



At The First International Poetic Ecologies Conference

Arpine Konyalian Grenier

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Here's a country with one king, three official languages and federal regions (French, German and Flemish), and a complex yet fascinating urban entity with a diverse population more than half of which is of foreign origin. The hybrid nature of the participants and the diversity of their practice and enthusiasm are apparent. Books and laptop filled bags all around the hotel lobby and bar. I feel awkward but am excited. Soon I shall be heard, challenged, appreciated and overwhelmed by a variety of views, projects and the enormous good nature of the delegates, most importantly, by the hospitality of the Department of Languages & Literatures faculty and staff at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. All in English.

Four full days of parallel panels daily culminating into a formal lecture followed by poetry readings until 11 PM. There were no fresher systems of romanticism or nostalgia, no 'nature writing' in newer robes, rather, reverberations of the rural with the urban, the natural with the technological, the cultivated with the wild - scholarly and futuristic explorations that promised to diminish our alienation from what is around and within us, the ecologies per se, the 'other' we continually deal with.

We trekked the horizontal and vertical interchange between landscape and poetry; the poetics of being human: the intersection of its spiritual, physical, scientific and sociological layers; colors of the eco-feminine, the eco-masculine, but mostly *l'eco-huomo - ecco l'huomo* as in here's the man (Passion of Christ), the androgynous, non-colonizing energy per formative in nature, articulating as well as blurring where it meets the rest of itself, out there in that region of displacement where no need for democracy, politics or politicking prevails. Eco also from the Greek, home, dwelling, making a home, a dwelling, through poetry..

because of light the additional

lurking to be registered

*while light slowly if it were
ordinary language terrain
life riding over*

*one bears witness to
with the body and place of an absent body
without the need to establish voice*

*attempting at constructing not describing
disclosing addressing negotiating*

for place

We were digging curious and impish. Besides Wordsworth, Dickinson and Niedecker there was found and recycled text. The delivery of the living word was addressed, language as activity eternally self-repeating a labor of spirit, articulating sound. Language, repeating and reproducing sign to song to sin and transgression with passion, doubt and perseverance, unframed and outside the box, like a hare under the weight of heat, hearing a creaking, listening. Eco-poetic Perspectives on Contemporary Australian & Singaporean Poetry; Metaphors of Domination & Subjugation from Nigeria; C.K. Williams and the Making of Nature's Music from Sweden; Ezra Pound's Cantos from Poland; Towards a Post Symbol Landscape from the USA; The Poem as Scientific Model. These were some of the presentations I attended.

Some are taking notes, others restless or listening. I repeat to myself, nature is not anthropocentric; like water it is universal and essential, allows time, transformation, follows form enacting content. Nature is the space we go to, to recharge. Can't own words much like can't own nature. Nature (*Doh*) described, loses its nature. If we are to continue to colonize it, we need a new vision and its corresponding ethics. Contextualize the other, caress and let go. While the world is organic, the physical is not in conflict with the ideological. What should we be teaching our children?

You can take all the time you need to choose your chocolates in Brussels. The assortments are astounding. Food, chocolate and beer are respectable and delightful enterprises in Brussels. My wrapping is undone, give me a chance at erosion cries the flesh of being self. There is no tension. We are sitting beside not under standing, *déjà vu*, *déjà eu*, the double, the stranger, the neighbor, the other. Adapting and developing like expats and nomads, not of choice but of circumstance. There is no con ceit con coct con jecture con cording cordance. No cram bam bless me Sam. There is hearing listening responding con cern con templative *con vivencia*. Professor Franca Bellarsi, the convener of the Conference, is a superb leader.

At the farewell banquet we had eggplant caviar with choice of salmon or turkey. Then there was a huge flaming cake with firecrackers wishing us *bon voyage* and *à bientôt* for another conference exclusively devoted to the poetic medium, hopefully in 2010.

Granted voice is not democratic, it does issue in part from civil space, as Dennis Lee states. When our consciousness changes, the underlying structure of civilization changes. Back in Tucson we were at *dim sum* the Saturday following the Conference. The Cantonese phrase refers to the weekend gathering of kindred folk tasting a little something to touch the heart, to your heart's content, sort of like our Middle Eastern *mezza*. The Chinese waitress at some point said, "Do you want to say anything else to me?" She meant, will there be anything else for you?