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Douglas L. Boudreau and Marnie M. Sullivan, eds., *Ecocritical Approaches to Literature in French*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2016. viii + 211 pp. Notes, bibliography, and index. \$80.00 U.S. (hb). ISBN 978-1-4985-1731-7.

Review by Jonathan F. Krell, University of Georgia.

Ecocriticism has long been the domain of Anglo-American literature but, in recent years, scholars of French-language literature have also begun to center their analyses on non-human elements of literary works. There have been conferences dedicated to French-language ecocriticism, for example, at the University of South Carolina (2011), Trinity College, Cambridge (2015), and the University of Angers, France (2016). Following Jacques Derrida's *L'Animal que donc je suis* [1], many fine philosophical works on animal studies and environmental studies have appeared in both French and English. Finally, scholars like Stéphanie Posthumus, inspired by her studies of Michel Serres and Bruno Latour, among others, are seeking to define and disseminate a uniquely French ecocriticism.[2]

Ecocritical Approaches to Literature in French makes a valuable contribution to this growing field. It consists of an introduction and an afterword, and eight essays by different critics on a variety of authors and subjects. Two of the articles are pedagogical in nature; three study Francophone works from Senegal, Martinique, and the former Canadian maritime colony of Acadia; four examine authors from metropolitan France. I will briefly review the eight essays in order of their appearance.

Roland Racevskis's article is particularly helpful for instructors preparing a syllabus on French ecocriticism at the undergraduate or graduate level, both in French and in English translation. Descartes and Rousseau provide philosophical background for a study of changing views on the relationship between the human and the non-human. Lamartine, Hugo, Giono, and Le Clézio are authors he typically includes. While studying Giono's "The Man Who Planted Trees," he seeks to go beyond the book and discuss current ecological concerns by inviting the University of Iowa's arborist to speak to the class and lead a tour of key trees on the campus. Racevskis explains that the arborist's "visit put us in touch with the biotic community that surrounds the place where we work and over which he exercises careful stewardship. This deambulatory session gave a new material immediacy to reading and discussing "The Man Who Planted Trees" (p. 28).

Annie K. Smart discerns a "green realism" in George Sand's *Le meunier d'Angibault*: "She combines a detailed observation of the living world and a normative discourse on the relationship between humans and the environment" (p. 42). Sand anticipates Aldo Leopold's idea of "land as community" in his "land ethic" portion of *A Sand County Almanac*. Through the actions of her protagonist, Sand embraces "the idea that the natural world has value in its own right" (p. 43).

James Whitlock traces environmental themes throughout Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal*, including urban ecology and respect for animals. The title of his essay implies that there is a link between Baudelaire and deep ecology, but I have a difficult time understanding the connection. The eight main

tenets of Arne Naess's deep ecology are summarized in another essay in this collection, Gilles Mossière's analysis of Rufin's *Le Parfum d'Adam*. Other than perhaps the principle tenet, which underscores the intrinsic value of non-human life, I see no correlation with Baudelaire. I am not aware that Baudelaire favored, for example, the most controversial principal of deep ecology, "a substantial decrease of the human population" (p. 173).

Douglas L. Boudreau examines the concept of Acadia in two of Antonine Maillet's novels, *Pélagie-la-charette* and *L'Oursiade*. No longer a political region, Acadia is nonetheless a habitat and a culture, both marginalized in today's Canada. Inspired by Bakhtin's dialogics, Boudreau emphasizes the oral quality of Maillet's novels, its dialogue written in the Acadian dialect. Maillet has truly succeeded in "giving the land a voice" (p. 96). Boudreau also notes the assimilation of characters to animals of the region, and, of course, the profound impact of the sea on Acadia.

Marnie M. Sullivan develops an "ecocritical pedagogy" for teaching two novellas by Senegal's Mariama Bâ to undergraduates and graduates. She notes that her "approach is informed by ecological pedagogy, feminist pedagogy, and ecofeminism" (p. 103), providing detailed teaching goals, strategies, and lesson plans. Since Sullivan uses English translations, translation theories and problems also play an important role in her lessons.

Nathan Germain studies Patrick Chamoiseau's poetic techniques for creating Creole identity through his characters' relationship to nature in his 1997 novel, *L'Esclave vieil homme et le molosse*. Germain underscores "the centrality of the natural environment to Chamoiseau's notion of identity in a forward-looking, creolizing, and relational world" (p. 125). His story follows the evolving relationship among a slave master, his vicious dog (*le molosse*), and a slave. The slave flees through the forest, which serves "as an opportunity for Chamoiseau to more deeply connect his poetic style with the elements of the Martinican landscape, an ecological-aesthetic project identified by Glissant in *L'Intention poétique* as one of the Antillean writers' most important roles" (p. 129).

Laura Call exploits her background in environmental science to analyze the theme of waste in Agnès Varda's film, *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse*, and Jean Rolin's novel, *La Clôture*. Call describes how characters in the two works identify with waste and how the form of the works resembles actual waste treatment processes. Waste becomes a resource in both. Call concludes that "[i]f we do indeed face an environmental crisis, ...we should not only attempt to limit our waste but we should be willing to look to it as a resource in the future" (p. 162).

Gilles Mossière analyses J.-C. Rufin's novel, *Le Parfum d'Adam*, a thriller about eco-terrorists who steal a cholera strain in an attempt to poison the water supply of an immense *favela* in Rio de Janeiro. The terrorists are steeped in deep ecology and plan to put into action Arne Naess's idea that the human population must be radically reduced. They reason that the poor should be the first to go since they clearly do not care about remedying the ecological crisis. Mossière gives a useful summary of the ecological movement in France since the 1970s. He then draws a parallel between Rufin's novel and Luc Ferry's *Le Nouvel Ordre écologique* based on the value they each place on the French tradition of humanism rejected by deep ecologists. He recognizes, however, that such a comparison must be nuanced. Indeed, although Rufin criticizes deep ecology, his title, based on a seventh-century religious text by Isaac the Syrian, calls for a holistic relationship between humans and animals. It recalls the time before the Fall when Adam and animals coexisted in mutual respect and peace.

Many of the articles contain references to others in the book, and these "intradisciplinary dialogues", as the editors call them, ensure that, despite the wide variety of subjects covered, the volume remains a cohesive whole (p. 193). Also unifying the collection is a general interest in "postcolonial greening" (p. 195). Several notes and bibliographies throughout the volume provide examples of this important collaboration between postcolonial and environmental criticism. Another common thread of the essays

is the acceptance of a place for humanism in ecocriticism, which has not always been the case. This idea is especially evident in the essays by Call and Mossière and in the editors' afterword: "Following the completion of this collection, we are more convinced than ever that the contributions to ecocriticism by scholars of French-language literature will foster an inclusive, sustainable, and humanist environmentalism that is truly global" (p. 190). A few paragraphs later, they add: "We...propose that ecocriticism can only benefit by consciously taking into account the human phenomena of culture and language" (p. 191). The environment is certainly at the center of these essays, but the pervading tone is that humans can do and have done great things; only humans will overcome the acute environmental crisis they brought on themselves. The remedy is in the poison....

LIST OF ESSAYS

Douglas L. Boudreau and Marnie M. Sullivan, "Introduction"

Roland Racevskis, "French Ecological Fiction in the Classroom"

Annie K. Smart, "George Sand's *réalisme vert*: Towards an Ecocritical Reading of *Le meunier d'Angibault*"

James Whitlark, "The Deep Ecology of 'Evil': Baudelaire and Holism"

Douglas L. Boudreau, "Acadia as Habitat: Environment and Identity in the Work of Antonine Maillet"

Marnie M. Sullivan, "Ecocritical Pedagogy for Teaching Mariama Ba's *Une si longue lettre* and *Le Chant Ecarlaté*"

Nathan Germain, "An Ecological Identity: Poetics, Nature, and Identity in *L'esclave vieil homme et le molosse*"

Laura Call, "Waste Treatment: Resource Recovery in *The Gleaners and I* and *La Cloture*"

Gilles Mossière, "An Ecocritical Reading of J.-C. Rufin's *Le Parfum d'Adam*"

Douglas L. Boudreau and Marnie M. Sullivan, "Afterword"

ERRATA

This volume contains the inevitable typographical errors: misspelled words, mis-numbered notes, etc. The following is a list of more substantial content errors. P. 65, l. 4: "industrious exploitation" should be "industrial exploitation." P. 147, l. 32: The Italian writer Italo Calvino is presented as a French author. P. 153, l. 8: The author describes a poor Paris neighborhood as "full of plight" (instead of "blight"). P. 153, l. 23: In a quotation, the author mistranslates the French word *bribes* ("scraps," "snatches"—meaning stories that come out by bits and pieces) as "bribes." The resulting sentence does not make sense. P. 166, n. 27: Don Diègue, Corneille's character from *Le Cid*, is incorrectly written as Don Diège, resulting in mispronunciation of the name.

NOTES

[1] Jacques Derrida, *L'Animal que donc je suis* (Galilée: Paris, 2006).

[2] See Stéphanie Posthumus, "Vers une écocritique française: le contrat naturel de Michel Serres," *Mosaic* 44/2(2011): 85-100.

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