





**EDUCATORS' GUIDE**  
**SUMMER 2017 | WORLDS WITHIN WORLDS**

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the **Summer 2017 *Asymptote* Educators' Guide**. With each new issue, we release this guide to provide materials designed to support educators who want to integrate *Asymptote* content into their classrooms.

We hope that *Asymptote*'s educational materials find their way into a wide range of classrooms and contexts, across regions and disciplines, and so we have tried to design a flexible resource that can supplement various learning environments. This guide is arranged into **six sections**, each representing a different classroom concept which we believe can be reinforced through the study of world literature in translation and includes lesson plans for each concept.

The Summer 2017 issue of *Asymptote*, themed "**Words Within Worlds**" explores the ways in which words not only describe but create and participate in the various worlds through which we move. We visit the worlds inside individuals, those thrown into conflict by national trauma, the natural world (with which we humans are still finding our harmony), the supernatural world, and the emerging worlds of our [Close Approximations](#) contest winners. We hope the following materials will help you to engage with the abovementioned concepts at their intersections with this versatile theme and with the work already occurring in your classroom.

We realize that the appropriate age ranges for each lesson will vary widely, so we encourage educators to adjust these lessons to meet their needs, and to record these modifications. Your classroom experience is very important to us, and hearing about it helps us to improve our offerings. Please leave **feedback and suggestions** [here](#).

Finally, if you like what we do and want to get involved, we would love to hear more from you!

We are currently seeking **contributors** willing to share **thoughts** and **experiences** about teaching world literature for the *Asymptote* for Educators **forthcoming website**. We'd especially love to read and share your **anecdotes** from the lessons you teach based on this guide, or using other *Asymptote* content. Let your stories inspire others! The *Asymptote* for Educators website is interested in publishing **student work** as well. If your students have produced excellent responses to the assignments offered in this guide, other work to do with *Asymptote* content, or if they want to participate in the global conversation about translated literature as it relates to them, we are currently accepting submissions.

If you're interested in contributing, or if you'd like to give us additional feedback, please contact us at [education@asymptotejournal.com](mailto:education@asymptotejournal.com).

## LITERATURE IN WORLD CONTEXT

### Questioning Assumptions and Cultural Values

It was late summer and the fields were full of ripe corn. Normally, the Santhals would be harvesting. But that day, they did not care about their farms. No man went to his field that day. Instead, holding their shovels and machetes, all the well-wishers of the Santhal society marched towards Kirta.

- *Memories of the Kirta Dangra* by Shibu Tudu

**From This Issue:** Shibu Tudu's [\*Memories of the Kirta Dangra\*](#), translated by Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar

#### Learning Objective:

Students will:

- Cite evidence from a text to support their interpretation
- Identify and evaluate the personal biases that impact their interpretation of the text
- Analyze the narrator's position in the text

#### Aligned Common Core Standards:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.6](#)

**Approximate Grade Level(s):** High School Level, Undergraduate Level

**Approximate Length of Class Period(s):** 50 minutes

#### Materials Needed:

- [\*Memories of the Kirta Dangra\*](#) (1 per student and one that can be projected to the class)
- Projector

### Lesson Plan

#### *Pre-Class Activity*

Have students write a page-long reflection upon the following prompt:

What is the worst crime in your society? How might one be punished for committing this crime?

#### *Warm-Up Activity*

Have a few volunteers share their reflections from the previous night's assignment and discuss them as a class.

#### *In-Class Activity I – Crime and Punishment*

Display [\*Memories of the Kirta Dangra\*](#) to the class using a projector and hand out copies to each student. Read the text together round-robin style, paragraph by paragraph. Then split the class into pairs or small groups. Have each group go through the text again and identify all of the crimes that were committed, who committed each, how each crime was punished (include attempted punishments, and if a crime went unpunished), and who imposed the punishment. Students can use the table in *Appendix I* (following this lesson) to organize their findings.

Come back together as a class and discuss the students' answers. You might find that students have answers that differ a little bit or dramatically. Encourage respectful discussion about these differences.

### *In-Class Activity II – The Narrator's Perspective*

Pose the following question to the class:

What is that narrator's opinion of the events in the text?

Give students 5 minutes to prepare their answers by underlining relevant passages. Then have students share their answers, encouraging them to use their underlined passages to support their claims.

### *Closing Activity*

Display the translator's note with the projector and have a student read it out loud. Pose the following question for a brief class discussion:

Does the information in the translator's note change your interpretation of the text or your feelings about the text? Why or why not?

### *Home Assignment*

Have each student write a reflection on the experience of reading and analyzing the text. Each reflection should address the following questions:

- Did you like the text? Why or why not?
- Were you surprised by the text or by your reaction to it? Why or why not?
- Did you find values in the text assumed to be normal? If so, are they consistent or inconsistent with values that you assume to be normal? If not, describe the way the narrator presents ethics and values.

*Appendix I*

Crime	Perpetrator	Punishment	Punisher

**From This Issue:** Stephanie Sauer's [Tove Jansson and the Questioning of the Moomins](#)

**Learning Objective:**

Students will

- Cite evidence from a text to support their interpretation
- Examine how Tove Jansson understood her society's gender roles and her relation to them
- Reflect critically on their own relationships to their society's gender roles

**Aligned Common Core Standards:**

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4](#)

**Approximate Grade Level(s):** High School Level

**Approximate Length of Class Period(s):** 50 minutes

**Materials Needed:**

- [Tove Jansson and the Questioning of the Moomins](#) (1 per student)
- Whiteboard or alternative
- Writing materials

**Lesson Plan**

*Pre-Class Activity*

Have students read and annotate [Tove Jansson and the Questioning of the Moomins](#) for homework. Each student should come to class prepared with their favorite passage highlighted.

*Warm-Up Activity*

Ask for some volunteers to read their favorite passages out loud.

*In-Class Activity I – Redefining Femininity*

Looking at Jansson's first two quotations, make a T-chart on the board and, together as a class, use it to list the words and phrases that Jansson uses to describe femininity and masculinity. The chart will look something like this:

Feminine Words	Masculine Words

Then split the class into pairs or small groups. Have each group mine the text for examples that show how Jansson thought of herself in relation to femininity and masculinity as she understood them. By the end of the activity, each group should have, in no more than three sentences, an answer to the question:

How did Tove Jansson understand and define her own femininity?

### *In-Class Activity II – Jansson as an Artist*

Give students about 5 minutes to individually skim the essay and bracket every description of Jansson's career and her relationship to her art. Use the following prompts for class discussion:

According to this essay

- How would Jansson describe herself as an artist?
- How would her society describe Jansson as an artist?
- How would you describe Jansson as an artist?
- How does her femininity affect Jansson's work and professional life?
- How did the *Moomintroll* series reflect and comment upon the central experiences and questions of Jansson's life?

Encourage students to cite evidence from the text to support their answers.

### *Closing Activity*

Have students choose one of the images that appear in the text and write a brief reflection addressing the following two prompts:

- Why did the author put this image here?
- How does this image make you feel?

### *Home Assignment*

Have students write a brief response paper to the following question:

Are there expectations that you feel social pressure to adhere to because of your sex or your gender? If so, what are they? How do you feel about these expectations? About the social pressure to adhere to them? If not, discuss this freedom. Does it come from you, your family, or your society? How does it make you feel to imagine such social pressure?

OR

Have students pitch an idea for a comic strip in which the characters play out their ideal family structure. Each pitch should contain:

- A character list complete with names, descriptions, and sketches
- A description of the family home with a sketch
- A brief description of the family structure
- A short plot outline for one installment in the series

## **CRITICAL ESSAY WRITING: BEYOND THE FIVE PARAGRAPH ESSAY**



## The Pulse of a Story

At some point or another, most young writers are exposed to the five-paragraph essay: introduction, three body paragraphs of supporting examples, and conclusion. This is for good reason. The five-paragraph essay teaches students how to make themselves understood by crafting an organized argument. However, once this skill set is mastered, we believe the model can become restrictive. *Asymptote* offers both abundant examples of artful critical and expository writing and opportunities for students to practice such writing themselves.

**From This Issue:** Ah-reum Han's [Surviving the Golden Spirals](#) and B. Jeyamohan's and [Periyamma's Words](#), translated by Suchitra Ramachandran

### Learning Objectives:

Students will

- Paraphrase the main idea of a text
- Analyze and evaluate the structure of [Surviving the Golden Spirals](#)
- Identify the purpose, passion, and perception of [Periyamma's Words](#) and cite evidence from the text to support their assertions

### Aligned Common Core Standards:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5](#)

**Approximate Grade Level(s):** Upper-level High School

**Approximate Length of Class Period(s):** 50 minutes

### Materials Needed:

- [Surviving the Golden Spirals](#) (one for each student)
- Journal or loose paper and writing utensils
- [Periyamma's Words](#) (one for each student)

## Lesson Plan

### Pre-Class Activity

Have students read and annotate [Surviving the Golden Spirals](#) for homework.

### Warm-Up Activity

Have students respond briefly to the following question in their journals or on scraps of paper: What are the three heartbeats of a story (as discussed in the text)? Describe each in your own words.

### In-Class Activity I – The Three Heartbeats

Together as a class, anatomize Han's essay using her own three heartbeats (purpose, passion, and perception). During the activity, students should:

- Paraphrase, in one phrase or sentence each, the purpose, passion, and perception of the essay
- Cite evidence from the text to support their assertions
- Discuss how the essay weaves together Han's personal story and those of the texts she analyzes
- Evaluate whether or not the text does so successfully

Use the analyses of the Vehlmann, Hubert, and Kerascoët texts as examples of successful anatomizing.

*In-Class Activity II – Periyamma’s Words*

Read [Periyamma’s Words](#) together as a class round-robin style. Then split the class into pairs or small groups and have them identify the three heartbeats of the story, citing evidence to support their claims.

*Closing Activity*

Come back together as a class to discuss the groups’ findings.

*Home Assignment*

Using their in-class work about [Periyamma’s Words](#), have students write an essay analyzing the text through the lens of Han’s three heartbeats. Like Han, students should choose a framing narrative from their own lives to put in conversation with their analysis, so that their own essays are also driven by the pulse of the heartbeats.

OR

Mimic the creative writing assignment Han describes from her own writing course. Have students choose an anecdote from their own lives, create a timeline of events, use this timeline to identify the purpose, passion, and perception, and then use this scaffolding to write the story. Students should hand in to you the timeline and the summary of the purpose, passion, and perception as well as the actual story.

## BREAKING DOWN GENRE

### Difference and Gender in Horror Narratives

In this section we hope to offer a comparative, structuralist approach to world literature and translation. Genre is not only a point of access for analyzing the function of a particular text, but also a way to explore literary forms and the role of literature across regions and contexts. This section of the guide will explore one feature in this issue through the lens of genre, to reveal intricacies within the text, and also to expose readers to non-traditional and non-anglophone literary structures.

**From This Issue:** Intan Paramaditha's [Visiting a Haunted House](#), translated by Stephen Epstein

#### Learning Objectives:

Students will

- Analyze and interpret [Visiting a Haunted House](#) through the lens of the horror genre and its conventions
- Cite evidence from the text to support their claims
- Identify and examine cultural references within a text and their own assumptions about these references
- Through understanding the mythological figure of the *kuntilanak*, examine the way gender functions in the text, in the horror genre, and in society

#### Aligned Common Core Standards:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.6](#)

**Approximate Grade Level(s):** Mid-level High School

**Approximate Length of Class Period(s):** 1 hour

#### Materials Needed:

- [Visiting a Haunted House](#) (1 per student)
- Writing Materials

### Lesson Plan

#### Introduction

Maurice Levy (author of *Lovecraft: A Study in the Fantastic*) writes that "the fantastic is a compensation that man provides for himself, at the level of imagination, for what he has lost at the level of faith." Horror fiction often highlights the interplay of religion and secularism, offering as it does a narrative for the fantastical and unexplained. This idea is evident in Paramaditha's work, and is an area of research interest in her academic writing. Furthermore, much of Paramaditha's work addresses the relations between gender, sexuality, culture, and politics and questions where the lines are between horror, mythology and history. She has stated, "The real horror is that moment where you question what you consider as normal, that's the most interesting moment in reading a horror story." Her exploration of the boundary between horror and reality offers a platform from which to consider genre, and how a reader's own (often unrecognized) perceptions and assumptions can influence their interpretation of a text.

### *Pre-Class Activity*

Ask students to read through [Visiting a Haunted House](#) at home, before class. Ask them to also bring in a paragraph/extract from their favorite horror story to share with the class during the lesson (can be oral).

### *Warm-Up Activity*

Ask students to work in pairs to compare their extracts using the question: what makes a horror story scary? Then come back together as a class and discuss some of the answers. Introduce the idea to the group that what we often fear most is the unknown. Encourage them to consider the subjective nature of fear - what some people may find scary (for example the dark), others might find comforting, depending on their own experiences of what is 'normal.'

### *In-Class Activity I – Cultural References*

Separate the class into pairs to have them identify themes in the story. Examples might include death, horror, grief, gender, and feminism. They can annotate in the margins of the story and underline evidence in the text to support their claims. When finished, come back together to share findings.

Share the following quote with the class:

*“I came to firmly believe that the only way to truly learn about another culture is through its literature”* (John McGlynn, American editor and translator and co-founded the Lontar Foundation with the aim of promoting Indonesian literature and culture through translation).

Prompt class discussion by asking whether or not they agree with this assertion. Then break again into pairs or small groups. Have them read through Paramaditha's piece and underline cultural references that are new to them, that they think might be specific to Indonesia. At the same time, have them highlight any cultural references that are familiar to them from their own cultural background (whatever this might be, there may indeed be multiple influences). Ask them to star any examples where they find cultures contrasting or conflicting.

Rejoin the class and use the following prompt for class discussion: When you read cultural references that are unfamiliar to you, how do they make you feel? What about when you read references that are familiar?

If necessary, you can use the following quotes to further discussion.

- “women in headscarves chanting prayers and men in peci heaping soil on her body...”
- “I received the news of her passing in New York, I was hurrying towards West 4<sup>th</sup> Station when I got the text from my dad”
- “Dutchified”
- “This was her bedroom; right beside it was uncle's room, plastered with posters of Duran Duran and Phoebe Cates.”

### *In-Class Activity II – The Feminine Horror*

Ask the pupils if they know what a *kuntilanak* is. If not (or not sufficiently), provide the following explanation:

A *kuntilanak* is a female vampiric ghost in Malaysian and Indonesian mythology, said to be the spirit of women who died while pregnant. A *kuntilanak* has the typical appearance of a ghost with her face covered by long dark hair. Significantly, the *kuntilanak* is also said to be able to transform into an attractive lady. With its female beauty, the *kuntilanak* attempts to seduce men.

Use the following questions to prompt a class discussion:

- How does it make you feel to imagine the *kuntilanak*? Is the figure scary to you? Why or why not?
- How do you think the narrator feels about the *kuntilanak*? Is it scary to her? How or how not? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer. If students need help, you can direct their attention to the following quotes:
  - “It made perfect sense that in death she’d prefer a wandering state.”
  - “My grandmother had always wanted to go abroad, but she had to make do with riding a minibus to market in her beautiful dress.”
  - “The wooden chest was like something that belonged to a sorceress.”
- Can you think of an analogous figure from your own culture or from another that you’ve heard of? This figure can be supernatural, or can be a cultural trope/stereotype, as long as it is ‘scary’ for similar reasons.

Then introduce students to the following quotation by Harry M. Benshoff (Professor of Media Arts at the University of North Texas) about horror stories featuring female spirits:

“The most potent symbol is that of the mirror. The monster, when summoned, enters the human realm through a mirror, because it is a symbol that signifies the two apparent dangers women traditionally pose to men (the desire for beauty and the desire to look).”

Have students work in pairs to underline any mention of mirrors in the story and to answer the following questions: How do mirrors function in this story? Is Benshoff’s observation accurate in this case? Why or why not?

#### *Closing Activity*

Point out the following quotation to the students:

“On the table lay a small book of Islamic Scripture, empty perfume bottles, and broken sticks of red lipstick.”

Note that it gives us a clue as to the character of the deceased grandmother. Have students respond in their notebooks to the following prompt: What 3 belongings will your grandchildren find on a table in your house? What will they think when they find them? Do objects take on a different meaning once their owners are deceased?

#### *Home Assignment*

Have students write horror stories of their own. They should first answer the following three questions as a preparation:

1. About which fear are you writing?
2. Why is it scary?
3. How is your story similar to/different from your favorite scary story from your childhood?

Students should turn in both their answers to these questions and their stories.

## ECOPOETICS

In her [review](#) of Julia Fiedorczuk's *Oxygen: Selected Poems*, Elisa González offers a sophisticated definition of ecopoetics to her readers:

*Fiedorczuk and the Mexican writer Gerardo Beltrán posit ecopoetics as “an integrative practice leading to the production of new ways of knowing and living.” They wish to resolve the opposition between the supposed “objective knowledge” of science and the “spiritual realm of the arts.” This is one step toward reconceiving human/non-human relationships, necessary because the traditional narrative of human exceptionalism and mastery is destroying the planet. The practice of ecopoetics generates—or germinates—fresh metaphors, altering the “individual and collective imaginations” to create a narrative for the future that embraces the duties of interconnectedness. The essay is an explicit “defense of poetry” as capable of more than beauty, but it resists “poetry can save the world” truisms. The practice they describe is “not limited to . . . the writing and reading of poetry”; however, poetry, as “a source of knowledge and wisdom as well as a vital creative force” has the power to transform the imagination. Ecopoetics, as described by Fiedorczuk and Beltrán, can and must expand beyond the page. It is the practice of “home-making,” represented in the word itself: “eco” from oikos, the Greek word for “home”; “poetics” from poiesis, the word for “making.”*

This section provides introductory lessons to ecopoetics for three age groups: middle school, high school, and undergraduate.

### Lesson 1: Place-Based Poetry

**From This Issue:** Ghassan Zaqtan's [from \*The Silence that Remains\*](#), translated by Fady Joudah

#### **Learning Objectives:**

Students will

- Identify the literal, surface interpretation of a poem
- Identify a poem's themes
- Cite evidence from the text to support their interpretations
- Think critically about their relationship with nature

#### **Aligned Common Core Standards:**

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.4](#)

**Approximate Grade Level(s):** Middle School

**Approximate Length of Class Period(s):** 50 minutes

#### **Materials Needed:**

- Writing utensils
- Whiteboard or alternative
- [Children of Palm Trees](#) (one for each student)
- Internet access to from [The Silence that Remains](#)
- Speakers connected to the computer
- Dictionary

## Lesson Plan

### *Warm-Up Activity*

Ask students to take five minutes to brainstorm a list of outdoor places, close to where they currently live, that they like. Then collect a list of some of these places on the board. Teachers in urban and rural schools can of course expect very different answers. If you have time, ask students if there are any outdoor places that are special to them that aren't near where they currently live, perhaps near a previous home, a family member's home, or somewhere they've visited.

### *In-Class Activity I – Children of Palm Trees, Literal Interpretation*

Have a student read [Children of Palm Trees](#) out loud. Then listen to the recording of Ghassan reading his poem.

Conduct a vocabulary check. As a class, make a list of all the words with which students are unfamiliar. Then have one student look up each word in the dictionary and read the definition out loud to the class. As they read, write the definition on the board for students to reference later. If students are shy to share the words they don't know, you can prompt them by asking for volunteers to share definitions of words you suspect they might not know. Then use the dictionary if volunteers aren't forthcoming.

Then, break the class into pairs or small groups. Have each pair or group read the poem again line by line. Have students discuss their literal, surface interpretation of what is happening in each line and write it down on their copy of the poem. Then come back together as a class and have the students share their answers. Encourage closer reading as necessary. Though some difference of opinion is possible, the class should have a working literal interpretation of the poem by the end of the discussion.

### *In-Class Activity II – Children of Palm Trees, Thematic Interpretation*

Quietly and individually, have students underline all of the words that have to do with nature on their copy of the poem.

Then separate students into small group and have them discuss the question: What is the narrator's relationship with nature? Encourage them to find their answers around the nature words they just underlined. Visit each group to evaluate their work, guide them towards deeper readings, and clear up any confusion.

### *Closing Activity*

Bring the class back together to share and discuss their answers.

### *Home Assignment*

Have students write a poem about their relationship with their environment. Ask each student to go outside (or if this isn't possible, to look out the window), choose something that they see, and write a poem about it *without using any adjectives* (including colors). Each poem should be at least 10 lines long.

## Lesson 2: Ecopoetry

**From This Issue:** [Elisa González Reviews \*Oxygen: Selected Poems\* by Julia Fiedorczuk](#) and Ida Börgel's [MA](#), translated by Jennifer Hayashida

### **Learning Objectives:**

Students will

- Use González's [review](#) to understand the term 'ecopoetry'
- Analyze the structure of a critical essay

### **Aligned Common Core Standards:**

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5](#)

**Approximate Grade Level(s):** High School

**Approximate Length of Class Period(s):** 50 minutes

### **Materials Needed:**

- Printed copies of González's [review](#) (1 per student)
- Whiteboard or alternative

## **Lesson Plan**

### *Pre-Class Activity*

Have students read González's [review](#) for homework (hand out paper copies). Each student should come to class prepared with a one-sentence definition of "ecopoetry," one question about the text, and their favorite passage highlighted. Students should also number the paragraphs for ease of class discussion. Leaving aside the block quotes, there should be 26 paragraphs.

### *Warm-Up Activity*

Call on volunteers to read out loud the passages that they highlighted for homework. Then have students share their questions and write them on the board. Don't try to answer them just yet.

### *In-Class Activity I – Defining Ecopoetry*

Ask some students to read out loud their definitions of ecopoetry. After each reading, ask the rest of the class to respond by pointing out ways in which they agree or disagree. Encourage students to use examples from the text to support their claims. Ask questions to guide students away from misunderstandings and towards deeper reading. Continue in this manner until you and the class are satisfied with your definition. If, after this discussion, there are still fruitful student questions left unanswered from the warm-up activity, use them to prompt further discussion.

### *In-Class Activity II – Applied Ecopoetics*

Point out to the students that one of the successful aspects of the review is the way in which González weaves together close readings from the poetry, information about Fiedorczuk, and her knowledge of Polish and Polish literary and political history to support her insights and opinions. Tell the students that they'll now take some time to analyze examples of this. Break the class into small groups and assign each group one of the following groups of paragraphs. Depending on class size, multiple groups can have the same paragraphs, or you don't need to assign all of them.



- 8-9
- 11-13
- 14-15
- 16-17
- 18-20
- 23-26

Have each group:

- Identify the topic and paraphrase the thesis in these paragraphs
- Highlight the evidence González uses to support her assertion

While the groups are working, visit each in turn to check their work and guide them if they've gone off track.

### *Closing Activity*

Have the students write a one-paragraph reflection on the following prompt and hand it in as they leave class:

What is your relationship with nature?

### *Home Assignment*

Have students write a poem about their relationship with their environment. Ask each student to go outside (or if this isn't possible, to look out the window), choose something that they see, and write a poem about it *without using any adjectives* (including colors). Each poem should be at least 10 lines long.

OR

Have students read Ida Börgel's [MA](#) and write a 2-3 page review. Using the bios provided on the *Asymptote* website as well as their own research about Börgel, students should use this opportunity to practice the reviewing techniques that they observed in class. A successful review should include:

- An introductory paragraph that connects [MA](#) to the eco-poetics movement using the definition agreed upon in class
- Relevant biographical information about Börgel
- At least 3 short close readings
- A subjective opinion about the text

### Lesson 3: Ecopoetics Theory

**From This Issue:** [Elisa González Reviews \*Oxygen: Selected Poems\* by Julia Fiedorczuk](#) and Marosa di Giorgio's [from \*I Remember Nightfall\*](#), translated by Jeannine Marie Pitas

#### **Learning Objectives:**

Students will

- Use González's [review](#) to understand ecopoetics
- Analyze and evaluate the structure of the review
- Research practitioners and theorists of ecopoetics and present their findings
- Interpret poetry through the lens of ecopoetics

**Approximate Grade Level(s):** Undergraduate Level

**Approximate Length of Class Period(s):** 2 50-minute class periods

#### **Materials Needed:**

- Printed copies of González's review (1 per student)
- Whiteboard alternative
- Writing materials

### **Lesson Plan**

#### **Day 1**

##### *Pre-Class Activity*

Have students read González's [review](#) for homework (hand out paper copies). Each student should come to class prepared with a one-sentence definition of "ecopoetry," one question about the text, and their favorite passage highlighted. Students should also number the paragraphs for ease of class discussion. Leaving aside the block quotes, there should be 26 paragraphs.

##### *Warm-Up Activity*

Call on some students to read out loud the passages that they highlighted for homework. Then have students share their questions and write them on the board. Don't try to answer them just yet.

##### *In-Class Activity I – Defining Ecopoetry*

Ask some students to read out loud their definitions of ecopoetry. After each reading, ask the rest of the class to respond by pointing out ways in which they agree or disagree. Encourage students to use examples from the text to support their claims. Ask questions to guide students away from misunderstandings and towards deeper reading. Continue in this manner until you and the class are satisfied with your definition. If, after this discussion, there are still fruitful student questions left unanswered from the warm-up activity, use them to prompt further discussion.

##### *In-Class Activity II – Applied Ecopoetics*

Point out to the students that one of the successful aspects of the review is the way in which González weaves together close readings from the poetry, information about Fiedorczuk, and her knowledge of Polish and Polish literary and political history to support her insights and opinions. Tell the students that they'll now take some time to analyze examples of this. Break the class into small groups and assign each group one of the following groups of paragraphs. Depending on class size, multiple groups can have the same paragraphs, or you don't need to assign all of them.

- 8-9
- 11-13
- 14-15
- 16-17
- 18-20
- 23-26

Have each group:

- Paraphrase the thesis in these paragraphs
- Highlight the evidence González uses to support her assertion
- Discuss whether or not González provides a successful interpretation of the poetry through the lens of ecopoetics

While the groups are working, visit each in turn to check their work and guide them if they've gone off track.

### *Closing Activity*

Have the students write a one-paragraph reflection on the following prompt and hand it in as they leave class:

What do you think of the idea of ecopoetics as González and Fiedorczuk understand it?

### *Home Assignment*

Have each student research other writers/theorists associated with the ecopoetics movement, choose one, and prepare a brief presentation about her/him. Each presentation should include some biographical information, a brief description of her/his body of work, and her/his definition of ecopoetics.

## **Day 2**

### *Warm-Up Activity*

Have each student present the writer/theorist they researched. As they do so, write on the board each definition of ecopoetics.

### *In-Class Activity I - Defining Ecopoetry (cont.)*

As a class, compare, contrast, and evaluate the different writer/theorists' definitions of ecopoetics.

### *In-Class Activity II – Applied Ecopoetics (cont.)*

Read the sections from [I Remember Nightfall](#) round-robin style. Split the class into 8 groups and assign each group one of the eight sections of the poem. Through the lens of their knowledge of ecopoetics, have each group perform a close reading analysis of the section. Visit the groups to evaluate their progress and help them work through any confusions.

### *Closing Activity*

Have students report their findings to the class.

### *Home Assignment*

Have students use the preparation they did in their groups to write essays interpreting a section from [I Remember Nightfall](#) through the lens of ecopoetics.

OR

Using their knowledge of ecopoetics, have students write their own ecopoem and a paragraph-long reflection about the goals of the poem, the aspects of ecopoetics they employed, and the experience of writing the poem.

## **FEEDBACK**

Thanks for taking the time to read the *Asymptote* Guide for Educators. We hope you found it useful and engaging. Have questions, comments, critiques, or testimonials? Please leave your feedback [here](#). We look forward to hearing from you!

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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Educational Arm Assistants: Laura Davies and Gareth Hadyk-DeLodder

Special thanks to *Asymptote* Editor-in-Chief, Lee Yew Leong, and Technical Manager, József Szabo