study of literature should pursue its own path vis-à-vis our current global ecological occasion. I am incredibly grateful for all the support, advice, knowledge, and critical constructive feedback he has given me during this project and my years at Purdue as well. In particular, I cannot thank him enough for his warm words during the challenges and hardships that I suffered after returning to Korea in 2015. I also owe innumerable intellectual and emotional debts to Professors Alfred J. López and Aparajita Sagar for their unwavering encouragement and direction. As we have worked together, I have become increasingly aware of the ways in which postcolonial studies and feminist scholarship can (and should) work together to unpack the

complex dynamics of the patriarchal hegemonies and practices and its complicit liaison with the triumphant discourse of neoliberal globalization as well as of gendered nationalism. I was also lucky to meet Professor Daniel W. Smith and take with him a course during which I gradually came to understand the significant connection between Whitehead's process philosophy and an ecological humanity. I deeply thank him for all the guidance and insightful comments on the drafts, and, above all, for serving as the fourth reader for the committee. I also greatly appreciate Professor Arkady Plotnitsky, the Director of Theory and Cultural Studies Program, for his sincere support and motivation. Much of my concern for issues of literature and its indissoluble affiliation with philosophy grew out of classes with him, whose rich readings of literature and philosophy have granted me a broader sense of the connections between literature, politics, and ethics.

Herein I would also like to thank my mentors and advisors at the State University of New York at Binghamton: Professors William V. Spanos, Susan Strehle, Joseph Keith, Michael Conlon, and David Bartine. I would like to truly appreciate their unconditional hospitality for my presence as well as their consistent support and enthusiasm for my work as I began my venture as a graduate student abroad at Binghamton. My special thanks to Professor William V. Spanos whose superlative and impassioned lectures fundamentally shaped my intellectual pursuits and research foci. His *contrapuntal* (to borrow from Edward Said) and in-depth reading of literature, history, and philosophy, and his genuine and therefore inimitable critique of *the problematic* (in Althusserian sense) of the Western metaphysical thinking and its tenacious ascendance over the "others" on a global scale have played a vital role in my research pursuits, which I began in Korea.

I am moved to extend here an immense amount of gratitude to my mentors and advisors in Korea, who have been an invaluable source of guidance and inspiration both during my undergraduate and graduate studies. From the bottom of my heart, I would like to thank those

outstanding scholars and sophisticated advisors for not only being there, but also for giving me critical and emotional support: Professors Kyu-Hyung Cho at Korea University; Keonjong Yoh at Sookmyung Women's University; Min-Seok Oh, Hyonyung Yoon, and Eunai Sung at Dankook University.

I am also grateful to my colleagues as well as friends (too many to name—you know who you are) both in the United States and Korea (and elsewhere across the globe), whose love, support, and friendship have sustained me during working on this dissertation.

Another set of thanks goes to Professor Ian Baucom at the University of Virginia and all members of the seminar “Postcolonial Studies in the Era of the Anthropocene” at the Cornell School of Criticism and Theory in the summer of 2013. Their brilliant and passionate endeavors to fully embrace the weight of the ills and ramifications of the history of imperialism and colonialism have enlivened my life-long trans-disciplinary concerns.

To warm-hearted José A. Rodríguez, once a classmate and roommate of mine and now such a great poet and scholar, I am blessed to call you my friend. My life has been enriched by you in ways you will never know. Thank you so very much for being there.

Last, but not least, I would like to dedicate this dissertation with my most sincere appreciation and respect to my parents in the real sense of the word, Dong-Hwi Lee and Jeong-Ok Lee. Their enduring patience and unconditional caring, not to mention their invaluable support and sacrifice, are always already being constantly actualized into every moment of my life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	9
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION: <i>HOMO ECOLOGICUS</i> LIVING IN THE ANTHROPOCENE	11
1.1 Reconsidering Nietzsche for the Anthropocene	11
1.2 Ecology for Homo Ecologicus.....	18
1.3 Alfred North Whitehead and the Process of Becoming.....	21
1.4 Thinking with Homo Ecologicus	29
1.5 Chapter Synopsis	37
CHAPTER 2. CRUSOE IN THE SHADOW OF ENLIGHTENMENT METAPHYSICS: DANIEL DEFOE’S <i>ROBINSON CRUSOE</i>	42
2.1 The Enlightenment and <i>Robinson Crusoe</i>	42
2.2 Crusoe in the Shadow of Metaphysics.....	45
2.3 Enclosures: Rationalization of the Land	54
2.4 Colonization of Life: Friday or the Indigenous Islander	61
2.5 Ecological Humanity for the Anthropocene	67
CHAPTER 3. THE WORLD-AS-HOME <i>BECOMING</i> EARTHLY PARADISES: TONI MORRISON’S <i>PARADISE</i>	70
3.1 The Abstract Idea and the Concrete Reality	70
3.2 The Presence of the Racial Other in Abstraction.....	73
3.3 The Idea of the Promised Land in Isolation.....	79
3.4 The Father’s Abstract Orders Imprisoning People’s Concrete Lives	85
3.5 Longing for Alternative Paradises: The World-As-Home.....	91
CHAPTER 4. VIBRANT “SMALL THINGS” SPEAKING BEFORE THE GLOBALIZING HEGEMONY: ARUNDHATI ROY’S <i>THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS</i>	99
4.1 An Ecological Ethic in Action	99
4.2 The Birth of the Caste Hindu	102
4.3 “Caste Hindus and Caste Christians”: Metaphysical Finality.....	110
4.4 Writer Speaking Before the Globalizing Hegemony	114
4.5 Literary Narrative as Counter-Hegemony	124

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION: A DARWINIAN TURN AND TRUTH AS <i>ALETHEIA</i>	128
WORKS CITED	133
VITA	147
PUBLICATIONS.....	150

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the philosophical, cultural, and political implications of the discourse on humanity and human subjectivity in the time of the Anthropocene that engages a wide geographic and temporal range. Specifically, I examine the ways in which three selected literary works of Daniel Defoe from England, Toni Morrison from America, and Arundhati Roy from India interact with the intricately contested notions of what it means to be a human being sharing the earth's natural habitats with another entity traditionally defined as "other," categorized around species, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, class, and even religion.

I argue that Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, the allegedly first modern novel, inaugurates the reigning understanding of human being as *homo sapiens* represented by Crusoe's rationalized humanity, the essential feature of which has come to engender a threatening condition both for the nonhuman and non-European world; that Morrison's *Paradise* and Roy's *The God of Small Things* each in their own way not only problematize and challenge the overall tenet of Defoe's metaphysical rationality in Euro-American and Anglophone cultures, but also investigate a more secular and thereby alternative idea of human subjectivity as *homo ecologicus*, so as to either (re)construct or restore a vibrant and sustainable community based on a notion of human not as hierarchically superior to "other" entities, but more horizontally and inclusively situated within one larger common habitat called the planet Earth.

Postulating the conviction that one cannot fully understand the aforementioned alternative conceptualization of human being as *homo ecologicus* within the confines of divisive identity politics based upon racial, ethnic, national, religious, gender, and sexual orientation categories, it is a pivotal concern of my thesis to bridge the ostensibly unquestioned bifurcation between human beings and Nature: that between the West and the East, that between male and female, that between

reason and intuition, and that between knowledge and life. In performing these wider ecological inquiries into radical modes of human existence, I place the core value of nonfoundationalist thoughts of Friedrich Nietzsche, Alfred North Whitehead, Martin Heidegger, Michel Foucault, and Edward Said, among many others, in critical dialogue with the study of literature with a view to thematizing the broader question of how a literary narrative as a historical and cultural institution imaginatively reframes our self-consciousness of the precarious condition of the Anthropocene. In conclusion, I argue that the study of literature and other humanities that valorize a vital interconnectedness between humans, objects, and the environment offers the potential for an inexhaustible and enduring habitat in which *homo ecologicus* continues to, in the words of Nietzsche, “remain faithful to the earth,” embracing *homo sapiens*.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION: *HOMO ECOLOGICUS* LIVING IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

God is dead; but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown. —And we—we still have to vanquish his shadow, too.

—Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*

1.1 Reconsidering Nietzsche for the Anthropocene

In 1900 at the dawn of the twentieth century, the world came to bear witness to the death of Friedrich Nietzsche whose life-work challenges the foundations of Western civilization characterized as maintaining the *metaphysical* modes of thought (in the sense of its etymology of the Greek *meta-ta-physica*: thinking the phenomena of being or all differential dynamics of temporality above/beyond the *concrete* earthly world called “nature”) with absolute, fixed, static, and organized knowledge since Plato’s indefatigable defense of “the Idea,” *eidos* in Greek—“the Being of being.” As is evident in Nietzsche’s eloquent statement that “Christianity is Platonism for ‘the people’” (*Beyond Good and Evil* 3), Plato’s metaphysical certainties about the Idea—the Being above/beyond immediate reality *within* the world—were bequeathed to reinforce the values of Christian idealism in European culture preoccupied by the Biblical proposition that “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). In narrative terms, this legacy of metaphysical idealism inscribed in Western civilization offers a reflective occasion to reevaluate human-centered values determined by modern humans as *homo sapiens*, the so-called “wise” and “rational” people who have arrived at this point in history, the Anthropocene (from the Ancient Greek: anthropo, for “human,” and -cene, the standard suffix for “epoch” in geologic time, connoting “new” or “recent”). Insofar as history is concerned, my writing thus engages not only with a natural history of the Earth, 4.5 billion years of natural Earth

history, but also, in Robert Marzec's compact phrase, with "the concept of history in the distinct terms of human understanding and existence—including all languages and systems of meaning, all known written literature, all philosophies and cultures, all forms of art and architecture, all religions and sciences, and anything whatsoever of value to humans" ("Reflections on the Anthropocene Dossier" 585).

As the epigraph opening this chapter illustrates, Nietzsche urges a people in the modern era to "vanquish" not simply all values and norms epitomized as God, but God's shadow, i.e., the hidden ramifications of all philosophical and theological dogmas. As is clear in his declaration of "the Revaluation of All Values" in the preface of *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche's philosophical project is aimed at *reevaluating all values*, the essence of which can be paraphrased as "the proposition 'I, Plato, *am* the truth' (*Twilight of the Idols* 171; Nietzsche's emphasis). A similar treatise is also found in Nietzsche's posthumously published notebooks: "My philosophy an *inverted Platonism*: the farther removed from true being, the purer, the finer, the better it is. Living in semblance as goal" (qtd. in Heidegger, *Nietzsche Volume One* 154; Nietzsche's emphasis). As one can discern here, all values that Nietzsche seeks to reevaluate amount to the metaphysical dualism with which the Western intellectual history has been saturated since Plato. For Nietzsche's philosophical trajectory, the greater focus is thus to undermine in general and eventually subvert Platonism in the sense both that "[t]hroughout the entire history of philosophy Plato's thinking remains decisive in its sundry forms" and that "[m]etaphysics is Platonism" (Heidegger, "The End of Philosophy" 433). In a word, metaphysic is Platonism and vice versa, both of which have lain at the heart of all philosophical and theological dogmas, doxas, and conjectures in European culture.

Granting that Nietzsche formulates an objective called “living in semblance,” highlighting Nietzsche’s affirmation of life, i.e., all temporal dynamics of differential living beings *within* the world, not *above* the world, one can easily consent to Nietzsche’s thesis that “the worst, most durable, and most dangerous of all errors so far was a dogmatist’s error—namely, Plato’s invention of the pure spirit and the good as such” (*Beyond Good and Evil* 3). Nietzsche’s reversal of Platonism thereby fervently refutes the traditional binary dualism conceiving difference as versus: Reality over Appearance or Mind/Soul against Body. From the Nietzschean perspective, since the actual living reality is reduced to what is less significant and thereby even discouraged to exist in this singular and rigid dichotomy of true being and untrue being, it seems necessary to develop a new mode of thought far from both metaphysics and Platonism as well.

Notwithstanding Nietzsche’s endeavors to subvert all the prevailing values of his time, however, the shadow of God, characterized as maintaining the metaphysical idealism, still has fallen upon human beings in the contemporary world, who, armed with a god-like universalizing faculty called *reason*, posit themselves as the primal measure of all things. As the main protagonist’s modes of thought in the novel *Robinson Crusoe* reveal, Crusoe has been more than often described as a representative of humanity with a reason (explored in chapter 2). Consequently, this implies that the logocentric imperatives have been perennial from Greco-Roman ontology through medieval theology, to modern anthropo-logical knowledge production. Considering that in each of its historical phases, the logos, equivalent to speech, logic, reason, the Word of God, functions as a paramount determinant of “the desire for an ultimate origin, telos, centre or principle of truth which grounds meaning” (Wortham 89), Martin Heidegger is correct to characterize this logocentric tendency of Western-European thinking as “ontotheological” (“Kant’s Thesis about Being” 10-11).

In 2000 on the centennial of Nietzsche's death, when the world was entering the start not only of a new century but also of a new millennium, the Nobel Prize-winning atmospheric chemist Paul Crutzen started to promulgate the concept of "the Anthropocene," the term that previously was in informal use by limnologist Eugene Stoermer. In February 2000 at a meeting of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, Crutzen came to use the term as a marker for our current historical epoch—that is, that age in which humankind has begun to act as a geophysical force on the ecology of the planet, supplementing the Holocene (meaning "entirely recent"), which began 11,500 years ago, coined by the nineteenth-century geologist Paul Gervais who adopted the previously used term the Recent Epoch proposed by Charles Lyell.¹ In *The Anthropocene: Key Issues for the Humanities*, Eva Horn and Hannes Bergthaller describe the scene in detail where Crutzen introduced this term in public as follows:

February 2000, Cuernavaca, Mexico. By the afternoon session of the annual meeting of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, the vice chairman has had it. All day long, the atmospheric chemist Paul Crutzen, who won a Nobel Prize for his work on the ozone layer, has been listening to his colleagues lecturing on the profound changes that the Earth is currently undergoing. They keep referring to the present as the Holocene. Crutzen finally interrupts them: "Stop using the word Holocene. We're not in the Holocene anymore. We're in the ... the ... the Anthropocene!" (1)

¹ For further elaboration on the two terms the Recent Epoch and Holocene, see Lewis and Maslin, "The Hidden History of the Anthropocene."

Since Crutzen's public use of the term at this conference in 2000, there has been a plethora of scholarship on the issue of the Anthropocene in general and in particular on the subject of what date would mark the beginning of the Anthropocene.² In 2019, the Anthropocene Working Group (AWG), an interdisciplinary research group, concluded through voting both that the Anthropocene should be treated as a formal new geological epoch and that the Anthropocene started during the Great Acceleration around the mid-twentieth century. As of September 2021, the AWG's formal proposal for the new epoch to the International Commission on Stratigraphy has been in progress. Although the AWG focuses more on the Great Acceleration of the 1950s, I claim that it would be more appropriate to propose as the starting point the advent of the Industrial Revolution around 1800, during which time humans started to accelerate fossil fuel use, contributing to unprecedented anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide.

As Crutzen and other scholars in the study of climate change and global environment have delineated, the concept of the Anthropocene concerns a wide period of time from the latter part of the eighteenth century to the current global ecological occasion, during which time not only a human species (i.e., Human with a capital H) has defined itself as the ultimate, unchanging, universal telos and center, but also the Scientific Revolution has rendered Nature inert and dead through the formulation of the classificatory table and its hegemonic influence. Phrased in a representational sense, the concept of the Anthropocene has gradually prompted apace the study of the humanities (art, literature, history, and philosophy, among many others) not simply to challenge the invisible and attritional ramifications of traditional Humanism with a capital H, but to bridge the ostensibly unquestioned bifurcation between human beings and Nature and between knowledge and life. In other words, Crutzen's and other scholars' interdisciplinary efforts to

² On the debate about what date would serve best as the beginning of the Anthropocene, see Steffen, et al.

formalize and disseminate the concept of the Anthropocene encourage us to address the urgency of climate change so that we may rethink our fragmented modes of thought and life in the post-Enlightenment era, identifiable with the age of *reason*.³

Reading the concept of the Anthropocene as a mirror reflecting the core question of who we are as *homo sapiens*, this dissertation considers the contemporary era as a timelier occasion during which “we have reached the necessity of once more resolving on a reversal and fundamental shift in values, owing to another self-examination of [hu]man, another growth in profundity” (Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* 44; brackets added). Although humankind has been remiss in grappling with the fact that the dominant form of the Human—historically sponsored by rationality and science—has generated an unsustainable form of existence, for both human and nonhuman entities, “we have reached the necessity of once more” reevaluating all the prevailing values “owing to another self-examination of [hu]man, another growth in profundity” in the midst of the current global pandemic of COVID-19. Herein I argue that this task of reevaluating all the prevailing values is then enabled through investigating an alternative conceptualization of human subjectivity not in terms of the transcendental substance *above* the world, but as becoming a fluid and relational entity *within* the world.

³ A few notable discussions on the Anthropocene from multiple disciplines include Paul J. Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer, “The ‘Anthropocene’” (2000); Will Steffen, et al. “The Anthropocene: conceptual and historical perspectives” (2011); Jill Bennett, *Living in the Anthropocene* (2012); Jan Zalasiewicz, et al., “When did the Anthropocene begin? A mid-twentieth century boundary level is stratigraphically optimal” (2015); Roy Scranton, *Learning to Die in the Anthropocene: Reflections on the End of a Civilization* (2015); Adam Trexler, *Anthropocene Fictions: The Novel in a Time of Climate Change* (2015); Jeremy Davies, *The Birth of the Anthropocene* (2016); Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz, *The Shock of the Anthropocene: The Earth, History and Us* (2016); T. J. Demos, *Against the Anthropocene: Visual Culture and Environment Today* (2017); Richard Grusin, *Anthropocene Feminism* (2017); Robert P. Marzec, “Reflections on the Anthropocene Dossier” (2018); Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Anthropocene Time” (2018); Steve Mentz, *Break Up the Anthropocene* (2019); and Eva Horn and Hannes Bergthaller, *The Anthropocene: Key Issues for the Humanities* (2020).

In this context, my dissertation explores philosophical conceptualizations, literary representations, and cultural actualizations of the increasingly popular idea of human subjectivity as *homo ecologicus*. My project pursues the question of how to (re)construct or restore a vibrant⁴ and enduring community based on a notion of the human not as hierarchically superior to “other” entities (other species, other races, and other genders), but more horizontally and inclusively situated with the “others.” This term concretizes a certain unified and convergent human being as a relational, interdependent, and contingent entity radically distanced from the traditional, rationally enlightened, and autonomous one. But it has either been sporadically deployed in popular “citizen science” efforts or narrowly formulated by a very limited number of scholars. “The Futures of *Homo Ecologicus*” is thus a substantial exploration and development of an idea that offers great potential for challenging the reigning understanding of human beings as *homo sapiens*.

In “The Futures of *Homo Ecologicus*,” I consider the potential of this alternative to *homo sapiens* not in an *abstract* context devoid of real-world crises, but against the background of a colonial history that has generated today’s unequal human-environmental contexts—in other words, the disparity of resources and flows of capital between the Global North and West and the Global South and East, which reminds us of another persuasive claim that “the Anthropocene began with widespread colonialism and slavery: it is a story of how people treat the environment and how people treat each other” (Lewis and Maslin 13). Phrased in another way, human-environmental relations become much more complex when we begin to consider the contexts, for instance, of human subjects in the world’s former colonies who have been born into and borne

⁴ The term “vibrant” is resonant with the title of Jane Bennett’s book, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, wherein she theorizes a vital materiality as human and nonhuman forces becoming mutual active participants in events.

along by a long history of dispossession (explored in chapter 4). To develop the concept philosophically, I will look at the significance of the notion of *homo ecologicus* by way of exploring the multilayered implications of what it means to be human as a member of a biological species sharing the planet with other species in the current global ecological occasion; but I will also look at the broader interconnected network of the ideas of “the world-as-home” that would consider the right of sovereignty of dispossessed and marginalized peoples (explored in chapter 3). This is an issue, to put it in the words of Toni Morrison, that concerns “the mass movement of raced populations, beginning with the largest forced transfer of people in the history of the world: slavery” (“Home” 10). Actively communicating the proposition that each member of a biological species has been enmeshed in a convoluted network system, it would be pertinent to insist that scholars working within this system must challenge the invisible and attritional ramifications of the anthropocentric ways of knowing and living. It is then vital to examine the futures of *homo ecologicus* within the terms of the philosophical, the political, and the cultural so as to both interrogate the essence of the current global climate repercussions and envisage an alternative to this broadly cast vulnerability of the Anthropocene. More significantly, in exploring this potential alternative, this study, as is indicative in the title, undertakes a *pluralistic* rather than a monolithic and deterministic approach to the concept of what it means to become human beings as *homo ecologicus*.

1.2 Ecology for Homo Ecologicus

“The Futures of *Homo Ecologicus*” seeks to open new avenues of thought not only in literary studies, but also in literary criticism and theory in that it animates the notion of *homo ecologicus* as an alternative and radical mode of existence for the Anthropocene. It offers a worldview that challenges both intellectuals and artists to rethink the interconnectedness between

humans, objects, and the environment, a constitutive interconnectedness that has become increasingly significant to scholars across the disciplines. The term *homo ecologicus* has been used previously—by Hwa Yol Jung in “Marxism and Deep Ecology in Postmodernity: From Homo Oeconomicus to Homo Ecologicus” (1991), John S. Dryzek in “Foundations for Environmental Political Economy: The Search for Homo Ecologicus?” (1996), and Bill Sharpe in “Homo Ecologicus, Home Economicus, Homo Poeticus” from *Economies of Life* (2010). In crossing the previously confined discussions of the term, my adoption of it considers its broader potential in further engaging creatively and critically with the aesthetic dimension that is foregrounded in the realm of literature.

Prior to articulating the notion of *homo ecologicus*, I should clarify how I use the term ecology or ecological in my writing. Herein I employ the term “ecological” in a more fundamental sense. By ecological or eco I refer to the very essence of the original Greek root word *oikos*, which means “house” or “dwelling place.” The notion of *homo ecologicus* then underscores a critical reflection that concerns a comfortable place to dwell or a blissful space for habitation for all living entities. A similar perspective on the term ecology is also taken by German Philosopher Vittorio Hösle. In *Philosophie der ökologischen Krise* [Philosophy of the Ecological Crisis] he tells us:

Die Ökologie ist, dem Wortsinn nach, die Lehre vom Haus; von den verschiedenen physischen Häusern, in denen der Mensch lebt, hat sie das räumlich größte im Blick, unsere Erde, die heute eine unauflöslische Einheit aus natürlichen und kulturellen Elementen bildet. (18)

Ecology is, in the literal sense, the study of the house; of the Earth, the largest spatially among the various natural houses in which humans live. Today, the earth

forms an indissoluble unity of natural and cultural elements. (18; my English translation)

As Höhle elaborates in this passage, what ecology primarily concerns is the largest place to dwell called the Earth, which combines nature's original elements and human beings' cultural elements. Given his definition, it is fair to say that human beings' culture is unable to stand alone without the existence of nature called the Earth since everything of what we call culture is the one that we human being either manufacture or fabricate, the very material of which originates from nature, the Earth. Thus the Earth becomes an indivisible unit of natural and of cultural elements without which all living entities could not be what they are. The implication being that the term ecology articulated here by Höhle interrogates the question not only of what it really means in a fundamental sense to dwell in the world, but also of *how to live* so as to inhabit this largest place called the Earth in which "the various natural houses" exist for other living entities. Which is to say that it is more about coalescing all the differential forms of life as well as their ways of living into one unity.

Relatedly, in *The Ecological Thought*, Timothy Morton also develops a similar definition of the term ecology as follows:

Ecology includes all the ways we imagine how we live together. Ecology is profoundly about coexistence. Existence is always coexistence. No man is an island. Human beings need each other as much as they need an environment. Human beings *are* each others' environment. Thinking ecologically isn't simply about nonhuman things. Ecology has to do with you and me. (4; Morton's emphasis)

In this description of the term ecology, what Morton underscores is that it invites us to rethink profoundly about coexistence since any entity cannot be alone and because every single entity needs each other for its own survival. Furthermore, one can be made aware here that “[t]hinking ecologically isn’t simply about nonhuman things” because “[e]cology has to do with you and me,” echoing Hösle’s thesis that the Earth and human beings are an inseparable unity. What should be also stressed here is that both Hösle and Morton commonly undertake the question about *how we live together* as an environment for one another. In other words, if we were deeply concerned with the question of how to live together, we would stand a better chance of answering the aforementioned core question of who we are as homo sapiens living at this specific point in history, the Anthropocene. In a word, based on the two definitions of the term ecology above, one can easily arrive at the following two theses: 1) “The ecological thought is the thinking of interconnectedness”; and 2) “The ecological thought doesn’t just occur ‘in the mind.’ *It’s a practice and a process of becoming* fully aware of how human beings are connected with other beings—animal, vegetable, or mineral” (Morton 7; emphasis added).

1.3 Alfred North Whitehead and the Process of Becoming

One of the key philosophers I turn to in developing the concept of *homo ecologicus* living in the Anthropocene is Alfred North Whitehead. While the prominent English theologian Charles Earle Raven concluded in 1953 that Whitehead’s “thought will probably have more influence upon the *future* than that of any recent philosopher” (18; emphasis added), few scholars in the literary field and criticism have yet to study Whitehead’s philosophy of organism (usually known as “process philosophy” or “the philosophy of becoming and connection”)—a nonfoundationalist philosophy that is primarily concerned with articulating an interdependent relationality, as well as

the notion of flux. The tendency has been to understand Whitehead by and large as merely a modernist philosopher heavily concerned with a speculative framework, about which the majority of the deconstructionist discourse would be suspect.

At a superficial level, Whitehead's endeavors to broaden the potential of what he terms speculative philosophy may seem unconcerned with a deconstructive postmodernist thinking radically opposed to absolute forms of knowledge. At a deeper level, however, as Whitehead makes clear in the very first part of *Process and Reality*, within the ideal of his speculative philosophy, "it is presupposed that no entity can be conceived in complete *abstraction* from the system of the universe, and that it is the business of speculative philosophy to exhibit this truth" (3; emphasis added). Phrased in another way, the idea of his speculative philosophy constitutes "its rational side and its empirical side": "the rational side is expressed by the terms 'coherent' and 'logical'"; "[t]he empirical side is expressed by the terms 'applicable' and 'adequate'" (3). And it follows that this well-balanced ideal of speculative philosophy rejects the traditional metaphysical system that relies heavily on abstract-centered rationality and claims instead that "metaphysical categories are not dogmatic statements of the obvious; they are tentative formulations of the ultimate generalities" (8). Simultaneously, this is also why Whitehead emphasizes that "the merest hint of dogmatic certainty as to finality of statement is an exhibition of folly" (xiv).

Within a similar tenor, in interrogating the imbalanced tendency of the traditional philosophical and metaphysical tradition, Whitehead also actively calls into question the interplay between the subject (human being) as the perceiver and the object (Nature) as the perceived with a view to asserting that our contemporary mode of life and thought still remains within the realm of the traditional metaphysical dichotomy (conceiving difference as versus). Namely, our mode of life and thought has still been overshadowed either by modern constitutions (Nature versus Society)

in Bruno Latour's terms, or by the bifurcation of nature (apparent Nature versus causal Nature) in Whitehead's sense.⁵ In this sense, it would be more adequate and timelier to reread Whitehead's process philosophy as an alternative mode of thought offering potentials not only for ecological sustainability, but also for a new understanding of human being as *homo ecologicus*. We may in turn get closer to unraveling the complex dynamics of Western metaphysics and Science, both of which might have become two of the most overlooked factors contributing to the current global ecological crisis at this specific point in history, the Anthropocene.

Process and Reality (1929), Whitehead's magnum opus focusing on what he calls "philosophy of organism" or "process philosophy," is loaded with its own inimitable terms such as "actual entities," "prehension," "ingression," "superject," "eternal object," and "concrecence," to name a few. His use of relatively esoteric terminology in a certain sense can be read as a strategic agenda to render his discussion of true being radically different from that of the European philosophical tradition, the character of which is "that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato" (Whitehead, *Process and Philosophy* 39). Unlike that of the European tradition in and by which identity (*being*) is always already presupposed as the unmoved mover (to use Aristotle's term) against difference (*becoming*), in Whitehead's process philosophy, a true "*being* is constituted by its *becoming*," which is what he calls "the principle of process" (*Process and Reality* 23; emphasis added). In accordance with that principle of process, "*how* an actual entity *becomes* constitutes *what* that actual entity *is*; so that the two descriptions of an actual entity are not independent" (*Process and Reality* 23; Whitehead's emphasis). That is to say, one's own actual entity or actual occasion (true being/ness) is being constituted not by abstract and in/external nothingness (*creatio*

⁵ For further discussion on the question of bifurcation, see both Latour's *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy* (2004) and Whitehead's *The Concept of Nature* (1920).

ex nihilo) nor by “vacuous actuality” (29), but by “the process of becoming” (28). Subsequently, within the principle of becoming, “the unchanging subject of change is completely abandoned” (29).

Insofar as the philosophy of organism is concerned, within Whitehead’s terminology, the notion of “concrecence” would be one of the pivotal terms not only in explaining the aforementioned process of becoming but also in developing the notion of *homo ecologicus*. Originally coming from the Latin *con* (together)-*crēscere* (to grow), “concrecence” means “to grow together.” It is “the name for the process in which the universe of many things acquires an individual unity in a determinate relegation of each item of the ‘many’ to its subordination in the constitution of the novel ‘one’” (*Process and Reality* 211). And it follows that the use of the term “concrecence” places emphasis on the idea that every single moment of actual entity (real thing or true being) is determined by its constant ongoingness and creativity, both of which lie at the heart of process philosophy and at the heart of the ecological worldview.

Such a microcosmic space of concrecence, in which plural and diverse forms of actual entity are being constituted, has constructive affinities with the condition for the possibility of Whitehead’s ecological worldview. In Whitehead’s philosophy based upon the principle of becoming through the inner dynamics of concrecence, as David Ray Griffin points out in the essay “Whitehead’s Deeply Ecological Worldview,” “all forms of life have, roughly, the same inherent value” (83). In the same sense, as Whitehead articulates it in *Science and the Modern World*, one can concede that there exists “the intrinsic worth of the environment” (196). The implication being that it is no more valid to assert that the environment, or Nature (or material), should be read as dead and inert, primarily because all actual entities in the world are constantly

“being present in another entity” (*Process and Reality* 50): meaning, all forms of life, however small they may be or however momentary their life, are being actualized into another form of life.

In championing his organic and ecological modes of thought, Whitehead ends up launching another project, which is somewhat different in degree, but not in kind, than *Process and Reality*. Published only a few months after *Process and Reality*, but presumably geared toward both professional and general audiences, *The Function of Reason* (1929) postulates that transcendently metaphysical Reason has continually presented its own ascendance as inexorable and permanent since Plato’s allegory of the Cave, which harnesses the resources of Cartesian rationality, i.e., the so-called disinterested and pure, subject-oriented rationality. Whitehead names this one-sided rationality the theoretical (or speculative) Reason, which requires and formulates another mode of Reason called the practical (or methodic) Reason. Taking issue with the one-sided understanding of Reason and its overarching application to the *concrete* living beings, Whitehead is wary of the theoretical Reason’s “godlike faculty which surveys, judges, and understands” *above* the world (*The Function of Reason* 9). He further suggests a new discussion of Reason as follows:

In the newer controversy Reason is one of the items of operation implicated in the welter of the process. It is obvious that the two points of view must be brought together, if the theoretical Reason is to be satisfied as to its own status. But much confusion is occasioned by inconsistently wavering between the two standpoints without any coordination of them. There is Reason, asserting itself as above the world, and there is Reason as one of many factors within the world. The Greeks have bequeathed to us two figures, whose real or mythical lives conform to these two notions—Plato and Ulysses. The one shares Reason with the Gods, the other shares it with the foxes. (*The Function of Reason* 9-10; emphasis added)

As it elucidates in this passage, while the traditional discussion of rationality has underscored the theoretical Reason rather than the practical Reason, Whitehead's process thought places more emphasis on the constructive mixture or consolidation of both Reasons: the theoretical Reason *above* the world (as in Kant's Ding-an-sich, i.e., "thing-in-itself") and the practical Reason *within* the world (as in Heidegger's Dasein, i.e., "there being"). More specifically, according to Whitehead, the speculative Reason "seeks with disinterested curiosity an understanding of the world Naught that happens is alien to it. This is the urge of disinterested curiosity," which is associated with "the life-work of Plato" (*The Function of Reason* 37-8). On the contrary, the practical Reason can be understood as "the piecemeal discovery and clarification of methodologies" having to do with "the legend of Ulysses" (37). Applying this to the notion of homo ecologicus, it can be better understood within the welter of these two notions of Reason and fully elaborated with more emphasis on the practical aspect of Reason *within* the world, owing to the fact that human being as a species cannot be separable from its habitat called the Earth.

At a much broader level, in grappling with the metaphysical tendency in the Western philosophy, Whitehead investigates the weakness of Cartesian cosmology as follows:

The Cartesian dualism, whereby the final actualities were divided into bodies and minds, and the Newtonian materialistic cosmology, combined to set a false goal before philosophic speculation. The notion of mere bodies and of mere minds was accepted uncritically. But the ideal of explaining either minds in terms of bodies, or bodies in terms of minds guided speculative thought. [...] The most important effect on the relations of philosophy to natural science was, however, produced neither by Hobbes nor by Berkeley, but by Kant. The effect of his *Critique of Pure*

Reason was to reduce the system of nature to *mere appearance*—or, to use the Greek word, the order of nature is phenomenal. But whether we prefer the word “appearance,” or the word “phenomenon,” the effect is the same. *There can be no metaphysics by scanning the order of nature.* For nature is a mere derivative appearance; and when we consider it, we are remote from any *intuition* which tells of final truths. (*The Function of Reason* 59-60; emphasis added)

As the passage above indicates, Whitehead actively questions the ways in which this dualistic cosmology has developed from Descartes to Kant since Plato, which has ended up being an “antagonism between philosophy and natural science” reluctant to prepare the grounds for effecting “a closer union between speculative thought and scientific method” (*The Function of Reason* 61). More significantly, Whitehead’s critique of dualism continues to problematize Kant’s philosophy as another agnosticism which evidences a specific metaphysical limitation to answering Ding-an-sich, since Kantian Nature as appearance becomes the very opposite to that of Whitehead’s process thought. In *Process and Reality*, he describes this issue as follows:

The philosophy of organism is the inversion of Kant’s philosophy. *The Critique of Pure Reason* describes the process by which subjective data pass into the appearance of an objective world. The philosophy of organism seeks to describe how objective data pass into subjective satisfaction, and how order in the objective data provides intensity in the subjective satisfaction. *For Kant, the world emerges from the subject; for the philosophy of organism, the subject emerges from the world—a ‘superject’ rather than a ‘subject.’* (88; emphasis added)

As this passage demonstrates, Whitehead's philosophy of organism can be read as registering epistemologically the harmony between "the subject I" and "the object Nature," between theoretical Reason and practical Reason, and between knowledge and experience so that his process philosophy can overcome the one-sided discussion of Reason or "subject" characterized as the unmoved logos *above* the world. With regard to this, Whitehead redefines the function of Reason as follows: that "the function of Reason is to promote the art of life," (*The Function of Reason* 4) and that Reason "as a criticism of appetitions" is "a second-order type of mentality. It is the appetite of appetitions," (33) which "civilizes the brute force of anarchic appetitions" (*The Function of Reason* 34).

Applying his redefinition of the function of Reason to an imaginary situation, in the burning desert, human being's body intrinsically desires to possess water which refers to one of the "appetitions" preinstalled in our body. However, if there are more than two human subjects in the desert, two human subjects' appetitions towards the water, i.e., "the brute force of anarchic appetitions" would end in conflict: each would attempt to monopolize the water instead of surviving together. In the worst case scenario, an anarchic destruction would occur. And it follows that "[reason] is the special embodiment in us of the disciplined counter-agency which saves the world" (*The Function of Reason* 34). In this aspect, Whitehead is right to say both that "Reason is the practical embodiment of the urge to transform mere existence into the good existence, and to transform the good existence into the better existence (*The Function of Reason* 28-29); and that "the function of Reason is to promote the art of life" (*The Function of Reason* 4). Ultimately, his definition of Reason as promoting the art of life is closely affiliated with the notion of moral intuition relying upon the practical Reason, which is meant to fuel the critical force of the term "homo ecologicus."

1.4 Thinking with Homo Ecologicus

Embracing the core modes of thought stemming from what Nietzsche and Whitehead have in common, the notion of homo ecologicus can be better elaborated within the terms of the *Übermensch* [overhuman].⁶ We begin to perceive the significance of homo ecologicus by observing what Nietzsche means by the *Übermensch*, which can be articulated as the practical embodiment of the agent who not only undertakes the reevaluation of all values but also challenges the brute force of purely theoretical Reason *above* the world. Phrased bluntly, homo ecologicus is an extended form of life borne along with and building upon the notion of *Übermensch*. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the concept of *Übermensch* is summed up as follows:

I teach you the over[hu]man. [Hu]man is something that shall be overcome. [...]

Behold, I teach you the over[hu]man. The over[hu]man is the meaning of the earth.

Let your will say: the over[hu]man *shall be* the meaning of the earth! I beseech you, my brothers, *remain faithful to the earth*, and do not believe those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes! Poison-mixers are they, whether they know it or not.

Despisers of life are they, decaying and poisoned themselves, of whom the earth is weary: so let them go. (124-125; Nietzsche's emphasis and brackets added)

As is obvious in the passage above, the *Übermensch* tries to live in harmony with the earth since the *Übermensch* celebrates life itself as opposed to *the last human* (Letzter Mensch), whose language of “otherworldly hopes” has either threatened or exhausted the earth. Unlike the ordinary human and the last human, the *Übermensch* seeks to “remain faithful to the earth” so that s/he

⁶ Although most English translations choose the masculine form “overman” for *Übermensch*, I phrase it as “overhuman” in that *Mensch* in German means person/human.

“could not have been born either into the incomprehensible or into the irrational” (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 198) both of which can be no less than the “otherworldly hopes.” In other words, the Übermensch is fully aware of the pitfalls inherent in the “otherworldly hopes,” i.e., “all this teaching of the One and the Plenum and the Unmoved and the Sated and the Permanent,” which are what Nietzsche calls “evil” and “misanthropic” (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 198).

Just as the Übermensch affirms all the earthly values *within* the world, so the homo ecologicus endeavors to overcome the limits and deficiencies of human beings in the post-Enlightenment era who posit themselves as the universal norm to measure all things, which is reminiscent of the metaphysical logos of God that previously was the universal measure of all values. In grappling with vanquishing the shadows of God, the homo ecologicus situates itself within all the differential dynamics of ongoingness and thereby lives not in the substantial world where the “subject” in the Kantian sense seeks to be placed alone *above* the world with pure and complete Reason, but in the relational world where the Nietzschean notion of eternal recurrence lives. Nietzsche describes the essence of eternal occurrence as follows:

Everything goes, everything comes back; eternally rolls the wheel of being.
Everything dies, everything blossoms again; eternally runs the year of being.
Everything breaks, everything is joined anew; eternally the ring of being remains faithful to itself. In every Now, being begins; round every Here rolls the sphere There. *The center is everywhere.* Bent is the path of eternity. (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 329-330; emphasis added)

As this self-explanatory passage illustrates, in the Nietzschean relational and non-hierarchical world in which “the center is everywhere,” full of its never-ending process of becoming, closely

juxtaposed with that of Whitehead to a larger extent, the homo ecologicus lives with *every Now and every Here*, and therefore actively negates all the otherworldly values such as the One, the Unmoved, and the Permanent, all of which are glorified as the absolute Ideals in Platonism. And it follows that thinking with the notion of homo ecologicus, as a largely advanced version of the Übermensch, is synonymous with actualizing the ecological practice to undermine at least and reverse at best not only Platonism but also its various transformations in human history: the religious dogmatism, the pure theoretical Reason (reminiscent of Heidegger's critique of calculative thinking), and the traditional Humanism with a capital H (to be discussed later in this chapter).

Considering how the notion of homo ecologicus is aimed at challenging a metaphysical conjecture that renders inert all the differential dynamics of immediate reality, the notion of homo ecologicus also resonates with the feminine sensibility or what Vandana Shiva calls the feminine principle. In *Staying Alive*, Shiva describes the feminine principle as "a living and creative process" "from which all life arises" in the context of "the ancient Indian world-view in which nature is Prakriti" (xxxiii). Endorsing Shiva's "reclaiming of the feminine principle as a non-violent, non-gendered and humanly inclusive alternative" (xxxv), I argue that my conceptualization of homo ecologicus is profoundly about coexistence and therefore champions an inclusive, unconditional hospitality toward the other (as in Derridean ethics of hospitality). Shiva's reclaiming of feminine principle can be better furthered by the reference to the notion of placental economy (the economy of respect for the other) proposed by Luce Irigaray. In *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, she postulates:

One of the distinctive features of the female body is its toleration of the other's growth within itself without incurring illness or death for either one of the living

organisms. Unfortunately, culture has practically inverted the meaning of this economy of respect for the other. [...] A woman's body in fact gives equal opportunities of life to the boys and to the girls conceived in it through the coming together of male and female chromosomes. (45)

As this passage illustrates, Irigaray's notion of placental economy can be read as embodying a specific biological case of Shiva's definition of the feminine principle as "a living and creative process" "from which all life arises" (*Staying Alive* xxxiii). In a similar tenor, the female body can be also translated into the locus where the Whiteheadian notion of concrescence is actualized, in that one indigenous entity within itself welcomes and accommodates the "other" foreign entity from outside the indigenous one "without incurring illness or death for either one of the living organisms," which is exactly what is meant by the notion of concrescence: *to grow together*.

Likewise, the notion of homo ecologicus with the feminine sensibility evolves itself against the grain of the reigning understanding of human being as homo sapiens indisputably conceived to be rational and autonomous. The notion of homo ecologicus thus suggests that the dominant understating of human being with rationality reveals the extent to which we have been unsophisticated about this matter: the discourse of Humanism with a capital H. Although there has been an enormously long history of the discourse of humanism, Heidegger's discussion of the term humanism can help us elaborate the notion of homo ecologicus since Heidegger addresses the neglected aspects of the central metaphysical tenet embedded in the term humanism, the contested concept of humanism.

In his essay entitled "Letter on Humanism," Heidegger responds to the question posed by a young French colleague Jean Beaufret after the catastrophe of World War II: "*Comment redonner*

un sens au mot 'Humanisme'?” [How can we restore meaning to the word “humanism”?] (“Letter on Humanism” 219). In answering this question, Heidegger argues that the ignored provenance of modern Humanism must be traced far back into ancient Rome, the Roman sense of national belonging and thereby imperial discourse. He claims as follows:

Humanitas, explicitly so called, was first considered and striven for in the age of the Roman Republic. *Homo humanus* was opposed to *homo barbarus*. *Homo humanus* here means the Romans, who exalted and honored Roman *virtus* through the “embodiment” of the *paideia* [education] taken over from the Greeks. These were the Greeks of the Hellenistic age, whose culture was acquired in the schools of philosophy. It was concerned with *eruditio et institutio in bonas artes* [scholarship and training in good conduct]. *Paideia* thus understood was translated as *humanitas*. The genuine *romanitas* of *homo romanus* consisted in such *humanitas*. We encounter the first humanism in Rome: it therefore remains in essence a specifically Roman phenomenon, which emerges from the encounter of Roman civilization with the culture of late Greek civilization. The so-called Renaissance of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Italy is a *renascentia romanitatis*. Because *romanitas* is what matters, it is concerned with *humanitas* and therefore with Greek *paideia*. But Greek civilization is always seen in its later form and this itself is seen from a Roman point of view. The *homo romanus* of the Renaissance also stands in opposition to *homo barbarus*. But now the in-humane is the supposed barbarism of gothic Scholasticism in the Middle Ages. Therefore a *studium humanitatis*, which in a certain way reaches back to the ancients and thus

also becomes a revival of Greek civilization, always adheres to historically understood humanism. (224-225)

As the passage above illustrates, for Heidegger, the historical and cultural significance inscribed in the Romanized late Greek civilization constitutes the actual provenance of the term humanism. Furthermore, it is more significant to point out that when *homo humanus* was understood to be opposed to *homo barbarous*, *homo barbarous* of the time did not mean anything inhumane, uncivilized, or cruel, but simply referred to those who spoke Greek badly or not at all. In other words, what is profound for Heidegger is that the origin of the term humanism has its roots in the Romans' reduction of other non-Greek speaking agency to an inferior or second order status, and this reduction was rooted in and enabled through the metaphysical tradition in the West, the tradition that has misdescribed or misunderstood what it means to be human. In short, Heidegger makes explicit not simply the highly nationalistic and therefore extremely limited nature of the origin of the term humanism, but also the inadequacy of rendering the term humanism transcendently universal and absolute in that:

Every humanism is either grounded in a metaphysics or is itself made to be the ground of one. Every determination of the essence of man that already presupposes an interpretation of beings *without asking about the truth of Being*, whether knowingly or not, is metaphysical. The result is that what is peculiar to all metaphysics, specifically with respect to the way the essence of man is determined, is that it is "humanistic." Accordingly, *every humanism remains metaphysical*. (225-226; emphasis added)

Just as Nietzsche and Whitehead constitute the suspicious reading of mere abstract-centered metaphysics *above* the world, Heidegger's discussion of humanism formulates an overarching critique of its absolute answer-based metaphysical dogmatism that has disregarded for too long the vibrant and polyvalent aspects of human beings *within* the world, human being in-between things (Dasein). In questioning the truth of Being, the notion of homo ecologicus thus lies in the pursuit of undermining the stable edifice of self-gratifying knowledge systems over all different forms of living being in human and non-human cultures under the aegis of the god-like function of abstract rationality largely based upon Platonism in later Greek civilization.

Not surprisingly, the inadequate definition of the term "humanism" by the Romans as transcendental and absolute, was passed on to the humanistic tradition of the Renaissance, in which Man becomes the measure of all things. Given that in this classic antiquity, Man is understood as Man with a capital letter, Man as universal in the sense of Mankind, not man in his radical finitude, one is made immediately aware both that it is not a complete break from the theological medieval world and that it obscures the internalization of the unchanging God and thereby maintains the integrity of the logos, the determining word, the telos. Furthermore, it should also be stressed that the insidiousness of this humanistic tradition continues to prevail in the Enlightenment era, during which Man with a capital letter still posits itself as the primal measure of all things in such a way that the concept of Man in the Western tradition conceals a privileging (European) male in opposition to women (and non-Europeans). One obvious example for this can be observed in our enduring ignorance, whether knowingly or not, of Marie-Olympe de Gouges who actively called into question the French Revolution's Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of 1789. Responding to this white-male-oriented declaration of the "self-evident and unalienable" rights of Man inspired by America's Declaration of Independence, both of which

failed to address the “others” such as women and non-Europeans in its “imagined community,” she published “The Rights of Women and the Female Citizen,” a year earlier than Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792).

Finally, Michel Foucault offers us another way to consider this critique of metaphysical humanism. Foucault’s relatively little-read interview, entitled “Revolutionary Action: ‘Until Now’,” interrogates the meaning of the term humanism in the Western tradition. He argues:

By humanism I mean the totality of discourse through which Western man is told: “Even though you don’t exercise power, you can still be a ruler. Better yet, the more you deny yourself the exercise of power, the more you submit to those in power, then the more this increases your sovereignty.” Humanism invented a whole series of subjected sovereignties: the soul (ruling the body, but subjected to God), consciousness (sovereign in a context of judgment, but subjected to necessities of truth), the individual (a titular control of personal rights subjected to the laws of nature and society), basic freedom (sovereign within, but accepting the demands of an outside world and “aligned with destiny”). In short, humanism is everything in Western civilization that restricts *the desire for power*: it prohibits the desire for power and excludes the possibility of power being seized. The theory of the subject (in the double sense of the word) is at the heart of humanism and this is why our culture has tenaciously rejected anything that could weaken its hold upon us. (221-222; Foucault’s emphasis)

As this passage makes clear, for Foucault the so-called free individual with rationality in the post-Enlightenment era is in fact the subjected subject vis-à-vis power. The implication being

that from a Foucauldian perspective this type of classical humanism translates into no more than a false humanism since rather than granting power to people, it inflicts and represses power, denying freedom in the name of granting people freedom. Unlike this synthetic humanism, the notion of *homo ecologicus* seeks to retrieve a more radical mode of humanism, one that cheerfully acknowledges the absolute radicality of finiteness, the sheer finiteness, the coming or going of a particular individual *bios*-life within one larger enduring living organism of the universe, called *zoē*-life. The notion of *homo ecologicus* is in turn situated within the *zoē*-life where the Whiteheadian notion of concrescence with the feminine sensibility attempts to vanquish the flawed self-contradictory humanism under the shadow of God, the damagingly unchanging logos. Eventually, the notion of *homo ecologicus* recognizes in essence the finiteness of the human condition arguing that the value and worth of life comes in the very awareness both that a single moment of time flees and that since it never remains, like the flash of lightening, the greatest beauty of life lies precisely in its fleetingness, in its passing, both of which enables us to accept Nietzsche's eloquent defense of the world of becoming: "Nothing in existence should be excluded, nothing is dispensable" (*Ecce Homo* 109).

1.5 Chapter Synopsis

Chapter 1 first outlines the ways in which various conceptual phrases recall the notion of *homo ecologicus* accompanied by a profuse array of intellectual repertoire in the Euro-American tradition: Nietzsche's inverted Platonism, the onto-theo-logical tradition, the Anthropocene, Whitehead's process philosophy, capital-H Humanism, among many others. Taking a cue from Nietzsche's endeavors to reevaluate all values, I investigate the question of how to (re)construct or restore a vibrant and enduring community based on a notion of the human not as hierarchically superior to "other" entities (other species, other races, and other genders), but more horizontally

and inclusively situated with “others.” Herein I argue that the term *homo ecologicus* concretizes a certain unified and convergent human being as a relational, interdependent, and contingent entity radically distanced from the traditional, rationally enlightened, and autonomous one. This is in turn meant to emphasize that the contemporary era has become a timelier occasion during which we have reached the necessity of interrogating the core question of who we are as *homo sapiens* living at this specific point in history, the Anthropocene.

In illustrating the futures of *homo ecologicus*, my Introductory unit seeks to challenge the metaphysical dogmatism inscribed in the Western intellectual history. Secondly, it investigates the significance of Whitehead and his process philosophy in the present ecological emergence in line with his critique both of the one-sided discussion of Reason and of the transcendental logos-based subject. More significantly, my investigation of Whitehead clarifies how the notion of “concrecence” in his process philosophy can be extended to develop the notion of *homo ecologicus*. Thirdly, it goes on to explore the significance of my conceptualization of *homo ecologicus* that seeks not only to challenge the invisible and attritional ramifications of traditional Humanism with a capital H, but also to bridge the apparently unquestioned bifurcation between human beings and Nature and between knowledge and life.

Chapter 2 discusses Daniel Defoe’s *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719) so as to investigate the ways in which the novel significantly reveals the undeniable link between rationalized humanity and the environment. My focal point engages one of the relatively little-discussed themes in the history of the reception of *Robinson Crusoe*: the complicit relationship between the metaphysical tenet of the Enlightenment and the ostensibly new, modern, free individual represented by Crusoe’s *rationalized* humanity, the essential feature of

which has come to engender a threatening condition both for the nonhuman and non-European world.

Accordingly, this chapter will focus on two points. The first suggests that *Robinson Crusoe* can be viewed as a rich artifact of cultural representation that exemplifies the extent to which the tenaciousness of metaphysical modes of thought situates *enlightened* humanity within the moment of the transition from the theo-logical imperative to the anthro-po-logical framework. The second concerns this *metaphysically* enlightened humanity that has been integrally linked to the colonization of diverse forms of life—in people and in nature, through the project of racialized (and hierarchical) categorization of human beings as well as through the formulation of the *scientific* classificatory table of the fecundity of the environment (lands, flora, and fauna).

Chapter 3 focuses on an in-depth study of Toni Morrison's *Paradise* (1998) within the broader interconnected network of the ideas of “the world-as-home” that would consider the right of sovereignty of dispossessed and marginalized peoples. It reads the novel as constituting a literary critique of the pitfalls of the abstract-centered idea in America from the very concept of “paradise,” the Edenic utopia alike through the idea of the Promised Land to that of American exceptionalism. This section investigates *Paradise* as a critical reflection not simply on American exceptionalist national subjectivity, but also on Eurocentric knowledge production, both of which exist as being hostile to and in conflict with the notion of *homo ecologicus*. In crossing traditional disciplinary boundaries, it proposes a reading of *Paradise* as Morrison's philosophically well-articulated, aesthetic response to a pivotal *ecological* question. The question fathoms the viability of a real home or the locus of *secular* paradises alike based upon the broader integrated network of the *earthly* notions of “the world-as-home” that would consider the right of sovereignty of unprivileged and silenced peoples not simply in “the wholly racialized society that is the United

States,” but in the world of diasporic inhabitants inevitably shaped by a great confluence of what Morrison calls “exiles, refugees, *Gastarbeiter* [guest workers], immigrants, migrations, the displaced, the fleeing, and the besieged” (“Home” 10; brackets added).

In exploring her endeavors to answer this question, I argue for the necessity of reading Morrison’s *Paradise* as establishing an eco-consciousness that concretizes both her non-essentialist modes of thought as well as her radical modes of existence. I also contend here that Morrison’s eco-consciousness ultimately concerns the process by which we understand the meaning of human beings sharing the planet Earth with other beings under the circumstance of global ecological urgency. In this discussion, I draw upon the core value of nonfoundationalist modes of thought to validate Morrison’s interrogation about the very idea of Paradise—the Eurocentric seductive, otherworldly, and transcendental idea of Paradise. To be more specific, I explore the manners in which Morrison’s originaive and radical commitment to defending the acts of imagining as *becoming* interacts with Whitehead’s process philosophy.

Chapter 4 reads Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* (1997) within the complex dynamics of the metaphysics of imperialism and colonialism in the age of globalization. In it, I explore the relationship between the epistemological violence of the caste system toward the Paravans in Kerala during the colonial era and its conspiratorial liaison with the status quo of Anglophone hegemony in postcolonial India; and I also argue that Roy’s critique of globalization inscribed both in her literary work as well as in her political nonfiction writings further engages the ways in which the living beings of “small river” in India have been exposed to and threatened by toxic pesticides and other chemical substances, the by-products of global capitalism, reducing the ordinary people to the status of “small things”—“disposable” or “expendable” objects. Phrased another way, this chapter examines not simply the ways in which Roy’s *The God of Small Things*

criticizes the caste system and its absurd liaison with the enormous value systems of the West, such as Christianity, Marxism, and nationalism, but also the significance evident in her writing in “speaking for” the ordinary people living in the world of small things, whose histories and voices have been under-represented and often silenced.

By discussing both the task of a writer and storytelling in the age of globalization and thereby placing these discussions in conversation with the non-essentialist modes of thought, my reading of *The God of Small Things* argues that it would be more rewarding to read both Roy’s novel and her other nonfiction writings as forming part of a larger postcolonial ecological manifesto, or at least as puissant and proleptic alternative frames of reference. Ultimately, it helps to unravel both the polyvalent layers of metaphysical thinking not merely in the Western tradition, but in the non-Western world, and the complicit relationships of metaphysical thinking and the prevailing monolithic knowledge system, which might have become the source of the current global ecological crisis.

The Conclusion of this study reinforces the notion of *homo ecologicus* in the context both of a Darwinian turn and the discourse of truth as *aletheia* in ancient Greek thought. Herein I further emphasize that the futures of *homo ecologicus* living in the Anthropocene primarily rely upon the choice we will make in that we are facing the new scientific *truth* called the Anthropocene which asks us to (re)think “the long-term impacts of the globally interconnected mega-civilization we have created, and what kind of world we will bequeath to future generations” (Lewis and Maslin 15-16).

CHAPTER 2. CRUSOE IN THE SHADOW OF ENLIGHTENMENT METAPHYSICS: DANIEL DEFOE'S *ROBINSON CRUSOE*

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

—William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

2.1 The Enlightenment and *Robinson Crusoe*

Prior to the advent of the Enlightenment modality, or in its transitioning stage from the Renaissance, William Shakespeare fashioned a particularly resonant statement in *Hamlet*: the epigraph that opens this chapter demonstrates his intuitive grasp of an ontological intertwinement of human being's abstract-centered philosophy and nature's concrete-oriented events. Although it might be difficult to determine whether Shakespeare consciously arrived at or theoretically formulated such an ecological insight, about three centuries later, Alfred North Whitehead—the philosopher of organism and becoming, altered this epigraph in *The Function of Reason* (1929) as follows: “there are more ideas in heaven and on earth than were thought of in their philosophy” (45). Motivated by what we might anachronistically but proleptically call Shakespeare's “ecological intuition” of the universe, Whitehead acknowledges the validity of Shakespeare's statement in launching a philosophical project to challenge the essence of Reason and thereby to problematize the ways in which “a closed system of thinking” “out of a narrow round of ideas” has been in place for too long, from the medieval theo-logical age to the anthro-po-logical modern world (*The Function of Reason* 44-45).

At the outset, it could be claimed that both thinkers' ecological insights into the exuberant vitality of nature can be read as implying their noticeable skepticism toward the Enlightenment rationality that comes to dominate Europe and then the globe. In line with the general consensus

that the Enlightenment began to emerge during the course of the eighteenth century, this chapter's main concern with the term Enlightenment conceptually (and etymologically) wrestles with what Immanuel Kant introduces and articulates in his short but classic essay "An Answer to the Question: 'What Is Enlightenment?'" (1784). In this essay, Kant defines Enlightenment as human being's emancipation from his/her "self-incurred immaturity" (54). Given this definition of Enlightenment, Kant continues to reinforce his predecessor Descartes's thesis in favor of privileging Reason (the Rational). With that said, Kant convincingly champions human being's teleological maturity grounded upon "the motto of enlightenment: *Sapere aude*," i.e., the courageous use of Reason or Rationality (54). On the contrary, however, Shakespeare's and Whitehead's more ecological approach to the interweaving of the two agents—a human being and nature—resists Kant's assertion that human being's self-enlightened maturity rests upon each individual's independent rational faculty. In challenging Kantian one-sided understanding of subjectivity, as previously discussed, Whitehead goes so far as to state in *Process and Reality*, "The philosophy of organism is the inversion of Kant's philosophy. [...] For Kant, the world emerges from the subject; for the philosophy of organism, the subject emerges from the world—a 'superject' rather than a 'subject'" (88).

More crucially still, Shakespeare's and Whitehead's ecological emphasis further suggests that the Enlightenment's (blind) faith in this rationality-based subjectivity, paradoxically glorified as unquestioned truth, has been prevalent and thereby legitimized to such a degree that it facilitated the condition not only for the literary treatment of the inauguration of this new, inchoate subjectivity, but also for the later historical and canonical meanings of Daniel Defoe's writings around the year 1719: a date referred to by many as the modern novel's "official birthday" (Robert

3).⁷ Defoe's *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719),⁸ the first volume of his *Robinson Crusoe* trilogy, is the focus of the subsequent portion of this chapter in that the novel begins to reveal the undeniable link between rationalized humanity and the environment.⁹ This specific eighteen-century novel has been consistently revisited and reexamined by a countless number of writers and critics from a great many interdisciplinary perspectives based on the socio-historical, the national, the post/colonial, the global, and others. My focal point, however, engages one of the relatively little-discussed themes in the history of the reception of *Robinson Crusoe*: the complicit relationship between the metaphysical tenet of the Enlightenment and the ostensibly new, modern, free individual represented by Crusoe's *rationalized* humanity, the essential feature of which has come to engender a threatening condition both for the nonhuman and non-European world.

In this context, my extensive reading of *Robinson Crusoe* calls into question the convoluted network of philosophical, ecological, and historical issues surreptitiously but widely registered in and outside the novel: the tenacious metaphysical system of thinking and its multilayered implications of the political as well as of the ethical from eighteenth-century England to the current global ecological occasion. Accordingly, I will focus on two points. The first suggests that *Robinson Crusoe* can be viewed as a rich artifact of cultural representation that exemplifies the

⁷ Although literary scholar Marthe Robert confirms that Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* can be considered one of the first modern novels since it represents "very clearly the tendencies of the mercantile middle class which emerged from the English Revolution," she also argues that Miguel de Cervantes's *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha* (1605) ought to be considered the first modern novel within the context of European modernity (3-20 and 19n1). On the contrary, Homer Obed Brown investigates the question of the origin of the modern novel so as to claim that the canonization of individual works such as Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* could have been enabled by institutionalizing it retrospectively later in the nineteenth century, not spontaneously in the eighteenth century (ix-xxiii and 1-22).

⁸ Hereafter, the original title of the novel is abbreviated as *Robinson Crusoe*, and all subsequent citations from *Robinson Crusoe* will be made by page numbers in parentheses.

⁹ For an illuminating discussion of the errant publishing history of *Robinson Crusoe* trilogy, see Free.

extent to which the tenaciousness of metaphysical modes of thought situates *enlightened* humanity within the moment of the transition from the theo-logical imperative to the anthropo-logical framework. The second concerns this *metaphysically* enlightened humanity that has been integrally linked to the colonization of diverse forms of life—in people and in nature, through the project of racialized (and hierarchical) categorization of human beings as well as through the formulation of the *scientific* classificatory table of the fecundity of the environment (lands, flora, and fauna).¹⁰

2.2 Crusoe in the Shadow of Metaphysics

Unlike the later interdisciplinary literary criticism on *Robinson Crusoe*, the emphasis of the earlier responses to the novel focused by and large on honoring Defoe as the first English writer who “created one of the most familiar and resonant myths of modern literature” (Drabble 259). Considering that some scholars even coined the terms “the Crusoe phenomenon” (James 1) and “the *Robinson Crusoe* Syndrome” (Marzec 129, 1), it is fair to say that the early reviewers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries rested to a great degree on praising *Robinson Crusoe* as an exemplary achievement of modern individual subjectivity, the rational agent under the aegis of the grand narrative of Enlightenment: the undaunted assertion of progress, universal reason, and others. For instance, the eighteenth-century French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau claims in *Emile* that Defoe’s book “provides the most felicitous treatise on natural education” since *Robinson Crusoe* “will serve as a test of the condition of our judgment [reason] during our progress” (qtd.

¹⁰ As previously discussed, the term metaphysics or metaphysical in this chapter mainly refers to Heidegger’s sense of the term, the one that comes from the etymology of the Greek *meta* (above, after, and beyond)-*ta* (plural of *the*)-*physica* (phenomena of being, i.e., all deferential dynamics of temporality).

in Shinagel 262); the nineteenth-century Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge sees Crusoe both as “a representative of humanity in general” and as “the universal man” (qtd. in Shinagel 268).

Somewhat reminiscent of these earlier readings, about a century later literary scholar Ian Watt characterizes the distinct nature of *Robinson Crusoe* in his classic study *The Rise of the Novel* (1957) as an archetype of “the rising tide of individualism” (92). In particular, in the chapter “‘Robinson Crusoe’, Individualism and the Novel,” Watt argues that various significant historical conditions give rise to the emergence not only of the modern novel but also of *Robinson Crusoe*, both of which are, in large measure, concerned with the prominent enhancement of “the individual’s freedom of choice” (61) based upon religious individualism (the Protestant Reformation), political individualism (the Glorious Revolution of 1688), and economic individualism (capitalist man or *homo economicus*) (60-92). Subsequently, it could be said that the aforementioned praises are to a larger degree engaged in establishing the foundational notion of individual independence, autonomy, and self-sufficiency, all of which have supposedly characterized the dominant culture of the modern world. In short, Watt’s provocative description of the rise of both the modern novel and *Robinson Crusoe* as a byproduct of a “vast transformation of Western civilization since the Renaissance” (31) with the correspondent new literary concerns has led the study of the novel to actively discuss the modern novel as a historical artifact.¹¹

Recalling the abundant theories of and approaches to the novel as a historical and symbolic form, later readings and criticism have for the most part observed the aforementioned multilayered

¹¹ A few of the illuminating scholarly achievements on the theory of the novel over the past century, besides the aforementioned Ian Watt’s *The Rise of the Novel* and Marthe Robert’s *Origins of the Novel*, include Georg Lukács’s *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essays on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*, Mikhail M. Bakhtin’s *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, Fredric Jameson’s *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Michael McKeon’s *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740*, and Franco Moretti’s *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*.

complexity in *Robinson Crusoe* through innovative theories and methodologies, which have been articulated in a vast amount of creative writers' literary recreations—works such as Nardine Gordimer's *Friday's Footprint* (1960), Michele Tournier's *Friday* (1969), Samuel Selvon's *Moses Ascending* (1975), Derek Walcott's *Pantomime* (1980), and J. M. Coetzee's *Foe* (1987)—and of literary critics' theses. However, despite such innovative and interdisciplinary efforts, what has been largely unacknowledged in much of the discussion of *Robinson Crusoe* is a more extensive reading of the novel from ecological modes of thought, the modes of thought that have challenged us to rethink a constitutive interconnectedness between humans, objects, and the environment.

One of the pivotal interpretations of *Robinson Crusoe* rendered more clearly through ecological reading lies in a deeper and more extended articulation of the degree to which the Western philosophical tradition functions as the determinant vehicle for constituting the triad of epistemological, cultural, and scientific institutions: Enlightenment metaphysics, the modern literary institution of the novel, and the classificatory table in eighteenth and nineteenth century England as well as Europe. Thus, by way of exploring these seemingly tenuous, but essentially indissoluble connection between the aforementioned three components, we may begin to fully disclose the extent to which *Robinson Crusoe* obscures the damaging effect of the enduring and pervasive metaphysical tenet in the West since Plato. This is precisely because the actual but ignored provenance of the Enlightenment humanist discourse is firmly rooted in the post-Socratic philosophical tradition. In other words, it would take a new level of significance to reread *Robinson Crusoe* in the terms of metaphysical thinking, the value of which rests in unveiling the latent relations between the dominant interpretation of the novel and the under-examined aspect of it, even if it may seem more difficult and unfeasible to undertake such an extensive philosophical and historical task in the space of one chapter.

As briefly aforementioned, in the Western philosophical tradition, the conceptual phrase “metaphysical thinking,” as Heidegger elucidates in “What Is Metaphysics?,” derives from the Greek *meta-ta-physika* (106). Parsed out etymologically, “metaphysics” oversees or surveys “the phenomena of being” (*phusis*) from one fixed point “above” (*meta*) the *concrete* world so as to privilege “Identity” over “Difference” as well as to colonize “Many” for “One.” In a word, the essence of metaphysical system of thinking takes precedence over the immediately temporal and mutable world in which all forms of life inhabit. Not incidentally, this dogmatically overarching re-presentation of the “temporal dynamics of different living beings” (*phusis*) from “above” or “beyond” (*meta*) its original place has maintained a rather inflexible tradition in the West prior to the emergence of contemporary deconstruction and ecocriticism.¹² And it follows that this *longue durée* of the Western philosophical trajectory has been sponsored for too long by the post-Socratic thought of stasis and immutability, over-relying upon the metaphysics of a dualistic mindset. For within the realm of the post-Socratic philosophy characterized as “a series of footnotes to Plato” (*Process and Reality* 39), to use Whitehead’s famous phrase, the temporal dynamics of vibrant living entities are automatically or eventually reduced to the label of “Appearance” which is deemed not “Reality,” nor the Real world, the Real world that must belong to the category of “Idea,” *Eidos* in Greek—“the Being of being.”¹³

¹² In my writing, “deconstruction” refers to Heideggerian sense of the term *Destruktion* that “must be understood in the strong sense as *de-struere*, ‘dismantling’ [*Ab-bauen*], and not as devastation” (Heidegger, *Four Seminars* 42). For more detailed notes on the term *Destruktion*, see Derrida’s “Letter to a Japanese Friend” and *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation*; Iain Thompson’s “Ontotheology?: Understanding Heidegger’s *Destruktion* of Metaphysics.”

¹³ As previously explored, in *The Function of Reason*, Whitehead contends and wrestles with the pitfalls of the abstract-centered interpretation of beings, philosophically derived from Plato whose forceful dualistic cosmology (mere Appearance versus true Being) generates what Whitehead terms “the godlike faculty” of Reason and the theoretical/speculative Reason or the Reason of Plato, “asserting itself as *above* the world” completely contrary to the practical Reason “as one of many factors *within* the world” (9-11; emphasis added).

Within a similar conceptual framework, if we take into account the deconstructionist thinkers' valid definition of the Western metaphysical tradition as "logocentric" (for instance, Jacques Derrida's critique of logocentrism, following Heidegger),¹⁴ we perceive that this metaphysical idealism has developed or transformed its inaugural authority in various parlances in the history of Western philosophy and culture: a logocentric imperative from Greco-Roman ontology through medieval theology, to modern anthropological knowledge production. In each of its historical phases, the logos, i.e., "thing itself," "word," and "reason" or "logic," serves as a major determinant of, in Simon Morgan Wortham's words, "the desire for an ultimate origin, telos, centre or principle of truth which grounds meaning" (89), which is how Heidegger characterizes the history of Western-European thinking as "ontotheological" (10-11).¹⁵

Immersed in this logocentric pursuit, the moment of writing *Robinson Crusoe* is the British juncture of the Enlightenment, the moment when the anthropo-logical framework becomes evident and increasingly prevalent. Under this anthropo-logos premise, capital-M Man (i.e., the Human) becomes the logos: the ultimate, unchanging, and universal Man as telos and center in such a way that Crusoe is quite commonly characterized in the novel as "the universal man." This is to say that *Robinson Crusoe*'s canonical reputation needs to be understood not in terms of the perfectly enlightened modern new subject, but in terms of the anthropo-logical transformation of the theo-

¹⁴ Derrida's deconstructionist undertaking calls into question the logocentric tendencies of metaphysical thinking buttressed by two particularly overriding notions: the notion of totality and essence. See Derrida's *Of Grammatology*.

¹⁵ With regard to the question of the perennial metaphysical (logocentric) imperatives, in *Nietzsche Volumes Three and Four*, Heidegger states "metaphysics determines the history of the Western era" in that "Western humankind, in all its relations with beings, and even to itself, is in every respect sustained and guided by metaphysics" (205). For an eloquent discussion of the relationship of Heidegger's *Destruktion* with the Western ontotheological tradition, see also William V. Spanos' "Martin Heidegger and Literature: A Preface" and "The Ontological Origins of Occidental Imperialism."

logos when medieval Catholicism gives way, in the context of the Reformation, to Protestantism: Protestant dissenters opposed to Popery, Roman Catholicism.

This ongoingness of metaphysical logos then suggests that if we look more closely at how Crusoe understands his objective world in general and the island's ecosystem in particular, it becomes difficult to see Crusoe as a mature and free individual that represents "the universal man" "during our progress." As is indicated in numerous scenes of *Robinson Crusoe*, the novel's protagonist does not fully embody the ideal exteriority of universal humankind with his/her own individual rationality perfectly free from the previous theo-logical principle of God. In articulating the experience of Crusoe on the island, what Defoe is considering is not so much the word of God, but the way Providential history manifests itself in the human's world and in his/her working: Crusoe is in transition to his anthropo-logical interpretation of being. In other words, he appears to remain in interregnum, still being called into God and His Providence as if these were programmed into Crusoe's humanist rationality; part of this is illustrated in the following passage:

I had a dismal Prospect of my Condition, for as I was not cast away upon that Island without being driven, as is said, by a violent Storm quite out of the Course of our intended Voyage, and a great Way, viz, some Hundreds of Leagues out of the ordinary Course of the Trade of Mankind, I had great Reason to consider it as a Determination of Heaven, that in this desolate Place, and in this desolate Manner I should end my Life; the Tears would run plentifully down my Face when I made these Reflections, and sometimes I would expostulate with myself, Why Providence should thus compleatly ruine its Creatures, and render them so absolutely miserable, so without Help abandon'd, so entirely depress'd, that it could hardly be rational to be thankful for such a Life. (46-47)

As the novel's narrative develops after the shipwreck, this ostensibly mature, rationalized narrator becomes increasingly anxious over his desperate state, describing the island as "dismal unfortunate Island," "the Island of Despair" (52), and even as "Prison" (71). For one thing, if Crusoe's description of the island could be read as a modern version of Plato's allegory of the Cave, wherein Plato describes all things and lives in a cave as the ephemeral, the wild, the dark, and therefore the unreliable, then it could be said that Crusoe's prison-like condition exemplifies the extent and tenaciousness of metaphysical *modus operandi* of the post-Socratic idealism. In short, the formation of Crusoe's subjectivity can be understood as dependent on and backed by the traditionally established, simple, dualistic categorizations of the world: Light/Truth and Dark/Nature or Mind and Body, etc.

Moreover, Crusoe is "in too much Discomposure of Mind" (51), since there has been no "Prospect" on his unfavorable condition (66, 82, 90, 101), that has him "lock'd up with the Eternal Bars and Bolts of the Ocean, in an uninhabited Wilderness, without Redemption" (83). However, not unexpectedly, somewhere along the way Crusoe begins to move past this desperate status and feels "compos'd" as he keeps writing a journal in which he, by dealing with and managing ungraspable time, finally comes to give a proper order to the previously wild temporality; he has become "more compos'd" self "for a time" (61) as he comes to gradually *rationalize* the thing(s) on the island. Crusoe's god-like rationality culminates in the following scene:

At the End of this March I came to an Opening, where the Country seem'd to descend to the West, and a little Spring of fresh Water which issued out of the Side of the Hill by me, run the other Way, that is due East; and the Country appear'd so fresh, so green, so flourishing, everything being in a constant Verdure, or Flourish

of *Spring*, that it looked like a planted Garden. I descended a little on the Side of that delicious Vale, surveying it with a secret Kind of Pleasure, (tho' mixt with my other afflicting Thoughts) to think that this was all my own, that I was King and Lord of all this Country indefeasibly, and had a Right of Possession; and if I could convey it, I might have it in Inheritance, as compleatly as any Lord of a Mannor in *England*. (73; italic in the original)

As the passage above illustrates, Crusoe proclaims himself “King and Lord” of the island—his country and homeland for twenty-seven years—and so is automatically able to hold “a Right of Possession”; it follows then that with his “secret Kind of Pleasure,” Crusoe is “surveying” his country as if it were “a planted Garden” (73), echoing God and His creation of the Garden of Eden in the *Old Testament*’s Book of Genesis. Phrased in more religious and epistemological terms, Crusoe as a *humanized* God looks down on the “things” or the “phenomena of beings” (*phusis*) from “above” (*meta*), i.e., a fixed and unmovable Archimedean point from “above.” Accordingly, Crusoe has fashioned his modes of thought and life into what the metaphysical interpretation of being dictates from the first night on the island when he ends up sleeping in the tree (36) and remains, as Robert Marzec points out, “metaphysically above” due to his uncontrollable anxiety over “fearful” and “unknown space” (“Enclosures” 130).

Oddly enough, however, his seemingly everlasting state of discomposure ends quite abruptly, as God or the Providential principle begins to play a role in shaping and constructing Crusoe’s identity as a “subjected subject” to his higher Subject God, to use the Althusserian term that indicates an individual’s subject-status and its functioning as categorized and hailed by another higher form of authority. As explicitly expressed in the scenes around his dreaming a “terrible

dream” (64), taking the Bibles from the ship (69), and thanking God profusely (70), his condition of despondency dissipates when the aforementioned series of events invites Crusoe to determine whether or not his life on the island is sustainable, which is largely dependent on the degree to which Crusoe’s “being interpellated” by God, in the Althusserian sense, has grown and developed.¹⁶

Granting that the entire process of his recuperating the lost prospect in a hopeless space in large measure echoes the ways in which God conducts His affairs with the world in the Bible, one can concede that Crusoe’s verisimilitudinous humanist rationality is, to apply Althusser’s term, “always-already” built in and predetermined by God’s Word (theo-logos)—His Providential design or “Intimations of Providence” (*Robinson Crusoe* 127). On one level, it appears that he is caught in-between, oscillating between the theo-logos and the anthro-po-logos; upon closer inspection, however, his presence is undoubtedly directed and shadowed by the aforementioned logocentric imperative: the metaphysical interpretation of being that is still running through him. On another level, Crusoe’s *rationalized* subjectivity, championed by Kant and the earlier reviewers of the novel, Ian Watt included, can be rephrased as a “theologos-incurred” subject, quite contrary to Kant’s term of “self-incurred” immature subject. Phrased otherwise, it is fair to claim that the endeavors to establish the free will of the individual fail to prove the actual existence of the same, in that the modern, *enlightened* human subject remains mired in the metaphysical or logocentric trap.

¹⁶ For further elaboration of the notion of interpellation, see Althusser’s “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Toward an Investigation).”

2.3 Enclosures: Rationalization of the Land

Not surprisingly, the persistence of the metaphysical imperative transforms its primary modality to territorialize other domains of the time: the socio-political and the scientific. In concrete terms, the transcendental logos of Enlightenment metaphysics leads not only to the British parliamentary act of enclosure, but also to the invention of the classificatory table, both of which are contemporaneous with the writing and publication of *Robinson Crusoe*. These two distinctive socio-political and scientific events in seventeenth and eighteenth century England and Europe are aligned with crucial junctures in Western history, in that the logocentric principle of Enlightenment metaphysics serves as a new paradigmatic framework that renders the *concrete* vitality of various forms of living beings as dead and inert by reinforcing the Cartesian dualistic division between mind and body, culture and nature, knowledge and life, etc.—the dichotomy that has been fundamental to Western thought since Plato.

As ecological feminist Vandana Shiva argues, since the first priority of the Enlightenment was focused on “the sacredness of two categories: modern scientific knowledge and economic development,” the empirical objective knowledge of the time has come to *rationalize* the world for the purpose of utilizing it to place monetary value on human and non-human life in all its diversity (xiv). In a word, the logos remaining in interregnum, previously up in heaven, becomes internalized within the humanist world in the Enlightenment era: the previous theo-logos after all comes to serve as the principle of economic causality with the emergence of anthropological science. In what follows, I examine another set of complicit interrelationships between the essence of Enlightenment metaphysics and the colonization of diverse forms of life—in people and in nature—on the island that *Robinson Crusoe* articulates.

Inferred from the fact that the term “Enclosure” appears numerous times in the text, Crusoe becomes familiarized with this practice to the extent that he treats the land and non-human life on

the island as a useful and productive object.¹⁷ One of the preliminary tasks that Crusoe undertakes after the shipwreck, in his efforts to escape or control an indefinable fear stemming from the “dismal unfortunate Island” (52), is to perform the practice of enclosure. In using the ladder to climb to the top of the island and survey it (59), Crusoe begins to domesticate not only animals (goats, chickens, and cattle) on the island, but also the land itself “by making an Enclosure” (85) with hedge and fence boundaries. This is evidenced in the following passage:

During this Confinement in my Cover, by the Rain, I work'd daily two or three Hours at enlarging my Cave, and by Degrees work'd it on towards on Side, till I came to the Out-Side of the Hill, and made a Door or Way out, which came beyond my Fence or Wall, and so I came in and out this Way; but I was not perfectly easy at lying so open; for as I had manag'd my self before, I was in a perfect Enclosure, whereas now I thought I lay expos'd, and open for any Thing to come in upon me; and yet I could not perceive that there was any living Thing to fear, the biggest Creature that I had yet seen upon the Island being a Goat. (76)

In fact, as Karl Marx's *Capital* delineates in the chapter entitled “The Expropriation of the Agricultural Population from the Land,” the custom of enclosing the land has a long history in England. In said chapter, Marx not simply provides a conspectus of the long history of enclosures, but further investigates how the combination of the take-off of capitalism and the growing capitalist bourgeoisie class exploits the peasantry class, who had previously used the land communally for the purpose of survival, but would soon be excluded from and thrown out of the

¹⁷ For Crusoe's frequent use of the term “Enclosure,” see the following pages in the text: 46, 59, 76, 85, 106, 107, 111, 113, 116, 118, 120, 121, 149.

commons, their present habitat. The emerging bourgeoisie capitalists sought to convert “the land into a merely commercial commodity” (885) and eventually demanded that the legislature ensure the land for its highest productivity and utility. The laws were named Bills for Inclosure of Commons and were enacted by Parliament between 1604 and 1914 (“Enclosing the Land”), the laws Marx describes as “the Parliamentary form of the robbery” (885), primarily because the enclosure of communal lands grants the capitalist landowners the people’s land as private property: the anthropo-logos of Enlightenment metaphysics functions as the principle of economic causality in the name of “utility” and “development.”

Inaugurated by Peter Hulme’s comprehensive and elegant arguments on the complexities of colonial discourse in *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (1986), more recent readings of *Robinson Crusoe* have attempted to investigate the ways in which the novel addresses the issue of Defoe’s treatment of modernity within the context of colonialism and the history of the novel.¹⁸ Nevertheless, however, many recent discussions to a larger degree seem to not recognize the broader overlapping philosophical, cultural, and political contexts, in a way that ultimately reveals an absence of the aforementioned ecological modes of thought profoundly concerned with the natural right of all subjects-of-a-life to strive for their own sovereignty, equally reserved for both human and nonhuman entities.

Based on such an ecological ethos, Marzec’s “Enclosures, Colonization, and the *Robinson Crusoe* Syndrome” (2002) engages the complicit nexus of the metaphysical modes of enclosure

¹⁸ The more recent readings of *Robinson Crusoe* include Christopher Loar, “How to Say Things with Guns: Military Technology and the Politics of *Robinson Crusoe*” (2006) ; Kevin Seidel, “Beyond the Religious and the Secular in the History of the Novel” (2007); Daniel Carey, “Reading Contrapuntally: Robinson Crusoe, Slavery, and Postcolonial Theory” (2009); Ning Ma, “When Robinson Crusoe Meets Ximen Qing: Material Egoism in the First Chinese and English Novels” (2009); Lynn Festa, “Crusoe’s Island of Misfit Things” (2011); Michael Gavin, “Real Robinson Crusoe” (2013); Wolfram Schmidgen, “The Metaphysics of *Robinson Crusoe*” (2016).

project at home (Parliament Acts of Enclosure) and its imperial advances to establish British overseas colonies of America, Africa, and India.¹⁹ In order to unravel the knotted strands of the enclosure movement and its metaphysical “system of supervision” (“A Genealogy of Land” 138) inscribed in both of Daniel Defoe’s works, *Robinson Crusoe* and *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, Marzec problematizes the enclosure movement in England and its extended complicity between the cultural production of the modern novel and the British imperial discourse, as well as its praxis, utilized *en masse* in compartmentalizing land first and then classifying “the ‘uncivilized’ and ‘wild’ indigenous inhabitants of the Americas, Africa, India, and the East Indies,” and elements of its domestic population at home (“A Genealogy of Land” 139).

Tellingly, Marzec’s ecological (and deconstructionist) reading aims to interrogate the gravest problem, the one that is implied in the taken-for-granted assumption that the great majority of the modern population from the age of the Enlightenment to the current age of globalization would be willing to “accept the essence of ‘land,’ and its various formations as self-evident” without (re-)awakening “an ontological understanding of land” (“Notes toward an Ontology of Land” 2). That is to say: to invoke the Gramscian concept of hegemony, which is harder to perceive than ideology since it is concerned with “a lived system of meanings and values” (Williams 110), we merely acknowledge the truth of land without raising any critical inquiries about it. We simply grant what Gramsci called “spontaneous consent” (Gramsci 12) to the truth of land without posing a critical question about the genealogy of land that would have been acknowledged at a certain

¹⁹ In Marzec’s book *An Ecological and Postcolonial Study of Literature: From Daniel Defoe to Salman Rushdie*, the first chapter “Enclosures, Colonization, and the *Robinson Crusoe* Syndrome: Notes toward an Ontology of Land” is a slightly longer version of the original essay “Enclosures, Colonization, and the *Robinson Crusoe* Syndrome: A Genealogy of Land in a Global Context” published in *boundary 2* in 2002. Hereafter, his original 2002 work is cited as “A Genealogy of Land” and 2007 work as “Notes toward an Ontology of Land.”

historic point as private (or public) property.²⁰ As I will discuss further in detail, from the period of the Enlightenment up until the present globally *enclosed* planet, we are not meant to inquire, due to some *structural* reason, both when and where the act of partitioning land began to claim a certain area of land or territory belonging to a specific individual or community, as well as who was granted a particular subjectivity to draw countless borders and lines on an *actual* land.

With regard to the issue of this widely, yet uncritically, acknowledged practice of drawing various types of exclusionary boundaries, we must first address the concept of *tableaux vivants* [living pictures] or the classificatory system as observed by Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*. Although Foucault never mentions Defoe or *Robinson Crusoe* in his works, many of his points can be broadened to explore Crusoe's complicit acknowledgement of as well as unconscious advocacy for the British imperial project. Throughout his works, Foucault elucidates the complicit relationship inherent in power and knowledge as embodied in his careful wording in "power-knowledge relations" (28) with a dash, not a slash: meaning, he takes issue with not merely the ways in which power produces reality, but the extent to which knowledge is committed to constituting that reality in any given disciplinary society since the Enlightenment era. In particular, in the chapter "Docile bodies" he calls for a broad (re-)investigation of how the modern disciplinary society emerged in tandem with the so-called classificatory system in the eighteenth century. He states:

The first of the great operations of discipline is, therefore, the constitution of
'tableaux vivants,' which transform the confused, useless or dangerous multitudes

²⁰ With regard to the relationships of hegemony and consensus, Antonio Gramsci elucidates in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* that "'spontaneous' consent [is] given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production" (12).

into ordered multiplicities. The drawing up of ‘tables’ was one of the great problems of the scientific, political and economic technology of the eighteenth century: how one was to arrange botanical and zoological gardens, and construct at the same time rational classifications of living beings; how one was to observe, supervise, regularize the circulation of commodities and money and thus build up an economic table that might serve as the principle of the increase of wealth; how one was to inspect men, observe their presence and absence and constitute a general and permanent register of the armed forces; how one was to distribute patients, separate them from one another, divide up the hospital space and make a systematic classification of diseases: these were all twin operations in which the two elements—distribution and analysis, supervision and intelligibility—are inextricably bound up. In the eighteenth century, the table was both a technique of power and a procedure of knowledge. It was a question of organizing the multiple, of providing oneself with an instrument to cover it and to master it; it was a question of imposing upon it an ‘order.’ (148)

As is obvious in this passage, for Foucault, “the first of the great operations of discipline is, therefore, the constitution of ‘*tableaux vivants*,’ which transform the confused, useless or dangerous multitudes into ordered multiplicities” (148). As Foucault asserts, “the drawing up of ‘tables’ was one of the great problems of the scientific, political and economic technology of the eighteenth century,” in that the “tables” are grounded upon the totality of a society that is compulsively obsessed with “*rational* classifications of living beings” (148). In other words, the constitution of the classificatory table has come to play a significant role in constructing the so-

called disciplinary society since the Enlightenment era, a disciplinary society devoted to administering, supervising, and policing the individuals (or the multitude), rendering each member of this society “docile” and “useful” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 138).

Analogously, this Enlightenment age is also convinced that diverse forms of life in nature must be classified and arranged into its own proper place that the “tables” hold or project and upon which physicians and natural scientists define, categorize, and compartmentalize natural beings in the world (for instance, Carl von Linné’s taxonomy, Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon’s law, Georges Léopold Cuvier’s anatomy of the human body, and Boissier de Sauvages’s framework for the classification of diseases). More significantly, the term “living pictures” as such can be an oxymoron. On the surface, the appearance that the pictures are allowing life may seem appropriate; however, that life is just below the surface contained by its transformation into picture, into a table, into a spatial image in that the picture just imitates or mocks all types of organic and real beings as a still life.

Applying this to *Robinson Crusoe*, it would not seem implausible to assume, then, that the endeavors the aforementioned physicians and natural scientists pursue to transform all forms of life into picture, into a table, the table that imitates or mocks all types of organic and vibrant beings as a still life are projected onto the character of Crusoe’s treatment of the nonhuman entities (animals and the land) that he confronts. As is evident in the transformation that takes place through all of Crusoe’s activities on the island, the establishment of the table and its unconditional application to all forms of living systems become integral to Crusoe’s *rationalization* of the island, a rationalization through which he transforms the seemingly confused and dangerous time, space, and his stocks into ordered and secured status. This is undeniably evidenced in the following scene where Crusoe gives a brief statement of reason and rationality before he begins to keep a journal:

So I went to work; and here I must needs observe, that as *Reason* is the Substance and Original of the Mathematicks, so by stating and squaring every thing by *Reason*, and by making the most *rational Judgment* of things, every Man may be in time Master of every mechanick Art. (50-51; emphasis added)

2.4 Colonization of Life: Friday or the Indigenous Islander

In addition to noting Crusoe's rationalization of the island based on the concept of the classificatory table, it is also imperative to note that the same classificatory table of the fecundity of flora and fauna among different continents runs, *mutatis mutandis*, parallel to the project of racialized classification of human beings since the period of the Enlightenment. Throughout the course of the eighteenth century in Europe and the Atlantic world, a fundamental idea of race began to emerge and provide a basis for a hierarchical order of human geographical diversity. For instance, the aforementioned significant luminaries of natural sciences sought to apply almost the same classificatory table to human being's numerous and varying types each in their own way: a Swedish botanist and naturalist Carl von Linné, in his second edition of *A General System of Nature* (1740), recognized four variants of human being—white European, red Americans (native Americans), yellow Asians, and black Africans (17); a French naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon used, but narrowly defined, the term “race” for the first time in a scientific sense (Buffon 26 and Montagu 18) to describe the variety of peoples found on different regions on earth in his multivolume *A Natural History, General and Particular* (1748-1804); a French anatomist Georges Léopold Cuvier categorized human beings into three major races in *The Animal Kingdom* (1797): the Caucasian, the Mongolian, and the Ethiopian (104).

Given natural science's increasing attention to the concept of race, one can argue that a positivist methodology of natural science on the practical life of living beings would either systematize the modern *scientific* idea of race or lay the foundation for the later prevailing *scientific racism* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Phrased differently, the Enlightenment discourse on race and its positing scientific knowledge as the most accurate manifestation have resulted in a certain rigid mentality that either relegates nonhuman (and non-European) beings on earth to hierarchically inferior species, or, at an extreme level, to nothing more than the ontological base, the mentality that, to use Edward Said's words, can be characterized as "the whole impulse to *classify* nature and man into types" (*Orientalism* 119; emphasis added). Although it would be chronologically inappropriate to postulate that in and around the years of writing *Robinson Crusoe*, this new scientific approach to "human variety" to use Roxann Wheeler's phrase (6-7), comes to function as the determinant vehicle for codifying and institutionalizing Defoe's perception of race, it can be said that the scientific approach to racial diversity during the Enlightenment era provides a concurrently seminal key to understanding the question of the ethnic other in general and of Crusoe's encounter with Friday in particular, in the context of the postcolonial and global occasion.

After Crusoe first encounters Friday and decides to "save this poor Creature's Life" (146) in accordance with Providential calling, he describes Friday as follows:

He was a comely handsome Fellow, perfectly well made; with straight strong Limbs, not too large; tall and well shap'd, and as I reckon, about twenty six Years of Age. He had a very good Countenance, not a fierce and surly Aspect; but seem'd to have something very manly in his Face, and yet he had all the Sweetness and Softness of an European in his Countenance too, especially when he smil'd. [...] His Face was round, and plump; his Nose small, not flat like the Negroes, a very good Mouth,

thin Lips, and his fine Teeth well set, and white as Ivory. (148-149; italic in the original)

As is evident in Crusoe's description of Friday as "a comely handsome Fellow," Friday seems to have desirable, "Orientalizing" features with "round face," "small nose," and "fine teeth." Although in this scene Friday is somewhat romanticized or idealized through rich positive terms, the narrator Crusoe's frame of reference to "a good countenance" is still heavily grounded upon that of a white European. The implication being that Crusoe, subconsciously and inevitably saturated into the germinating discourse of human variety of the time, renders Friday invisible as an unclassified living being. Insofar as Crusoe's first encounter with Friday is concerned, devising his own "table" on the ethnic other, Crusoe simply places Friday within a hierarchical system and reduces him to uncivilized object, or at an extreme level, to mere private property as a consumable commodity without allowing Friday the same agency and voice that he holds. This is culminated in a few lines later of Crusoe's encounter with Friday:

When he espy'd me, he came running to me, laying himself down again upon the Ground, with all the possible Signs of an humble thankful Disposition, making a many antick Gestures to show it: At last he lays His Head flat upon the Ground, close to my Foot, and sets my other Foot upon his Head, as he had done before; and after this; made all the Signs to me of Subjection, Servitude, and Submission imaginable, to let me know, how he would serve me as long as he liv'd. I understood him in many Things, and let him know, I was very well pleas'd with him; in a little Time I began to speak to him, and teach him to speak to me; and first I made him know his Name should be *Friday*, which was the Day I sav'd his Life; I call'd him

so for the Memory of the Time; I likewise taught him to say *Master*, and then let him know, that was to be my Name; I likewise taught him to say, Y E S, and N O, and to know the Meaning of them; I gave him some Milk, in an earthen Pot, and let him see me Drink it before him, and sop my Bread in it; and I gave him a Cake of Bread, to do the like, which he quickly comply'd with, and made Signs that it was very good for him. (149; italic in the original)

As this self-explanatory scene reveals, there is no absolute difference between Crusoe's comportment vis-à-vis the *rationalization* of the land, making the land fructify and useful to him, and his perspective that reduces and domesticates Friday. In other words, at an ontological level, one can hardly find any cardinal difference between Crusoe's taming animals and domesticating Friday via teaching him a name he assigns to him and his Master's name. Given this connection, one might contemplate how just a few centuries ago this appalling treatment of one human being by another could be tolerated in this kind of unquestioning manner.

The French writer Michel Tournier is one intellectual who finds Defoe's treatment of Friday in the novel disturbing. Decades earlier than Coetzee's *Foe*, Tournier raises this question of the ethnic other in his 1967 novel *Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique* [*Friday: Or the Limbo of the Pacific*], by way of retelling and reinventing Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* from Friday's perspective. Fully conscious of the aforementioned self-deceptive and distorted description of the Other, Tournier addressed in 1986 his radical critique of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* in *Magazine Littéraire* as follows:

Il faut faire un nouveau *Robinson Crusoe* en tenant compte des acquisitions de l'ethnographie. Deux choses me paraissaient extrêmement choquantes dans le

Robison de Daniel Defoe qui, par parenthèse, date de 1719, il ne faut quand même pas l'oublier. D'abord, dans ce roman, Vendredi est réduit à néant. C'est un simple réceptacle. La vérité sort de la bouche de Robinson parce que celui-ci est blanc, occidental, anglais et chrétien. Mon propos était de faire un roman où Vendredi jouerait un rôle important et même, à la fin, primordial. Et donc, ce roman s'appellerait non pas Robinson mais Vendredi. Une seconde chose m'a paru déplorable dans le roman de Daniel Defoe: tout est rétrospectif. (20-21)

We have to make a new *Robinson Crusoe* by taking into account the acquisitions of ethnography. For me, there were two extremely shocking problems in Daniel Defoe's 1719 *Robinson Crusoe*. First of all, in this novel, Friday is reduced to nothing. He is no more than an empty container. The truth comes only from the mouth of Robinson since he is white, western, English, and Christian. My purpose was to create a novel wherein Friday plays an important role, and ultimately primordial role. And, therefore, this novel would be called, not Robinson, but Friday. The second deplorable problem of Defoe's novel appears that everything is retrospective. (20-21; my English translation)

Tournier herein remarks that Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* was problematic for two distinct but related reasons. First, "dans ce roman, Vendredi est réduit à néant" ("in this novel, Friday is reduced to nothing"), which means "c'est un simple réceptacle" ("he is no more than an empty vessel"). Second, "la vérité sort de la bouche de Robinson" ("the truth flows from the mouth of Robinson") (20). Deeply troubled by Defoe's Eurocentric dogmatic treatment of the other ethnicity, Tournier

began his own literary project “où Vendredi jouerait un rôle important et même, à la fin, primordial” (“where Friday plays an important and ultimately fundamental role”) (20-21).

Given his rationale for re-imagining Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, Tournier’s focus on Friday offers his dissent against Defoe’s un/conscious dismissal of alternative world/s: life, culture, and civilization. That is to say that Tournier’s retelling of *Robinson Crusoe* emphasizes the significance of “l’ethnographie” (“ethnography”): the question of how all differential dynamics of peoples, societies, and cultures could coexist without distorting, misrepresenting, and silencing one another. In much the same vein, in another essay on the character of Friday, Tournier admits both that he resisted to dedicate his novel *Friday* to “the memory of the man who inspired it, Daniel Defoe,” and that he rather wanted to pay his respects to the “silent masses of Fridays shipped to Europe from” the non-European world, who have become a significant part of the contemporary postcolonial world (“Friday” 196-197).

Meanwhile, the quintessential significance of Tournier’s question of other alternative world/s inscribed in *Friday*, curiously enough, becomes the subject of an essay of Gilles Deleuze’s “Michel Tournier and the World without Others.” In this essay, Deleuze distinguishes Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* from Tournier’s *Friday* through the dynamics of *a priori Other* and *a concrete Other* (301-321). More to the point, Deleuze’s reading of *Friday* challenges *a priori Other*, the very *structure* that limits a quintessential meaning of Other: “an expression of a possible world” (310). And it follows that the “*concrete Other* is always someone—I for you and you for me” (318)—that can be rephrased as “Crusoe for Friday and Friday for Crusoe,” which we can symptomatically read in Defoe’s novel, but can immediately in Tournier’s. At a more fundamental level, it would not be incorrect to suggest that Deleuze’s eloquent problematization of *a priori Other* mirrors the core value of his nonfoundationalist thought to challenge a transcendently

metaphysical imperative in the West,²¹ an imperative that in the words of Edward Said, “transmute[s] living reality into the stuff of texts,” tables, and pictures (*Orientalism* 86). Based on Deleuze’s thesis to counter *a priori Other*, one may conclude that the structural erasure of the Other, say, Friday (i.e., “the expression of the possible world”) enacted in Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, can be read therefore as “a murder of the possible” alternative world, the possible alternative world that cannot exist without the presence of the Other and vice versa (Deleuze 320).

2.5 Ecological Humanity for the Anthropocene

The extensive reading of Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* in terms of the four interrelated issues—the metaphysical tenet of Enlightenment, the practice of enclosures, the invention of the classificatory table, and the colonization of diverse forms of life—is reminiscent of the core ethos of recent ecocriticism that aims to generate more sustainable forms of existence, for both human and nonhuman entities, by way of embracing an interconnected web through which we come to fully understand any and all living entities, an interconnected web without which these living entities would hold no meaning under the precarious condition of the Anthropocene. Recent ecocriticism—Rachel Carson’s valiant ecological initiative for “silent spring” after Aldo Leopold’s ecocentric attention to “the land ethic,” Carolyn Merchant’s ecological consciousness of “death of nature” with a feminine sensibility, Edward Said’s worldly critique of “orientalism” and “culture and imperialism,” Bruno Latour’s radically suspicious inquiry both into the scientific reductionism and the “politics of nature,” and Rob Nixon’s Saidean, geographical and ecological awareness of “slow violence,” to name only a few of the most suggestive—has sought to

²¹ Deleuze’s nonessentialist critique of a transcendently metaphysical imperative in the West concerns an interdependent relationality that is embodied in the notion of the “fold,” “immanence,” and “assemblage,” as well as in the notion of flux concretized in “the rhizomatic in flow.”

underscore the question of how to (re)construct or restore a vibrant and enduring community based on a notion of the human not as hierarchically superior to other humans, species, and the environment, but as an organism situated more horizontally and inclusively with other culture and life. This notion of what I call “homo ecologicus” concretizes a certain unified and convergent human being as a relational, interdependent, and contingent entity radically distanced from the traditional, enlightened, and autonomous *homo sapiens*: the dominant form of the Human—historically buttressed by rationality and science, as is evident in Defoe’s presentation of Crusoe as “the universal man” or *homo economicus*.

Unveiling the overwhelming influence of capital-R Reason and capital-S Science, both of which might have become the most overlooked and ignored provenances of the current global ecological occasion, is therefore enabled not by thinking the phenomena of being from “above” the world/earth (*meta-physically*), but by (re-)thinking human beings “within” the world/earth as ecological creatures involved in a biological process of development and interaction where every single being, however small its size or however momentary its life, is constantly being actualized into another form of being, rendering the process as never-ending, interconnected, and overlapping.

In the end, it can be conceded that such ecological endeavors to retrieve the question of coexistence must seriously engage with the constitution of human subjectivity and thereby speak to knowledge and life in all its variety and as a unified continuum—not as separate compartments. In the era of the Anthropocene—involving a wide range of time from the latter part of the eighteenth century to the present ecological occasion—during which time a human species (i.e., capital-H Human) has *metaphysically* defined itself as the ultimate, unchanging, universal telos and center, such compartmentalization has led to a mystification of the ways in which human beings are intimately and continually connected to the

environments in all their variety. Moreover, the negation of these intimate ecological relations has resulted in the transformation of the richness of environments and their interactions into disposable commodities, which both Defoe and Crusoe and many readers of the novel have disregarded for too long under the aegis of the aforementioned hegemonic “lived system of meanings and values” in a given, disciplinary capitalist society.

CHAPTER 3. THE WORLD-AS-HOME BECOMING EARTHLY PARADISES: TONI MORRISON'S PARADISE

The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is *the idea only*. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea—something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to. . . .

—Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1899; emphasis added)²²

3.1 The Abstract Idea and the Concrete Reality

At the apogee of the European *messianic* empire-building projects purporting to “redeem” the Other—the so-called primitive, under-developed, and uncivilized civilizations in the “Orient,”—an endless cavalcade of experts from academic, military, industrial, political, cultural, and religious institutions were mesmerized to, in the words of Edward Said, “transmute living reality [of the Orient] into the stuff of texts” (*Orientalism* 86; brackets added). Joseph Conrad diagnosed the fallibility of the projection of “the idea only,” hatched and residing in *abstraction*, on the basis of which specific human subjectivities in a particular segment of the world had intended to fulfill the insatiable.²³ Without being occasioned to “look into *the idea only* too much,”

²² Edward Said places this well-known passage as epigraph within his major two works of *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism* as a way of interrogating the whole idea of “the devotion to efficiency” (Conrad 10), from which the political and cultural rules of dominating the Other are derived. Here I use Conrad’s and Said’s question concerning the neglected relationship between human beings and the earth in a more extended context to focus attention on the ways that Toni Morrison’s *Paradise* re-examines and re-imagines the concept of the human upon the earth and its close affinity with the notion of natural sovereignty.

²³ The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term “idea” as “senses derived from the Platonic concept of general or ideal form as distinguished from its realization in individual instances”; thereby in Platonic philosophy, the “idea” is described as “an abstract or eternally existing pattern or archetype of any kind of thing”; in Kantian thought as “an a priori concept of reason denoting object beyond the bounds of possible experience or empirical knowledge.” Similarly, Nietzsche states that the “idea” is something before which you “quickly down on your knees” (47). See *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*.

these particular European descendants came to worship and even prostrate themselves before “the idea only” to the extent not simply of conquering the earth (i.e., one particular sector of the world, called Africa, among others) and displacing the *concrete* inhabitants of that land to the remote places of Europe, America, and the Caribbean, but of “transmuting” them into slaves for the production of surplus value for the metropolitan center.

Throughout her work Toni Morrison endeavors to respond to Conrad’s salient insight into the fallibility of such an *abstract* scheme of thought that has persisted throughout Western history. This abstract scheme of thought has been primarily engaged in containing and conforming our ways of knowing from the Western imperial project of colonizing the land and its peoples to the glorified concept of American exceptionalism, quite often disguised as an unquestioned idea. The consistent thematic awareness of Morrison’s oeuvre, from her fictional writings to her non-fiction critical essays, has dramatically illuminated the inherently paradoxical gap and distance between the American ideals and American reality in the welter of racialized agency.

Morrison’s thematic concern also involves the multilayered dynamics of the cultural, the political, and the epistemological in the Western tradition—the dynamics of the *abstract* idea and the *concrete* reality.²⁴ In other words, Morrison’s thematic foci perform an artistic and equally philosophical inquiry into the aggravated lives of the racialized presence in the modern world—the modern world characterized as, to quote Morrison, “the mass movement of raced populations, beginning with the largest forced transfer of people in the history of the world: slavery” (“Home”

²⁴ From her first essay “What the Black Woman Thinks about Women’s Lib” in *New York Times Magazine* in 1971 through her historical trilogy of *Beloved*, *Jazz*, and *Paradise* to her most recent fiction, interviews, and essays, Morrison has persistently engendered a singular body of critical consciousness wherein a particular local narrative always either resonates with the very idea of Americanness or gets projected within the context of a larger America. Analogous critical consciousness has been also embodied in some other American novelists such as Herman Melville, William Faulkner, Don DeLillo, and Thomas Pynchon.

10), which is to a larger degree reminiscent of Conrad's terms: the taking of the land and life away from the indigenous peoples' natural habitats.

Concerning the question of the aggravated lives of the racialized presence in the modern world, Morrison's non-fiction bestseller *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (hereafter abbreviated as *Playing*) investigates the ontological intertwinement between the idea of whiteness and darkness, in general, and the socio-historical erasure of "the four-hundred-year-old presence of, first, Africans and then African-Americans in the United States," in particular (5). In undertaking this investigation, she further confirms that her fictional world fully concerns the significance of "the imaginative act" (xiii) in which "racial 'unconsciousness' or awareness of race" interacts with readers of "the wholly racialized society that is the United States"—readers who, "regardless of the race of the author," have been assumed for the most part as white (xii).

Granting Morrison's core argument that "the contemplation of this black presence is central to any understanding of our national literature and should not be permitted to hover at the margins of the literary imagination" (5), we then begin to perceive that the acts of "imagining" in Morrison's works function as a force of "*becoming*" rather than "merely looking or looking at," or "taking oneself intact into the other"(4; Morrison's emphasis)—a creative and originitive force that reveals the complex dynamics of a "seductive concept: the hierarchy of the race" (38) as well as "a kind of willful blindness" (18) to "a dark and abiding presence" (46) embedded in American literature. In this light, within Morrison's imaginative sphere, the both overt and covert mores of championing the Euro-American posture in literature as either "universal" or as "race-free" are forcefully challenged. For, as she claims, the defending of any literature in Euro-American terrain

as “not only ‘universal’ but also ‘race-free’ risks lobotomizing that literature” (12)—a literature or a cultural institution that has been born with and “shaped by the presence of the racial other” (46).

Whereas one might argue that Morrison’s emphasis on the acts of “imagining” might also fall into the trap of “the idea only” fallacy, Morrison’s discerning awareness of the presence of the racialized other posited not as *being-over-there*, but as *becoming-right-here*, as I will discuss in further detail, actively rejects committing the persistent faults inherent in the idea only type of mind. Disenchanted with the-idea-only-being-over-there, her insightful characterization of the acts of imagining as “becoming” is also addressed far more deeply and comprehensively in another occasion in quite a different fashion when she strives to articulate a new way of registering the presence of the racial, other than merely remaining silent or crouching down behind the protracted white curtain and the overriding arc of the white gaze.

3.2 The Presence of the Racial Other in Abstraction

Morrison’s relatively little-read 1988 lecture “Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature” (hereafter abbreviated as “Unspeakable”) invokes a historical and structural omission of this presence of the racial other in thinking about the canon formation in the Euro-American cultural context. In it she argues that the notion of canonization in its own right has meant to “measure up to the ‘universal’ criteria of Western art” (6) or “the superiority of Western culture” (2). Herein she contends that African presence has been undocumented and misplaced for too long in this Euro-American canon criterion. In wrestling with this Eurocentric canon criterion, Morrison seeks to situate the historical and cultural formation of this omission within the roots of Western civilization. This is to say that in ascertaining that “canon building is Empire building,” and that simultaneously “canon defense is national defense” (8), she calls into question the fundamental bases of Western civilization so as to unearth the neglected

relationship of the origin of the West with the unrepresentability of non-European descendants. Morrison refuses to acknowledge the *purely* unquestioned origin of Greek civilization as the earlier stage of Western European civilization.

In order to further validate her conviction, after briefly acknowledging the intellectual achievement of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Morrison thoroughly delves into historian Martin Bernal's provocative study on the largely ignored foundations of Greek civilization in *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, wherein the origin of Greek civilization is critically re-examined and re-interpreted from a convergent and trans-disciplinary perspective.²⁵ Considering Morrison's assessment of Bernal for his "stunning investigation" of the original character of Greek civilization ("Unspeakable" 7), the passage merits quoting at length:

According to Bernal, there are two "models" of Greek history: one views Greece as Aryan or European (the Aryan Model); the other sees it as Levantine—absorbed by Egyptian and Semitic culture (the Ancient Model). "If I am right," writes Professor Bernal, "in urging the overthrow of the Aryan Model and its replacement by the Revised ancient one, it will be necessary not only to rethink the fundamental bases of 'Western Civilization' but also to recognize *the penetration of racism and 'continental chauvinism'* into all our historiography, or philosophy of writing history. The Ancient Model had no major 'internal' deficiencies or weakness in explanatory power. It was overthrown for external reasons. For eighteenth and nineteenth century Romantics and racists it was simply intolerable for Greece,

²⁵ Martin Bernal's controversial argument that in the first volume of *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* (1987) Northeast Africans and other non-Europeans possessed superior and refined cultures upon which a great deal of ancient Greek civilization was grounded has led to subsequent numerous debates culminated in two books: *Black Athena Revisited* in 1996 and *Black Athena Writes Back* in 2001.

which was seen not merely as the epitome of Europe but also as its *pure* childhood, to have been the result of the mixture of native Europeans and colonizing Africans and Semites. Therefore the Ancient Model had to be overthrown and replaced by something more acceptable.” (“Unspeakable” 7; emphasis added)²⁶

With Bernal’s cogent proposition and Morrison’s endorsement of it, one may conclude that our current idea of ancient Greek civilization was *revised* and created by alleged Eurocentric political and cultural representation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in general, and, in particular, by that of the nineteenth-century German nationalists who attempted justify the supremacy and *purity* of the Aryan race. In other words, to quote the indicative subtitle of the first volume of *Black Athena*, “the fabrication of ancient Greece” that arose during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe is what has cemented our current idea of ancient Greek civilization. Hence, what both Bernal and Morrison postulate here constitutes a solid critique of the self-gratifying discourse of the *abstract*, Eurocentric (Aryan) origin of the West, the motive of which has “involved the concept of purity, of progress” (“Unspeakable” 7) and rendered inexorable the rise of the racialized categorization of human beings that would consequently systematize the later prevailing *scientific racism* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

More significantly, Bernal’s and Morrison’s efforts to challenge and even invalidate the Aryan (European) model, hence, persuasively suggest that ancient Greek civilization was not engaged with the singular, monocultural, unified collectivity (such as that of the nationalist or the racial). On the contrary, it was primarily concerned with the multicultural and nomadic modes of

²⁶ This quote originally comes from Martin Bernal’s *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, Vol. 1: *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785-1985*, p. 2. For further elaboration on Bernal’s major argument, see “Introduction,” pp. 1-73 and specifically pp. 1-22.

life, the various aspects of which were tremendously influenced by the presence of the ethnic other: peoples of Northeast Africa and Asia Minor. In this regard, one can argue that the modern construction of ancient Greece as monocultural is an example of constituting the multicultural/the other as a “being-over-there,” an example of which might easily devalue or obliterate the humanity of the other.

At a much broader level, it can be therefore conceded that the point of Bernal’s “stunning investigation” of the origin of the West animates the validity of Morrison’s questions concerning not only the imaginative act as “becoming” in literature, but also the long-erased presence of the racial other in Euro-American socio-politics. For both Bernal and Morrison each in their own way seek to disclose the historically unquestioned and immutable tendency of the European intellectual tradition to conceive one specifically *fabricated* preconception of Greek origin (the Aryan Model) as flawless and indisputable since the age of the Enlightenment—the Enlightenment that, in Morrison’s phrase, merely disregarded “the black population” and even “could accommodate slavery” because it was predominantly overwhelmed with the “seductive concept of the hierarchy of race” (*Playing* 38).

Morrison’s *Paradise* (1998)²⁷ is the central focus of this chapter that aims to fully articulate the aforementioned issues: the historical and philosophical implication of the relationship between “the very notion of white progress, the very idea of racial superiority, of whiteness as privileged place in the evolutionary ladder of humankind” (“Unspeakable” 18) and the “significant and underscored omissions” of “the varieties and complexities of African people and their descendants” (“Unspeakable” 6), who have long been saddened and troubled by the formulation of the identity

²⁷ Hereafter, all subsequent citations from *Paradise* will be made by page numbers in parentheses. Morrison’s *Paradise* in this chapter refers to the 2014 republication of her 1998 novel entailing Foreword.

of America and Americans. *Paradise* figures the perilous mechanism of the aforementioned *abstract* “seductive concept of the hierarchy of race” running through the entire society of the United States and further traces the historical provenance of this *otherworldly* concept back to the Puritans’ religious doctrine in the seventeenth century.

Much of the critical scholarship on *Paradise* has addressed the significance of Morrison’s first work of fiction since her Nobel Prize in 1993 within the context of nationhood (black nationalism, American exceptionalism, national historiography, entailing its global and transnational perspective) on the one hand, and of identity politics (ethnicity, race, gender) on the other.²⁸ What has been largely under-examined and overlooked in the scholarship, however, is the extent to which *Paradise* communicates Morrison’s noticeable ecological consciousness—a consciousness that has urged us to rethink a constitutive interconnectedness between human beings who are bound to reside in the physical, *actual* land named the Earth. As discussed earlier in the Introduction, herein I employ the term “ecological” in a more fundamental sense. By ecological or eco I refer to the very essence of the original Greek root word *oikos*, which means “house” or “dwelling place.” “Eco-consciousness,” then underscores a critical reflection that concerns a comfortable place to dwell or a blissful space for habitation for all living entities. In the novel,

²⁸ Some significant readings of Morrison’s *Paradise* in terms of nationhood, identity politics, and utopian narrative include, among many others, Katrine Dalsgard, “The One All-Black Town Worth the Pain: (African) American Exceptionalism, Historical Narration, and the Critique of Nationhood in Toni Morrison’s *Paradise*” (2001); Peter Widdowson, “The American Dream Refashioned: History, Politics and Gender in Toni Morrison’s *Paradise*” (2001); Marni Gauthier, “The Other Side of ‘Paradise’: Toni Morrison’s (Un)Making of Mythic History” (2005); Holly Flint, “Toni Morrison’s *Paradise*: Black Cultural Citizenship in the American Empire” (2006); Carola Hilfrich, “Anti-Exodus: Contemporary, Gender, Race, and Everyday Life in Toni Morrison’s *Paradise*” (2006); Susan Strehle, “Homeless in the American Empire: Toni Morrison’s *Paradise*” (2008); Heather Tapley, “Queering *Paradise*: Toni Morrison’s anti-capitalist production” (2013); Mark A. Tabone, “Rethinking ‘Paradise’: Toni Morrison and Utopia at the Millennium (2016). In addition to these articles and book chapter, there are also a couple of special issues on Toni Morrison and her fictions that engage *Paradise*. See *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 52, no. 2, 2006 and *College Literature*, vol. 47, no. 4, 2020.

Morrison's ecological consciousness, derived from her unremitting ethical intuition of the harsh reality of human subjectivity predetermined by an absolute idealism or a fixed form of knowledge, illuminates the mentality and *modus operandi* of the abstract-oriented idea and thereby constitutes her critique both of American exceptionalism and of Eurocentric knowledge production, the novelistic representation of which is enabled by defending the acts of imagining as *becoming*.

In crossing traditional disciplinary boundaries, I propose a reading of *Paradise* as Morrison's philosophically well-articulated, aesthetic responses to a pivotal *ecological* question.²⁹ The question fathoms the viability of a real home or the locus of *secular* paradises alike based upon the broader integrated network of the *earthly* notions of "the world-as-home" that would consider the right of sovereignty of unprivileged and silenced peoples not simply in "the wholly racialized society that is the United States," but in the world of diasporic inhabitants inevitably shaped by a great confluence of what Morrison calls "exiles, refugees, *Gastarbeiter* [guest workers], immigrants, migrations, the displaced, the fleeing, and the besieged" ("Home" 10; brackets added).³⁰ In exploring her endeavor to answer this question, I argue for the necessity of reading Morrison's *Paradise* as establishing an eco-consciousness that concretizes both her non-essentialist modes of thought as well as her radical modes of existence. I also contend here that Morrison's eco-consciousness ultimately concerns the process by which we understand the meaning of human beings sharing the planet Earth with other beings under the circumstance of global ecological urgency. In this discussion, I draw upon the core value of nonfoundationalist

²⁹ In her 1998 interview with Charlie Rose, Morrison addressed her strong reservation about the reviewers' general tendency to reduce Morrison to a certain category, considering *Paradise* a feminist novel or a racial novel and so on. See Rose.

³⁰ Morrison uses this term "the world-as-home" in her 1997 essay "Home," wherein she explores a viability of real home: "an open house, grounded, yet generous in its supply of windows and doors" (4).

modes of thought to validate Morrison's interrogation about the very idea of Paradise—the Eurocentric seductive, otherworldly, and transcendental idea of Paradise.

3.3 The Idea of the Promised Land in Isolation

Morrison's artistic endeavor to answer the aforementioned ecological question is immediately embodied in the startling (and famous) opening sequence of the novel:

They shoot the white girl first. With the rest they can take their time. No need to hurry out here. They are seventeen miles from a town which has ninety miles between it and any other. Hiding places will be plentiful in the Convent, but there is time and the day has just begun. They are nine, over twice the number of the women they are *obliged to stampede or kill* and they have the paraphernalia for either requirement: rope, a palm leaf cross, handcuffs, Mace and sunglasses, along with *clean, handsome guns*. (3; emphasis added)

In this opening scene, readers immediately become aware that a certain abominable incident—the gun related violence—has been and is going to be perpetrated by a group of men for unspecified reasons. Readers also learn in this opening that the victims are women residing in “the Convent” and that a pack of men who are currently “seventeen miles from a town” do not “need to hurry out” since there exists a mission that “they are obliged to stampede or kill” the women of the Convent (3). Moreover, as the narrative develops, readers come to realize that the date of those women's sacrifice is set in July of 1976, the year of the bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence. That is to say, this massacre takes place the same month as the bicentennial anniversary, an event during which a great majority of people in America are expected to celebrate or commemorate the

founding moment of America and its greatness as the *exceptional* nation-state. Likewise, from the beginning of the novel, Morrison suggests to readers a connection between the immediate tragedy and its origin; she further requires readers to investigate a significance of this dreadful incident by portraying a grim ironic picture of what has been occurring both in this larger America as well as in these two local small towns within America—a picture that reflects the complicated relationship between the local and the national in one sense and between whiteness and darkness in another.

After this opening sequence (and simultaneously a portion of the novel's concluding sections), the novel illustrates the unidentified reasons why a single group of male members with guns sneaks into the Convent and commits a violent attack against the female members of the Convent. More to the point, during the rest of the novel Morrison focalizes not simply on the deliberateness or triumphalism of the perpetrated violence, but on the tracing of the provenance of the atrocities back to the facile, yet pernicious idea of the Promised Land inscribed in the Old Testament's Books of Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Joshua that historically and culturally have buttressed America's national identity as an exceptional, national subjectivity.³¹

In the novel, this idea of the Promised Land is refigured through the life-stories of African Americans. The male members from the town of Ruby that appear in the opening scene are the descendants of Africans, almost all of whom were forcefully transmogrified into slaves and brought to the North American continent before 1776 for the production of surplus value under the aegis of the imperial and colonial "devotion to efficiency," to quote Conrad (10). They are all

³¹ Much of my understanding of American exceptionalism is gained from a few eminent scholarly discussions on the discourse of American exceptionalism: Seymour Martin Lipset's *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (1996); Deborah L. Madsen's *American Exceptionalism* (1998); Howard Zinn's "The Power and Glory: Myths of American Exceptionalism" (2005); William V. Spanos' *American Exceptionalism in the Age of Globalization* (2009); and Donald E. Pease's *The New American Exceptionalism* (2009). In addition to these books and essay, on the literary representation of American exceptionalism, see the special issue of *LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory*, vol. 25, no. 2, 2014.

called blue-black people, whom the town historian Pat Best names “8-R” as “[a]n abbreviation for eight-rock, a deep deep level in the coal mines,” identifying their skin color with that of coal at its bluest, darkest black (193). Through this categorized skin color, these people take pride in “the sign of racial purity” (194) since their purely black color signifies that they have never been adulterated by the admixture of Caucasian blood (193).

However, on their long poverty-stricken journey “from Mississippi and Louisiana to Oklahoma” after the Civil War, the communal pride “become[s] a stain” owing to “a new separation: light-skinned against black” (194), reason for which they have been shunned within their American homeland and even ostracized by “fair-skinned colored men” (195). Tremendously marred by this collective traumatic event, called the “Disallowing” (194), these freed ex-slaves nurture a longing for their own *exceptionally* “imagined community,” to use Benedict Anderson’s term,³² and finally settle in Ruby after leaving Haven in search of their own *promised land*.

Superficially, this movement of African Americans after the period of the Reconstruction is reminiscent of the story of the Exodus that enables the Israelites to move to Sinai and live with the grace of God. However, if we look more closely into the ways that Morrison articulates the story throughout the novel, it would seem implausible to read her development of the Exodus motif as an encomium to the American idea of the Promised Land. On the contrary, with this duplication we begin to perceive that Morrison’s articulation of the Exodus motif constitutes a seminal critique

³² It is imperative to reconsider the fact that Anderson’s discussion of “imagined community” has proved itself less effective in examining how the project of nation-state formation has been complicit with imperialism and colonialism. In this sense, Melani McAlister is right to say that “scholars of all stripes need to stop acting as if Benedict Anderson had solved—rather than defined—a problem” (423). For this reason, Anderson’s most-frequently cited term “imagined community” needs to be understood not as a final answer, but as an adequate starter to examine the problem in question.

of the very idea of the Promised Land and simultaneously brings into sharp focus the significance of the title of the novel: *Paradise*.³³

In broader terms, the title of the novel itself serves as a pivotal point of departure for an understanding of Morrison's comprehensively ecological reflection on the land and its inhabitants that ultimately concretizes the broader interconnected notions of "the world-as-home." Considering that "Paradise," as understood in the Western tradition, mainly means the Edenic world that transcends the conditions of mortal existential life, i.e., mortality, it is fair to say that the idea of the Promised Land is destined to be situated solely and inevitably within the concept of Paradise. In other words, the feasibility of actualizing the Promised Land in the real world does not exist mainly due to its undeniable fallibility inherent both in the idea of the Promised Land and Paradise.

With regard to the question of Paradise, Morrison states in the interview with James Marcus:

I was interested in the kind of violent conflict that could happen as a result of efforts to establish a Paradise. Our view of Paradise is so limited: it requires you to think of yourself as the chosen people—chosen by God, that is. Which means that your job is to isolate yourself from other people. That's the nature of Paradise: it's really defined by who is *not* there as well as who is. (qtd. in Marcus; Morrison's emphasis)

As is evidenced in her eloquent statements, Morrison is wary of the extent to which the efforts to establish Paradise engender another type of epistemological (and then eventually physical) violence, or "the kind of violent conflict," since the nature of Paradise lies in "isolating" oneself

³³ In her interview with James Marcus, Morrison notes that her "original working title for the manuscript was *War*."

from the other at best or reducing the other entities to non-entities at worst. In a similar vein, she elaborates in detail on the nature of Paradise in another interview:

The isolation, the separateness, is always a part of any utopia. And it was my meditation, if you will, and *interrogation of the whole idea of paradise*, the safe place, the place full of bounty, where no one can harm you. But, in addition to that, it's based on *the notion of exclusivity*. All paradises, all utopias are designed by who is *not* there, by the people who are *not* allowed in. (qtd. in Farnsworth 156; emphasis added)

Herein Morrison's remarks emphasize that the idea of Paradise "is based on the notion of exclusivity" and comes to "carr[y] the seeds of its own destruction" (qtd. in Farnsworth 156). That is to say, through the inherent "seeds of its own destruction," Morrison problematizes "the whole idea of paradise," which requires us to reconsider the essence of Western civilization deeply rooted in Judeo-Christianity.

The very exclusiveness embedded in the idea of Paradise de facto derives from the prime characteristics of the monotheistic Yahweh in the pre-Christian era. As evidenced in the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament, Yahweh is not the only God, and there are other multiple Gods that the Israelites are forbidden to worship (Exodus 20:3). From the beginning there is no one-and-only God, but one God among multiple Gods whose jealous nature would punish those who bow down to and worship other Gods (Exodus 20:4). By definitively dismissing the existence of other Gods, Yahweh comes to succeed in establishing redemptive and permanent covenant with Moses and the Israelites at mount Sinai (Exodus 34:28), where He *promises* to confer the land of Canaan to the Israelites insofar as they abide by the covenant—also referred to as the Law of

Moses (Exodus 24:6-8 and Deuteronomy 1:1-32). In short, the land of Canaan is the origin of the idea of the Promised Land understood as Paradise.

As Morrison elucidates in the same interview, this is how and why “Ruby has the characteristics, the features of the Old Testament,” (qtd. in Farnsworth 157) on the basis of which the patriarchal leaders of Ruby endeavor to keep their community safe and secured, through abiding by the rules and engagements of what the Old Fathers fashioned.³⁴ They (both the Old Fathers and the current patriarchal leaders) literally believe in what the Exodus story of the Old Testament tells them so that they could found their own African American Canaan, “the one all-black town worth the pain” (5): first Haven and then Ruby.³⁵ Though excruciating, the efforts to sustain their own *exceptional* and *exclusive* community are quite vividly illustrated in the following scene:

As Deek drove north on Central, it and the side streets seemed to him as *satisfactory* as ever. *Quiet* white and yellow houses full of *industry*; and in them were elegant black women at *useful* tasks; *orderly* cupboards minus surfeit or miserliness; linen laundered and ironed to *perfection*; good meat seasoned and ready for roasting. It was a view he would be damned if K.D. or *the idleness of the young* would disturb.
(111; emphasis added)

As the passage above illustrates, one of the leading male characters Deek (Deacon) Morgan, as one of Ruby’s ruling clans, is proud of himself and his twin brother Steward Morgan as “truer”

³⁴ In the novel, the founding father of Haven is Coffee Morgan and later renamed Zechariah Morgan whose first name is the same as the Hebrew prophet Zechariah in the Old Testament’s Book of Zechariah.

³⁵ On a fruitful discussion of Afro-American exceptionalism, see Dalsgard.

and “right heirs” of the founding fathers of their town: Zechariah and Rector Morgan (113). What this scene also demonstrates is that as a truer heir of the Old Fathers, Deek Morgan goes so far as to envision “Ruby itself” as “proof” of his self-identification as a truer heir in the sense that his town of Ruby has been “full of industry” and “useful” women, who are expected to work hard to make things “orderly” and perfect (111). Thus, in the town of Ruby, full of “quiet” and peaceful perfection, “the idleness of the young” is destined to be either discouraged or prohibited by the older generation.

3.4 The Father’s Abstract Orders Imprisoning People’s Concrete Lives

In much the same vein, both Deek Morgan’s convincingly pleasant description of Ruby as an ideal town as well as his primal concern for “the idleness of the young” function as self-explanatory indicators that disclose one of the unidentified reasons why a single group of men with guns sneaks into the Convent and commits a violent attack against the female members of the Convent in the opening sequence of the novel. Given that the patriarchal leaders in Ruby are overwhelmed by the communal ethos that the Old Fathers defined and nurtured, their overriding anxieties over “the idleness of the young” can be better elaborated through the promise-fulfillment structure of Scripture. Which is to say that just as the New Testament is aimed at fulfilling the promises of what God has provided in the Old Testament, so the male leaders of Ruby make efforts to abide by and thereby fulfill the promised rules and values that the Old Fathers of Haven pursued. In the novel, these promises are represented through two elements: the blood rule and the letters inscribed in the mouth of the Oven, with its iron lips. Both elements are highlighted in the following passage:

So the [blood] rule was set and lived a quietly throbbing life because it was never spoken of, except for the hint in words Zechariah forged for the Oven. *More than*

a rule. A conundrum: “*Beware* the Furrow of His Brow,” in which the “You” (understood), vocative case, was not a command to the believers but a threat to those who had disallowed them. It must have taken him months to think up those words—just so—to have *multiple meanings*: to appear stern, urging obedience to God, but slyly not identifying the understood proper noun or specifying what the Furrow might cause to happen or to whom. So the teenagers Misner organized who wanted to change it to “*Be* the Furrow of His Brow” were more insightful than they knew. Look what they did to Menus, forcing him to give back or return the woman he brought home to marry. The pretty sandy-haired girl from Virginia. (195; brackets and emphasis added)

With this semantically rich passage narrated by a school teacher Pat Best working on her own project on the town’s genealogy, the daughter of Roger Best “who was the first to violate the blood rule” (195), we begin to uncover the significance of the rule that lies at the heart of the Rubyites. As a member of the young generation in Ruby, Pat Best feels supportive to other younger people who actively interpret at their own will the message inscribed in the Oven, the first word of which is missing. For Pat Best who is a mixed-race and light-skinned woman, it appears that the teenagers, craving to “live in the world,” “the whole world” (210), are “more insightful” than the older generation who adhere to a singular and rigid interpretation of the motto in the Oven as “Beware.” Seeking connections between themselves and the rest of the world at the time during which most of the country has been rocked by the Civil Rights movement, the young Rubyites do not hesitate to change “Beware” into “Be” despite this change being interpreted as “[b]lasphemy” by the older Rubyites (87).

For the young people in Ruby, unlike the elderly group of men, any change to the Oven is acceptable because they seek to live out the proposition that “[i]solation kills generations,” which “has no future” (210). In this regard, if the elders in Ruby would have been open and inclusive enough to interpret the missing part as “Be,” one of the relatively young in Ruby Menus Jury could have married “the pretty sandy-haired girl from Virginia” outside of his color and lived a happy life with her, not drinking every weekend since he came back from the Vietnam War (195). As the town of Ruby’s midwife and one of the oldest women Lone DuPres assumes, his binge drinking is not due to “what Vietnam had done to him” but due to “the pretty redbone girl’s loss” (278). In fact, the previous section entitled “Seneca” in the novel obviously captures the aforementioned conflict between the young and the elderly. The highly intense debate on the meaning of the missing word engraved in the Oven is unsurprisingly settled by one male elder Steward Morgan’s threatful *promise*: “If you, any one of you, ignore, change, take away, or add to the words in the mouth of that Oven, I will blow your head off just like you was a hood-eye snake” (87). Given this ferocious sentiment dominating Morgan’s mind, one can argue then that this Menus case is an apparent example of how the communal preoccupation with one single fixed meaning comes to impinge upon the “multiple meanings” of an individual’s *concrete* and tangible life.

More significantly, what Morrison alludes here with this Menus case brings to mind that the peril of being overwhelmed by one single unchanging meaning may serve as a pivotal clue as to the question that readers are immediately expected to formulate upon the opening sequence: Why are a pack of men in Ruby “obliged to stampede or kill” (3) the women in the Convent? One germane response to this question invites us to invoke the previously discussed issue of *abstract idea*. Shackled by the fixed and unchanging structure of promise-fulfillment, the male leaders in Ruby ultimately fall into the trap of “the idea only fallacy” derived from, in Morrison’s words, “a

deeply held and wholly shared belief system” (“God’s Language” 248), inevitably founded on the metaphysical modes of thought in Western civilization. That is to say, what Morrison overtly takes issue with here is the kernel of Western civilization identifiable with the logocentric tradition. As Jacques Derrida challenges the logocentric imperative accorded Western intellectual history in *Of Grammatology*, so Morrison interrogates in a different manner the metaphysics of logocentrism, the essence of which privileges the linguistic signifier over the signified.³⁶ In the novel, the linguistic signifier amounts to the letter inscribed in the Oven accepted as promises or undeniable truth for the Rubyites; this written word obstructs the *actual* lives of people not only in Ruby, but also in the Convent. In this logocentric world, hence, as evidenced in the opening chapter of the Gospel of John in the New Testament, such *purely* religious people as the male perpetrators in the opening sequence of *Paradise* would hardly consider even a hint of doubt about the logos, the word itself, since “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

Morrison’s literary investigation of this explicitly logocentric religious belief system can be better understood in light of Louis Althusser’s notion of the problematic—though he invokes this concept of the problematic in the context of capitalism. In the chapter entitled “From *Capital* to Marx’s Philosophy” of *Reading Capital*, Althusser describes the problematic (not as an adjective but as a noun) as an ideological framework that delineates “the forms in which all problems must be posed” (25). Considering Althusser also calls it “the terrain and within the horizon of a definite theoretical structure” (25), we come to perceive the problematic as a frame of reference that determines how one perceives the world. Which is to say that *the problematic* dictates the perspective or the inscription that has been deeply carved into one’s mind, reminiscent

³⁶ Derrida’s deconstructionist undertaking calls into question the logocentric history of philosophy in the Western tradition. See Derrida’s *Of Grammatology*, pp. 1-93.

of the concept of textual attitude articulated by Edward Said in *Orientalism*, wherein he defines it as “a fallacy to assume that the swarming, unpredictable, and problematic mess in which human beings live can be understood on the basis of what books—texts—say” (93).

Applying Althusser’s notion of the problematic, I claim that Morrison seeks to undermine the problematic of the aforementioned “deeply held and wholly shared belief system” (Morrison, “God’s Language” 28), i.e., the *purely abstract* structure of belief system, “a definite theoretical structure” (Althusser 25) upon which the promise of the words inscribed in the Oven is assumed as *self-evident*. As is obvious in the novel, almost all elderly males, except for Reverend Misner, take for granted a definite theoretical structure: the problematic of the Word of God itself, in which even “that love of God also can go awry” (qtd. in Rose). This is why Morrison carefully selects the sentences in question as follows: “they are obliged to stampede or kill” (3) because “God at their side, the men take aim. For Ruby” (18). Her calling into question the purely abstract structure of this belief system further suggests that there is a strong juxtaposition between the ferocious sentiment of the pack of men and that of God’s Words to the Israelites in the Old Testament, which reads: “Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each *killing his brother and friend and neighbor*” (Exodus 32:27; emphasis added).

In this Exodus story, after God tells Moses that he has to lead the Israelites out of Egypt where they are threatened to lose their identity in the context of flesh pots of Egypt, Moses has a tremendously hard time being loyal and dutiful to God. This occurs in the midst of the passage from the promise to the fulfillment, when the Israelites on their way slowly but surely begin to regress, when they begin worshipping the Golden Calf, a false idol. Enraged by this forbidden worshipping identified with *decay* and corruption, God commands Moses to *kill* “his brother and friend and neighbor” who are reluctant to undertake the demands that Moses and God are making

upon them and thereby automatically labeled as *obstacles* of the fulfillment of God's promise (Exodus 32).

In *American Exceptionalism in the Age of Globalization*, William V. Spanos investigates the intricate connection between this ferocious sentiment in the Old Testament and the binary logic of American exceptionalism. In it Spanos explores "an *ontological* interpretation of the American national identity whose origins lay in the American Puritans' belief that their exodus from the Old World and their 'errand in the wilderness' of the New was, on the prefiguratively analogy of the Old Testament Israelites, divinely or transcendently ordained and which became hegemonic in the course of American history" (188; Spanos' emphasis). Given that the Old Testament atrociously defines those who get down on their knees before a false idol, the Golden Calf of Egyptian religion, as a fundamental threat, Spanos' relevant argument suggests that the communal identity of Ruby as an exceptional one inevitably necessitates "a (usually defeatable) 'enemy' who always threatens the 'fulfillment' of the errand" (Spanos, *American Exceptionalism in the Age of Globalization* 197).

In *Paradise*, women in the Convent are depicted as an epitome either of the aforementioned "obstacles" and "enemy" threatening the fulfillment of God's promise or as "clear signs of already advanced *decay*" (157; emphasis added). For the pack of armed men in Ruby who firmly believe that "everything that worries them must come from women" (217), these women in the Convent are reduced to a fundamental threat to most likely breach a covenant with God and the Old Fathers of Haven. Subsequently, the women in the Convent come to be scapegoated for maintaining the covenantal unity of the people of God, who *purely* love God that promises the Rubyites their own land of Paradise. In an effort to bring the covenantal people back into the initially ideal and powerful unity with tremendous energy and forward-lookingness, they accept it as "so clean and

blessed a mission” (292) so as to invade and slaughter with “*clean, handsome guns*” (3), an undeniably very modern Enlightenment version of *swords* in the Exodus story,³⁷ those “more like witches” than bitches who “don’t need men and don’t need God” (276). Phrased in another way, these men in Ruby are *obliged to fulfill* this “clean and blessed mission” (292) because “the mess [the loose women in the Covert] is seeping back into *our* homes, *our* families” (276; Morrison’s emphasis and brackets added). Unable to tolerate this mess, the men with “God at their side” (18) much more easily conclude and even justify that those women as “detritus: throwaway people” (4) deserve to be terminated simply because they live in the Covert “where the entrance to *hell* is wide” (114; emphasis added).

3.5 Longing for Alternative Paradises: The World-As-Home

With regard to the catastrophe depicted in the novel, we need to take a closer look at the ways in which Morrison’s eco-consciousness interacts with the very idea of the Promised Land in which the idea of Paradise is situated. As previously but briefly discussed, the Exodus story in the Old Testament is duplicated and refigured in *Paradise* through the life-stories of an African American people. However, taking into account how Morrison articulates the Exodus motif throughout the novel, it would be more plausible to read Morrison’s development of this Exodus motif not as an encomium to the American idea of the Promised Land but as a seminal critique of the idea of the Promised Land. The implication being that, in critiquing the fundamental abstractness to the perception of the Promised Land, Morrison advocates for the notion of the world-as-home rather than the traditional idea of Paradise. For whereas the latter is characterized

³⁷ On a productive and persuasive discussion on the issue of the gun in the context of Euro-American civilization in the post-Enlightenment era, see Jared Diamond’s *Guns, Germs, and Steel* and Richard Slotkin’s trilogy: *Regeneration Through Violence*, *The Fatal Environment*, and *Gunfighter Nation*.

as separation, isolation, closedness, exclusivity, and gated community, the former can be identifiable with openness, borderlessness, interconnection, syncretism, and inclusive community.

In this respect, I argue that the notion of the world-as-home cannot be divorced from Morrison's eco-consciousness. As aforementioned earlier, herein I employ the term eco-consciousness in a more fundamental sense. By "ecological" I refer to the very essence of the original Greek root word *oikos*, which means "house" or "dwelling place." "Eco-consciousness," then underscores a critical reflection that concerns a comfortable place to dwell or a blissful space for habitation for all living entities. Considering the aforementioned ethos inherent in the notion of the world-as-home, Morrison's eco-consciousness can be translated as her longing for the equivalent right of sovereignty of unprivileged and silenced peoples not only in America but also in the contemporary diasporic world. Morrison's eco-consciousness is represented through the interweaving network between two factors registered in and outside of the novel: the Convent and Candomblé.

The massacre occurring in the Covent, *Paradise's* central dramatic event, as Morrison notes in her interview with Dinitia Smith in *New York Times*, is inspired by a supposed incident wherein armed men violently attacked women in Brazil:

On a [research] trip to Brazil in the 1980's, Ms. Morrison heard about a convent of black nuns who took in abandoned children and practiced Candomblé, an Afro-Brazilian religion; the local populace considered them an *outrage*, and they were murdered by a posse of [armed] men. "I've since learned it never happened," Ms. Morrison said. "But for me it was irrelevant. And it said much about institutional religion and uninstitutional religion, how close they are." (Smith; brackets and emphasis added)

As indicated in this interview with Smith, what is more significant for Morrison is not that the incident was probably untrue or not factual but that “it was not without truth” (qtd. in Rose). Since there were similar incidents upon the issue of practicing Candomblé taking place in Brazil at the time, it is safe to say that Morrison was immediately afflicted by the “outrage” of local people who would find their own *exceptional* place in an institutionalized religion called the Catholic Church, the origin of which extends back to Portuguese colonialism. Mulling over this supposed incident, Morrison wound up formulating the very first questions that not only fueled and animated her then-next project, i.e., her new fiction after *Jazz*, but also came to be revived as the most disconcerting scene in *Paradise*: “How could they do that? How could they shoot some girls for whatever reason and actually pull the trigger? Armed men” (qtd. in Rose). More to the point, those questions posed by Morrison can be paraphrased as follows: How could they be so naïve and closed-minded to convince themselves that “violence becomes the solution for some so-called worthy cause”? (qtd. in Rose); How tenaciously has the intolerance of religious belief embedded in the Judeo-Christian tradition when it comes to other non-Christian religions?; and (even more broadly) Who on earth are we, and what makes a human being a human being? As Morrison suggests in her interview with Rose, her novel *Paradise* is an answer to those questions, and one way to approach her answer is taking into account the Convent where the non-Christian, uninstitutional religious practices are actualized.

In *Paradise*, Morrison presents the Convent, “a big stone house in the middle of nothing” (*Paradise* 169), as an “oppositional community of the town of Ruby,” where “the corruption of a black utopian dream” is portrayed (Terry 192). As Morrison elaborates in her interview with Farnsworth, “[t]he Convent becomes a kind of crash pad for some women [Mavis, Grace/Gigi,

Seneca and Pallas] who are running away from all sorts of trauma” since “they have been hurt profoundly by men” (qtd. in Farnsworth 157; brackets added). Contrary to the all-black town called Ruby, deeply concerned with *organized* and *institutional* religion, i.e., the patriarchal Christianity (three established churches in Ruby, for instance), the Convent is the locus where “non-institutional forms of worship are celebrated through the depiction of Consolata’s mission” (Terry 192). In the novel, the practitioner of this non-institutional form of worship, Consolata is described as an extraordinary character capable of “stepping in” (*Paradise* 247) and of performing “the loud dreaming” (*Paradise* 264) as a way to heal and release the Convent women’s traumas accumulated from the past lives injured mostly by men.

This non-institutional religious practice in the Convent indicates a much closer affinity with what is called Candomblé. As briefly mentioned above, Candomblé is “an Afro-Brazilian religion that developed in the cities and plantations of northeastern Brazil in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Created by enslaved Africans and their descendants, its roots are in ancient societies of West, Central and Southwest Africa” (Harding). Although it originates in Africa, “there are some Amerindian and Catholic elements which reflect influences of the colonial society in which the [Candomblé] religion came into being” (Harding; brackets added). Furthermore, Candomblé, “a set of beliefs, practices, and cosmology introduced by Yoruba [a native West African ethnic group] slaves and freedmen” (Voeks 51; brackets added) is also “a religion of balance and reciprocity which places great emphasis on the *interconnectedness of all forms of life*. Human beings are not seen as somehow separate from other elements of the natural universe. All life is related. And all life is necessary” (Harding; emphasis added).

Considering both Candomblé’s emphasis on the interconnectedness of all forms of life and Morrison’s positive stance toward Candomblé, one can concede that Morrison’s eco-

consciousness circulating in *Paradise* asks us to actively participate in imagining alternative earthly paradises where both the radical openness and the viscerally tangible interconnectedness are constantly in motion.³⁸ In this regard, the Convent, as the locus of solace for some women's aggrieved lives, becomes a symbolically alternative place that "disrupts patriarchy and subverts masculine-imposed codes of femininity, celebrating both body and spirit" (Stave 6). Although Morrison seems hardly convinced that the Convent is a singular, real paradise-like home, she suggests to readers one viable example of the world-as-home, an earthly home, *becoming* what the aggravated and afflicted lives "consider a free place, a place where they don't have to fear that they are the people to be preyed upon" (qtd. in Farnsworth 157).

In *Paradise*, Morrison's broader integrated notion of the world-as-home is more comprehensively imagined through the voice of the Reverend Richard Misner:

But can't you imagine what it must feel like to have *a true home*? I don't mean heaven. I mean *a real earthly home*. Not some fortress you bought and built up and have to keep everybody locked in or out. *A real home*. Not some place you went to and invaded and slaughtered people to get. Not some place you claimed, snatched because you got *the guns*. Not some place you stole from the people living there, but your own home, where if you go back past your great-great-grandparents, past theirs, and theirs, past the whole of Western history, past the beginning of *organized knowledge*. (213; emphasis added)

³⁸ In her interview with Dinitia Smith, Morrison admits her unintended oversight in failing to type a lowercase "p" in the very last sentence in *Paradise*: "Something I forgot to do is bothering me a lot. The last word in the book, 'paradise,' should have a small 'p,' not a capital P. The whole point is to get paradise off its pedestal, as a place for anyone, to open it up for passengers and crew. I want all the readers to put a lowercase mark on that 'p.'"

Taking into account Morrison's acknowledging the Reverend Misner as the character "closest to (her) own sensibility" (qtd. in Jaffrey),³⁹ this stunningly polyvalent description of home reaffirms the extent to which Morrison is guardedly optimistic about the attainability of *a true home* and *a real earthly home* as well. Within her ecological optimism, a true home is a place where a people can be at home, and therefore that home can be anywhere. For Morrison, a real earthly home, far from *an unearthly heaven* or a gated community with exclusionary borders, is also a place where she "prefer[s] to think of a-world-in-which-race-does-*not*-matter as something other than a theme park, or a failed and always-failing dream" ("Home" 3; Morrison's emphasis): "[a]n open, borderless, come-one-come-all paradise, without dread, minus a nemesis" (Morrison, Foreword xv). Relatedly, what Morrison here implies is that the history of the modern West has been intertwined with conquest and theft—both of which are tied into a legacy of "organized knowledge." It should be also stressed that this passage characterizes the Western European (West Aryan) people as imperialists running rampant across the globe in the colonial era, reminiscent of Conrad's and Said's claims previously discussed in earlier section of this chapter.

In examining Morrison's ecological notion of the world-as-home, it would be more rewarding to readdress my previous argument that the acts of imagining in Morrison's works function as a force of *becoming*—a creative force that unconceals the complex dynamics of the abstract-oriented idea not only in the Eurocentric *otherworldly* and transcendental idea of Paradise (Morrison's fiction *Paradise*) but also in the seductive concept of purity, of progress (Bernal's reexamination of the original character of Greek civilization). In a word, what Morrison's literary imagination fully concerns is not so much *being-over-there* as *becoming-right-here*. Thus, in

³⁹ In her interview with Zia Jaffrey, Morrison addresses that she has much affinity for the Reverend Misner: "I suppose the one that is closest to my own sensibility about moral problems would be the young minister, Rev. Maisner [sic]. He's struggling mightily with the tenets of his religion, the pressures of the civil rights, the dissolution of the civil rights."

Morrison's fictional world, the presence of the other (race, gender, religion, age, etc.) would never be silenced nor dismissed because Morrison's imaginative acts characterized as *becoming-right-here* are always situated *within* the world, *within* our earthly imagination radically opposed to the idea-only-being-over-there which is far *beyond and above* the world. Phrased in another way, since the being-over-there asserts itself as *above* the world and therefore establishes a particular hierarchical order of other beings, it would be easily bound to supervise, confine, dominate, and master the *actual and concrete* presence of the other.

Morrison's imaginative acts as *becoming* also resonates powerfully with what philosopher Alfred North Whitehead terms "the process of becoming" (Whitehead, *Process and Reality* 28). In *Process and Reality*, Whitehead investigates the question as to what a true being (*res vera*) is. His answer to that question forcefully challenges that of the Western philosophical tradition characterized as "a series of footnotes to Plato" (39). Unlike Plato's metaphysics of binary opposition emphasizing the superiority of *being* (identity) over *becoming* (difference), Whitehead seeks to validate the proposition that a true "'being' is constituted by its 'becoming,'" which is what he calls the "principle of process": "*how an actual entity becomes constitutes what that actual entity is*; so that the two descriptions of an actual entity are not independent" (23; Whitehead's emphasis). As Whiteheadian philosophy privileges *becoming* (concrete actuality) over *being* (pure abstraction), a true being is being constituted or governed by "the process of becoming" (28) where every single actual entity (all forms of life) is interdependent and interrelated, echoing the essential principle of Candomblé that *all forms of life are interconnected*.

Juxtaposed with the ways in which Whitehead undermines the core value of the Western philosophical tradition (the superiority of being over becoming), Morrison defies the very idea of Paradise understood on the basis of exclusivity and seclusion in the Western (religious or

logocentric) tradition. One may argue thus that Whitehead's discussion of the process of becoming substantiates what Morrison endeavors "towards the possibility of reimagining Paradise" as well as of understanding "the *planet* to be that place" (qtd. in Marcus; Morrison's emphasis). Which is to say that in her literary imagination, the planet Earth as such becomes the world-as-home, a place that is inherently accompanied by "the unambivalent bliss of going home to be at home" (Morrison, *Paradise* 318).

Likewise, Morrison's eco-consciousness exists in harmony with the notion of *becoming-right-here*, placing paradises *within* the world, *within* our imagination. In opposition, the metaphysical finality of logocentrism (Western civilization imprisoned by logocentrism) represented via the blood rule and the motto of the Oven in Ruby favors being-over-there, and therefore is situated *above* the world, *beyond* our imagination. As an ambiguous, yet open-ended concluding section of the novel suggests, Morrison asks readers to actively participate in deciphering the meaning of home in multiple ways. Simultaneously, this is why and how Morrison urges us not only to "develop *nonmessianic* language to refigure the raced [and the gated, isolated, closed] community" but also to advance "an *epistemology* that is neither intellectual slumming nor self-serving reification" ("Home" 11; emphasis and brackets added).

CHAPTER 4. VIBRANT “SMALL THINGS” SPEAKING BEFORE THE GLOBALIZING HEGEMONY: ARUNDHATI ROY’S *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*

Most people in the world are Yellow, Black, Brown, Poor, Female, Non-Christian
and do not speak English.

—Audre Lorde, *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*

[W]e must be able to think through and interpret together experiences that are
discrepant, each with its particular agenda and pace of development, its own
internal formations, its internal coherence and system of external relationships, all
of them coexisting and interacting with others.

—Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*

4.1 An Ecological Ethic in Action

The epigraphs opening this chapter concern the world of small and earthly things that has
been to a great degree either dismissed or unrepresented by the ways in which the grand and
abstract narrative of big things has asserted itself as self-evident and therefore desirable. I refer
here to the patriarchal ideologies and practices, ranging from Western imperialism and colonialism
through nationalism to other systems of inequality and stratification in our contemporary moment:
the whole relic of caste in modern India and, in Anne McClintock’s compact phrase, “the varied
undertows of patriarchal Christianity, Confucianism, and Islamic fundamentalism” around the
globe (14).

At an epistemological level, these various grand narratives presuppose a “metaphysical”
conviction that there should be always already something ultimate, absolute, and transcendentally
self-identical in opposition to mutable and epochal difference, upon which the history of abstract
idea has developed and thereby rendered impotent or invisible the experimental knowledge from

the ordinary and its organic conjunction with epistemological knowledge. In short, the history of metaphysics and its complicit commitment to all types of self-gratifying modes of thought and narrative, from Western Orientalism to the religion-based as well as custom-oriented fundamentalism across the planet,⁴⁰ including today's neoliberal globalization, can be described as the superiority of absolute and identical being to actual and different being. In other words, the history of *being* over *becoming*.

The contemporary Indian author Arundhati Roy stages her work in direct reaction to these metaphysical structures. A leading voice confronting globalization, as both a novelist and an activist, Arundhati Roy has launched a resistant political project grounded in an ecological literary agenda.⁴¹ For the most part, it could be argued that both her fiction and other nonfiction have made us aware of the extent to which ordinary people's reality has been vulnerable to the world of big things: the grand narrative of "Greater Common Good in the name of Progress and National Interest," in Roy's apt terms (*Cost of Living* 21). In "The Greater Common Good," Roy proactively criticizes the unilateral progressive forces of development and national interest upon which the India government has favored the construction of a controversial dam on the Narmada River at the expense of the poor. Calling attention to its lack of morality, Roy goes on to elaborate upon the view that the government's preoccupation with the notion of development has continuously

⁴⁰ The term Orientalism is used by Edward Said in *Orientalism* to describe the master assumption that the Occident has "all" of the knowledge about the Orient since the late Greek civilization in general and about the non-Western world since the period of the Enlightenment in particular.

⁴¹ Roy seems to feel uncomfortable with the idea that there is a clear distinction between a novelist and an activist. She talks about the activist tag in question in an interview: "I am a writer and want to be identified with a writer only. One should not define me as an activist. I am not an activist." For further information on her thoughts and reservation about the activist tag, see "I want to be known as a writer: Arundhati Roy." The later section of this chapter will examine this issue of "writer-activist."

produced the poor and those at the bottom: the uprooted and the displaced in its *imagined community*.

Among her numerous writings, Roy's first novel, *The God of Small Things* (1997), eloquently narrates this inconvenient truth about the reality of the ordinary.⁴² As the title of the novel indicates, *TGST* is a story regarding a group of Indian people the majority of whom become the "small things" for various reasons: women, children, and the outcast Untouchables. The novel simultaneously portrays the ways in which these small things have long been docile and rendered expendable by the "large things": Hindu caste tradition and the legacy of gendered nationalism in postcolonial India. In the novel, Roy seeks to unconceal the problematic master narrative of authentic and indisputable identity and its indissolubly complicit association with both Western imperialism's and colonialism's subtly ongoing hegemony even in the postcolonial era. Phrased in another way, *TGST* seeks to embody Roy's consistent grappling with the world of grand things: the post/colonial rules and the current master narrative of globalization. She does so, by critiquing, no matter in how limited a form, not only the ongoing legacy of caste system in India, but also the status quo of Anglophone hegemony in the postcolonial world, both of which have served the interest of an unbridled patriarchal regime operative in both colonial and postcolonial India.

As I will argue in this chapter, in critiquing these irrational and uneven mechanisms, *TGST* takes a different and therefore distinct direction from the leading trends of previous postcolonial fictions, incorporating an ecological agenda within the larger literary narrative. *TGST* pays particular attention to the quintessential relationality between human beings and non-human beings, which has been acknowledged but often remains backgrounded in postcolonial writings and ideas. *TGST*'s description of human beings as a significant and organic part of a larger nature and

⁴² Unless noted otherwise, hereafter the title of the novel is abbreviated as *TGST*, and all references to the novel will be made by page numbers in parentheses.

environment can be read as a point of departure from customary attempts to undermine and deconstruct the metaphysics of imperialism and colonialism in the age of globalization.

In this context, this chapter examines not simply the ways in which Roy's *TGST* criticizes the caste system and its absurd liaison with the enormous value systems of the West, such as Christianity, Marxism, and nationalism, but also the significance evident in her writing in "speaking for" the ordinary people living in the world of small things, whose histories and voices have been under-represented and often silenced. By discussing both the task of a writer and storytelling in the age of globalization and thereby placing these discussions in conversation with the "deconstructive postmodernist" ideas,⁴³ my reading of *TGST* argues that it would be more rewarding to read both Roy's novel and her other nonfiction writings as forming part of a larger postcolonial ecological manifesto, or at least as puissant and proleptic alternative frame of references. Thus, it helps to unravel both the polyvalent layers of metaphysical thinking not merely in the Western tradition, but also in the non-Western world, and the complicit relationships of metaphysical thinking and the prevailing monolithic knowledge system, which might have become the source of the current global ecological crisis.

4.2 The Birth of the Caste Hindu

Roy's robust and pointed critique of modern India is enabled by the representation of vulnerable subaltern or outcaste Untouchables—those who have been erased and suppressed throughout Indian history. The definition and more articulate discussion of the term subaltern was

⁴³ My use of the term "deconstructive postmodernist" primarily concerns a number of radical thinkers' life-long endeavors to dismantle the traditional philosophy of dualism established by the post-Socratic philosophy of stasis since Plato: Friedrich Nietzsche, Alfred North Whitehead, Martin Heidegger, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Edward Said, and others.

initiated by Antonio Gramsci in his works such as *The Modern Prince* and *The Prison Notebooks*, in which he defines the subaltern classes as those excluded from any meaningful role in a regime of power that subjugates them. This notion of subaltern has been adapted to the Subaltern Studies group of historians in South Asian Studies. Followed by this group to which Ranajit Guha, David Arnold, Partha Chatterjee, and others belonged and contributed themselves, Gayatri Spivak has taken issue with the notion of subaltern in light of the postcolonial subjectivity by raising one compelling question: “Can the Subaltern Speak?” The later part of this chapter will elaborate more upon the notion of the subaltern within the intersection of Gramsci’s other crucial notion of hegemony and Roy’s counter-discourse against globalization.

As the novel portrays, despite its official effort to eradicate the caste system (beginning with the Untouchability Offenses Act in 1955, and other laws in the subsequent years), postcolonial India still practices caste as an expression of its rigid hierarchical class structure upon the Untouchable, or “Dalit,” community. The nationally and internationally well-known spiritual, political leader of the then Congress Party before the independence of India, Mahatma Gandhi used to call the Untouchable *harijan*, which is referring to children of God, though Gandhi’s “harijan” has been criticized as a pointedly Hindu term (“hari” is an appellation of the Hind god, Krishna). However, they recently have begun to prefer the term *Dalit* by themselves, literally meaning oppressed, broken, downtrodden, and trampled upon in such a way that “Dalit is a symbol of change and revolution” since “the Dalit believes in humanism” (Shah 22).

Although the Portuguese were the first to use the term *casta*—designating a social class of hereditary and usually unchangeable status in Portuguese—for the first time to refer to the unique trait of India (Dirks 19), the caste system in India, one of Roy’s objects of critique in this novel, can be traced all the way back to the *Rig Veda*, the earliest text of Hinduism (1100 B.C.E.); The

Manusmriti, the law books of the sage Manu (100 B.C.E.), institutionalized the caste system as a common practice, and they continue to sanction this hierarchy in contemporary India. In the *Rig Veda*, Purusa is described as the sole creator of the basic grounds of the world above and beyond all other entities. In this creation myth, his body turns into the stepping stone of the Hindu caste system as follows:

Purusa alone is all this—whatever has been and whatever is going to be. Further, he is the lord of immortality and also of what grows on account of food. [...] When [the gods] divided the Purusa, in how many different portions did they arrange him? What became of his mouth, what of his two arms? What were his two thighs and his two feet called? His mouth became the brahman (the priest class); his two arms were made into the *rajanya* (the noble class); his two thighs the *vaisya* (the commercial class); from his two feet the *sudra* (the peasant class) was born. The moon was born from the mind; from the eye the sun was born. (*Rig Veda* 10.90 qtd. in Clothey 24-25; brackets and italic in the original text of Clothey; parenthetical translation added)

Fundamentally grounded upon a particular abstraction or a set of hypotheses by those in power at that time, this genesis myth of Hinduism, surprisingly and oddly enough, has continued to be afoot and had a profound impact on multiple generations of Indian people up until the emergence of *Manusmriti*, the Laws of Manu, in and by which the life of the outcaste Untouchable and its rules of engagement are predetermined as follows:

A Chandala (the lowest caste), a pig, a cock, a dog, a menstruating woman, or a eunuch must not look at the Brahmins while they are eating. [...] Chandalas and

Svapacas [“Dog-Cookers”] must live outside the village and they should be made Apapatras [the so-called illegitimate children]. Their property consists of dogs and donkeys; their garments are the clothes of the dead. [...] They must not go about in villages and towns at night; they may go around during the day to perform some task at the command of the king wearing distinguishing marks. They should carry away the corpses of those without relatives—that is the settled rule. (*The Law Code of Manu* 3.239, 10.51-55 qtd. in Olivelle 61, 183; brackets added)

As is illustrated in the passages from *Rig Veda* and *The Law Code of Manu* above, the caste system begins with a mere religious myth, but winds up controlling and overriding the actual life of Indian people for millennia. Having failed to completely exterminate the politics of caste, the people in modern India still live with the specter of the caste institution under the new term “Scheduled Caste,” which emerged as the Constitutional order of 1936, to be more precise, the Scheduled Castes Order, in the name of promising the opportunity to change and raise their social/class status from the outcaste Untouchable to the Touchable.⁴⁴ As the term “scheduled castes” tellingly implies, the dominant ruling castes in India have continued to internalize the assumption that there are backward people and classes who should be placed in the traditional caste regime in one way or another without rectifying the status quo: the Hindu caste hierarchical social order. Undeniably, insofar as the practice of relentless untouchability persists, as Roy points out in an interview entitled “It’s Outright War and Both Sides are Choosing Their Weapons,” a countless people in India—the Untouchable— would have to either “earn their living carrying

⁴⁴ As for the brief history of the Scheduled Castes Order and its development, see Dahiwale.

other people's shit on their heads everyday" or "starve to death" while the "economists number-crunch and boast about the growth rate."

On the one hand, although Roy never mentions the term scheduled castes in the novel, we can easily recognize the permanent cruelty of the caste institution throughout the novel. Just as Chandalas in the Law of Manu were excluded one thousand years ago, so are some of the main characters in the novel, like Velutha and his father Vellya Paapen, prohibited from doing the ways or the things the Touchable can do not only in public places, but also in private spaces. Concomitantly, Untouchables are commanded to purify and clean up everything they have done, since they are automatically stigmatized as natural bearers of pollution:

As a young boy, Velutha would come with Vellya Paapen to the back entrance of the Ayemenem House to deliver the coconuts they had plucked from the trees in the compound. Pappachi would not allow Paravans into the house. Nobody would. They were not allowed to touch anything that Touchables touched. *Caste Hindus and Caste Christians*. Mammachi told Estha and Rahel that she could remember a time, in her girlhood, when Paravans were expected to crawl backwards with a broom, sweeping away their footprints so that *Brahmins or Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into a Paravan's footprint*. In Mammachi's time, Paravans, like other Untouchables, were not allowed to walk on public roads, not allowed to cover their upper bodies, not allowed to carry umbrellas. They had to put their hands over their mouths when they spoke, to divert their polluted breath away from those whom they addressed. (70-71; emphasis added)

What this passage illustrates is that the ways in which the Law of Manu prescribed the life of Chandalas about 100 B.C. has persistently molded the modern outcastes' life through what Hindu protocols systemize and contrive. Even though we could acknowledge the counter-argument that the caste system is a modern phenomena that emerged in tandem with the Western colonial powers in general and British colonial rule in particular, it still retains a crucial level of significance that the whole praxis of the caste system has impinged upon the structure of the lives in India for more than four hundred years.⁴⁵

As Roy suggests in the novel, this whole system of inequality and injustice might have begun “in the days when the Love Laws were made. The laws that lay down who should be loved and how” (33). This Hindu haunts the main characters of the novel, especially Velutha and his father. Phrased alternatively, this ongoing cruelty of the caste system, on a fundamental level, has much to do with an actual body rather than with a soul, which is observed by Partha Chatterjee in his essay “The Nation and Its Outcasts,” from *The Nation and Its Fragments*. This specific essay about how caste system operates in India illustrates the ways in which caste system has confined and enclosed the reality of Untouchables in *TGST*. He states:

Caste attaches to the body, not to the soul. It is the biological reproduction of the human species through procreation within endogamous caste groups that ensures the permanence of ascribed marks of caste purity or pollution. It is also the physical contact of the body with defiling substances or defiled bodies that mark it with the temporary conditions of pollution, which can be removed by observing the

⁴⁵ In *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*, Nicholas B. Dirks argues that “colonialism made caste what it is today” in that it was under the British that caste became a single term capable of expressing, organizing, and above all systematizing India’s diverse forms of social identity, community, and organization” (5). For further discussion, see “Introduction: The Modernity of Caste,” pp. 3-18.

prescribed procedures of physical cleansing. Further, if we have grasped the essence of caste, the necessity to protect the purity of his body is what forbids the Brahman from engaging in acts of labor that involve contact with polluting material and, reciprocally, requires the unclean castes to perform those services for the Brahman. The essence of caste, we may then say, requires that the laboring bodies of the impure castes be reproduced in order that they can be subordinated to the need to maintain the bodies of the pure castes in their state of purity. (194)

As Chatterjee argues here, caste is much more problematic in the sense that it is designed to reproduce the laboring bodies, the outcaste laboring bodies that are destined and bound to handle the excrement and the dead bodies of the people in the higher castes. That is to say, the caste system can be eternal only via reproducing the laboring bodies of the lower “unclean castes.” The ostensibly irrefutable discourse of who are considered “unclean” and “impure” has been permanently preserved by those in power, i.e., the Brahmins and other touchable castes. Phrased another way, if one is fortunate enough to be pure, one has everything at stake in brainwashing the people of the lower castes to believe and accepting their own impurity so that they will clean up the substances that one’s status requires one not touch.

With that said, Roy’s conscious description of the outcaste laboring body of Velutha’s father in the scene mentioned earlier can translate into an exhibition of how contradictory and irrational it is that caste hierarchy-oriented ideology and practice have little to do with any dynamic capacity and active event in the real, earthly world. To all touchable caste class, the outcaste Untouchable, people like Velutha and his father, are no less than a biologically reproduced living entity of “the human species through procreation within endogamous caste groups” (Chatterjee

194). For the caste regime has long brainwashed millions people of India to accept, as indisputable and unquestionable truth, that the fate of lower castes results from their misdoings and wrongdoings in a previous life. In a similar tenor, in *Dalit: The Downtrodden of India*, Hilmansu Sadangi discusses this issue: the significance of Hindu religion as an operative justification of injustice and misfortune. He states:

[T]he Hindu religion provides an effective ideology for the suppression of resistance to injustice, having as a central tenet of its propaganda the idea that those in the lower castes are poor and suffering because of their misdeeds in the previous birth. And accordingly, as their sufferings are of their own making, and in fact reflect the working out of some inexorable justice, the higher castes are absolved of any responsibility for their condition, and need do nothing to help them even though these ruling castes control the power and resources of the country. (58-59)

What has been at stake for both Sadangi and Roy, then, as is evident in the passage above, is that this completely abstract and formal propaganda of the Hindu caste system has functioned as a social and religious affirmation of cruelty and lack of charity by reducing the entire actual plight of the lower castes simply to “their misdeeds in the previous birth” (Sadangi 58). In accordance with this idea of karma, whereas the Brahmins are supposed to work their way up toward the stage of nirvana and therefore do not need to be reincarnated, those who are reincarnated as one of the outcastes or as a lower caste person are to be blamed for their misdeeds in a past life. In other words, an outcaste or a low caste person is not allowed to blame anything around in the present, no matter how horrible and irrational the reality is underneath the twin beliefs or doctrines of karma and reincarnation, both of which are deeply rooted in Hindu mantra.

4.3 “Caste Hindus and Caste Christians”: Metaphysical Finality

In a similar vein, this absurd yet comprehensive juxtaposition between a religion and its self-affirmation of injustice and prejudice would immediately bring to mind that other religions, say, Indo-European prime religions such as Hindu and Christianity, are not entirely keen to provide a careful consideration on the sufferings and hardships of ordinary people in this earthly life.⁴⁶ For Hinduism, almost uniquely, appears to remove any religious influence from helping the poor due to the idea of karma and incarnation, which renders their plight specifically awful. On one level, despite the fact that Christianity always seems to inform its followers that they have to be benevolent enough to give away financial aid to help the poor, it simultaneously emphasizes the significance of the afterlife. For the whole focus of either Catholicism or Christianity, quite often, is to preach and admonish to the effect that this life is not the real important one, but rather the one that comes after death. Moreover, the more its followers suffer in this life, the more deserving they are of heaven. In this sense, one can argue that both Hindu and Christianity by and large propagate almost the same idea that ordinary people have to accept as a given all of the sufferings derived from injustice and discrimination of this life, this earthly life. This is also why two religions or two religious doctrines in *TGST* have no trouble living together as in Roy’s quite simple yet enticing terms: “Caste Hindus and Caste Christians” (71).

On a deeper level, this term “Caste Hindus and Caste Christians” would remind us of a Mobius strip in that they are seemingly two strands, but are actually one, since the essentialism of

⁴⁶ There has been much discussion regarding the structural similarity of the modes of thought and language between the two civilizations of Europe and India. For instance, it is a commonly held view among linguistics that there is an obviously major category of language family called Indo-European language group. Moreover, although Buddhism was born in India, now it has become popular in other parts of the world such as China, Japan, and Korea, more so often in its homeland of India, since Hinduism and Buddhism are not compatible with each other in terms of their core tenets of how to deal with all creatures: saving all living beings as in Buddhism or not as in Hinduism.

Hindu and Christianity is profoundly “metaphysical” and far from the practical: “thinking the things” down on the earth “from above,” which already establishes a certain hierarchical and fixed order over temporal and mutable being/s in the real and epochal world, as in a panoptic gaze in a Foucauldian sense. Insofar as the praxis of this abstract idea manifests itself as undeniable and transcendent, it would unendingly perpetrate epistemological violence against the small and little things in the earthly world. As is significantly revealed in the novel, when the Hindu people in the outcastes and lower castes convert to Christianity simply (and mainly), due to starvation, they are immediately relegated to the group of “the Rice-Christians” (71). Velutha, one of the Rice-Christians, becomes a Christian in order to urgently “escape the scourge of Untouchability” (71), and the significance of this conversion is illustrated in the following scene:

They were known as the Rice-Christians. It didn’t take them long to realize that they had jumped from the frying pan into the fire. They were made to have separate churches, with separate services, and separate priests. As a special favor they were even given their own separate Pariah Bishop. After Independence they found they were not entitled to any government benefits like job reservations or bank loans at low interest rates, because officially, on paper, they were Christians, and therefore casteless. (71)

As Roy’s description of the Rice-Christians demonstrates in the above passage, the people who have converted primarily for “a little food and money” (71) would later come to understand that “they had jumped from the frying pan into the fire” (71), because “caste Christianity became another version of caste Hinduism” (Sekher 169). In addition to Christianity’s tacit acknowledgement of caste injustice and prejudice, the other grand abstract narratives of Marxism

and nationalism imported primarily from the colonial West might also be accused of perpetrating a noticeable degree of violence against the ordinary in the lower castes by way of their exclusionary principles and practices. This clearly resonates in the life and death of Velutha in the novel.

Being both a Rice-Christian and a Marxist at the time, Velutha has been not merely dismissed by Ammu's Syrian Christian family, but marginalized by his "fellow" touchable Marxist Comrade Pillai, as well as his employer Chacko, "a self-proclaimed Marxist" (62), all of whom look at the world from the perspective of caste, neither of benevolent Christianity nor of revolutionary Marxism. This is unambiguously portrayed in the following passage:

The real secret was that communism crept into Kerala insidiously. As a reformist movement that never overtly questioned the traditional values of a caste-ridden, extremely traditional community. The Marxists worked from *within* the communal divides, never challenging them, never appearing not to. They offered a cocktail revolution. A heady mix of Eastern Marxism and orthodox Hinduism, spiked with a shot of democracy. (64; Roy's emphasis)

Namely, it could be argued that just as (Syrian) Christians are co-opted to a lesser or greater extent by the mantra of caste, so are Marxists. For, as Roy notes in her conversation with Howard Zinn in 2002, India has "caste which is a complex business because" when Kerala "had the first ever democratically elected Marxist government in the world," "all the leaders of the Marxist party are Brahmins" (qtd. in Zinn, "Arundhati Roy in Conversation with Howard Zinn").

On the other hand, this exclusive doctrine also repeats itself in the bureaucratic mechanism of a nation-state in which a mere inspector can resort to the extreme exercise of physical violence over another fellow human being for arbitrary reasons. Under the aegis of the police power, one

of the “repressive state apparatuses,” in Louis Althusser’s terms, the inspector goes to the extreme to the extent that the inspector Matthew metamorphoses Velutha as if he were a mere game animal or a non-being. This culminates in the following scene:

They [the policemen] woke Velutha with their boots. Esthappen and Rahel woke to the shout of sleep surprised by shattered kneecaps. Screams died in them and floated belly up, like dead fish. Cowering on the floor, rocking between dread and disbelief, they realized that the man being beaten was Velutha. Where had he come from? What had he done? Why had the policemen brought him here? They heard the thud of wood on flesh. Boot on bone. On teeth. The muffled grunt when a stomach is kicked in. The muted crunch of skull on cement. The gurgle of blood on a man’s breath when his lung is torn by the jagged end of a broken rib. Blue-lipped and dinner-plate-eyed, they watched, mesmerized by something that they sensed but didn’t understand: the absence of caprice in what the policemen did. The abyss where anger should have been. The sober, steady brutality, the economy of it all.

(292; brackets added)

The process of Velutha’s death described in the scene above, thus, can be understood as an apparent exhibition of how every single “bare” or “naked life,” whose life might be considered “ungrievable,” in Giorgio Agamben’s and Judith Butler’s terms respectively,⁴⁷ could be unconditionally suspended and thus victimized by the larger driving force of a nation-state in one

⁴⁷ Both thinkers have significantly committed to elaborating upon the question of: 1) how every single individual can be deprived of rights of citizenship by the modern form of sovereignty, i.e., a nation-state as in Agamben’s works *Homo Sacer* and *Means without End*; 2) how certain human beings can be relegated to the expendable and therefore to the “ungrievable” as in Butler’s works *Precarious Life* and *Frames of War*.

sense, as well as by the combination of a religious totem pole and its complicity with various state apparatuses (RSA's and ISA's) in another sense. As a powerless and vulnerable human being, Velutha, like Ammu, has "no Locusts Stand I" (151, 179), which means in Latin "no legal standing." For Velutha, there is no place in his community and society, since his larger external world has been relying upon the authentic and universal narrative in an abstract: caste-Hindu patriarchal national identity, not for all, but for a privileged group in the higher castes.

4.4 Writer Speaking Before the Globalizing Hegemony

Roy's solid critique of "the traditional values of a caste-ridden" (64) India and its complicity with other Western values of Christianity and Marxism, entailing nationalism, is also broadened to problematize the notion of globalization in the current context. After Roy published her first fiction in 1997, she began to write numerous political essays, primarily on the controversial issues surrounding the Narmada Valley Dam Projects, a nuclear bomb test in India, the homogenizing force of globalization, and the ongoing war on terror by the US. The majority of critics and audiences in general seem to have viewed her political writings as having a quite different agenda from her literary one. Roy has quite often been branded as a "writer-activist," a term about which she has had a strong reservation. In the first chapter of *Power Politics*, she interrogates this issue of "writer-activist." She calls into question:

[N]ow, I've been wondering why it should be that the person who wrote *The God of Small Things* is called a writer, and the person who wrote the political essays is called an activist? True, *The God of Small Things* is a work of fiction, but it's no less political than any of my essays. True, the essays are works of nonfiction, but since when did writers forgo the right to write nonfiction?" (10-11)

As it implies in this passage, her question immediately brings to mind one of the classic debates about the relationships between literary narratives and philosophical thoughts posed by Plato in the *Republic*, that “there’s an ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy” (607 b). Since Plato’s claim, the indissoluble relationship between literature and other genres of writing on the philosophical and the political have long been concerned with each or one another.⁴⁸

Indeed, it would be inevitable that human being would speculate about this fundamental relationship between literature and other genres of writing, both of which are grounded upon the two instinctive tendencies of humans. Consequently, it stands to reason that through these two innate tendencies a concrete society develops its dynamic features of politics, ethics, economy, and culture: to imagine the thing in the world, whether it is internal or external, in a systematic fashion and to make it significant with habits of storytelling, which leads humans not simply to produce certain forms of god and religion, but to establish social norms and rules. In this aspect, as Arkady Plotnitsky puts it, narrative cannot live without “the significance of philosophy”; and by the same token, “the role of narrative” has become “a constitutive part of philosophy” (427).

Applying the discussion of philosophical and political aspects in literature and vice versa to the issue of labeling Roy as a “writer-activist,” her recurring themes in all of the genres she pursues can be understood primarily as the ways in which human beings interact with the external world that we, here and now, live in; it follows that all of the subjects and ingredients in any writings are derived from the world which one lives in. Moreover, it is no doubt a compelling statement, if we re/define literature or the institution of fiction, as Jacque Derrida does in *Acts in*

⁴⁸ In the nineteenth century, an English poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, came up with a similar insight on the close link between literature and politics as he famously claims in *A Defence of Poetry*: “[p]oets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world” (90).

Literature, as “the power” or “an authorization to say everything” a writer “wants to or everything he can” (37). Roy’s adequate understanding, either of the relationship between a writer and his/her world or of the task of a writer living in the world, is articulated in her essay “Come September” in *War Talk*:

Writers imagine that they cull stories from the world. I’m beginning to believe that vanity makes them think so. That it’s actually the other way around. Stories cull writers from the world. Stories reveal themselves to us. The public narrative, the private narrative—they colonize us. They commission us. They insist on being told. *Fiction and nonfiction are only different techniques of storytelling.* For reasons I do not fully understand, fiction dances out of me. Nonfiction is wrenched out by aching, broken world I wake up to every morning. The theme of much of what I write, fiction as well as nonfiction, is the relationship between power and powerlessness and the endless, circular conflict they’re engaged in. John Berger, that most wonderful writer, once wrote:

Never again will a single story be told as though it’s the only one.

There can *never be a single story*. There are only ways of seeing. So, when I tell a story, I tell it not as an ideologue who wants to share her way of seeing. Though it might appear otherwise, my writing is not really about nations and histories, it’s about power. About the paranoia and ruthlessness of power. About the physics of power.” (45-46; emphasis added)

As Roy declares in the statement above, her writings are spontaneously and intuitively interested in unconcealing “the relationship between power and powerlessness and the endless, circular conflict they’re engaged in” (“Come September” 46), since there should be no “single story” or singular perspective in the world: only different ways of knowing and living.⁴⁹ For Roy, accordingly, “every day” a writer has “to think of new ways of saying old, and obvious, things. Things about love and greed. About politics and governance. About power and powerlessness. Things that must be said over and over again” (Roy, “Before the Flood” 12). Having as the central theme of her writings that “which connects the very smallest things to the very biggest” (qtd. in Barsamian 11), Roy does not “see a great difference between *The God of Small Things* and” her “nonfiction” (qtd. in Barsamian 10), because:

[F]iction is the truest thing there ever was. Today’s world of specialization is bizarre. *Specialists and experts end up severing the links between things, isolating them, actually creating barriers that prevent ordinary people from understanding what’s happening to them.* (qtd. in Barsamian 10; emphasis added)

For the reasons mentioned above, Roy tries “to do the opposite: to create links, to join the dots, to tell politics like a story, to communicate it, to make it real” rather than “severing” and “isolating the links between things” (qtd. in Barsamian 10). Roy actually shows this cogent and organic agenda in her novel *TGST* “to make the connection between a man with his child telling you about life in the village he lived in before it was submerged by a reservoir, and the WTO, the IMF, and the World Bank” (qtd. in Barsamian 10-11).

⁴⁹ John Berger’s phrase in “Come September” is initially used by Roy as her opening epigraph to *The God of Small Things*.

Roy's conscious effort to "use the craft and rigor of writing fiction to make the separate parts cohere, to tell the story in the way it deserves to be told" is initially represented in her novel ("Before the Flood" 14), by way of her awareness of how globalized the small world of southern India is. This is represented in the following scene where Estha walks through Ayemenem:

Some days he walked along the banks of the river that smelled of shit and pesticides bought with *World Bank loans*. Most of the fish had died. The ones that survived suffered from fin-rot and had broken out in boils. Other days he walked down the road. Past the new, freshly baked, iced, *Gulf-money houses* built by nurses, masons, wire-benders and bank clerks, who worked hard and unhappily in faraway places. Past the resentful older houses tinged green with envy, cowering in their private driveways among their private rubber trees. Each a tottering fiefdom with an epic of its own. He walked past the village school that his great-grandfather built for Untouchable children. (14; emphasis added)

As Susan Strehle has observed, returning home to Ayemenem after a long absence, Estha realizes that "the small village of Ayemenem and the river have come under the influence of globalization" (Strehle, "Exiles and Orphans" 146). As the scene above illustrates, under the investment of World Bank loans, the living entities of the small river have been exposed to and threatened by "shit and pesticides"; the labor of local people, more precisely semi-skilled labor, has been exported, and the money from this labor working outside India has become the financial resource of building "Gulf-money houses" in the village. In other words, this scene highlights the world that Estha returns to and has been transitioning to the globalized world endangering the small living entities

of the river. Such remarkable ecological concern is demonstrated in another description of the river as follows:

Once it had had the power to evoke fear. To change lives. But now its teeth were drawn, its spirit spent. It was just a slow, sludging green ribbon lawn that ferried fetid garbage to the sea. Bright plastic bags blew across its viscous, weedy surface like subtropical flying-flowers. The stone steps that had once led bathers right down to the water, and Fisher People to the fish, were entirely exposed and led from nowhere to nowhere, like an absurd corbelled monument that commemorated nothing. Ferns pushed through the cracks. On the other side of the river, the steep mud banks changed abruptly into low mud walls of shanty hutments. Children hung their bottoms over the edge and defecated directly onto the squelchy, sucking mud of the exposed riverbed. The smaller ones left their dribbling mustard streaks to find their own way down. Eventually, by evening, the river would rouse itself to accept the day's offerings and sludge off to the sea, leaving wavy lines of thick white scum in its wake. Upstream, clean mothers washed clothes and pots in unadulterated factory effluents. People bathed. Severed torsos soaping themselves, arranged like dark busts on a thin, rocking, ribbon lawn. On warm days the smell of shit lifted off the river and hovered over Ayemenem like a hat. (119)

Roy's critique of globalization with its ecological considerations also envisages the ongoing hegemony of the Eurocentric regime of politics and economy, even after the official end of colonialism and imperialism. Given that the setting of the scene is in the welter of turbulence and change after the Gulf war and the demise of the former Soviet Union, we can see that there is

a proleptic insight in Roy's understanding of the phenomena of globalization. For the transcendental and invincible project of neoliberal globalization looms large between the late 1970s and the 1990s, more specifically after the first step toward the state-controlled capitalist society of a communist Deng Xiaoping's China in 1979, and the neoliberalism of Margaret Thatcher in England and Ronald Reagan in America during the 1980s (Harvey 1). More to the point, after the ostensibly official end of the Cold War simply due to the collapse of the Soviet Union as well as the Eastern bloc satellite states, the triumphant discourse of neoliberal globalization has ferociously accelerated its theory and practices on the basis of "deregulation, privatization, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision" through multiple international institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO (Harvey 3).

Although Roy may not appear to fully criticize globalization in the novel, the description of globalization portrayed in the novel as the problematic renders it viable for her to dispute against the globalizing hegemony up until the present moment. In an interview to *The Guardian* in 2001, Roy provides an eloquent definition of the notion of globalization. She states:

I think of globalization like a light which shines brighter and brighter on a few people and the rest are in darkness, wiped out. They simply can't be seen. Once you get used to not seeing something, then, slowly, it's no longer possible to see it. It never existed and there is no possibility of an alternative. (qtd. in Bunting; emphasis added)⁵⁰

⁵⁰ This eloquent description of globalization is also used by Rob Nixon as his opening epigraph to "Introduction" of *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*.

For Roy, as her observation in this statement clarifies, globalization might be understood as no less than an advanced or upgraded version of imperialism and colonialism in that the discourse of globalization has underwritten the interest of the former colonial powers, i.e., a few “developed” countries in the West, all of which have arduously demanded that every country open its door to the foreign countries with a lower tariff for the sake of its development and advancement under the aegis of equal opportunities and access to free trade.

Although it may sound fair and plausible to enjoy the full-and-equal trade between all nation-states on the surface, a close look reveals that it is quite contradictory since the previous imperial and colonial Europe and the US have not applied to themselves the same standard they have applied to others. As Ha-Joon Jang argues in *Kicking Away the Ladder*, the now-developed nations almost without exception have wanted to “kick away the ladder” by which they climbed to the top and so prevent developing countries from applying the basis of protectionism and subsidies upon which the developed countries themselves relied in order to develop their industries in the first place (Jang 1-9). This is why the now-developed Western Europe and America have championed and reiterated the notion of free trade from the period of imperialism and colonialism right up until the present moment without acknowledging and sharing the secret of “the ladder.” In short, the “light” of globalization with this secret of the ladder “shines brighter and brighter on a few” already-developed countries in the West, and, by and large, this highly abstract narrative of neoliberal globalization, in the words of Roy, “simply can’t be seen,” but “slowly” permeates into everyday life.

In much the same vein, another way of better elaborating Roy’s insight of globalization both in *TGST* and in her observation above, with regard to cast Hinduism’s metanarrative of its own is by considering Antonio Gramsci’s notion of hegemony as theorized by Raymond Williams

in *Marxism and Literature*.⁵¹ According to William's understanding of Gramsci, the notion of hegemony is summed up as follows:

The concept of hegemony often, in practice, resembles these definitions, but it is distinct in its refusal to equate consciousness with the articulate formal system which can be and ordinarily is abstracted as 'ideology.' It of course does not exclude the articulate and formal meanings, values and beliefs which a dominant class develops and propagates. But it does not equate these with consciousness, or rather it does not reduce consciousness to them. Instead it sees the relations of domination and subordination, in their forms as practical consciousness, as in effect *a saturation of the whole process of living*—not only of political and economic activity, nor only of manifest social activity, but of *the whole substance of lived identities and relationships*, to such a depth that the pressures and limits of what can ultimately be seen as a specific economic, political, and cultural system seem to most of us the pressures and limits of simple experience and common sense. Hegemony is then not only the articulate upper level of 'ideology,' nor are its forms of control only those ordinarily seen as 'manipulation' or 'indoctrination.' It is *a whole body of practices and expectations*, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is *a lived system of meanings and values*—constitutive and constituting—which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes *a*

⁵¹ Gramsci never worked on the systemically focused and well-developed discussion of the term hegemony, but just sporadically did in his notebooks which would later become the book *Prison Notebooks*. There are two well-known scholarly editions and translations in the Anglo-American archive: Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith's *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1971) and Joseph Buttigieg's projected three volumes of the *Prison Notebooks* (1992, 1996, and 2007).

sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most areas of their lives. It is, that is to say, in the strongest sense a '*culture*,' but a culture which has also to be seen as the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes. (Williams 109-110; emphasis added)

One advantage of taking into account Gramscian Williams's well-articulated notion of hegemony, when it comes to the question of globalization, is that Gramsci's historical insight requires us to contemplate and therefore unconceal the extent to which any hegemonic system in a given society conceals the nature of reality in general and to which the current discourse of globalization conceals the single and monolithic narrative of modernity: the narrative of progress and development in particular. Just as we are being subsumed into the current democratic capitalist hegemony, which is harder to see than ideology since it is concerned with "our lived system of meanings and values," it would be inevitably complex for the ordinary not only in the colonial, but in the postcolonial India, to recognize the degree to which both the Western metaphysical tradition and the perennially ruthless practice of Hindu caste "saturate" their lives. They, like us today, take it for granted what "a whole body of" metaphysical Hindu "practices and expectations" permeates; they just grant, in Gramsci's word, "the spontaneous consent" (Gramsci 12) to the world and society in which they live: "the spontaneous consent" to the ways things are, to the ways the ruling castes in India encloses the rest, the people in the lower castes, and the ways the developed countries disenfranchise the developing and underdeveloped countries.

Consequently, Roy's problematization of globalization with its ecological considerations in her writings makes us aware of this entire "lived system" of hegemony: "a whole body of

practices and expectations” of imperialism and colonialism as well as the “lived dominance and subordination” of liberal democratic capitalist classes, both of which have concealed the relations of dominations and subordinations between the male and the female, the colonizing and the colonized, the chosen elite and the wretched preterite, the developed and the underdeveloped, and others.

4.5 Literary Narrative as Counter-Hegemony

This chapter has elaborated upon the ways in which Arundhati Roy’s novel *The God of Small Things* interacts with the evocative issue of the Hindu caste-ridden value system, the question of globalization, and the task of a writer in the current postcolonial globalized world. By exploring those three interconnected associations with one another, I argue both that the highly yet subtly metaphysical doctrine of Hindu caste and globalization has long described its own ascendance as inexorable, logical, and permanent, and that Roy’s dissident trajectory of her writings has sought to unconceal the extent to which the privileged discourse of Hindu caste in India and of globalization around the world has been buttressed and sustained by the invisible but disseminated hegemony.

What is more significant and urgent here is that *TGST*’s valid treatise on the aforementioned hegemonic force of Hindu caste and globalization should be extended to the relationship between human civilizations and nature, the planet Earth itself, since all forms of living and non-living entities exist “in-the-midst-of beings” as in Heidegger’s *Dasein* or in the realm of “actual entities” as in Whitehead. The Whiteheadian notion of “actual entities” or “actual occasions” means “the final real things of which the world is made up” (Whitehead, *Process and Reality* 27), which is used to conversely describe “the thing in itself” in Kant of Platonic tradition. For Whitehead, every single thing or event is interconnected to each other, since actual entities (all

living beings) are always already in the process of becoming, and their becoming is also their moment of emerging and perishing as well. In regard to the rationale for placing Whitehead in conversation with this chapter, he has not been discussed much in literary studies and criticism in the Anglo-American context. His enduring trajectory of process thought, or philosophy of organism would serve to enhance the significant nexus between Roy's deep ecology and other deconstructive thoughts' critique of traditional Western philosophy.

Similarly, the postcolonial ecology would also benefit from Heidegger's notion of Being-in-the-world, in that the whole focus of *Dasein* is to restore and then validate the significance of *becoming* and flux rather than of *being* and stasis. As Roy's fiction and nonfiction writings have reflected thus far, she is mindful of the indissoluble relationality between human beings and non-human beings on the ground. She as a writer "would rather be loved by a river valley than by a nation-state, any day" ("Before the Flood" 18).

In this light, we, as the people of the modern world, most of whom are ventriloquized by the hegemonic modes of thought and life to a certain degree and in one way or another, should recuperate the moment when we are able to acknowledge any seemingly indisputable and disinterested knowledge as a tentative conviction or generalization. Otherwise, we would not break this unequally and unfairly tragic or vicious circle of dualistic mindset: "civilization's fear of nature, men's fear of women, power's fear of powerlessness" (*TGST* 292), which requires us to rethink the value of Velutha's unflinching attitude of mind as well as undaunted way of life: "a lack of hesitation" and "an unwarranted assurance" (*TGST* 73).

In a broader sense, I argue for the necessity of reading "a lived hegemony" as "always a process" (Williams 112), and as simultaneously as a "slow violence" in Rob Nixon's terms. In *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, Nixon defines it as attritional, chronically

ignorant, slow moving environmental damage stemming from “resource imperialism inflicted on the global South to maintain the unsustainable consumer appetites” of the relatively developed countries (22). Consequently, I contend that it is imperative to conceptualize a new type of knowledge or political community different than the current one within the national patriarchal boundaries. And this is enticingly portrayed toward the end of the novel as follows:

Even later, on the thirteen nights that followed this one, instinctively they stuck to the Small Things. The Bing Things ever lurked inside. They knew that there was nowhere for them to go. They had nothing. No future. So they stuck to the small things. [...] One night they contributed to his wardrobe—a flake of garlic skin—and were deeply offended when he [Chappu Thamburan] rejected it along with the rest of his armor from which he emerged—disgruntled, naked, snot-colored. As though he deplored their taste in clothes. For a few days he remained in this suicidal state of disdainful undress. The rejected shell of garbage stayed standing, like an outmoded world-view. An antiquated philosophy. Then it crumbled. Gradually *Chappu Thamburan* acquired a new ensemble. (320; italic in the original and brackets added)

As the lesson of Chappu Thamburan—a spider that Velutha calls—suggests in *TGST*, only if we are able to reject our “shell of” “an outmoded world-view” and “an antiquated philosophy” (320), would it then be imaginable to “crumble” all types of antiquated metaphysical convictions and eventually to “acquire a new ensemble” (320) within which all living and non-living entities can be equally or at least solicitously treated and given the same agency. In the end, human beings

with the faculty of language and thought should not simply admit the imperfections of all metaphysical systems, but go one step further beyond the limits by establishing, to borrow a phrase from Whitehead, “an ultimate moral intuition into the nature of intellectual action” because there are certain “limits to the claim that all the elements in the universe are explicable by ‘theory’” (*Process and Reality* 42).

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION: A DARWINIAN TURN AND TRUTH AS *ALETHEIA*

A new scientific *truth* does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and *a new generation grows up that is familiar with it.*

—Max Planck, *Scientific Autobiography and Other Papers* (emphasis added)

This study has explored the question of what it means to become a human being who has arrived at this specific point in history, the Anthropocene. Through the chapters of this dissertation, I have sought to validate the proposition that in order to (re)construct or restore a vibrant and enduring community that is neither isolated nor gated, it is urgent to deconstruct, in the spirit of Nietzschean “philosophizing with a hammer,” all the prevailing values that have both overtly and surreptitiously sponsored the discourse of human subjectivity with a pure independent self-consciousness: the privileging of “I” (unmoved and permanent *being* identity) over “Other” (fleeting and temporal *becoming* difference). As each chapter of this study has illustrated thus far, the metaphysical dogmatism to privilege *being* over *becoming* has been perennial and remains decisive in its various forms ranging from the ancient Roman’s interpretation of human (*homo humanus* over *homo barbarus*), medieval Christianity (the kingdom of heaven over this world), Enlightenment metaphysics (rationality over experience and the universal Man over the dismissed women), modern imperialism and colonialism (the superior West *orientalizing* the East), and American exceptionalism and the caste system in India (the chosen elite over the wretched preterite), to the cotemporary divisive identity politics around the globe based on gender, race, and nationality categories (authentic “I” over against questionable “You”).

In effectively challenging this self-contradictory metaphysical scheme of thought that has dominated the discourse of human subjectivity, I propose in the Introduction the necessity of reinforcing the notion of homo ecologicus that has either been sporadically deployed in popular “citizen science” efforts or narrowly formulated by a very limited number of scholars. In advancing the notion of homo ecologicus, my chapters have sought to place the core value of nonfoundational modes of thought in critical dialogue with the study of literature so that the notion of homo ecologicus can animate an alternative and radical mode of existence for the broadly cast vulnerability of the Anthropocene.

One possible way of concluding my study on the discourse of humanity and human subjectivity is to (re)consider the potential of the pre-Socratic philosophy such as that of Heraclitus or Parmenides, among many others. In *Process and Reality*, Whitehead alludes to a fact that the Heraclitean world of flux has been “barely analyzed” (208) as of his writing in 1929, the notion that all things flow and thereby one cannot step twice into the same river. Deeply inspired by Heraclitus and his notion of flux, Whitehead’s process philosophy, undeniably resonating with the Nietzschean notion of eternal recurrence, calls into question the metaphysical tendency in Western thinking since Plato from the inside, as it were. In a similar tenor, Heidegger grants a particular attention to the significance of truth as *aletheia* in ancient Greek thought. In *Parmenides*, Heidegger contends that there are two different modes of truth: *aletheia* and *veritas*. The former is the Greek concept of truth which originally means “unconcealedness” (*Parmenides* 11), involving “unconcealing,” “disclosing,” and “unforgetting”; the latter, on the contrary, is equivalent to “adequation” and “correspondence.” It is thus assumed that as the “counter-essence” of *aletheia*, *veritas* is intended to generate the idea of “correctness” and “certainty.” As Heidegger highlights, this transformation or reduction of the radically originative Greek understanding of truth as

aletheia to the more calculative and closed-ended thinking as *veritas*, was established by the Romans (*Parmenides* 42). And it follows that this fundamentally imperial and colonial mode of thinking has continued to undergo such historical transformations as the *Pax Romana*, the medieval theological tradition, and the anthropological knowledge production of the Enlightenment.

One of the pivotal rationales for why the Conclusion brings into sharp focus the discourse of truth as *aletheia* has to do with the extent to which the notion of homo ecologicus proactively communicates a more sensible and ecological truth, one that would privilege the open-ended questions over the fixed and immutable answers. In this aspect, it stands to reason that the essential value of truth as *aletheia* is synonymous with the concerns raised by Thomas Kuhn's notion of paradigm shift. As is implied in the epigraph opening the Conclusion, a paradigm shift takes place when what was previously considered "truth" is radically challenged either by a new way of thinking or by a new scientific discovery that fundamentally alters our perception of what we already know. A paradigm shift is then always accompanied by a certain form of resistance, some of which is life-long. Robert FitzRoy, for instance, a British naval officer who commanded the voyage of the HMS Beagle and became a close friend to Charles Darwin, risked his life to resist Darwin's new scientific truth, *inverting* the prevailing worldview at the time that God had originally created all living beings on the Earth, the age of which was calculated to be about 6,000 years old relying on interpretations of the Bible. Darwin's discovery of the new scientific *truth* articulated in *On the Origin of Species* in 1859 as such was revolutionary (comparable to the Copernican revolution) to the extent that FitzRoy ended his life by himself in 1865 under depression. It is a tragic irony that it was FitzRoy who presented to Darwin almost as a gift one phenomenal book entitled *The Principles of Geology: Being an Attempt to Explain the Former*

Changes of the Earth's Surface by Charles Lyell who first coined the term the Recent Epoch for his contemporary geological epoch (later adopted as Holocene), the book that might have apparently stimulated Darwin's initial formulation of the theory of evolution in deep time.

To return to the discourse of truth as *aletheia*, on the verge of facing the new scientific *truth* called the Anthropocene, that is “the interlacing of human history and Earth's history” (Lewis and Maslin 9), the notion of homo ecologicus asks us to (re)think about “the long-term impacts of the globally interconnected mega-civilization we have created, and what kind of world we will bequeath to future generations” (Lewis and Maslin 15-16). In narrative terms, the way of living and knowing of homo ecologicus would happily ascertain the claim proposed by Rachel Carson in the last chapter of *Silent Spring*:

The road we have long been traveling is deceptively easy, a smooth superhighway on which we progress with great speed, but at its end lies disaster. The other fork of the road—the one “less traveled by”⁵²—offers our last, our only chance to reach a destination that assures the preservation of our earth. The choice, after all, is ours to make.” (277)

Endorsing Carson's passionate concern for the future of our planet, the major thesis of the Conclusion would slightly paraphrase Carson's last line from the passage above as follows: the *futures* of homo ecologicus living in the Anthropocene, after all, are ours to create and shape. For the Anthropocene may become one of the new scientific *truths* with which, in the words of Max Planck in the epigraph opening this chapter, “a new generation grows up” and becomes “familiar.”

⁵² It seems obvious that this phrase refers to the last three lines of Robert Frost's exquisite “The Road Not Taken” (1915). In the last stanza, it reads: “Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.”

This new generation will also become familiar with joyfully acknowledging what Edward Said eloquently postulates in the final passage of *Culture and Imperialism*: “survival in fact is about the connection between things; in Eliot’s phrase, reality cannot be deprived of the ‘other echoes [that] inhabit the garden.’ It is more rewarding—and more difficult—to think *concretely* and sympathetically, contrapuntally, about others than only about ‘us’” (336; Said’s brackets and emphasis added). In the end, it is imperative once again not only to “develop *nonmessianic* language to refigure the raced [and the gaged, isolated, closed] community” but also to advance “an *epistemology* that is neither intellectual slumming nor self-serving reification” (Morrison, “Home” 11; emphasis and brackets added).

WORKS CITED

- Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen, Stanford UP, 1998.
- _____. *Means without End: Notes on Politics*. Translated by Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Casarino, U of Minnesota P, 2000.
- Althusser, Louis. "From *Capital* to Marx's Philosophy." *Reading Capital*. Translated by Ben Brewster, Verso, 1997, pp. 11-70.
- _____. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Toward an Investigation)." *Lenin and Philosophy and other essays*. Translated by Ben Brewster, NLB, 1971, pp. 85-126.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, 2006.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Translated by Michel Holquist, U of Texas P, 1981.
- Barsamian, David. *The Checkbook and the Cruise Missile: Conversation with Arundhati Roy*. South End Press, 2004.
- Bennet, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke UP, 2010.
- Bennett, Jill. *Living in the Anthropocene*. Hatje Cantz, 2012.
- Bernal, Martin. "Introduction." *Black Athena: The Afro-Asiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* Vol. 1: *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785-1985*. Rutgers UP, 1987, pp. 1-73.
- _____. *Black Athena: The Afro-Asiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* Vol. 1: *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785-1985*. Rutgers UP, 1987.
- Bonneuil, Christophe, and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz. *The Shock of the Anthropocene: The Earth, History and Us*. Translated by David Fernbach, Verso, Jan. 2016.

- Brown, Homer Obed. *Institutions of the English Novel: From Defoe to Scott*. U of Pennsylvania P, 1997.
- Buffon, Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de. "The Geographical and Cultural Distribution of Mankind." *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, edited by Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, Blackwell Publishers, 1997, pp. 15-28.
- Bunting, Madeleine. "Dam buster: Interview with Arundhati Roy." *The Guardian*, 28 July 2001. Web.
- Butler, Judith. *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* Verso, 2010.
- _____. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. Verso, 2004.
- Carey, Daniel. "Reading Contrapuntally: *Robinson Crusoe*, Slavery, and Postcolonial Theory." *The Postcolonial Enlightenment: Eighteenth-Century Colonialism and Postcolonial Theory*, edited by Daniel Carey and Lynn Festa, Oxford UP, 2009, pp. 105-136.
- Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "Anthropocene Time." *History and Theory*, vol. 57, no. 1, 2018, pp. 5-32.
- Chatterjee, Partha. "The Nation and Its Outcasts." *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton UP, 1993, pp. 158-199.
- Clothey, Fred. *Religion in India: A Historical Introduction*, Routledge, 2006.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. "Crusoe as a Representative of Humanity." In *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Norton Critical Edition, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Shinagel, W. W. Norton, 1994, pp. 267-268.
- Conrad, Joseph. *The Heart of Darkness*. Norton Critical Edition, 3rd ed., edited by Robert Kimbrough, W. W. Norton, 1988.

- Crutzen, Paul J., and Eugene F. Stoermer. "The Anthropocene." *IGBP [International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme] Newsletter*, no. 41, 2000, p. 17.
- Cuvier, Georges Léopold. "Varieties of the Human Species." *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, edited by Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, Blackwell Publishers, 1997, pp. 104-108.
- Dahiwale, "Identifying 'Backwardness' in Maharashtra." *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 35, no. 37, 2000, pp. 3293-3297.
- Dalsgard, Katrine. "The One All-Black Town Worth the Pain: (African) American Exceptionalism, Historical Narration, and the Critique of Nationhood in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*." *African American Review*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2001, pp. 233-248.
- Davies, Jeremy. *The Birth of the Anthropocene*. U of California P, 2016.
- Defoe, Daniel. *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Norton Critical Edition, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Shinagel, W. W. Norton, 1994.
- Deleuze, Gilles. "Michel Tournier and the World without Others." *The Logic of Sense*. Translated by Mark Lester, 1990, Columbia UP, pp. 301-321.
- Demos, T. J. *Against the Anthropocene: Visual Culture and Environment Today*. Sternberg Press, 2017.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Acts of Literature*. edited by Derek Attridge, Routledge, 1992.
- _____. *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation*. Translated by Peggy Kamuf and edited by Christie McDonald, U of Nebraska P, 1988.
- _____. "Letter to a Japanese Friend." *Psyche: Inventions of the Other Volume II*, edited by Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, 2008, pp. 1-6.
- _____. *Of Grammatology*. Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, The Johns Hopkins UP, 1976.

- Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. Norton, 2005.
- Dirks, Nicholas. *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*. Princeton UP, 2001.
- Drabble, Margaret. *Oxford Companion to English Literature*. Oxford UP, 1998.
- Dryzek, John S. "Foundations for Environmental Political Economy: The Search for Homo Ecologicus?" *New Political Economy*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1996, pp. 27-40.
- "Enclosing the Land." Feb. 2015, <http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/towncountry/landscape/overview/enclosingland/>.
- Farnsworth, Elizabeth. "Conversation: Toni Morrison." *Toni Morrison: Conversations*, edited by Carolyn C. Denard, U of Mississippi P, 2008, pp. 155-158.
- Festa, Lynn. "Crusoe's Island of Misfit Things." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 53, no. 3-4, 2011, pp. 443-471.
- Flint, Holly. "Toni Morrison's *Paradise*: Black Cultural Citizenship in the American Empire." *American Literature*, vol. 78, no. 3, 2006, pp. 585-612.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan, Vintage Books, 1977.
- _____. "Docile bodies." *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan, Vintage Books, 1977, pp. 135-169.
- _____. "Revolutionary Action: 'Until Now.'" *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Translated and edited by Donald F. Bouchard, Cornell UP, 1980, pp. 218-233.
- Free, Melissa. "Un-Erasing Crusoe: Farther Adventures in the Nineteenth Century." *Book History*, vol. 9, 2006, pp. 89-130.

Gauthier, Marni. "The Other Side of Paradise: Toni Morrison's (Un)Making of Mythic History."

African American Review, vol. 39, no. 3, 2005, pp. 395-414.

Gavin, Michael. "Real Robinson Crusoe." *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, vol. 25, no. 2, 2013, pp. 301-325.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. Translated and edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, International Publishers, 1971.

Griffin, David Ray. "Whitehead's Deeply Ecological Worldview." *Whitehead's Radically Different Postmodern Philosophy: An Argument for Its Contemporary Relevance*. SUNY P, 2007, pp. 70-85.

Grusin, Richard. *Anthropocene Feminism*. U Of Minnesota P, 2017.

Harding, Rachel Elizabeth. "Candomblé: A Religion of the African Diaspora." May 2014, prometra.org/Report_on_Candomble.htm.

Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford UP, 2005.

Heidegger, Martin. "The End of Philosophy." *Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to the Task of Thinking (1964)*, edited by David Farrell Krell, HarperSanFrancisco, 1993, pp. 427-439.

_____. *Four Seminars*. Translated by Andrew Mitchell and François Raffoul, Indiana UP, 1976.

_____. "Kant's Thesis about Being." *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*. Translated by Ted Klein and William Pohl, vol. 4, no. 3, 1973, pp. 7-33.

_____. "Letter on Humanism." *Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to the Task of Thinking (1964)*, edited by David Farrell Krell, HarperSanFrancisco, 1993, pp. 217-265.

- _____. *Nietzsche: Volumes One and Two*. Translated and edited by David Farrell Krell, HarperSanFrancisco, 1991.
- _____. *Nietzsche: Volumes Three and Four*. Translated and edited by David Farrell Krell, HarperSanFrancisco, 1991.
- _____. *Parmenides*. Translated by Andre Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz, Indiana UP, 1992.
- _____. “What is Metaphysics.” *Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to the Task of Thinking (1964)*, edited by David Farrell Krell, HarperSanFrancisco, 1993, pp. 93-110.
- Hilfrich, Carola. “Anti-Exodus: Counteremory, Gender, Race, and Everyday Life in Toni Morrison’s *Paradise*.” *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 52, no. 2, 2006, pp. 321-349.
- Himansu Charan Sadangi, “Social Background and Origins of Dalits.” *Dalit: The Downtrodden of India*, ISHA Books, 2008, pp. 41-65.
- Holy Bible: New International Version*, Biblica, 2011.
- Horn, Eva, and Hannes Bergthaller. *The Anthropocene: Key Issues for the Humanities*. Routledge, 2019.
- Hösle, Vittorio. *Philosophie der ökologischen Krise: Moskauer Vorträge*. C.H.Beck, 1994.
- Hulme, Peter. *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797*. Methuen, 1986.
- “Idea, N.” *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford UP, 2019, www.oed.com/view/Entry/90954.
- Irigaray, Luce. *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*. Translated by Alison Martin, Routledge, 1992.
- Jaffrey, Zia. “The Salon Interview: Toni Morrison.” *Salon*. Feb. 1998, www.salon.com/1998/02/02/cov_si_02int/.

- James, Louis. "Unwrapping Crusoe: Retrospective and Prospective Views." *Robinson Crusoe: Myths and Metamorphoses*, edited by Lieve Spaas and Brian Stimpson, St. Martin's Press, 1996, pp.1-9.
- Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconsciousness: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Cornell UP, 1981.
- Jang, Ha-Joon. *Kicking Away the Ladder: Development Strategy in Historical Perspective*. Anthem Press, 2002.
- Jung, Hwa Yol. "Marxism and Deep Ecology in Postmodernity: From Homo Oeconomicus to Home Ecologicus." *Thesis Eleven*, vol. 28, 1991, pp. 86-99.
- Kant, Immanuel. "An Answer to the Question: 'What Is Enlightenment?'" *Kant's Political Writings*, edited by Hans Reiss, Cambridge UP, 1991, pp. 54-60.
- Latour, Bruno. *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*. Translated by Catherine Porter, Harvard University, 2004.
- The Law Code of Manu*. Translated by Patrick Olivelle. Oxford UP, 2004.
- Lewis, Simon L. and Mark A. Maslin. "The Hidden History of the Anthropocene." *The Human Planet: How We Created the Anthropocene*. Penguin, 2018, pp. 17-41.
- _____. *The Human Planet: How We Created the Anthropocene*. Penguin, 2018.
- Linné, Carl von. "The God-given Order of Nature." *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, edited by Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, Blackwell Publishers, 1997, pp. 10-14.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin. *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword*. W. W. Norton, 1997.
- Loar, Christopher F. "How to Say Things with Guns: Military Technology and the Politics of *Robinson Crusoe*." *Eighteenth Century Fiction*, vol. 19, no. 1-2, 2006, pp. 1-20.

- Lukács, Georg. *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essays on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*. Translated by Anna Bostock, The MIT P, 1971.
- Madsen, Deborah L. *American Exceptionalism*. U of Mississippi P, 1998.
- Ma, Ning. "When Robinson Crusoe Meets Ximen Qing: Material Egoism in the First Chinese and English Novels." *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 46, no. 3, 2009, pp. 443-466.
- Marcus, James. "This Side of Paradise." Jan. 1998,
www.amazon.com/gp/feature.html?ie=UTF8&docId=7651.
- Marx, Karl. "The Expropriation of the Agricultural Population from the Land." *Capital Volume I: A Critique of Political Economy*. Translated by Ben Fowkes, Vintage Books, 1977, pp. 877-895.
- Marzec, Robert P. "Enclosures, Colonization, and the *Robinson Crusoe* Syndrome: A Genealogy of Land in a Global Context." *boundary 2*, vol. 29, no. 2, 2002, pp. 129-156.
- _____. "Enclosures, Colonization, and the *Robinson Crusoe* Syndrome: Notes toward an Ontology of Land." *An Ecological and Postcolonial Study of Literature: From Daniel Defoe to Salman Rushdie*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. 1-26.
- _____. "Reflections on the Anthropocene Dossier." *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 64, no. 4, 2018, pp. 585-616.
- McAlister, Melani. "Can This Nation Be Saved?" *American Literary History*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2003, pp. 422-440.
- McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. Routledge, 1995.
- McKeon, Michael. *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach*. The Johns Hopkins UP, 2000.
- Mentz, Steve. *Break Up the Anthropocene*. U of Minnesota P, 2019.

- Montagu, M. F. Ashley. *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*. Columbia UP, 1942.
- Moretti, Franco. *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*. Verso, 1987.
- Morrison, Toni. Foreword. *Paradise*, Vintage International, 2014, pp. xi-xvii.
- _____. "God's Language." *The Source of Self-Regard: Selected Essays, Speeches, and Meditations*. Vintage, 2019, pp. 246-254.
- _____. "Home." *The House That Race Built: Original Essays by Toni Morrison, Angela Y. Davis, Cornel West, and Others on Black Americans and Politics in America*, edited by Wahneema Lubiano, Pantheon Books, 1997, pp. 3-12.
- _____. *Lecture and Speech of Acceptance, upon the Award of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Delivered in Stockholm on the Seventh of December, Nineteen Hundred and Ninety Three*. Alfred. A. Knopf, 1994.
- _____. *Paradise*. Alfred. A. Knopf, 1998.
- _____. *Paradise*. Vintage International, 2014.
- _____. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. Harvard UP, 1992.
- _____. "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature." *Michigan Quarterly Review*, vol. 28, no. 1, 1989, pp. 1-49.
- _____. "What the Black Woman Thinks about Women's Lib." *New York Times Magazine*, Aug. 1971, pp. 14-15, 63-66.
- Morton, Timothy. *The Ecological Thought*. Harvard UP, 2010.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann, Vintage, 1966.

- _____. *Ecce Homo: How to Become What You Are*. In *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*. Translated by Judith Norman, edited by Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, Cambridge UP, 2005, pp. 69-151.
- _____. *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*. Translated by Peter Preuss, Hackett Publishing Company, 1980.
- _____. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. In *The Portable Nietzsche*. Translated and edited by Walter Kaufmann, Penguin, 1982, pp. 103-439.
- _____. *Twilight of the Idols: or How to Philosophize with a Hammer*. In *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*. Translated by Judith Norman, edited by Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, Cambridge UP, 2005, pp. 153-229.
- Nixon, Rob. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard UP, 2011.
- Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 3rd ed.
- Pease, Donald. E. *The New American Exceptionalism*. U of Minnesota P, 2009.
- Plato. *The Republic*. Translated by Desmond Lee, Penguin, 1987.
- Plotnitsky, Arkady. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, edited by David Herman, Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan, Routledge, 2005.
- Rajshekar, V. T. *Dalit: The Black Untouchables of India*. Clarity, 1995.
- Ravens, Charles Earle. *Natural Religion and Christian Theology: Experience and Interpretation, Gifford Lectures, 1951-52*. Cambridge UP, 1953.
- Robert, Marthe. "Why the Novel?" *Origins of the Novel*. Translated by Sacha Rabinovitch, Indiana UP, 1980, pp. 3-20.
- Rose, Charlie. "A Conversation with Author Toni Morrison." *Interview with Toni Morrison*, Jan. 1998, CharlieRose.com, <https://charlierose.com/videos/17664>.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. "A Treatise on Natural Education." In *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Norton Critical Edition, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Shinagel, W. W. Norton, 1994, pp. 262-264.

Roy, Arundhati. "Before the Flood." *Onearth*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2000, pp. 12-18.

_____. "Come September." *War Talk*. South End, 2003.

_____. *The God of Small Things*. HarperCollins, 1997.

_____. "The Greater Common Good." *The Cost of Living*. Random House Modern Library, 1999, pp. 7-90.

_____. "I want to be known as a writer: Arundhati Roy." *Outlook India*, Apr. 2008.

_____. "It's Outright War and Both Sides are Choosing Weapons: Interview with Arundhati Roy." *Tehelka*, Mar. 2007.

_____. *Power Politics*. South End, 2001.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. Vintage Books, 1993.

_____. *Orientalism*. Vintage Books, 1979.

Schmidgen, Wolfram. "The Metaphysics of *Robinson Crusoe*." *ELH: English Literary History*, vol. 83, no. 1, 2016, pp. 101-126.

Scranton, Roy. *Learning to Die in the Anthropocene: Reflections on the End of a Civilization*, City Lights Publishers, 2015.

Seidel, Kevin. "Beyond the Religious and the Secular in the History of the Novel." *New Literary History*, vol. 38, no. 4, 2007, pp. 637-647.

Sekher, Ajay S. "Nation Versus Conversion: *Kanthapura*, *God of Small Things*," *Representing the Margin: Caste and Gender in Indian Fiction*, Kalpaz Publications, 2008, pp. 149-182.

- Shah, Ghanshyam. "Introduction: Dalit Politics." *Dalit and Identity Politics*, edited by Ghanshyam Shah, Sage, 2001, pp. 17-43.
- Sharpe, Bill. *Economies of Life: Patterns of Health and Wealth*. Triarchy Press, 2010.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe. *A Defence of Poetry*, edited by Mrs. Shelley, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1904.
- Shiva, Vandana. *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*. Zed Books, 1989.
- Slotkin, Richard. *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America*. Perennial, 1993.
- _____. *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*. U of Oklahoma P, 2000.
- _____. *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization 1800-1890*. U of Oklahoma P, 1998.
- Smith, Dinitia. "Toni Morrison's Mix of Tragedy, Domesticity and Folklore." *New York Times*, Jan. 1998.
- Spanos, William V. *American Exceptionalism in the Age of Globalization*. SUNY P, 2008.
- _____. "Martin Heidegger and Literature: A Preface." *boundary 2*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1976, pp. 337-339.
- _____. "The Ontological Origins of Occidental Imperialism." *America's Shadow: An Anatomy of Empire*. U of Minnesota P, 2000, pp. 1-63.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculations on Widow Sacrifice." *Wedge*, vol. 7, no. 8, 1985, pp. 120-130.
- Stave, Shirley A. "Introduction." *Toni Morrison and the Bible: contested intertextualities*, edited by Shirley A. Stave, Peter Lang Publishing, 2006, pp. 1-7.

- Steffen, Will, et al. "The Anthropocene: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, vol. 369, no. 1938, 2011, pp. 842-867.
- Strehle, Susan. "Exiles and Orphans: Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*." *Transnational Women's Fiction: Unsettling Home and Homeland*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp. 126-152.
- _____. "Homeless in the American Empire: Toni Morrison's *Paradise*." *Transnational Women's Fiction: Unsettling Home and Homeland*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp. 28-52.
- Tabone, Mark A. "Rethinking *Paradise*: Toni Morrison and Utopia at the Millennium." *African American Review*, vol. 49, no. 2, 2016, pp. 129-144.
- Tapley, Heather. "Queering *Paradise*: Toni Morrison's anti-capitalist production." *Feminist Theory*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2013, pp. 21-37.
- Terry, Jennifer. "A New World Religion? Creolisation and Candomblé in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*." *Toni Morrison and the Bible: Contested Intertextualities*, edited by Shirley A. Stave, Peter Lang Publishing, 2006, pp. 192-214.
- Thomson, Iain. "Ontotheology? Understanding Heidegger's *Destruktion* of Metaphysics." *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 297-327.
- Tournier, Michel. "Friday." *The Wind Spirit: An Autobiography*. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer, Beacon Press, 1988, pp. 176-197.
- _____. "Tournier face aux lycéens." *Magazine Littéraire*, Jan. 1986, pp. 20-26.
- Trexler, Adam. *Anthropocene Fictions: The Novel in a Time of Climate Change*. U of Virginia P, 2015.
- Voeks, Robert A. *Sacred Leaves of Candomblé: African Magic, Medicine and Religion in Brazil*. U of Texas P, 1997.

- Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. U of California P, 2001.
- Wheeler, Roxann. *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture*. U of Pennsylvania P, 2000.
- Whitehead, Alfred North. *The Concept of Nature*. Cambridge UP, 1920.
- _____. *The Function of Reason*. Beacon Press, 1958.
- _____. *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*. Corrected Edition, edited by David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne, The Free Press, 1978.
- _____. *Science and the Modern World*. The Free Press, 1967.
- Widdowson, Peter. "The American Dream Refashioned: History, Politics, and Gender in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*." *Journal of American Studies*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2001, pp. 313-335.
- Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford UP, 1977.
- Wortham, Simon Morgan. *The Derrida Dictionary*. Continuum, 2010.
- Zalasiewicz, Jan, et al. "When did the Anthropocene begin? A Mid-Twentieth Century Boundary Level Is Stratigraphically Optimal." *Quaternary International*, vol. 383, 2015, pp. 196-203.
- Zinn, Howard. "Arundhati Roy in Conversation with Howard Zinn." Sep. 2002,
<https://www.howardzinn.org/arundhati-roy-in-conversation-with-howard-zinn/>.
- _____. "The Power and the Glory: Myths of American Exceptionalism." *Boston Review*. 2005,
<https://bostonreview.net/articles/zinn-power-glory/>.

VITA

EDUCATION

Ph.D. English, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, December 2021

Primary Area: Theory and Cultural Studies

Secondary Areas: Twentieth and Twenty-First-Century Literature, American Studies, Postcolonial Ecologies, Ecofeminism, *Destruktion*

School of Criticism and Theory, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (Summer 2013)

Preferred Participant in seminar “Postcolonial Studies in the Era of the Anthropocene” led by Ian Baucom, Duke University

M.A. English, with a concentration in Modern American Literature and Critical Theory
State University of New York at Binghamton, NY, December 2009

Non-Thesis Option

M.A. English, with a concentration in Modern British Fiction

Korea University, Korea, August 2005

Thesis: “A Reflective Representation of Modernity: Joseph Conrad’s *The Secret Agent*”

B.A. English, Dankook University, Korea, August 2002

Thesis: “A Critique of Victorian Industrial Society: Charles Dickens’s *Hard Times*”

AWARDS & HONORS

Purdue Graduate Assistantship, Fall 2010 – Spring 2015

Purdue Research Foundation Summer Grant, Summer 2014

Cornell School of Criticism and Theory Sponsored Fellowship, Summer 2013

Honorable Mention (3rd Place), Kneale Award for Literary Criticism in Purdue University's 82nd

Annual Literary Awards Contest, April 2013

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Lecturer, Graduate School of Korean Studies at the Academy of Korean Studies, Korea

Fall 2021–

Lecturer, Department of English, Dankook University, Korea

Spring 2020–

Lecturer, University College, Yonsei University, Korea

Spring 2018–Fall 2018

Lecturer, Global Basic Education Division, Konyang University, Korea

Spring 2017

Lecturer, Department of English, Korea National Open University, Korea

Fall 2015–Fall 2019

Instructor of Record, Department of English, Purdue University

Fall 2010–Spring 2015

Instructor, Institute for Unification Education in the Ministry of Unification, Korea

Spring 2010

Grader, Department of English, State University of New York at Binghamton

Fall 2007–Fall 2009

CONFERENCES

2021 “Chang-rae Lee’s Native Speaker: His Dream of a True American,” The 2nd Global Forum on Interdisciplinary Studies of Ethical Literary Criticism – Zhejiang University, Hangzhou.

2014 “Ecological Humanism in Process: Rereading Whitehead in the Time of the Anthropocene,” Tufts Graduate Humanities Conference: “Eco-Imaginariness” – Tufts University, Boston.

2012 “Process Thought and American Exceptionalism in the Age of Postglobalization,” The Shifting Tides, Anxious Borders Conference 2012: “Reimagining the New World(s)” – SUNY-Binghamton, Binghamton.

2005 “A Representation of Modernity in Reflexive Form,” The Korean Society of English Language and Literature Conference, Onyang.

PUBLICATIONS

Lee, Geun-Sung. "Reconsidering Otherness: Reading Hegel on the Post-9/11 Global Occasion."

Journal of Liberal Arts and Sciences Education, vol. 1, no. 1, 2020, pp. 91-120.

_____. "Richard Wright's *The Outsider*: An Existential Consideration of Human Condition."

Studies in British and American Language and Literature, no. 140, 2021, pp. 209-222.