A Leap Beyond Leopold: Agamben, Ecocriticism, and Global Realignments

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Abstract: This article discusses Giorgio Agamben's theories about the centrality of human/nonhuman animal relations as a formative feature of Western politics and explores some of the questions about these relations. The author shows how imagined and real similarities between human and nonhuman animals (among these, perhaps most notably the capacity to feel and conceptualize pain) have produced discussions about extending to nonhuman animals ethics traditionally extended only to humans. This article offers some discussion of human/nonhuman animal matters in terms of Agambenian ethics and argues for the extension discussions even further in a direction laid out long ago by Aldo Leopold, and further yet beyond to include not only biotic but nonbiotic landscapes. The article argues against the cultural and intellectual colonialism that frequently over-writes, minimizes, or simply ignores voices and ideas from East Asia, and shows the environmentally damaging effects of such one-way traffic. Finally, the author shows how a text such as *Life of Pi* suggests a reversal of globalization traffic, how learning from East Asian histories of human/environment relations are crucial in our current age of dire environmental crisis, and how very central Agamben's work can be to rethinking our current global alignments.

Key words: ecocriticism; environmental ethics; sovereignty; *Life of Pi;* ecophobia

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题目：超越利奥普：阿甘本、生态批评、全球重组

内容摘要：本文探讨了阿甘本关于西方政治的形成性特征在于人与非人类动物关系的中心地位的有关理论以及与这类关系相关的问题，揭示了想象的和真实的人与非人类动物之间近似性如何催生有关传统的人类伦理延伸到非人类伦理的讨论。本文还根据阿甘本的伦理理论探讨了一些人与非人类动物的问题，认为应该将上述讨论朝着利奥普早已指出的方向推进，不仅应该涵盖生命景观而且应该涵盖非生命景观。本文反对那些夸大、矮化或无视来自东亚的声音和思想的文化殖民主义和知识殖民主义，展示了这种单边主义所造成的破坏性的环境后果。本文还以《少年派的生活》为例，分析了这类文本所蕴含着对全球化进

程的逆转，揭示了在环境危机四伏的当代学习东亚人与环境关系史的重要意义以及阿甘本的著作对于反思当前全球重组的核心价值。

关键词：生态批评；环境伦理；主权；《少年派的生活》；生态恐慌

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Ζωη, *bloss leben*, *vita nuda*, bare life, unaccommodated man: each presume an understanding of the natural world as hostile, alien, and distinct from sovereignty, despite the mutual entanglements of the political and the natural as corollaries of each other. To assume a universal position on these matters, however, would be a consequential mistake, one reflective both of deep ethnocentrism and wilful ignorance of cultural differences regarding human/environment relations. Giorgio Agamben's theories about the centrality of human/nonhuman animal relations as a formative feature of Western politics has found a wide and welcoming audience, and the questions about these relations have received important theoretical and artistic attention—and for quite a while now in a great variety of forms. Issuing from imagined and real similarities between human and nonhuman animals (among these, perhaps most notably the capacity to feel and conceptualize pain), discussions about extending to nonhuman animals ethics traditionally extended only to humans remain—surprisingly—necessary. In this article, however, I will (after some discussion of human/nonhuman animal matters in terms of Agambenian ethics) extend discussions even further in a direction laid out long ago by Aldo Leopold, and further yet beyond to include not only biotic but nonbiotic landscapes. In so doing, I will rigorously argue against the cultural and intellectual colonialism that frequently over-writes, minimizes, or simply ignores voices and ideas from East Asia, and I will show the environmentally damaging effects of such one-way traffic. I will show how a text such as *Life of Pi* suggests a reversal of globalization traffic, how learning from East Asian histories of human/environment relations are crucial in our current age of dire environmental crisis, and how very central Agamben's work can be to rethinking our current global alignments.

Agamben defines the central conflict of Western societies as being rooted in anxieties about human/animal relations: "In our culture," he argues, "the decisive political conflict, which governs every other conflict, is that between the animality and the humanity of man. That is to say, in its origin Western politics is also biopolitics" (*Open* 80). Yet, without substantial empirical evidence (or solidly persuasive rhetoric) to support such a claim, there is little reason to give much credence to it, and one might as easily contend that the decisive political conflict, which governs every other conflict, is something else—for instance, between the spirituality and the earthliness of humanity; between the id and the ego of humankind; between different classes; or between consciousness and everything else. Again, without empirical evidence (or solidly persuasive rhetoric), the argument, though it might sound good (as an advertisement for health benefits of cigarettes in the 1960s might have), is invalid. This is not to diminish the importance of "the animal question" but rather

to refocus the terms of our engagement with it. One of the things I am arguing in this article is that the conflict Agamben notes is a symptom of a much deeper matter concerning what is human and what is not human. It seems limited and limiting here to focus entirely on the undoubtedly deeply ambivalent relationship between the human and nonhuman animals as a constitutive conflictual and definitional site when, in fact, our fears of pain, death, and eventual dissolution (fears around which everything else human is set) into a nonhuman and ultimately perhaps even nonbiotic material environment is surely the more focused site at which we should be looking. ①

Admittedly, what human and nonhuman animals share is important, not the least of which is the ability to feel and conceptualize pain, but it is the *fear* of pain and death that requires a deeper analysis than simply an observation about the isomorphic patterns of perception among human and nonhuman animals.

Pain, Elaine Scarry long ago argued compellingly, has the capacity to rip away the human into the nonhuman, to dissolve human identity, and to cast the sentient subject into a setting that is incomprehensible and frightening—one devoid of boundaries and language. Pain is "language-destroying: as the content of one's world disintegrates, so the content of one's language disintegrates; as the self disintegrates, so that which would express and project the self is robbed of its source and its object" (35). Pain reduces humans to the "bare life." As pain dissolves the imagined boundaries of the body forcing the sufferer to recognize or imagine material agency outside of that body, it becomes difficult "to maintain one's extension out into the world" (33). Javier Moscoso, writing about cultural histories of pain, argues similarly that "the person in pain lives in a liminal space, an indeterminate region; as long as the suffering does not cease, the sufferer wanders between separation and reconciliation.… [P]ain … is a drama that situates us in a borderland.… The person who suffers lives among shadows" (6). Those shadows are the ones that King Lear fears, pointing at unaccommodated man and worrying that the chasm may not be so great between him and "such a poor, bare fork'd animal" (4.3.106-8) as he images Edgar to be. Dissolution into the bare life, for many people, is a tremendous fear, one heralded through many means (among them, banishment, pain, and sleep) and each entailing a loss of agency. For Agamben, one of the ways in which sovereignty maintains itself is precisely through banishment, through a stripping of the comforts and protections of the polis to bareness and exposure—ultimately to the dangers of pain, suffering, and death.

Fear of a loss of agency is at core a fear of dissolution to the bare life. It is a fear fostered and abetted by unpredictabilities in nature (human and nonhuman), and is at the core of ecophobia. Imagining the power and the danger of nonhuman agency often means imagining threats to human control. Ecophobia is the notion that nature is the fearsome object in need of our control, the loathed and dangerous thing that can only result in pain and tragedy if left in control; but, as Neil Levy so aptly puts it, "We are not in control of the non-human world, because we are unable to predict with any accuracy the effects of our actions upon it" (210). While pain is obviously the essence of our own embodiment, scant attention has been focused within ecocritical circles on theorizing of pain as constitutive of our ontological and material boundaries and realities (and the processes sustaining them). At the very core of human existence is pain (or the absence of it), and

we rudder our lives around sites of pain, danger, and death. ②

Pain presents problems. For Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen and Karl Enenkel, as for Descartes, "the epistemological problem of pain lies partly in the way in which it straddles the mind-body divide" (3). And like sleep, it is a vital link between human and nonhuman animality. Both pain and sleep are reminders of our inextricability from the material world. Both have received scant attention in ecocriticism.

Without digressing too far on sleepy and painful matters, it is important to observe that sleep (at the "wrong" times) often evokes images of bestiality (like other animals, we sleep), laziness, and unnaturalness. Sleep—a go-between and mediator of the very category of "the human"—threatens dissolution of the human to nonhuman (even nonbiotic) nature. David Abram's poetic explanation about the materiality of sleep is worth mulling over here:

> We sleep, allowing gravity to hold us, allowing Earth—our larger body—to recalibrate our neurons, composting the keen encounters of our waking hours (the tensions and terrors of our individual days), stirring them back, as dreams, into the sleeping substance of our muscles. We giveourselves over to the influence of the breathing earth. Sleep is the shadow of the earth as it seeps into our skin and spreads throughout our limbs, dissolving our individual will into the thousand and one selves that compose it—cells, tissues, and organs taking their prime directives now from gravity and the wind—as residual bits of sunlight, caught in the long tangle of nerves, wander the drifting landscape of our earth-borne bodies like deer moving across the forested valleys. (24)

The similarities among human and nonhuman animals, obviously, are many, and there are good reasons for comparisons. Discussions about nonhuman animals have been based on similarities (imagined and real) between nonhuman and human animals, on the abilities to grieve, to feel joy or anger or fear, to love or care or show selflessness, to want or not want, and so on. None of these things apply to nonsentient nature, of course. A swath of land—lacking a cerebral cortex and any emotive agency—is the setting rather than a character in the dramas of sentient existences, whether we are talking about Sancho Panza in the pit with his donkey or Lear on the heath with his presumed madman.

A nonhuman animal is (and is not, depending in part on the credibility of similarities) the embodiment of the bare life, and—if Laura Hudson is to be taken seriously—"they have always existed in the state of exception that founds the political" (Hudson 97). Yet, Hudson's use of the word "always" makes it difficult to take the comment absolutely seriously, since there are surely exceptions, depending on which culture or tradition happens to be our focus. Culture, obviously, defines the terms of human/nonhuman relations (as I discuss in detail in the context of contemporary East Asia below). Although he argues that "the animal" is the site of the central and decisive political conflict in Western culture, Agamben sufficiently expands the terms of discussion beyond "the animal." He argues, as Cary Wolfe has neatly summarized in Cole *et al*, that "it is not just nonhuman animals but rather *life itself*, globally, that becomes the direct object

of political power in its modern form" (99). Wolfe continues: "Under biopolitics, the subject—and with it the human/animal distinction—becomes a floating signifier in a second-order operation, one that can be deployed as needed to supplement the first-order political work of rendering certain beings 'killable but not murderable' (Agamben), of 'making live and letting die (Foucault)' (100)" (Wolfe 7).

This is all very true and interesting, but the picture is not complete: to echo and elaborate on Wolfe and Agamben, it is not just life itself, globally, but rather *nature itself* (living and nonliving) that becomes the direct object of political power in its modern form. The idea of biopolitics is frankly becoming a bit tired. It is time to start talking more earnestly about eco-politics, about including "nature" in all of its rich materiality rather than the very small fraction of that materiality that actually lives. If the environmental humanities is to have any meaning beyond narrow biopolitical navel-gazing, then it will have to address nature in all of its complexity; it will have to address our ethical positions in relation to this Nature; and it will have to translate data about that Nature into forms that are comprehensible. Biocentrism is not a viable or sustainable position in the long-run.

Beusterien and Callicott see Aldo Leopold performing precisely such a radical move and argue that "In the Aristotelian terms that Agamben resurrects to construct the concept of the bare life, Leopold would elevate 'plants, animals, soils, and waters' from the status of ζωη (bare life) to βιος (socially qualified life) on the grounds that they are members of the *biotic* community" (61), a position much more in line with East Asian thinking, wherein "the human" is a part of nature (living and nonliving) rather than a separate spiritual and ethical entity. Beusterien and Callicott argue that it is "Leopold's quest to explicate and inculcate an evolutionary ecological worldview, to foster a sense of membership in a biotic polity, and to collectively govern that polity in accordance with an associated land ethic" (62).

To be clear, extending discussions of ethics beyond animals to biotic (and further to nonbiotic) landscapes does not diminish the importance of the work that has been and is being done with animals, tired though it is becoming. Indeed, it seems a radical misunderstanding of environmentalism to suggest as Laura Hudson does that "Both environmentalism and animal rights depoliticize struggles for social justice, replacing the goal of restructuring social organization and production to be more democratic and just with the injunction to 'Save nature!' or 'Save the animals!'" (88). From the very start, ecofeminism has been resolute precisely about politicizing—not depoliticizing—struggles for social justice and for seeing alliances of these with struggles against speciesism and ecophobia. Similarly, Hudson's absolute understandings of environmentalism simply do not bear up to any serious kind of scrutiny. At one point, for instance, Hudson maintains that "The problem with environmentalism is that it uses the same structure of thought that allows us to dominate nature while attempting to restructure society; despite its attempts to decenter human interests, all environmentalism (even the purest of deep ecologies) remains anthropocentric and based in the primacy of the individual that structures capitalism" (90). In point of fact, "all" environmentalism does *not* remain anthropocentric and based in the primacy of the individual. The enormously productive body of material Hudson ignores includes

virtually everything done within feminist ecocriticism and ecofeminism, not to mention the work of Robyn Eckersley, Aldo Leopold, Stan Rowe, and many others—for a comprehensive review of feminist ecocriticism, see Greta Gaard's "New Directions for Ecofeminism."

If "the effective power of the discourse of species when applied to social others of whatever sort relies, then, on a prior taking for granted of the institution of speciesism—that is, of the ethical acceptability of the systematic 'noncriminal putting to death' of animals based solely on their species" (Wolfe 7), then what about the noncriminal violence toward the natural environment, both biotic and nonbiotic? If we talk about speciesism, then should we not also talk about ecophobia? The increasing recognition of (and subsequent theoretical unease about) non-sentient (even non-biotic) agency urgently implies questions. For a nonhuman system that has its own laws, to what degree are human laws actually relevant? We question the sham logic of speciesism, what does new materialism and the work of Giorgio Agamben (taken to the next step, beyond species and sentience to environment, biotic and non-biotic) reveal about the sham logic of ecophobia? If we can talk about the logic of exempting an "our" species from an arbitrary set of laws and definitions, then what happens when we take it to the next step and ask about the exemption not of species but of an ecosystem? Moreover, how do these questions function within the current context of globalization?

Before hazarding responses to these and other questions, the warnings of the CFP for a recent Special Issue of *Concentric* bear repeating: "The term 'Asia,' like that of 'the West,' names neither an essential civilization nor a substantial geographical entity but rather something like what Agamben identifies as an *apparatus*: a network of heterogeneous elements spanning several registers" (Solomon and Huang, Web). Having said this, retaining the term "Asia" allows for a discussion of some very substantial differences in environmental ethics, East and West. As Karen Thornber notes, "East Asia has long been associated with belief systems advocating reverence for nature, especially Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Shinto as well as numerous indigenous philosophies and religions" (18). Thornber then scrupulously lists—in her encyclopedic 688 page *Ecoambiguity: Environmental Crises and East Asian Literatures*—numerous monographs that explain this reverence.

One of the central fractures within ecocriticism (which has always had an American flavor) has been with whether or not to thoroughly critique the use of animals (for food, clothing, entertainment, science, and so on) in industrialized Western nations (and subsequently to act on the results of such critiques). The sources of this defining fracture are wedged deeply in Western thinking. Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* virtually invites an ecocritical reading that takes the fractured site of "animals" as focal point of entry to the discussion of schizophrenic Western thinking about nonhuman subjects. Challenging readers to question the use and utility of animals in narrative and in the innumerable businesses of people who are "just trying to survive," the question of ethics and of ethical relationships with nonhuman subjects and matters rise center-stage from this novel. A fascinatingly fringe novel (conventional in no sense of the word) thrust to the very center of Western culture (first as a best-selling novel, and then as a blockbuster movie), *Life of Pi* is a testament to the permeability of mainstream and avant-garde borders. It indulges in both the

biophilic and the ecophobic, stressing finally that each are a spectrum condition and asserting that co-existence, not necessarily harmony, is the best that we can hope to achieve.

But the book takes us further than "the question of animals" that has now become a thriving industry of its own; without romanticizing flora, fauna, or geographies (terrestrial or maritime), Martel offers up ethically ambivalent spaces. Far from being a grotesque example of pathetic fallacy, *Life of Pi* writes natural environments that have agency. Far from being the passive object of observation or inhabitation, physical spaces in this story matter because of their agential capacities. Of course, Nature cannot participate in politics—cannot engage in a participatory democracy, or rule in favor of or against burcas, for instance—but neither can it be excluded from politics, since it forms, provides, and hosts the settings in which all human activities occur and from which all human and nonhuman agents borrow their materiaAgamben assumes that "state of exception" refers only to active and not to passive exceptionalism. He argues, for instance, that "World War One (and the years following it) appear as a laboratory for testing and honing the functional mechanisms and apparatuses of the state of exception as a paradigm of government" (*State of Exception* 7), but this seems historically inaccurate and naïve. To talk about states of exception in this way is to ignore classes or groups that are *ipso facto* not included in the first place in the civil society from which they are passively exempted. This would include the First Nations people of Canada, the Native Americans, and the Indigenous people of Australia, not to mention the land on which these people live—and mention that land we must. First, however, any discussion of the "absolute necessity and temporariness" that Clinton L. Rossiter posits as vectors under which a state of exception is brought out and which Agamben critiques (*State of Exception* 9) must surely evoke questions: for whom is this an absolute necessity? Surely not for the indigenous people of the Americas, yet it is these people who have been in a state of exception for varying lengths of time over the past five hundred years or so. What exactly does "temporary" mean? Agamben is indeed accurate in his assessment of Rossiter's take on the whole matter: "the words that conclude the book," Agamben maintains, "sound even more grotesque: 'No sacrifice is too great for our democracy, least of all the temporary sacrifice of democracy itself' (Rossiter 314)" (*State of Exception* 9). One person's law surely is another person's crime, yet Agamben does not discuss this issue. Similarly, for the laws of one species to be dominant in a world that has 8.7 million other species is surely exceptional.

If physical environments (and nature generally) are really to have an ontological status that discards the "active observer"/"passive observed object" dyad (a dyad that not only allows but necessitates the exemption of nonbiotic nature from ethical consideration), then it is important to understand nonsentient agency and to avoid characterizing such agency (regardless of how dangerous it may be, how sinister it may appear, or how it could lead to our own pain or death) in human terms.

Without romanticizing flora, fauna, or geographies (terrestrial or maritime), Martel offers up ethically ambivalent spaces. India, the ocean, the island, the ocean again: each is inimical in varying ways to Pi's existence.

The colonial apparatus that the zoo embodies survived transplantation to Asia but not

transplantation back to its cultural source. Ephemeral at best, colonial authority is no match to the landscape of India. Though Martel doesn't describe it, the abandoned zoo in Pondicherry is a ghostly image of human endeavors overrun by Nature, similar to all of the abandoned colonial mansions in the world that have been absorbed by creepers, vines, and rot. The decay of the zoo is a testament to the ephemerality of human endeavors. These are no match to nature.

In a plain misreading and misunderstanding of the function of the fractured ending of the novel, an August 2002 review in *The New Yorker* hails *Life of Pi* as "an impassioned defense of zoos" ("Books Briefly Noted", web). The seemingly innocuous little question toward the novel's end about whether the story with animals or the one without is preferable fractures the narrative unity of the novel, calling into question both the function and the process of the narrative itself. Centering animals in the primary narrative and relegating the one without animals to peripheral hind quarters of the story, the novel answers its own question: the story with animals is the better one. Far from defending zoos, the novel fundamentally critiques the deeply anthropocentric ontology that enables the very existence of zoos, a hierarchal thinking that plays out in the strained dialogue between the pair of Japanese Ministry of Transport officials in the novel, as well as between this pair and Pi. More than this, though, the novel enacts a radical carrying across from East to West, a bridging and translation not only of Pi and his deeply complicated ontology across the troubled Pacific Ocean (with a brief stop on a carnivorous island), a literal journey, a literal literary carrying-across and bridging of East and West; it also deeply questions the exemption of the physical worldscapes from ethical consideration.

The carnivorous island—floating between Asia and America and between two very different histories of relations with the natural environment—posits a clearly agential space (the island) within another clearly agential space (the ocean), and the dramatic action of the narrative Pi tells hinges on how sentient agency deals with non-sentient agencies (of the ocean and the island in this story). And Pi is compelled to respond.

Pi is a vegetarian compelled to place his survival above his ethical orientations. He ends up a true omnivore (with even Richard Parker's feces offering fair fare), but there is no omnivore's dilemma for him. His ethics themselves come from the perceived necessities of survival. Washed away like the animals emancipated—albeit to a watery death—from the zoo, Pi's ethics too are erased. Moreover, Pi obviously fails to find a master narrative to account for his postcolonial hybridity; for his experience of two worlds and the conflicting states of exception these express; or for his unfinishedness. He has to reconcile himself to unfinishedness: "What a terrible thing it is to botch a farewell. I am a person who believes in form, in the harmony of order. Where we can, we must give things a meaningful shape. For example—I wonder—could you tell my jumbled story in exactly one hundred chapters, not one more, not one less? I'll tell you, that's one thing I have about my nickname, the way the number runs on forever. It's important in life to conclude things properly" (316-7). Yet, such definitive statements and conclusions are rarely possible—or wise. There are limits.

For Agamben, the limits of our relations with the physical world very much resemble in *de facto* mode what is the moment of exception for Pi. For Agamben, relations with the physical

environment is a constant state of exception, where the use of physical and capital force is permitted, whilst any of the liberties or rights normally accorded people are absent, withheld, and simply considered inapplicable. "The expression *full powers (pleins pouvoirs)*, which is sometimes used to characterize the state of exception," Agamben argues, "refers to the expansion of the powers of the government, and in particular the conferral on the executive of the power to issue decrees having the force of law" (*State of Exception* 5). These decrees are the *de facto*, the always already of our relationship with physical nature. Agamben assumes but never says this. Nature is outside of the law. This is more poignantly true of non-biotic Nature.

Aldo Leopold's idea of "the land ethic" is very close to the idea I have been pursuing and expanding in this article. Leopold explains that "The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land…. [A] land ethic changes the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such" (204). Yet, while his much-admired plea to develop a "land ethic" and to extend ethical consideration beyond humanity to the land is worthy, his claim (as I have explained in "Terror and Ecophobia") that "a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community" (224-5), whatever his best intentions, seems perhaps a less than accurate representation of biotic communities: they are far from stable and are rent from within and without by violent upsurges and down-surges, fantastical (indeed, virtually unbelievable) occurrences, and other morally neutral events. Moreover, as I have argued in "Theorizing in a Space of Ambivalent Openness," "Nature actively disrupts the integrity and stability of biotic communities all of the time, and this is neither good nor bad" (209). Climate change may feel evil, but it is not.

The term Leopold uses to describe how it is humanity is to achieve this expansion of what Stacy Alaimo calls the "circle" of environmental ethics is "social evolution" (225), and this is a subdiscipline of evolutionary biology, wherein natural selection is the determinant of movement. Yet, if ethics are to be viewed within such a framework, then there are several problematical issues that we face. Firstly, one has to wonder why we would want to argue such a thing. What are the benefits and the drawbacks of seeing "all things human" within such a framework? Secondly, how could we possibly prove such a proposition through any scientific or empirically valid model? Finally, if "all things human," including ethics, must be seen within a Darwinian evolutionary scheme, then surely Cubism, the Mona Lisa, and Heavy Metal are also evolutionary mechanisms.

Arguing in support of Leopold and for the viability of the notion of social evolution, Callicott maintains that "[w]ithout ethics, groups can't stay integrated" (Web). Yet, this is clearly not supported by the facts we see in the world around us. Ants surely are not ethical creatures, any more than bees or pigeons or trees. Arguing that they are would be pure anthropocentric arrogance, an assumption that the very human quality of ethics is something shared by nonhuman animal and herbal groups.

At any rate, despite its numerous logical and scientific lapses, the argument Leopold puts forward for extending ethics well beyond human and nonhuman animals is solid, an argument that has long been a way of life in much of Asia. As Won-Chung Kim perceptively observes in a

discussion about indivisible relationships between human and nonhuman natures, “all things are different aspects of one nature and they cannot exist without the others” (132). This truly holistic notion of things human and nonhuman, though often espoused in Western ecological thinking, is, it seems, rarely conceptualized—if the on-going histories of Western-led environmental degradation are any indication.

Learning to live with more reverence toward Nature may not ultimately be “good” (whatever that means) for the planet (assuming that the entire biosphere—and not just us—is evolving), we being the compulsively invasive species that we are. Equally certain, though, is the fact that things will not go well for us if we retain our ethical positions on the biotic and nonbiotic environments in which we live. Hudson’s claim that “nature can no longer act as the ‘outside’ to human politics” is worthy for all the wrong reasons, relying on the resolutely anthropocentric idea that “[nature] has always been the unacknowledged ground of the inside” (96), an idea that continues the very destructive notion that ethics are relevant only to the degree that the recipient object bears similarities or utility to the Human. Right for all the wrong reasons, but still right: it is not simply biotic nature, but all of the natural world that is entitled to inclusion within the expanding circle of environmental ethics about which Agamben and so many others have spoken less expansively.

The push and rhetoric of Western-style environmentalism in the current atmosphere of “globalization,” coupled with the near uni-directionality of cultural capital, is dangerous and destructive and needs redressing. Blaming China—or Korea or Taiwan or Japan—is not going to help matters. The flagrant audacity and hypocrisy of the United States (which has “no intention” to sign to the Kyoto Protocol) and Canada (which had signed but has since renounced the Kyoto Protocol) to dictate visions of environmental ethics (whether through professors, scientists, mass media products, or whatever) to any of the countries in Asia (all of which have, at differing levels of commitment, signed) is astounding. Yet, Western ethicists are beginning to understand the mutual material engagements of human and nonhuman, living and nonliving, material and immaterial worlds, understandings that are not—by any stretch of the imagination—new. Giorgio Agamben’s theories about human/nonhuman animal relations, the work on which these theories are based, and the work that has developed from them, strongly support further extensions of the ethical circle. This, and the deepening of work on re-defining the parameters of legal protections and entitlements, will take us a long way to critiquing the failings of Western environmental ethics and perhaps to learning some of the lessons East Asia has to teach on these matters. If *Life of Pi* is a small sign of the reversal of globalization traffic, it is nevertheless a hopeful sign of changing global alignments, changing alignments that depend on many hands—among which Giorgio Agamben’s are surely absolutely central.

Notes

① To speak of the natural environment in this way means to focus on and recognize the instabilities Agamben does not note in the terms central to the discussion. Apart from all of the untethered remarks about animals, Agamben does not spend much time explaining where “animal” begins or ends, what “animal” he has in mind (or

why), or why "the animal" constitutes the limits to inclusion (or exclusion) in his discussions. Arguing that "the inside is obtained through the inclusion of an outside, and the non-human is produced by the humanization of the animal" (*Open* 37) only provides a partial account—rather like describing a day by focusing only on the thirty minutes preceding sunset.

② As Agamben explains in *Homo Sacer*, bare life is constituted by a sovereignty that has capital powers and is, therefore, "included in the political order in being exposed to an unconditional capacity to be killed" (85).

③ Laura Hudson interprets without critique the Agambenian notion that "Natural objects reappear within the political realm not as political actors but as markers of bare life. Sovereignty, in seeking to establish a political life separate from the state of nature, produces *both* political life as the life proper to the citizen (the "good life") *and* bare life, which occupies a space in between *bios* and *zoē*, evacuated of meaning" (96).

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2015 年文学理论与解读讲习班通知

杭州师范大学外国语学院将于 2015 年 7 月 22—24 日在安徽黄山市举办为期三天的英美文学研讨会暨第五届文学理论与解读讲习班，继续邀请国际知名学者、美国加州州立大学“杰出教授”、杭州师范大学特聘教授刘军（童明）老师主讲，外国语学院殷企平、李公昭、陈正发等资深教授将参与研讨。

2011 年起，刘军教授主持的讲习班已在杭州连续举办四届。2015 年的暑期讲习班将由黄山学院承办，并在黄山学院举行。讲座主题包括：（1）中西比较异同交叉的方法；（2）中西比较和解构；（3）从浪漫主义到现代主义——诗感的变化；（4）海明威小说的现代性；（5）诗歌形式和内容的统一；（6）童明散文的中西互文（二例）。

报到地点：黄山阳光酒店（黄山屯溪区西海路率水桥南 20 号，黄山学院南区对面）
电话：05592568888

报到时间：2015 年 7 月 21 日下午 13:00—17:00

会 务 费：1000 元（研究生凭学生证 600 元），期间食宿费用自理

联系方式：杭州师范大学外国语学院

电　　话：姜琼玮　0571-28865248　13588435359
陈光乐　0571-28865235　18758859055

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有意参会者请将报名表发至电子邮箱 wgykyxx@163.com，报名截止时间 2015 年 6 月 15 日，刘军教授简介详见杭州师范大学外国语学院网站 http://wgyxy.hznu.edu.cn/。