

*Literature, Pedagogy, and Climate Change: Text Models for a Transcultural Ecology*

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Roman Bartosch's new book, *Literature, Pedagogy, and Climate Change: Text Models for a Transcultural Ecology*, considers the practice of reading and teaching literature related to the Anthropocene during the Anthropocene. Designed as a guide for practitioners, this book will be a valuable resource for literature instructors who seek to engage their students in discussions of this pressing contemporary topic. Bartosch begins by explaining what the Anthropocene is, observing that the rise of discussion about the Anthropocene 'has entailed a deliberate call for a consideration of the normative ramifications of humankind's impact on the earth system' (1). In turn, Bartosch sees in this call 'also a call for a questioning of (the underlying premises of) educational practice,' namely the role of storytelling and the 'significance, fluidity and situatedness of knowledge' (2). Throughout *Literature, Pedagogy, and Climate Change*, Bartosch is careful to differentiate top-down interpretation and the kind of open critical thinking that is at the heart of the pedagogical practice for which he advocates: transcultural ecology. Transcultural ecology is a model for reading that engages multiple perspectives, interpretations, and theories in order to make sense of complex, overwhelmingly large concepts like the Anthropocene and its cultural and natural consequences. For Bartosch, transcultural ecology is 'an attempt to understand cultural-ecological processes across divergent scales and thus to grasp global naturalcultural processes where individual action and global change become linked in new and disconcerting ways' (151).

*Literature, Pedagogy, and Climate Change* presents a critical grounded meditation on literary education and cultural learning. The book is divided into seven chapters, each clearly argued and organized: an introduction to Bartosch's approach and the Anthropocene more generally, five analytical chapters that focus on specific texts, and a conclusion. Bartosch clearly grounds each chapter in relevant critical theory, deftly explaining the various critical approaches

and debates related to each topic and situating his own model reading in them. Bartosch models readings rather than definitively interpreting texts because the practice of transcultural ecological pedagogy he puts forward is predicated on a multiplicity of interpretations co-existing, informing each other, and gaining strength through difference. Each of the close reading chapters is structured in the same way: key terms are introduced, several texts are analyzed to model different ways of reading in relation to the Anthropocene, and some learning activities are put forward. To emphasize that the model readings that appear in the text are a single model among many, Bartosch concludes each chapter with what he calls a GIST, ‘General Implications for Studying and Teaching’ (3). In place of a space where Bartosch’s interpretation is conclusive, these GIST passages serve as ‘a hybrid tool for speculation and exploration’ (4), opening up new avenues for potential interpretation and helping to frame the implications of the specific model reading Bartosch has done in broader considerations of the Anthropocene.

The five close reading chapters focus on literary critical concepts including text composition and scale, reception and interpretation, storyworlds, affect, narrative framing, and the posthuman centering on the question ‘how can literary fiction help us reframe the idea of knowledge and competence in ways that are not only compatible with but may in fact enrich contemporary thinking about the Anthropocene?’ (16). Chapter Two includes close readings of Nigerian-American writer Teju Cole’s novel *Open City* (2011) and Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adachie’s works *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), and *Americanah* (2013) focusing on composition, asking ‘What are the results if we read a text from different scalar perspectives? ... What happens to the level of abstraction or intimacy when we move scales?’ (39). Chapter Three examines petroculture and the agency of the reader, as modeled in a close reading of Nigerian writer Helon Habila’s *Oil on Water* (2010). This reading takes a ‘postcolonial toxic gothic’ approach after Hanna Straß, which reflects on the ‘horror of oil’ - that it is everywhere (55-56). Here the GIST is ‘it is crucial to take full advantage of the diversity of often incommensurate scalar perspectives and to engage in pedagogically beneficial moments of translating between different scales’ (65).

Where the first two close reading chapters demonstrate ways of reading that make use of the scalar dimension of transcultural ecology, Chapters Four and Five engage more closely with affect and emotion, focusing predominately on model readings South African writer J. M. Coetzee’s works. Chapter Four introduces the concept of ‘dark cosmopolitanism’ - a term

Bartosch uses to refer to ‘a focus on feelings and narrations of exile and uprootedness’ (71), which he derives from the critical concept ‘dark ecology’ - and engages with it in a model reading of Coetzee that reflects on the complex relationship between reality and subjectivity, narrative ethics, autonomy, and authenticity. Chapter Five models a reading of Coetzee that specifically considers the narrative ramifications of moments of reader shock or wonder in the text. These chapters’ model readings engage productively with questions of uprootedness, alterity, affect, and the body in considering ‘the sometimes unsettling or even uncanny ways “in which human life is implicated in realities that it can neither escape ... nor comfortably inhabit”’ (99). As Bartosch demonstrates through his model readings in these chapters, considering the shift from rootedness to uprootedness in literary texts engaged with questions of the Anthropocene as a pedagogic resource can be productive in that it ‘creates imaginative spaces that we might need in a world “in ruins”’ (100).

Chapters Six and Seven serve to conclude the study. Chapter Six reflects on the tension between the urgency of environmental crises and ‘the ethos of a critical pedagogy “that encourages free expression” and is grounded in “a concern to engage students in an oppositional ... critique of society”’ (121). The chapter models a reading of the South African science fiction film *District 9* (2009) that introduces the nonhuman as another element in the scales of transcultural ecology. Here Bartosch reflects on the value and effectiveness of teaching consciousness and ethical awareness. In Chapter Seven, Bartosch concludes with a reflection on transcultural ecology not just as an environmental humanities theory, but as a ‘way of thinking and rethinking balance’ (139). He observes, ‘It is only if we understand the importance of this trope for ecological thought... that we can truly pinpoint the role of literature in the context of transcultural ecology’ (139).

Bartosch’s method of transcultural ecology provides a productive pedagogical resource for engaging with questions related to the Anthropocene in the study of literary texts. This author appreciated that *Literature, Pedagogy, and Climate Change* provides models and avenues for further exploration rather than an interpretation. This method for literature pedagogy is clearly effective for teaching texts and films related to the Anthropocene, and Bartosch’s study will be a valuable text for instructors, scholars, and students of literature.