

Mitigating planetary catastrophes with a call for ecological wisdom through contemporary American poems

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Abstract

In today's digital technology era, humans orientate toward material fulfillment. This manner often neglects his care about nonhuman organisms and the natural environment in general. The impacts are that nowadays temperature is getting higher and biodiversity is dwindling or disappearing due to the rising temperature and deforested lands. Global warming is the ongoing climatic phenomenon that is now prevalent on earth today along with the surging digitalization in daily social and cultural life. Humans need to retreat and think it over in order to prevent the condition from deteriorating and from further catastrophes. Poetry as one literary genre might be one outlet for humans to think about what it means to be humans in this one and only earth household. Contemporary American poems are the epitome of raising present issues about anthropocentrism and its impacts on the degradation of the physical environment. This brief paper discusses some American contemporary poems of Denise Levertov, Susan Stewart, and Robinson Jeffers. Levertov's poem "Brother Ivy"; Stewart's long poem "The Rose"; and Jeffers's poem, "Life from the Lifeless" are the epitome of poetic works that aim to humanize and anthropomorphize nonhuman things and organisms such as forest, rock, and plant. These are the actions humans should do to preserve the biotic life from demolition because of various anthropogenic activities. Reading and understanding ecological views in these poems as a poetic discourse helps ones to ecologize their thoughts and action to sustain the planetary robustness.

Keywords: global warming; biodiversity; anthropocentrism; digitalization; ecological poems

INTRODUCTION

Global warming has been a universal climatic phenomenon. The change of weather has occurred to many countries around the world. This phenomenon is often attributed to anthropogenic cause rather than to natural process. One impact of this is an extreme heat that tallies with greenhouse effect that further changes the climate "up to 100 times faster than nature" (Hubbell & Ryan, 2022, p. 24-25). In South Asia and Southeast Asia, extreme heat called heat wave also occur in many countries including India, Bangladesh and Indonesia (Dong et al., 2021; ADB Report, 2021; OCHA Report October, 2022). This shows that the weather has been changing and the cause of the change is surely attributed to humans and their daily massive activities that have great ecological footprints (Leonard, 2011). In Indonesia as a developing country, people tend to build more and more physical infrastructures while the size of the land in each region does not and cannot get increased. As a consequence, the more increasing number of the physical infrastructures is not comparable to the capacity of the land. Instead, the numerous physical infrastructures including high-rise buildings, modern apartments and malls, and houses contribute much to the emission of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere (Maslin, 2009). Furthermore, human's consumerism is another agent that produces much ecological footprint. Human's overconsumption of stuff and material things not only directly reduce natural resources, but their reckless use of the things also produce much trash that contaminate the land and marine habitats (Leonard, 2011; O'Neill, 2019). Moreover, humans often do not manage their garbage and trash properly but only to put them in heaps that further emit various toxic gases to the atmosphere and the surroundings (ibid., 2011). Global warming then correlates with science and technology as human's agency in excessively manufacturing products that this only increases the amount of waste (O'Neill, 2019).

Humans are material-oriented creatures. Since the prehistoric times to the present millennial era, humans have always relied on material things for their life survival. The history of humankind began with *homo sapiens* about 70,000 years ago and developed into certain following periods as humans began to use certain tools and do methods in cultivating lands for agriculture and producing further apparatuses (Harari, 2014). Science and technology are the epitome of human's invention in the modern times. Throughout the history of human civilization especially since the Industrial Revolution in England in the 18th century to this present digital technology era, human's scientific inventions tend to objectify the natural environment. This revolution initiated anthropogenic activities

that tended to overextract natural resources as the materials for various industries as well as commercial buildings. These projects certainly had to convert natural ecosystem into artificial man-made landscapes for various industrial activities (Harari, 2014). Frankly speaking, science and technology have advanced human civilization. It began with an invention of telephone as a telecommunication medium by a Scottish scientist, Alexander Graham Bell in the 18th century (Bader, 2013). Throughout the ages, humans have kept evolving and so have their intelligence and civilization (Harari, 2014). From the conventional and manual telephone, humans began to invent a portable digital telephone that each individual may have and bring everywhere. It is what we now call as a handphone or smartphone. The emergence of this gadget has been preceded with the invention of the internet. Through this cyber technology, people can get connected with each other and the world very instantly. This technology embodies hyperreal platform that brings each individual to surf the world-wide web only by clicking keypads and images on their smart phone. This trajectory then dissolves the boundary between the real and virtual. However, humans are never satisfied with what they already have. They keep innovating on the internet technology so that it results in what we now call as Artificial Intelligence (Cycleback, 2018). This AI technology then will backfire on humans themselves when the sophisticated algorithms in AI will otherwise rule over human's lives in various aspects. Correlated with the digital technology is what scientists do with genetic engineering on any life form including animals and plants. The present scientists can engineer any life form they want through their intelligent design and replace classical Darwinian evolution idea of natural selection in living creatures on earth (Harari, 2014). These anthropogenic formidable projects lead humans to play God, while these certainly disrupt the natural cycle of life and result in unethical ecological issues.

Considering the dysfunctional roles of science and technology in conserving the natural environment, poetry as one genre of literature that belongs to the Humanities has to be an ecological agent. This means that poetry needs to delve into the natures of the material overconsumption and its impacts on the changing climate and biodiversity loss. An American professor in English and an ecocritic, John Felstiner argued that "poetry can save the earth", which means that poetry can discern the havocs that science and technology and their products produce that science and technology themselves do not realize (Felstiner, 2009, p. 1-15). Human's material overconsumption and overdevelopment proves what is called Anthropocentrism or a culture that centers on humans or privileges human's necessities and desires rather than caring about nonhuman beings and inanimate things including the natural environment as the macrocosmos that provides all sources to human and nonhuman beings needs. This paper discusses some poems of contemporary American poets, Denise Levertov, Susan Stewart, and Robinson Jeffers. I chose some poems of the poets that portray human's relationship with plants, trees, and nonliving objects as the inhabitants of the planetary ecosystem that coexist with human and nonhuman animals. One evident reason why this paper discusses only three poems of the poets is that the limitation of time and space in discussing any other poets and their works. The reason why the paper discusses the three particular poems instead of other poems of the poets is that the three poems have a particular topic dealing with human's relationship with nonhuman beings as the similar fundamental organisms that coexist in the biosphere. In discussing this topic, the paper refers to some notions in what western literary scholars now call as environmental humanities (Hubbell & Ryan, 2022) or what scholars in general previously knew as ecocriticism or literary ecology (Glottfelty & Fromm, 1996). The subject about human's relationship with nonhuman organisms in these three poems also corresponds with a field of the environmental humanities called ecopoetry and ecopoetics as the study about ecopoetry (Hume, 2012). This paper addresses two questions: first, how the four contemporary American poems orchestrate human's re-connection with nonhuman organisms; second, how this non-human poetics can raise individual's awareness of mitigating planetary catastrophes.

METHODOLOGY

This paper uses qualitative and descriptive method that focuses on words used in the poems as the primary data (Creswell, 1994). Furthermore, the analysis refers to some ideas of environmental humanities and ecopoetics as the secondary data. Environmental humanities refer to "crossdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and/or transdisciplinary studies that interweaves literary studies and other disciplines especially environmental studies, biology, ecology, geography (Hubbell & Ryan, 2022, p. 3) Environmental humanities aims to delve into the "intricate relationships between people, places, animals, plants, mushrooms, water, soil, land and air." This studies incorporates more or less nine aspects as the focus of its epistemic trajectory. Among these nine terms include "ecology, ecosystem, environment, landscape, more-than-human, nature, natural

world, non-human, and other-than-human.” In view of environmental humanities, nature and culture “were not separate categories but instead were intertwined and informed each other” from time to time (Hubbell & Ryan, 2022, p. 6-7). The difference between sciences and environmental humanities is that the former tends not to think about what impacts of any science and technology invention on environmental change and crisis, while the latter critically considers “the moral, ethical, social, and cultural dimensions of environmental change and crisis” including the ways how humans should ‘respond to ecological degradation’ (ibid., 2022, p. 10) in times of robustly growing anthropogenic activities.

Ecopoetry is a branch of environmental humanities just like ecofiction and ecodrama (Dwyer, 2010; Kulick, 2023). In general, poetry embodies ecological aspects so that it suggests ecopoetry. Yet, a more conceptual definition of ecopoetry says that is “a kind of paradigm shift.” It is “the apprehension of real biological selves (as opposed to fantasy selves)” that coexist with any environmental and physical phenomena in the natural world (Street, 2013, p. xxxviii). The meaning of ecopoetry also refers to the qualities that poetry stores energy, a kind of fossil fuels but these are ‘renewable source of energy’ that sustains life. Another ecological aspect of ecopoetry is that poems are organic and earth-based organisms like “green plants” that “arrest energy and create a self-growing and evolving system” (Rueckert, 1996, p. 108-111).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The three poems in this paper come from different periods. For instance, “Brother Ivy” by Denise Levertov might be written in the late 1950s or 1960s (Levertov, 1997). Meanwhile, “The Rose” by Susan Stewart was written in the postmodern era of 1995 (Stewart, 2017). The next poem “Life from the Lifeless” by Robinson Jeffers was written in the modern era of the 1960s.

Human’s Re-connection with Nonhuman Organisms

Human’s re-connection means a moment when humans realize their affinity with nonhuman living organisms such as plants and animals in terms of their similarity in being the organisms with certain inherent consciousness. This awareness leads humans to respect any life form in their co-existence in the biotic life. The first poem that I discuss here is “Brother Ivy” by Denise Levertov. The poet was once a student and a female poet of an experimental school in arts and literature called Black Mountain College in Asheville, North Carolina in the early 1950s (Duberman, 2009). As a contemporary work, this poem has a free verse form and non-rhythmic pattern:

Brother Ivy

By: Denise Levertov

Between road and sidewalk, the broadleafed ivy,
unloved, dusty, littered, sanctuary of rats,
gets on with its life. New leaves shine gaily
among dogged older ones
that have lost their polish.

It does not require appreciation. The foliage
conceals a brown tangle of stems
thick as a mangrove swamp; the roots
are spread tenaciously. Unwatered
throughout the long droughts, it simply
grips the dry ground by the scruff of the neck.

I am not its steward.
If we are siblings, and I
my brother’s keeper therefore,
the relation is reciprocal. The ivy
meets its obligation by pure
undoubtable being.

The first stanza consisting of 11 lines describes the ivy plant that she saw growing “between road and sidewalk”. This shows how the ivy was growing on the fringe of the broad road while it had broad leaves. The condition of the plant itself was not really good as it looked “unloved, dusty, littered, sanctuary of rats. Yet, the narrator saw new leaves sprouting from the old ones of the plant. Nevertheless, this vibrant growing scene of the ivy tends to be something ordinary as it did not deem one’s enthusiasm. In the next line, the narrator describes how the foliage of the ivy disclosed ‘a brown tangle of stems’ that was ‘as thick as a mangrove swamp’. This simile certainly also shows hyperbole as the ivy’s broad leaf is being compared with the broadness of mangrove swamp. The narrator also portrays how the roots of the plant stretched out closely to the broad leaf, which shows an ecological aspect or an interconnectedness between one part and another part of the plant. The last line of the first stanza depicts the endurance of the plant as it never got water during ‘the long droughts’, which indicates the physical strength of the plant during the harsh waterless condition. Its growth that ‘simply grips the dry ground by the scruff of the neck’ indicates another ecological relation of the interdependent relation between one part of the plant and the soil as the habitat that enables its living. In the second stanza consisting of six lines, the narrator illustrates how she had a mutual symbiosis with the plant when they become siblings rather than being apart from each other. This first line implies another ecological fact that humans and any vegetative organism in fact exchange biotic mechanism in the ways humans release carbon dioxide and the ivy then absorb it and emit oxygen that humans and other life forms need to survive. The last line emphasizes how the ivy despite its small size really gives merit to humans through the mechanism.

In the next poem “The Rose”, Stewart views ‘the rose’ as a living organism that inspires her with its all physical features. This poem was one from her anthology *Columbarium* (2003) and then anthologized in *Cinder* (Stewart, 2017). This flower also represents temporariness as each petal of flower tends to easily come off that is analogous with a fleeting and transitory time and other physical phenomena. In terms of poetic form, this poem is orchestrated in indented typography, jagged lines that suggest the transitory moment:

The Rose

By: Susan Stewart

Not so long ago, or was it?—the bud
 was tightly wound and the edge
as hard to start as a roll of cellophane
 tape
 (though it wasn’t up to you or
 me to start it)

Remember how the “dew and velvet”
first caught our eye?
 how the butter-yellow
 striations went
 into pink, or withdrew
 from pink?

(though it wasn’t up to you or me to
 say which way it was going)

The corolla did unfurl. The anther
cracked and flew.
 Each part in fact played its
 part, and when we turned
 away,

it didn't die—of course, or
not
because of that.

Eventually, it shattered
like any rose, just as roses do:
first the outer
petals, then the inner
ones that cling
a little longer
to the pistil,

though even that wasn't the end, for
The hip
had hardly begun—its apple-green
knob
would still take months
to ripen and wither

--the very months that send
their filaments toward the sun:
the long ago, the start,
the *little longer*,
eventually,
the end like
clockwork—
notions
drawn from simple math,
like *clockwork*.

When you and I are gone, it's true
that time will die in time.
It won't be up to the rose
to say which way
the wind has blown.

*I was wandering alone in a ruin
as vast...as vast as the moon...
and thought that time
had a form of its own,
but then the rose came to save me. (Stewart, 2017, p. 76)*

The poem is not clearly constructed in a conventional stanzaic pattern but the blank space after a group of lines may indicate and enable the lines to be read and classified into stanzas. Thus, the first and second stanzas depict the narrator's inquiry of the hard and soft parts of the rose. Its hard part certainly refers to its thorns, while its beautiful part points to its soft petals that she calls "dew and velvet", "butter-yellow striations" and "pink" as its physical features. The next line written in couplet "though it wasn't up to you or me to say which way it was going" suggests the narrator's re-connection with the rose as she identified herself with it in that both are not able to really discern any direction where the life is going to, but instead tend to succumb to the circumstance. In the next stanzas, the fourth to the sixth, the narrator again describes the components of the rose such as the unfurling

“corolla”, the cracking and flying “anther” by asserting that each part of the rose has its own function that remains undamaged in itself. The image “each part” of the rose also represents one aspect in human’s psyche namely ‘mind’ that cannot perish because of what the mind does to one’s consciousness. The line then expounds this human’s awareness to re-connect with the vegetative organism and its corresponding mental qualities. In the fifth and sixth stanza, the narrator further analogizes human’s fallible mind with delicate and shattering rose petals. The way the human’s mind declines is like the petals that come off layer by layer. Nevertheless, the mind will never completely take leave of one’s senses but there is a fundamental mind which anyone holds onto that the narrator compares with the rose’s pistil. Next, the narrator uses the images ‘hip’ and ‘apple-green knob’ to consecutively represent one’s ‘imagination’ and ‘mind’ that both need time to mature and shatter in time. Then, in the seventh and eighth stanza, the narrator continues her idea of temporality and temporariness of material and physical entity including the rose as she has described in the previous stanza about the shattering qualities of the rose petals. The image ‘the very months that send’ suggests what time can do to any physical phenomena on earth. Next, the image ‘their filaments’ are greening the ‘very months’ under ‘the sun’ as the macrocosmic time machine. This makes the ‘very months’ run in various temporal continuum in the past, present, and future as the images ‘the *long ago*, the *start*, the *little longer*, *eventually*’ imply. The last line “the *end* like clockwork— notions drawn from simple math, like *clockwork*” asserts human’s re-connection with the rose through his awareness of the temporariness of time that is actualized in the physical transformation of the rose and the changing temporal spectrums. The last two stanzas, the ninth and tenth conclude the polemics about time as a temporary phenomenon. When people pass away, this shows their life in time and space also ends, which means that time itself terminates. Then, the line “it won’t be up to the rose to say which way the wind has blown” indicates the power of time over any life form on earth and the rose’s inability to resist the the controlling and determining power of time. The tenth stanza written in italics serves as the narrator’s insight into the natures of time and the transience and mutability of any life form because of the temporal trajectory. The line “and thought that time had a form of its own” affirms the notion that time essentially is a concrete entity despite the fact that it is also an imperceptible, intangible, and invincible phenomenon. Then, the line “but then the rose came to save me” exemplifies human’s re-connection with the rose as a nonhuman organism in that his awareness of the transient nature of the rose enables him to discern the transitory nature of physical phenomena that he will not be overwhelmed by the phenomena but at the same time he cherishes the material temporariness.

In the next poem “Life from the Lifeless” by Robinson Jeffers, the narrator suggests the human’s re-connection with nonhuman organisms through his notion of temporal transience and its impacts on the mutable natures of physical phenomena including flora and fauna. This poem consists of five stanzas in tercet or three-line stanzas. This poem similarly is composed in an open form that disregards rhyme schemes and conventional poetic diction:

Life from the Lifeless

By: Robinson Jeffers

Spirits and illusions have died,
The naked mind lives
In the beauty of inanimate things.

Flowers wither, grass fades, trees wilt,
The forest is burnt;
The rock is not burnt.

The deer starve, the winter birds
Die on their twigs and lie
In the blue dawns in the snow.

Men suffer want and become
Curiously ignoble; as prosperity

Made them curiously vile.

But look how noble the world is,
The lonely—flowing waters, the secret—
Keeping stones, the flowing sky.

In the first stanza, the narrator asserts his respect for any inanimate or nonhuman organism as in the line “The naked mind lives in the beauty of inanimate things”. The line shows human’s re-connection with nonhuman organisms by analogizing ‘the naked mind’ with ‘the beauty of inanimate things’. In the second stanza, the narrator reveals the fact about the transience of physical phenomena through ‘the withering flowers’, ‘fading grass’, ‘wilt trees’, ‘burnt forest’. Next, the line “the rock is not burnt” likewise discloses the different ontology of natural phenomena. Vegetative organisms such as ‘flowers’, ‘grass’, ‘trees’ and ‘forest’ have transformed into different entities because of progressing time and burning fire. Yet, the rock remains to be undestroyed by the fire, which indicates the sturdy and relatively invulnerable qualities of the rock. The third stanza describes the impacts of temporal changes on animals, in which animals such as deer starve and winter birds perish because of the temporal progression. In the fourth stanza, the narrator discloses the fact about human’s nature that always pursue things but never feel contented and thus keep chasing their dreams. The line “man suffer want and become curiously ignoble” asserts the fact that fulfilling one’s wishes relentlessly will only cause suffering and make people offensive. Yet, in the last stanza the narrator begins to realize the noble values of the earth through its natural and organic physical landscapes including ‘lonely flowing waters’ and ‘keeping stones, the flowing sky.’ The narrator’s notion of the lonely, flowing waters, and keeping stone, and flowing sky enables him to re-connect with the nonhuman organisms. He aims to identify human’s consciousness with that of nonhuman phenomenon.

Nonhuman Poetics and Its Impacts on Raising Awareness of Planetary Catastrophes

Mitigating planetary catastrophes through the narrator’s entreaty to nonhuman organisms means that they can learn earthbound values and take some relevant learning from various nonhuman entities. In the tree poems above, the narrator of each poem portrays a subject of natural world, flora, fauna, and the natural landscapes. At the same time, their use of these earthbound images also raises an issue about the need for human’s re-connection with the natural organisms. The poems about flowers like “Brother Ivy” and “The Rose” raises human’s awareness of the natural organisms so that they can care and protect them instead of perceiving and treating them as objects. In view of ecopoetry, flowers have inherent values in themselves. They have life and consciousness that humans have to respect just like humans esteem their own consciousness. In view of ecology, flowers are very essential living organisms since their existence give life to other living organisms such as insects as well as humans. The benefits that flowers can give include nectar, floral oils, pollen, and the edible body tissues that draw insects to pollinate them. Pollen for instance contains “from 5 to 60 percent protein, all of the essential amino acids, diverse lipids and antioxidants” that insects such as bees need for their food (Buchmann 2016, 10). Furthermore, another floral benefit and attraction to insects as well as to humans is its scents. Flowers such as rose, jasmine, and some kinds of orchids produce scents when they initially burst open and their ‘intensity of fragrance’ varies according to ‘the time of day’. Usually flowers send considerable amount of fragrances during ‘hot, sunny midday weather’ (Buchmann 2016, 12). But flowers such as ‘jasmine, moonflower, queen-of-the-night cactus, sacred datura and other nocturnal flowers ‘release their fragrances in the evening’ (ibid., 2016, 13). Flowers also have medicinal benefits to heal human’s bodies and minds. Even more so, people and their different cultures have used traditional knowledge about flowers and their efficacies to ‘promote one’s health and happiness’. For instance, classic Egyptian people use saffron as a ‘favorite ingredient’ to make ‘love potions’ and a mixture in medicines to “reduce fevers, cramps, enlarged livers, or to calm the nerves”. Next, cloves that contain chemical eugenol are used as “a fragrant ingredient in potpourri bundles and in perfumes.” The substance also becomes “a powerful antibiotic and painkiller for toothaches.” Another example is flower-based teas that contain “the dried flowers of chrysanthemum, jasmine, daylily, hibiscus, and fragrant olive (*Osmanthus fragrans*) as ‘flower bundles’ used in Chinese teas.” Chrysanthemum tea is a popular beverage in Southern China. These flower teas have efficacies to “treat chest pain (angina), high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, fevers, colds, and headaches.” Then Chamomile tea made from the ‘dried heads of the flower’s small, white and yellow blossoms’ is effective in “calming anxiety, settling the stomach, and as a mild sedative during the bedtime.” A next

example is African marigold flowers (*Calendula officinalis*) have benefits in ‘treating skin infections’ since the flowers and leaves ‘have astringent properties’. In general, people around the world especially the traditional and native ones have relied on ‘plants, their stems, leaves, flowers, fruits, and seeds as part of their healing pharmacopoeias for numerous ailments’ (Buchmann 2016, 288-289).

As vegetative species, flowers as the elements of plants and trees serve as ecological agents. This means that their existence and the natural bounties they give to human and nonhuman creatures and to the natural environment in general is a pivotal aspect that maintains and sustains the biotic life. Their roles in absorbing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen to the atmosphere will not only give life to human and nonhuman creatures but also to maintain the robustness of the climate. It means that they can reduce the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere so that this simultaneously lessen the level of greenhouse effects that lead to global warming. The roles of plants for the biotic life are grouped into four: provisioning (producing food or fresh water), regulating (serving as carbon sequesters), supporting (providing pollinators), and cultural (for human’s activities such as gardening, hiking, and the like) (Walker 2012, 98). What the narrators describe in the poems above, “Brother Ivy” and “The Rose” exemplifies human’s awareness of the values of the flowers and their love for being identical with them to some extent. Edward O. Wilson, an American ant biologist calls this human’s ecocentric behavior ‘biophilia’ or “human’s love of and dependence upon the natural world”. The idea of biophilia is that “humans have a universal desire to be in natural settings” (Buchmann, 2016, p.286-287). In view of environmental humanities, human’s awareness of the inherent values in flowers and plants in general corresponds with literary and cultural plant studies that is called phytopoetics (Jacobs 2021, 313; Ryan 2020). The idea of this phytopoetics is that plants basically have ability “to impact the human imagination that it results in changes to human culture and society”. It is a way for plants (phyto) “to participate in the making (poiesis, poetics) of culture” (Jacobs, 2021, p. 313). The narrator’s way of anthropomorphizing ivy and rose in the poems “Brother Ivy” and “The Rose” epitomizes the narrators’s biophilia and awareness of discerning mind consciousness in the flowers as being corresponding with their mind consciousness. Some of phytopoetic ideas regarding the mind consciousness of the plants are percipience (plants as intelligent, responsive, and agentic beings) and corporeality (plants as embodied individuals located in time and space) (Ryan 2020, 99). Nóbrega in his writing calls “ivy” as ‘devil’ and its latin name is *epipremnum aureum*. He recognizes the ivy as an intelligent organism since the plant “is very resistant to extreme environmental conditions” compared with other plants. For instance, the ivy can “live with very little light” and even without any light so that this can endure in any weather and season. Another reason that made him believe in the ivy as “a close, trustworthy friend” just as Levertov regards the flower as her “brother” comes from the fact that this plant has ‘electrophysiological response to the environment’ and capacity to ‘interact with its surroundings’. For instance, by using a robot that he created, he tried to breathe near the leaves of the plant. Surprisingly, he found that “a tiny pores in the plant tissue open and close to enable gas exchange and help with photosynthesis.” This process means that “the carbon dioxide from his breath enters through the stomata that release water vapor and oxygen and results in changes of conductivity on the plant’s leaves.” He then concludes that ‘breathing’ is “the best way to interact with the flower” since this process is an essential aspect of any life form (Nóbrega, 2021, p. 167-171). The way the ivy releases oxygen describes the same thing what most plants and trees do towards human and nonhuman creatures in this natural environment.

In a like manner, rose (*rosa*) is one of favorite and popular flowers around the world. This flower becomes one of well-liked floral images used in arts, music, religion, literature, and other social lives. In Christianity for example, parishioners pray with rosaries (the word comes from ‘rose’) that are made of ‘petal beads in South America’, while Moslems use rosewater as a ‘spiritual cleansing agent’ and ‘an ingredient of popular delicacies’ (Jacobs 2021, 307). People like the Turks use rose to make rose tea, while the Arabic and Indian people use it to make rose perfume oil (ibid., 2021, 307). Physically, the various colors, beauty, delicateness, but also ferociousness of rose through its thorns are often attributed to females. A rose also symbolizes “purity or passion, jealousy or death—and messages conveyed in secret or sub rosa” (ibid., 2021, 308). In classical poetry of the Romantic period for instance, Robert Burns depicts this flower in his poem “A Red, Red Rose” that compares the poet’s love with a red rose. Another Romantic poet, William Blake uses this floral species in his poem “The Sick Rose”; a next Romantic poet, John Keats in his poem “To a Friend Who Sent Me Some Roses”; a Victorian poet, Christina Rossetti in her poem “The Rose”; an American female poet of the Revolutionary War era, Emily Dickinson in her poem “Nobody Knows This Little Rose”; an Imagist female poet, H.D. (or Hilda Doolittle) in her poem “Sea Rose”; a modern poet, Dorothy Parker in her poem “One Perfect Rose” (Tearle, 2023). Another interesting aspect of rose is its scent that attracts

pollinators such as bees but also serves as the communicative quality of this floral organism to human and nonhuman creatures. Like what Stewart describes in her poem, the layered petals of rose are composed in one “sepal or the green structure” that ‘surrounds the flower buds and supports the blossom’ (Jacobs, 2021, p. 311-313). The delicate quality of the petals that represents the transience and mutability of material phenomena simultaneously evokes one’s awareness of caring and protecting the existence of the rose and other plants in general for the sake of the biotic life. Plants with flowers just like big trees are natural agents that help to absorb carbon dioxide and to release oxygen to the atmosphere. The floral subsistence is very pivotal to reduce the carbon dioxide and other chemicals as gases that contribute to greenhouse effects or what we now know as global warming. This climatic state then leads to another condition called climate change that refers to several conditions such as “changes in regional and global temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, expansion and contraction of ice sheets, and sea-level variations” (Maslin, 2009, p. 15). Some environmental issues including deforestation also exacerbates the climatic phenomenon (Bjørnlund, 2010) that human’s care for the plants and flowers that begins from each household garden serves as a right action to green the neighborhood and to mitigate the global warming. Human’s love for flowers and other plants means biophilia that benefits in rescuing the planet from the climatic catastrophe. The act to reduce the climate change does not have to center on forests and deforested lands but begin with each home garden with its various flowers and potted plants (Buchmann, 2016).

CONCLUSION

Jeffers in his poem evokes one’s awareness of cherishing the beauty of inanimate things which means rock, soil, sand, as well as fallen leaves or flowers. When rock and soil might become the indispensable natural areas where plants can grow, their existence remains to be as important as the plants themselves. Though these rock and soil tend to be sessile or fixed in one place, they are not completely inanimate since they in fact contain microorganisms and minerals that enable the plants to grow. This means that these “inanimate things” give life to conventionally animate organisms. These three poems by Levertov, Stewart and Jeffers make individuals be aware of the life inside the nonhuman organisms that humans have to discern and protect. Their poetics of nonhuman organisms gives insight into the terrestrial organisms, their inherent values, and their roles in greening the planet and mitigating the global warming. In this present posthuman era when the threat of digital technology and artificial intelligence remains in human’s daily life, one’s care about garden flowers and inanimate things is an ecological wisdom to conserve the planet and any life form from the planetary catastrophes worsening and bringing disadvantages to human and nonhuman creatures. As a language and literary discourse, these poems and their ways of anthropomorphizing plants and inanimate things mean to humanize these nonhuman organisms, to shift anthropocentric paradigm, and to re-connect human and nonhuman organisms as those living creatures that co-exist in a mutual relationship to sustain the planetary ecosystem and resilience.

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