

POETICS OF LANDSCAPE IN GARY SNYDER AND JACK SPICER'S POEMS: EVOKING ONE'S SENSE OF TIME AND PLACE IN A POST-TRUTH ERA OF ANTHROPOCENE

Henrikus Joko Yulianto
Universitas Negeri Semarang
henrikus.joko@mail.unnes.ac.id

Abstract

Poetry should not only be *dulce* but also *utile* or being *sweet* and *useful* as what a Latin poet Horatius once said. The essence of usefulness is very indispensable in this recent post-truth era when the surging digital technology has contributed to the an escalating anthropocentric culture. Consumerism and other anthropogenic activities that pervade human daily life are the very epitome of this anthropocentrism. An obvious impact but also a polemical controversy of these practices is global warming as one ecological phenomenon. Eco-poetry as a sub-genre of environmental humanities or ecocriticism aims to unveil the truth that the biotic community consists of the interdependent relation between human and nonhuman animals and their physical environment. This ecological fact is an indisputable truth that differs from the one of social or political facts. Gary Snyder and Jack Spicer as two poets of the San Francisco Renaissance movement in the 1950s are two figures who show concern about human interconnection with material phenomena. In their succinct poems, they open one's awareness that any material good is not an object but that each material thing co-exists with one's consciousness in certain time and place. Their landscape poetics then is able to evoke one's understanding of his/her interconnection with any life form in the natural world. This ecological awareness would impact on human savvy ways in consuming goods to fulfill daily necessities.

Keywords: post-truth era, digital technology, anthropocentrism, eco-poetry, environmental humanities, biotic community

INTRODUCTION

Literature is an agent for expressing truth. Historically, literary tradition began with oral form by indigenous communities in different countries around the world. This indigenous literature correlates with folklore and folk literature that people in ancient times passed verbally from one generation to another (Dundes 1965; Zumthor 1990, 13-31). It was W. J. Thoms who invented the term *folklore* in 1846 from the word *folk* or 'people' and *lore* or 'knowledge'. The words in tandem mean "a set of customs but has the sense of *volksgeist*, *volkspoesie*, *volkslied* or spirit, poetry and folk song" (Zumthor 1990, 13). As a verbal mode of expressing values and truth of any indigenous community, oral poetry was the very epitome of this oral literature (Zumthor 1990, 21-31). Folklore itself is a genre that incorporates myths, legends, tales, proverbs, riddles, ballads, and other forms of communal rites (Bascom 1965, 28). Oral folk poetry was also known as ethnopoetics (Rothenberg 1985). This folk literature including myths and oral

poetries of different indigenous communities around the world originally searched for truth through their respective mythic chants, spells, stories, and visions (ibid., 1985; Campbell 1991, 4). For instance, an oral poem from China entitled "Correspondences" from *The Book of Changes* talks about a metaphorical cosmology of the earth and other physical landscapes. This poems not only enlightens but also evokes one's respect for any life forms as being analogous with human animals (Rothenberg 1985, 17-18).

Finding a life truth evolves through times. In modern era of the 19th century, movements in arts and literature in Europe and America still embodied their search for truth. These *avant-garde* movements including cubism, dadaism, expressionism, futurism, imagism, impressionism, naturalism, surrealism, symbolism and vorticism aimed to project the truth through bizarre socio-political lampoons (see Bradbury & McFarlane 191-292). For instance, surrealist artists and writers searched for ways of expressing their works of art through

July, 16 2020

automatism that means to liberate one from the control of reason (Matthews 1976, 71). Furthermore, another modern poetic movement in America in the 1920s known as imagism with its poets such as Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens expressed the sense of truth through their play on images (Allen & Tallman 1973; Beach 2003; Howarth 2012). The next movement in the 1930s, objectivism with its poets such as Louis Zukofsky, Lorine Niedecker, Charles Reznikoff, George Oppen, Carl Rakosi and Basil Bunting focused on certain poetic techniques in expressing truth (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>; Beach 2003). These objectivists treated poems as object and emphasized “sincerity, intelligence, and clarity of their vision” (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>). In the late 1940s to the middle of 1950s was the era of the Beat Generation writers in New York with its originators such as Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs, and Gregory Corso. These young poets similarly search for “a new vision” as the essence of truth in their writings (Charters 1992). In the early 1950s several poetic schools emerged including the Confessionals, the New York School, the Black Mountain Poets, the San Francisco Renaissance (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>; Beach 2003).

In philosophical views, truth reveals relative qualities. In this millennium, truth no longer becomes a fixed and absolute concept. Truth principally turns to be relative. It is no longer a single meaning, but is likely to change in quality and degree. Even more so, the invention of digital technology as social media has impacted on the nature of human interaction and perception toward life and the natural environment in general. Martin Heidegger, a German philosopher once posited that the idea of truth of something does not absolutely tell about the truth of the thing itself but the statement or judgment that one gives about the trueness of the object. Therefore, the essence of this truth here is agreement and correspondence of the statement with the object (Gorner 96). The term *post-truth* might be comparable to post-structuralism in literary criticisms as a form of continuation and also renewal of the former structuralism (Ryan &

Rivkin 2017). Jacques Derrida’s deconstruction and difference is one major post-structuralist concept that likewise identified relativeness or indeterminacy of *signified* (concept) as nothing else but other *signifiers* (sound) (ibid., 2017).

In this digital millennium, the idea of truth likewise has changed. This refers to the term ‘post-truth’ that suggests ‘after’ and ‘beyond’ the notion of truth. This term in general means “circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal” (Fuller & Kivisto 2018, 1). This word ‘post’ does not mean that it is ‘past’ such as in the word *postwar*, but that this has concealed truth so that it is no longer relevant (McIntyre 2018, 5). Nowadays, the proof of this post-truth idea is socio-political hoaxes that politicians speak about various subjects, from political affairs to ecological issues such as climate change (see Inhofe 2012). Digital gadgets and tools such as laptops, iPads and smart phones while being socially functional equipment might have vastly shifted one’s perception of truth that further leads to the post-truth phenomena (Berry 2011, 1-28). For instance, humans tend to center on themselves and objectify any life forms in the natural environment as merely inanimate things. This human-centered agency is known as anthropocentrism (de Jonge 2011, 307-319; Moore 2017, 1-45). This phenomenon later brought forth an imbalance in the ecosystem that further led to environmental crises such as global warming and its minor causes including air pollution, deforestation, and biodiversity loss (Wilson 2016).

Ecopoetry stands as an agent of truth in the post-truth era. As one sub-genre of ecocriticism or Environmental Humanities, ecopoetry aims to delve into the ecological truth, environmental facts, and technology of language to raise individual awareness of the crises and action to preserve the earth (Bryson 2005; Rueckert 1996, 108-111). Poetry especially ecopoetry helps to save the earth from any anthropogenic extravagant activities in consuming and extracting natural resources (Felstiner 2009, 1-15). What ecopoetry can do is especially by evoking one’s understanding of the essence of ecological system and the inherent values of any

July, 16 2020

life form that humans will conserve rather than expend the earthbound materials (ibid., 2009, 1-15). Ecopoetry considers ecological aspects in any poetic work. These aspects certainly originate from ecology as a discipline that consists of factual elements of biotic and abiotic organisms in the physical environment (Begon & Townsend & Harper 2006, xi). Therefore, the ecological values the poetic text embodies do not constitute *a faked truth* or *post-truth* since the ecological facts remain the same from time to time. The ecological truth will vanish when humans with their excessive activities have detrimental impacts on disrupting and changing the orderliness of ecological network. Yet, in this condition humans still do not realize the hazards of what they have wreaked upon the physical environment and tend to oversimplify them. In this case, they have lived upon the post-truth without recognizing that this will further lead to a more severe cataclysm. It is then ecopoetry's duty to retrieve the essence of truth that declines in this post-truth era.

This brief paper discusses two poets of the San Francisco Renaissance, Gary Snyder and Jack Spicer. This focuses on how their poems reveal post-truth aspects through their ecological poetics. What I mean by post-truth here is their vision that transcends any physical phenomena that anyone comprehends in conventional ways. The discussion addresses two issues: **first**, Snyder and Spicer's poetics of landscape as a revelation of ecological vision; **second**, Snyder and Spicer's poetics of landscape to raise one's sense of time and place in the post-truth era of anthropocene. The analysis refers to some sources on ecopoetry, landscape poetics, anthropocentrism, and ecological awareness in the digital millennium (Bryson 2005; Boddice 2001; Moore 2017; Morton 2010).

The San Francisco Renaissance

This school of poetry began in San Francisco Bay Area during the late 1950s and early 1960s. As the name of the movement that contains a place and landscape, San Francisco, this school likewise privileged a physical setting of San Francisco in particular and California in general as a myth and spirit of the West. The

origin of this school began with a poetry reading event by East Coast and West Coast poets on October 13, 1955, which was called the Six Gallery. The East Coast poets themselves were affiliated with the Beat Generation poets including Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg (Davidson 1989, 3; Charters xxvii-xxviii). Meanwhile, the West Coast poets include figures such as Michael McClure, Gary Snyder, Philip Whalen, Philip Lamantia. These later four figures who read their poems in the event (ibid., 1989; 3). Some other poets of the West Coast include Kenneth Rexroth, Jack Spicer, Robin Blaser, Robert Duncan and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Spicer, Blaser, Rexroth, and Snyder were among the major poets of the San Francisco Renaissance. Robert Duncan for instance was also affiliated with modern school of poetry called Black Mountain poets of Black Mountain College which was located in Asheville, North Carolina (Duberman 1972, 434-435).

The term *renaissance* here means *renewal* and *return* to 'the romantic movement that was disrupted by "the sedimentation of its ideals during the period of late modernism"' (Davidson 1989, xiv). I found this renaissance aspect also in the poets' use of ancient myths, such as Greek and Native American ones as in Snyder and Spicer's poems (see Snyder 1960, 2007; Spicer 2008). Being born and growing up in West Bay vast areas, most of these San Francisco Renaissance poets celebrate physical landscapes in their poems. A place becomes *the source and the ground of numinous presence* and their way to *summon up* past events to the present moment (Davidson 1989, 13). Snyder for instance considers place as history and ecological model in which he means to identify the interconnection between poem, individual, and nature. Meanwhile, his retrospection of history means to evoke one's concern about landscape sustainability for future generation (ibid., 1989, 12). They named their poetic trajectory *poetics of place*. In this paper I use the term *poetics of landscape* in discussing Snyder and Spicer's sense of place and time.

Anthropocentrism

The term 'anthropocentrism' was derived from

July, 16 2020

Greek words *anthropos* meaning human being and *kentrikos* or ‘sharp point’. In general, this refers to “any stance, perception or conception that takes the human as centre or norm” (Clark 2012, 3). The idea of this term embodies *human chauvinism* as it contrasts with nature, the environment and non-human animals (Boddice 2011, 1). The idea determines order and structure of human understanding of the world and also the limitation of the understanding. This directs one’s way of forming ethics, politics, and moral status of Others, in which the latter term ‘Others’ refers to non-human animals and organisms (ibid., 2011, 1). This term has a very broad meaning since any human conduct and even ideas and ethics become anthropocentric when they at all events center on humans or for the sake of human interests (see Moore 2017, 4-5). In today’s world, environmental and social phenomena such as consumerism (overconsumption of material goods), land clearing, illegal logging, over-extraction of natural resources are several examples of anthropocentrism. All these activities point toward anthropocentric practices since they think about human’s self-indulgence more than care about impacts of their activities upon the natural environment and other nonhuman creatures (see Wilson 2015; Leonard 2011).

Ecopoetry

The term ‘ecopoetry’ consists of two words *ecology* and *poetry*. The word *ecology* itself was derived from Greek words *oikos* meaning ‘house’ and *logos* denoting ‘a subject of study or interest’. The word in tandem then means “the story of home” (Howarth 1996, 69; Siewers 2011, 108). In general, the term refers to a branch of biology that studies the relations between organisms and with the physical environment (Begon, Townsend & Harper 2006, xi). Furthermore, the term *ecopoetry* similarly originated from the same Greek words *oikos* ‘house’ and *poesis* or ‘forming or shaping’ (Siewers 2011, 108). Ecopoetry is a sub-genre of the study of literature and environment or what is now known as ecocriticism or environmental humanities (Howarth 1996, 69; Rueckert 1996, 108-111). Like the term suggests, ecopoetry

raises issues related to the physical environment and ecosystem in the biosphere. This ecological tradition has begun since the Romantic and Transcendental Eras in England and America in the 18th century. British romantic poets such as William Blake, William Wordsworth and American transcendentalist poets such as Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote poems and essays about nature (see Coupe 2008; Buell 1993).

Historically, the idea of ecopoetry originated from the rise of environmentalism in the 1960s in the western countries. This genre then includes three main groupings, namely (1) nature poetry, which influenced by romanticism and transcendentalism in the way it “meditates on an encounter between the human subject and something in the other-than-human world revealing an aspect of the meaning of life;” (2) environmental poetry, which “emerged historically and philosophically out of nature poetry.” This poetry “is directly engaged with active and politicized environmentalism and influenced by social and environmental justice movements, is committed to questions of human injustice, to issues of damage and degradation to the other-than-human world;” (3) ecological poetry is more elusive than the previous two since it “engages questions of form most directly, not only poetic form but also a form historically taken for granted of the singular, coherent self.” The term *ecopoetry* then refers to this third kind of work, which tends to be “experimental and to think in self-reflexive ways” (Fisher-Wirth & Street 2013, xxviii-xxix). The term *poetics of landscape* that I use in this paper then refers to the third genre since this does not literally describe a natural landscape but orchestrates it polemically to the extent that it raises ecological issues. In terms of poetic form, Snyder and Spicer’s poems similarly exemplify this experimental ecopoetics. Their poetic form differs from the one of Wordsworth, Blake, Thoreau, Emerson, or even modern poets such as Robert Frost or William Stafford (Fisher-Wirth & Street 2013).

Poetics of Landscape in Gary Snyder and Jack Spicer’s Poems as a Revelation of Ecological Vision

July, 16 2020

Two poems of Snyder that I use here are those written in the mid of 1950s entitled “Piute Creek” and “Riprap” (Snyder 1991, 35). Meanwhile, the two poems of Spicer were from his anthology *Book of Magazine Verse* in 1965 entitled “Seven Poems for the Vancouver Festival”. These poems do not use titles but numbers. “Piute Creek” has two stanzas, while “Riprap” has one stanza of 25 lines. In “Piute Creek” the first stanza consists of 18 lines, while the second 11 lines (Snyder 1992). Spicer’s poem entitled “4” has one stanza of 11 lines with asymmetric lines. Then, the second poem entitled “7” has 17 lines with similarly jagged typography. Snyder’s poems clearly suggest a physical landscape, *Piute Creek* and *riprap*. The first physical landscape is a real one of a “19-mile (31 km) long stream in northern Yosemite National Park in Tuolumne County, California. This river is a major tributary of the Tuolumne River, which “begins at an unmasked lake near Burro Pass and Matterhorn Peak and flows west then southwest into Slide Canyon” (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>). Furthermore, the poem “riprap” also portrays a natural landscape as it denotes a rock formation or pavement that is laid in ‘any rough or eroding trail’ (Snyder 1992, 36). This rock “is also placed along shorelines, bridge foundations, steep slopes to protect from scour and erosion” (www.ayresassociates.com). Spicer’s poem “4” and “7” describe trees, lake, forests and wilderness as elements of landscapes in Vancouver.

Piute Creek

One granite ridge
 A tree, would be enough
 Or even a rock, a small creek,
 A bark shred in a pool.
 Hill beyond hill, folded and twisted
 Tough trees crammed
 In thin stone fractures
 A huge moon on it all, is too much.
 The mind wanders. A million
 Summers, night air still and the rocks
 Warm. Sky over endless mountains.
 All the junk that goes with being human
 Drops away, hard rock wavers

Even the heavy present seems to fail
 This bubble of a heart.
 Words and books
 Like a small creek off a high ledge
 Gone in the dry air.

Each line in the stanza above depicts a landscape. In terms of poetic form, the poem like the title depicts the shape of a flowing creek. ‘Granite ridge’, ‘tree’, ‘small creek’, ‘pool’, ‘hill’, ‘stone’, ‘moon’, ‘rocks’, ‘endless mountains’, ‘ledge’ are all natural objects. Each object is intertwined with another object that signifies an ecological interconnection between one organism and another in the natural world. The fourth line “A bark shred in a pool” clearly exemplifies this ecological *mesh* (see Morton 2010, 28). Then, the sixth and seventh lines “Tough trees crammed in thin stone tough trees be crammed in thin stone fractures? Then the ninth to eighteenth lines begin to unveil an ecological interconnection between human consciousness and any life forms in the physical environment. The natural organisms do not separate from one’s self-existence but they arise as phenomena as realized by one’s sensory consciousness. In the second stanza, the narrator asserts this ecological vision through his realization of the interconnection between things and human consciousness.

A clear, attentive mind
 Has no meaning but that
 Which sees is truly seen.
 No one loves rock, yet we are here.
 Night chills. A flick
 In the moonlight
 Slips into Juniper shadow:
 Back there unseen
 Cold proud eyes
 Of Cougar or Coyote
 Watch me rise and go.

The lines above identify the truth about the nature of phenomena that one can see through one’s senses. The first, second, and third lines as one line suggest the interconnection between one’s sense perception and any physical phenomena as an ecological symbiosis. Then the fourth line emphasizes the point about this

July, 16 2020

ecological truth. Perceiving any material phenomena similarly brings one's contact with one's physical time and space. The following lines further describe how one's consciousness interact with things and with nonhuman beings in a symbiotic relation within this time and space—"Back there unseen cold proud eyes of cougar or coyote watch me rise and go" (Snyder 1992, 6).

The form of the second poem "Riprap" similarly reveals the literal meaning of the word—the rock formation. This poetic typography then conforms with Charles Olson's theory of Projective Verse, in which he posited that "Form is never more than an extension of content" (Creeley 1951, 16). The content of the poem therefore deals with related imageries such as 'rocks', 'cobble', 'pebbles', 'loam', 'stone', 'granite', 'crystal', 'sediment' (Snyder 1992, 21). In the first to eighth lines, the narrator compares poetry with the formation of rock—

Lay down these words
 Before your mind like rocks.
 placed solid, by hands
 In choice of place, set
 Before the body of the mind
 in space and time;
 Solidity of bark, leaf, or wall
 riprap of things:
 (Snyder 1992, 21)

The lines above illustrate how the narrator entreats his readers to learn from the rock formation and other natural organisms in the way one thinks and acts. Especially the narrator encourages the readers to learn this natural orderliness in composing poems. The way the narrator evokes the readers in composing the poems by learning from the rock orderliness exemplifies an ecological interdependence between one's consciousness and material phenomena, between one's sense perception and spatial and temporal landscape. The use of metaphor and simile signifies human's eulogy of rock formation and vegetation as things that have values. The last line "Solidity of bark, leaf, or wall riprap of thing" is another metaphor that illustrates the narrator's ecological view of the orderliness of bark and leaf as the epitome of other well-ordered natural phenomena. In the

ninth to seventeenth lines, the narrator still compares words as materials of his poems with rocks and worlds—

Cobble of milky way,
 straying planets,
 These poems, people,
 lost ponies with
 Dragging saddles
 and rocky sure-foot trails.
 The worlds like an endless
 four-dimensional
 Game of *Go*.

The indented lines not only characterize the formation of rock, but also suggest an interdependent relation between one organism and another in the natural world. The image 'worlds' does not refer to the natural world but to anthropogenic activities in their daily life. The image 'game of *Go*' that the narrator uses to compare it with the worlds suggests material things that humans orientates toward in this world. This game looks like chess by using stones as playing pieces (see "Go (game)" at <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>). Yet, at the same time, the comparison unveils human realization of the interconnection with material phenomena since humans who made all these things. Then in the eighteenth to twenty-fifth lines, the narrator again presents 'rock', 'pebbles', 'loam', 'granite', 'crystal', 'sediment' as the natural elements that still relate to the stones of game of *Go*—

 ants and pebbles
 in the thin loam, each rock a word
 a creek-washed stone
 Granite: ingrained
 with torment of fire and weight
 Crystal and sediment linked hot
 all change, in thoughts,
 As well as things. (Snyder 1992, 21)

Again the lines above describe an interdependent relation of things in the natural world. The narrator wants to point out that the way he composes words in his poems should also embody this ecological interconnection. For instance, describing 'rock' and 'granite' as the

July, 16 2020

words in his poems means that his works will have sturdy and massive qualities of the natural rocks. The images ‘ants’ and ‘pebbles’ are intertwined with ‘the thin loam’. This figuratively means that ‘words in poems should be succinct but solid’. Then, the next lines “each rock a word” and “a creek-washed stone Granite” are metaphors to compare words in the narrator’s poems with *rock* and *granite*. This similarly aims to embody the solid and sturdy qualities of the rock in his poetics. This comparison suggests the quality of the words that have been polished by one’s freshness of ideas, spontaneity and straightforwardness as well as by rolling time. Then, the next phrase “ingrained with torment of fire and weight” further depicts the process of maturing and tempering the narrator’s poetics. The ‘fire’ is the element that hardens metal or rock, while ‘weight’ refers to values that solidify the narrator’s poetic ideas. The next line “crystal and sediment link hot” shows the mixture between refined rock and dregs that further results in the change of form. As the narrator further says “all change, in thoughts, as well as things”; this suggests the volatility of material entities both of one’s thought and physical things in the phenomenal world.

In his poem entitled “4” in the collection entitled *Seven Poems for the Vancouver Festival*, Jack Spicer uses an asymmetric form. There is neither any stanza nor rhyme pattern. This has 11 lines; the lines consist of complete lines with subject and predicate; clauses and phrases—

Wit is the only barrier between ourselves and them.

“Fifty four forty or fight,” we say holding a gun-barrell in our teeth.

There is still a landscape I live on. Trees Growing where trees shouldn’t be. No trees growing where

trees are. A mess Of nature. Inconvenient To the pigs and groins and cows Of all these settlers.

Settling itself down In a dirt solution In the testube The water still not alive.

(Spicer 2008, 418)

The first line is a metaphor that shows an interdependent relation between ‘wit’ and ‘the only barrier between ourselves and them’. The third line “there is still a landscape I live on” is another line that embodies an ecological aspect. Though the word ‘landscape’ refers to ‘scenery’ or ‘panorama’, this figuratively suggests ‘home’ and the term *home* points to the physical environment or Mother Nature or what Synder called ‘earth household’ (Synder 1957). Then, the next lines “trees growing where trees shouldn’t be. No trees growing where trees are. A mess of nature” imply anthropogenic disruption to arboreal ecosystem that has an erratic dispersion. The next lines “Inconvenient to the pigs and groins and cows of all these settlers” describe the impacts of the natural despoliation on human, nonhuman animals and the physical environment. This causality exemplifies the ecological network; this is the havoc on any life form and the biosphere. The last line—

Settling itself down
In a dirt solution
In the testube
The water still not alive.

Illustrates the despoiled condition of the physical environment because of the human activities. The phrases ‘in a dirt solution’ and ‘in the testube’ suggest muddy water as the impact of the tree clearing. The last line “the water still not alive” affirms another impact of the natural despoliation.

In the next poem entitled “7”, the narrator polemicalizes another ecological havoc in Vancouver—the illegal logging that devastates forests as the temple of the earth—

It then becomes a matter of not Only not knowing but not feeling. Can A place in the wilderness become utterly bugged up with logs?

A question
Of love.
They
Came out of the mountains and they came in by ship

July, 16 2020

And Victoria fights New Westminster. And
They're all at the same game. Trapped
By mountains and ocean. Only
Awash on themselves. The seabirds
Do not do their bidding or the mountain birds.
There is
No end to the islands. Diefenbacher
Addresses us with a parched face. He
Is, if anything, what
Earthquakes will bring us. Love
Of this our land, turning.

The first and second lines suggest human indifference to the state of natural environment. This also reveals a polemic about it as the narrator further says "Can a place in the wilderness become utterly bugged up with logs?". This line implies a despoiled forest because of excessive logging. The next phrase "a question of love" indicates the lack of human care and love for the vegetative organisms. Blank spaces before and after words indicate this ecological cataclysm since the blankness suggests an absence of the trees because of the logging. This vacuity similarly expresses the narrator's concern about this deforested land since people logged trees from the mountains and sent them abroad by ship. Another ecological impact is that seabirds and mountain birds lose their places to shelter and nest. The narrator felt rather sceptical about the future of the island (Vancouver-my emphasis) as he further found that Diefenbacher lake was also getting drier as the impact of the excessive logging (see "Lake Diefenbacher" at <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>). He further prophesied that the loss of trees in the forest will cause earthquakes. The last line "Love of this our land, turning" suggests the narrator's hope for the change of the physical condition of Vancouver into an ecologically resilient and sustainable one.

Snyder and Spicer's Poetics of Landscape for Raising One's Sense of Time and Place in the Post-Truth Era of Anthropocene

Referring to Felstiner's notion that poetry can save the earth (2009), one should feel sure that ecopoems can play a significant role in changing one's consciousness and perception

about any life forms in the natural world (ibid., 2009, 4). In this era of anthropocene when everything tends to be human-centered, ecopoetry serves as an agent that dismantles one's egocentrism and converts it to ecocentrism (6). In fact, anthropocentrism is a perennial phenomenon. It has lasted throughout the ages (Sax 2011, 21-36). Yet, as humans get more civilized and aware of impacts of their activities toward any life forms, anthropocentrism has a new meaning. In this recent digital technology era when everything is digitized, the idea of anthropocentrism correlates with one's engrossment in digital gadgets. Smartphone serves as a medium of any social purposes. It not only functions as a medium of communication, but also a commercial medium for doing any activities such as online shopping, business deals, and even learning and teaching activities. Online consumerism and Iphone entanglement is one phenomenon of this material-oriented culture (Berger 2018; Schaberg 2018). This consumerism is also related to the increasing production of digital gadget in which consumers tend to buy the latest series of gadgets and to just throw away the old ones. This causes the heap of digital trash that will pollute land and marine habitats since the materials of each smartphone and laptop are various metals with toxic particles. Among these metals include zinc, silver, gold, copper (Grossman 2006). Socially, the gadget with its speedy qualities have changed behavior of people especially the young ones. They tend to be emotional and frenetic especially in the way they drive their vehicles on the road. The rapid and accessible materials in smartphones make a shortcut and escape for young people (students-my emphasis) in their academic learning process. Children and young people are also fond of playing online games in their smartphones. Their engrossment in the games has impacts on their manners; they tend to be indifferent to social affairs and courtesy (see Berger 2018, 53-54). Overconsumption of material products certainly has detrimental impacts on the natural environment (Leonard 2011). Plastic products as non-degradable material will pollute land and marine habitats; these endanger any life forms living there (Weis 2015, 44-46). Marine and wetland pollution is

July, 16 2020

still an issue in third-world countries since this correlates with disposal of industrial and household waste (ibid., 2015; Morrison 2015). Furthermore, deforestation and excessive land clearing for business projects is also a prevalent issue throughout the world (Bjornlund 2010; Palmer & Engel 2009). Snyder and his poem “Piute Creek” represents his riverine poetics, while Spicer and his poems exemplify arboreal poetics. Both creek and trees are essential natural organisms that have a significant ecological value as they epitomize natural landscapes that any life forms originate from and depend on.

The first lines in the second stanza of Snyder’s “Piute Creek” for instance, aims to dismantle anthropocentric orientation when the narrator illustrated the creek not as a discrete object but a united entity with one’s consciousness. This ecological interdependence leads anyone not to objectify any material things but to care about them in their trajectory in certain time and place—

A clear, attentive mind
Has no meaning but that
Which sees is truly seen.
No one loves rock, yet we are here.

The lines above disclose the truth that human sense perceptions coexist with material phenomena in the physical environment. The first line “a clear, attentive mind has no meaning” indicates one’s tendency to objectify a material thing. Meanwhile, any material thing does not possess its true identity but emerges as a physical entity in its interdependent relation between one component and another (Eckel 1997, 329). This kind of material truth at the same time evokes one’s awareness of momentary quality of material things. This insight into the temporality will encourage anyone to care rather than to harm any life form and to squander any material thing in fulfilling his/her necessities (Gross 1997, 291-311). In “Riprap”, the last lines likewise show the same idea about the material temporality—

Granite: ingrained
with torment of fire and weight
Crystal and sediment linked hot
all change, in thoughts,
As well as things.

First, the narrator encourages his readers to solidify one’s verbal expression by imitating a tempered granite that means to strengthen one’s sense of time and place. Second, he points out that any material thing even if it is crystal and granite including one’s thought is momentary and they will change in form and essence. This vision likewise substantiates the truth of any material thing and one’s sense perceptions as a symbiosis between human and nonhuman being in the phenomenal world (see Ingram 1997, 77-78). Therefore, there is no place to deny this biotic and abiotic interconnection as a faked truth when human overuse of fossil fuels can increase emissions of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere and this further leads to greenhouse effect and global warming (Begon & Townsend 2006, 56). The temporality of material things will also evoke anyone to enhance his/her care about any material goods he/she consumes since these goods make use of natural resources. Meanwhile, the resources are diminishing every single day because of being extracted massively. Even more so, some resources such as fossil fuels are non-renewable so that human should consume them wisely while there has not yet any available and reliable alternative resources to substitute the energy. The first six lines at the same time point out a vision of social ecology or the interconnection between one individual and another and humans and the physical environment—

Lay down these words
Before your mind like rocks.
placed solid, by hands
In choice of place, set
Before the body of the mind
in space and time;

Social cohesiveness is important in this millennium, when individuals tend to be engrossed in personal electronic gadgets and be overwhelmed with material pursuit. The narrator’s entreaty to learn from the rocks and their formation exemplifies the urgency to reconnect with Mother Nature and to look into organic cycle of each nonhuman life form to disengage humans from the material

July, 16 2020

engrossment. This also means to nourish one's sense of time and place as ecological conscience by cherishing the life forms for their sustainability (Leopold 1947, 524-532; Orr 1992, 28-38).

In Spicer's poem "4", the ecological issue deals with the narrator's concern about the loss of trees in Vancouver landscape—

There is still a landscape I live on. Trees
Growing where trees shouldn't be. No trees
growing where
trees are. A mess
Of nature.

The lines above clearly polemicize the barrenness of the city landscape because trees have grown in the wrong places. This phenomenon implies the impact of anthropogenic activities such as land clearing and excessive logging or deforestation (see Bjornlund 2012; Palmer & Engel 2009). This illustrative ecological issue as reflected in the lines will assure anyone to cherish trees as very indispensable organisms for a biotic life. A tree needs time to grow and propagate. The location of where the tree grows and the time it needs to flourish epitomize an ecological wisdom for anyone to learn from and to nourish his/her sense of place and time. At this moment when the Covid-19 pandemic is lingering in the vicinity, one's acquaintance with trees rather than with man-made material products might be a wise path not only to restore the wellness of the earth but also of living creatures in the biosphere. In poem "7", the narrator still raises the issue of logging in forests that cause other catastrophes such as drought, flood and earthquakes—

A place in the wilderness become utterly
buggered up with logs?

A question
Of love.

The lines above clearly criticize anthropocentric culture where anthropogenic excessive logging has despoiled the forest land. This anthropocentrism then points toward the lack of care and love for other nonhuman organisms. The ruined forest temple as the line describes exemplifies a natural landscape that humans

should conserve and preserve for the sake of any life forms and the future of the earth itself. As humans live on the earth and need material goods to survive, they will keep extracting natural resources to manufacture various products for their necessities. Yet, any overextraction of the resources will result in environmental hazards so that humans need to think of wise ways in consuming them in order to keep their sustainability. Deforestation then is a global issue since people around the world need materials from forests or convert these forests into plantations for producing commodity plants for their necessities (see Moutinho 2012; Mawalagedara & Oglesby 2012, 3-20). The lines in the poem then open one's consciousness that excessive logging only exacerbates ecological cataclysm since the act will cause some other cyclic impacts. These likewise imply the need to consume materials wisely and to waste less (Orr 1992, 29-32) to preserve the sustainable biotic life.

CONCLUSION

Poetics of landscape is poetics of time and place since a portrayal of any object is always located in certain time and place. Creek and other wetlands inhabit particular areas and evolve through times. And so do forests and other arboreal areas. This poetics then means to evoke one's consciousness of the true nature of any material phenomena as being interconnected with one another. This insight into this material interconnectedness would encourage one's care and esteem for any life forms and any material goods they consume daily. Ecological concerns that Gary Snyder and Jack Spicer raise in their poems are not merely based upon fancy and imagination but principally on their awareness of inharmonious state of biotic life in the physical environment. In this digital millennium, indifference to environmental issues is still prevalent as anthropocentric culture still strongly pervades the social structure and behaviors. As global warming is still an omnipresent phenomenon, human overconsumption of material goods also poses other hazards to any life forms and the physical environment. In this post-truth era, anyone should have an ecological conscience since all events occurring have an

July, 16 2020

interconnection with one another. Snyder and Spicer's ecopoetics work through this human uncertainty of which truth is a real or a faked one in the surging global culture that remains to be anthropocentric. This poetic agency then aims to save what remains to be pristine in our earth household and to repair what has been damaged because of anthropogenic activities in fulfilling their socio-economic necessities.

REFERENCES

- Allen, D. & Tallman, W. (Eds.) (1973). *Poetics of the new american poetry*. New York: Grove Press, Inc.
- "American Poetry." Article. *Wikipedia*. Wikipedia. 24 June 2020. Web. 10 July 2020.
- Begon, M. & Townsend, C. R. & Harper, J. L. (2006). Introduction: Ecology and its domain. In *Ecology: From individuals to ecosystems* (pp. xi-xii). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing. Retrieved from libgen.rus
- Berger, A. A. (2018). Millenials and the media. In *Cultural perspectives on Millenials* (pp. 47-62). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Berry, D. M. (2011). The idea of code. In *The philosophy of software* (pp. 1-28). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bjornlund, L. (2010). *Deforestation: Energy and the environment*. San Diego, CA: ReferencePoint Press, Inc. Retrieved from libgen. rus
- Boddice, R. (2011). Introduction. The end of anthropocentrism. In R. Boddice (Ed.), *Anthropocentrism: Humans, animals, environments* (1-18). Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV. Retrieved from libgen.rus
- Bryson, J.S. (2005). All finite things reveal infinitude: Place, space, and contemporary ecopoetry. In *The west side of any mountain: Place, space, and ecopoetry* (pp. 7-22). Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press. Retrieved from libgen.rus
- Buell, L. (1993). The Transcendentalist Poets. In J. Parini & B. C. Millier (Eds.), *The Columbia history of american poetry* (97-119). New York: Columbia University

- Press.
- Campbell, J. (1991). Myth and the modern world. In B. S. Flowers (Ed.), *The power of myth with bill moyers* (pp. 1-43). New York: Anchor Books.
- Charters, A. (Ed.) (1992). "Variations on a generation." In *The portable of beat reader* (xv-xxxvi). New York: Penguin Books.
- Clark, T. (2011). Introduction: The challenge. In *The Cambridge introduction to literature and the environment* (pp. 1-11). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Coupe, L. (Ed.) (2008). *The green studies reader: From romanticism to ecocriticism*. London: Routledge.
- Davidson, M. (1989). Introduction: Enabling Fictions. In *The San Francisco renaissance: Poetics and community at mid-century* (pp. 1-32). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Derrida, J. (1968). Différance. In J. Rivkin & M. Ryan (Eds.) (2017), *Literary theory: An anthology* (475-495). Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell.
- Eckel, M. D. (1997). Is there a buddhist philosophy of nature?. In M.E. Tucker & D. R. Williams (Eds.), *Buddhism and ecology: The interconnection of dharma and deeds* (pp. 327-349). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Felstiner, J. (2009). Introduction: Care in such a world. In *Can poetry save the earth?: A field guide to nature poems* (pp. 1-15). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Fisher-Wirth, A. & Gray-Street, L. (2013). Preface. In A. Fisher-Wirth & L. G. Street (Eds.), *The ecopoetry anthology* (pp. xxvii-xxx). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.
- Francis, P. (2015). *Laudato si': On care for our common home*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division.
- Fuller, S. (2018). Introduction. Science and politics in a post-truth era: Pareto's hidden hand. In *Post-truth knowledge as a power game* (pp. 1-8). New York: Anthem Press. Retrieved from libgen.rus
- "Go (game)." Article. *Wikipedia*. Wikipedia. 19 August 2020. Web. 21 August 2020.
- Grossman, E. (2006). *High tech trash: Digital*

July, 16 2020

- devices, hidden toxics, and human health.* Washington, DC: A Shearwater Book.
- Gross, R. M. (1997). Buddhist resources for issues of population, consumption, and the environment. In M. E. Tucker & D. R. Williams, *Buddhism and ecology: The interconnection of dharma & deeds* (pp. 291-311). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Howarth, W. (1996). Some principles of ecocriticism. In C. Glotfelty & H. Fromm Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press.
- Ingram, P. O. (1997). The jeweled net of nature. In M. E. Tucker & D. R. Williams, *Buddhism and ecology: The interconnection of dharma & deeds* (pp. 71-88). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Inhofe, J. (2012). *The greatest hoax: How the global warming conspiracy threatens your future.* Washington, D.C.: WND Books.
- “Lake Diefenbaker.” Article. *Wikipedia*. Wikipedia. 12 June 2020. Web. 10 July 2020.
- Leonard, A. & Conrad, A. (2011). *The story of stuff: The impact of overconsumption on the planet, our communities, and our health—and how we can make it better.* New York: Free Press.
- Matthews, J.H. (1976). The emergence of surrealism. In *Toward the poetics of surrealism* (48-83). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Mawalagedara, R. & Oglesby, R. J. (2012). The climatic effects of deforestation in south and southeast asia. In P. Moutinho (Ed.), *Deforestation around the world* (pp. 3-20). Rijeka, Croatia: InTech. Retrieved from libgen.rus
- McIntyre, L. (2018). What is post-truth? Iemin *Post-truth* (pp. 1-14). Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Retrieved from libgen.rus
- Meine, K. (Ed.) (2013). The land ethic. In *Aldo Leopold: A sand county almanac & other writings on ecology and conservation* (pp. 171-189). New York: The library of america.
- Moore, B. L. (2017). Introduction: Anthropocentrism, the anthropocene, and the apocalypse. In *Ecological literature and the critique of anthropocentrism* (pp. 1-45). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Morrison, S.S. (2015). Introduction: The western literary canon in the waste-ern tradition. In *The literature of waste: Material ecopoetics and ethical matter* (pp. 1-14). New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Retrieved from libgen.rus
- Morton, T. (2010). *The Ecological Thought.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Moutinho, P. (Ed.) (2012). Preface. In *Deforestation around the world* (pp. x-xi). Rijeka, Croatia: InTech. Retrieved from libgen.rus
- Orr, D. W. (1992). Two Meanings of Sustainability. In *Ecological literacy: Education and the transition to a postmodern world* (pp. 23-40). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Palmer, C. & Engel, S. (2009). Introduction: Reducing CO₂ emissions through avoided deforestation?. In C. Palmer & S. Engel (Eds.), *Avoided deforestation: Prospects for mitigating climate change* (pp. 1-8). Retrieved from libgen.rus
- “Piute Creek (Tuolumne River tributary).” Article. *Wikipedia*. Wikipedia. 19 November 2018. Web. 10 July 2020.
- “Riprap.” Article. *Wikipedia*. Wikipedia. 19 August 2020. Web. 21 August 2020.
- Rivkin, J. & Ryan, M. (2017). Introduction: The class of 1968—post-structuralism par lui-même. In J. Rivkin & M. Ryan (Eds.), *Literary theory: An anthology* (pp. 446-465). Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell.
- Rothenberg, J. (Ed.) (1985). *Technicians of the sacred: A range of poetries from africa, america, asia, Europe & oceania.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Rueckert, W. (1996). Literature and ecology: An experiment in ecocriticism. In C. Glotfelty & H. Fromm (Eds.), *The ecocriticism reader: Landmarks in literary ecology* (105-123). Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press.
- Sax, B. (2011). What is this quintessence of dust? The concept of the ‘human’ and its origins. In R. Boddice (Ed.), *Anthropocentrism: Humans, animals, environments* (pp. 21-26).

July, 16 2020

Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill
NV.

- Siewers, A. K. (2011). Ecopoetics and the origins of english literature. In S. LeMenager, T. Shewry, and K. Hiltner (Eds.), *Environmental criticism for the twenty-first century* (pp. 105-120). New York: Routledge.
- Snyder, G. (1992). *No nature: New and selected poems*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- , J. (1991). Riprap and the old ways: Gary Snyder in yosemite, 1955. In J. Halper (Ed.), *Gary Snyder: Dimensions of a life* (pp. 35-42). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books.
- Spicer, J. (2008). Seven poems for the Vancouver festival. In P. Gizzi & K. Killian (Eds.). *My vocabulary did this to me: The collected poetry of jack spicer* (pp. 417-420). Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Weis, J. S. (2015). Marine debris. In *Marine pollution: What everyone needs to know* (pp. 42-62). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wilson, E. O. (2016). *Half-earth: Our planet's fight for life*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation.
- Zumthor, P. (1990). Defining the field (K. Murphy-Judy & W. J. Ong, Trans.). In *Oral poetry: An introduction* (pp. 13-31). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.