

**ECOLOGIST AND ECOFEMINIST AWARENESS IN
ÁGUA VIVA: A BRAZILIAN WOMAN REREADING
NATURE**

Cristina Sáenz de Tejada
Goucher College

Este ensaio mostra uma leitura diferente da obra de Clarice Lispector, *Água viva*, partindo das teorias ecologistas e ecofeministas dos últimos anos. O estudo se concentra no uso de imagens de natureza para apresentar a consciência sócio-política da autora brasileira. Lispector reinterpreta o conceito patriarcal de natureza, que a entendia com um espaço inferior e concretamente como uma metáfora negativa para a mulher.

During the 70s it became increasingly clearer that human beings inhabit a world in which all events seem to be interconnected through an immensely complex dynamic process. The dichotomous terminology that was traditionally used to describe the world and that produced harsh divisions such as spirit vs. nature, mind vs. body, subject vs. object, and controller vs. controlled, were seen more to be conventions of language than expressions of fact. These changes in Western thought, which cast doubt upon all oppositional divisions, questioned the intellectual and literary conventions that opposed nature and humankind and also suggested an end between these two concepts. This in turn brought about the erasure of the traditional hierarchical division between spirit and nature and simultaneously annulled the symbolism that equated spirit with the male and nature with the female. As a result of this new thinking, many and diverse ecological groups emerged and their voices were finally heard in the public arena.

In *Green Political Theory*, Robert Goodin shows the difference between contemporary ecological concerns and those of earlier groups. Among the latter are the German romantic poets of the nineteenth century and before, the English landscape gardeners of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the writings of mid nineteenth-century American transcendentalists, such as Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Goodin argues that the changes in recent years respond to what he defines as two "environmental crises".³ The first one arose with the publication of *Silent Spring* (1962) in which the author, Rachel Carson, showed her concern about the effects of DDT on birds in the Great Lakes area. The second one, during the 80s, was more global and aimed at stopping the adverse effects on Nature (such as the destruction of the ozone layer) brought about

by the practices of the industrialized countries of the First World. Goodin comments that, although these groups of the 80s, known as "greens", are strongly and politically committed to "a programme of radical decentralization – thinking globally but acting locally", the lack of a theory that coordinates all these autonomous smaller groups might fail to achieve the desired results globally.⁵ In his opinion, greens still lack a political program because their values do not necessarily derive from what he calls a theory of agency that "tells us how to go about pursuing those values", a theory that not only tells "natural individuals what they should do and should not do" but that also "tells them what sort of collective organizations they should create and what they should and should not do directly through the agency of such artificial entities".¹⁵ Goodin believes that the relationship between principles and pragmatics is not always clearly coordinated; instead, he considers them two separate components. It is only when both value and agency come together that one can say that there is a green political theory that presses for change.

It is my intention to discuss Clarice Lispector's *Água viva* (1973) in light of Goodin's ideas in order to present Lispector's socio-political commitment, an element that has frequently been ignored by some male critics and feminists. My goal is to show the literary strategies that are used in this Brazilian text to urge for a political change, one parallel to that desired by green theorists. I intend to present the text as a space where the reader can find reflections of some of the green values and pragmatics discussed by Goodin in his book. Considering the complex process of reading a literary text such as *Água viva* through the eyes of ecology, I begin my analysis by first presenting how certain images and concepts that Lispector uses in her writing serve to reveal a philosophical basis similar to that defended by the green program. Secondly, I will argue that Lispector's literary strategies in *Água viva* are intimately related to those philosophical values and therefore that these strategies can constitute, according to Goodin's ideas, a green political agency. The philosophical values I will be discussing in this study are the constituent of nature and humanity, the value of the natural world, and the connections between nature and humanity.

A theory of value is a theory of the Good; it should tell us what is to be valued and why; that is, what attributes characterize those things considered good and worthy. This philosophical definition is pertinent to *Água viva* because Lispector's writing has frequently been interpreted as philosophically oriented and concerned with ontological principles. In *Água viva*, Lispector probes the characteristics of nature and humanity, among other ontological issues. The theory of value is based on the narrator's personal experience that nature is good because it shows the coherence and harmony that she longs for. She also feels that humans, being part of the natural world, should show respect for it and live in harmony through their interactions with it in such a way that nature can retain some real independence from humanity. That, in turn, will allow nature to sustain its valued role for humanity.

Among the immediate consequences of this theory of value is a rhetoric of liberation that connects green issues with other forms of environmentalism such as ecofeminism and ecosocialism which equates the liberation of nature from domination by humans with the liberation of oppressed humans – as well as animals and Third World societies – from domination by others. Carson's *Silent Spring*, in which the author expresses her concern about how the abuse of nature might also affect humanity, is an example of the connections between green issues and women's issues. Carson's voice is now considered prophetic and she is seen as the precursor of the ecofeminist movements that blossomed in the USA and Europe in the mid-to-late 1970s. According to Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein's *Reweaving the world: the emergence of Ecofeminism*, "Ecofeminism is a term that some use to describe both the diverse range of women's efforts to save the Earth and the transformations of feminism in the West that have resulted from the new view of women and nature" (ix).

After the Women's Movement in the late 1960s dismantled the biological determinism that had been used historically to justify men's control over women, feminists in the last decade have been reevaluating everything that the masculine consciousness defined as Other, whether nature, women, or Third World cultures.¹ Instead of insisting "that women would not be free until the connections between women and the natural world

were severed" (iv), Diamond and Orenstein argue that women from different countries were inspired by the myths and symbols of varied ancient and local cultures that led to diverse innovative practices which

recognized the *lived* connections between reason and emotion, thought and experience. They embraced not only women and men of different races, but all forms of life – other animals, plants, and the living Earth itself. The diverse strands of this retelling and reframing led to a new, more complicated experiential ethic of ecological interconnectedness. (xi)

Green and ecofeminism arguments are pertinent to the study of Clarice Lispector's *Água viva* because this work shows a parallel reinterpretation of the traditional Western relationship between (wo)man and nature by writing a story that acts in favor of the interrelationship between the natural and the human diversity that sustains Brazil. Lispector's path into literary ecofeminism manifest itself in different ways throughout her career, especially in her treatment of nature's essential role in the development of female characters' awareness and their relationships with others. Ever since her first novel, *Perto do coração selvagem* (1944), she has challenged the essentialist notion that biology determines a specific social role. In refutation of this ideology, Lispector has created androgynous male and female characters, those who combine both masculine and feminine psychological traits, whose experiences are frequently associated with elements of nature, especially water. This is the case of "As águas do mundo" and "O primeiro beijo", two of her short stories from *A Legião Estrangeira* (1964) in which both the female and the male character undergo a similar transcendent experience of recovering her and his androgynous human condition. This experience is typically presented through images of water, birth, fountain, silence and body, as well as through the union of opposites at all levels of human existence. This technique of oxymoron perfectly describes Lispector's philosophical definition of reality: an interconnection between two or more spaces that are

traditionally presented as opposite and in conflict. I will discuss how this ideology is manifested in *Água viva* in regard to the specific relationship between humanity and nature and the role language plays.

It is not a coincidence that Lispector chooses the image of water to represent the process of individuation undergone by the majority of her characters as it is a perfect metaphor to describe how her characters are always moving back and forth between opposite boundaries.² At the same time, the water ultimately represents a nurturing and spiritual space that is frequently associated with the character's liberation from alienation or oppression. In regard to Lispector's first novel, Cristina Ferreira-Pinto describes Joana in these terms: "é líquida, fluida, mutável, não pode ser moldada pelo Outro. A água também é para a personagem refúgio, liberdade (o mar), possibilidade de mudança e renascimento" (101). A similar characterization and function of water in the female character's liberation can be found in *Uma aprendizagem ou o Livro dos prazeres* (1968). In their study, *Ambiguity and gender in the new novel of Brazil and Spanish America. A comparative assessment*, Payne and Fitz support the importance of water in Lispector's texts, characters and language because it is a manifestation of her philosophy about reality and language, both considered as a fluid entity, "in direct opposition to the rigidity and stasis demanded by patriarchy" (95).

More profoundly than in any of her previous texts, in *Água viva* Lispector breaks the traditional dichotomy that states that man is to culture as woman is to nature. She achieves this task by manipulating language that expresses specific images of nature. The water image that gives name to the text recurs constantly in this work in connection with mutability and formlessness. These two qualities are used to represent the narrator's writing, the construction of her text, and her self-discovery. *Água viva's* connection with ecofeminism and environmentalism is made through use of a technique in which a female narrator reveals her liberated and fluid identity through a series of multiple transfigurations into various flowers and animals. Thus she temporarily becomes part of that nature: "Transfiguro a realidade e então outra realidade sonhadora e sonâmbula, me cria, e eu inteira rolo e à medida que rolo no

chão vou me acrescentando em folhas, eu, obra anônima de uma realidade anônima só justificável enquanto dura a minha vida” (22). It is within this natural space that the narrative voice reveals her identity which she presents as different from the one she was given by her lover. She constantly writes this difference through images of nature: “O risco – estou arriscando descobrir terra nova. Onde jamais passos humanos houve. Antes tenho que passar pelo vegetal perfumado” (45). Although nature and self are frequently presented as one entity in her text, the narrative voice breaks the stereotype of nature as a silent space by moving back and forth between her humanity – the act of writing – and her natural characteristic – the act of being. The frequent associations of the “I” with nature and its mysterious essence could lead the reader to meld them into a homogeneous entity causing each to lose its original identity, an erasure that, ultimately, represents the traditional connection between woman and nature. However, *Água viva* avoids this blending by emphasizing the uniqueness of these two entities. Secondly, it shows that their relationship is not that of identification but of encounter.

The mutability of traditional boundary (such as that between nature and humanity) is frequently presented in *Água viva* through flower imagery. By granting human features to diverse flowers, and vice versa, the narrative voice tries to break the isolation that separates humanity and nature in her environment. Far from identifying herself with nature in general, the narrative voice is clear about her preferences when it comes to “using” flowers or animals versus relating to them because she chooses those that show solidarity and respect towards the Other in a way that cannot be found in other flowers or in some human beings. That explains why the narrative voice acknowledges and values the behavior of ants and bees, which in both cases represent insects with a strong sense of community and group communication.

Tomei em criança conta de uma fileira de formigas: elas andam em fila indiana carregando um mínimo de folha. O que não impede que cada uma comunique alguma coisa à que vier em direção oposta. Formiga e abelha já não são it. São elas.

Tomar conta do mundo exige também muita paciência: tenho que esperar pelo dia em que me apa-reça uma formiga. (63)

The role of these animals is to show the contrast between the nurturing effects of what Western ideology has considered an inferior element of culture – nature in general and insects in particular – and the distant and silent relationship that both the narrative voice and her lover have (63-64). Shortly after describing how both of them cannot communicate their innermost thoughts and feelings, suggesting that her lover is incapable of crossing the boundaries that separate their biology, the narrative voice continues her text with an extensive depiction of how she can understand the language of nature because she observes and values what it has to offer. This is the case of several Amazonian flowers she gets to know on her visits to the Botanical Garden in Rio de Janeiro, which suggests that distance from nature – or the Other at any level – is not an excuse for ignoring it. The Botanical Garden plays a crucial role in the narrative voice's socio-political awakening because it is the locus where she later in the text reveals the situation of minorities in her society. On the other hand, it represents a metonymy of the Amazon – mythical place of ambiguity and fluidity and symbol of change in the text – as it is suggested by the image “of a *tajá*”.

The image of “a *tajá*” is crucial to the understanding of Lispector's reinterpretation of nature because it represents a flower that has the ability to speak and communicate to human beings: “Um homem chamado João falou comigo pelo telefone. Ele se criou no profundo da Amazônia. E diz que lá corre a lenda de uma planta que fala. Chama-se *tajá*. E dizem que sendo mistificada de um modo ritualista pelos indígenas, ela eventualmente diz uma palavra” (61). With the incorporation of this animistic tradition, Lispector breaks the Western image of nature – and by analogy, women and minorities – as a silent entity. At the same time, her text combines a historical discourse – traditionally a male function – with one imitating the oral tradition – a discourse often associated with Otherness, especially through the figure of story-tellers and witches.

The flexible attitude of the narrative voice, which comes from the empathic observation of and encounter with nature,

enables the narrator to extend her concern to other subjects whose voices cannot be heard by those who do not know how to cross the boundaries that separate different groups. That explains several allusions in *Água viva* to the oral and visual discourse of Otherness. One of these is her identification with the Afro-Brazilians in her fight for freedom, an identification she extends to her text and her discourse when she describes it to her lover as a negro spiritual. This identification is the result of the female narrator being a member of a minority – that of women in Brazil during the 70's – who speaks out about the inequalities and obliviousness of the patriarchal discourse towards the Other:

Há uma canção do amor deles que diz também monotonamente o lamento que faço meu: por que te amo se não respondes? envio mensageiros em vão; quando te cumprimento tu ocultas a face; porque te amo se nem ao menos me notas? Há também uma canção para ninar elefantes que vão se banhar no rio. Sou africana: um fio lamento triste e largo e selvático está na minha voz que te canta. Os brancos batiam nos negros com chicote. (44)

The social commitment suggested through these images is continued later on in the text when the narrative voice openly criticizes the exploitation of children and women who live in poverty:

Tomo conta do menino que tem nove anos de idade e que está vestido de trapos e magérrimo. Terá tuberculose, se é que já não a tem. No Jardim Botânico, então, fico exaurida.

Se tomar conta do mundo dá muito trabalho? Sim. Por exemplo: obriga-me a me lembrar do rosto inexpressivo e por isso assustador da mulher que vi na rua. Com os olhos tomo conta da miséria dos que vivem encosta acima.

Você há de me perguntar por que tomo conta do mundo. É que nasci incumbida. (62)

This concern about social oppression is brought into her text again when the narrative voice tells her lover that the text she is writing is not only her self-portrait, but a defense of those who are oppressed:

Mas há os que morrem de fome e eu nada posso serão nascer. Minha lengalenga é: que posso fazer por eles? Minha resposta é: pintar um afresco em adágio. Poderia sofrer a fome dos outros em silêncio mas uma voz de contralto me faz cantar – canto fosco e negro. É minha mensagem de pessoa só. A pessoa come outra de fome. Mas eu me alimentei com minha própria placenta. (44)

Without betraying the poetic and ambiguous character of her text, Lispector's green political attitude also becomes evident in *Água viva* in the way her character openly criticizes the way some men and women relate to nature by imposing their human values on the narrator's respectful relationship with Otherness: "Conheci 'ela' que humanizava bicho conversando com ele e emprestando-lhe as próprias características. Não humanizo bicho porque é ofensa – há que respeitar-lhe a natureza – eu é que me animalizo. Não é difícil e vem simplesmente. É só não lutar contra e é só entregar-se" (50). It is through this respectful interconnection with nature that the narrative voice discovers a new spirituality that is suggested at the end of her text when she talks to her ex-lover and extends her desire of freedom for herself to the one who has oppressed her: "Olha para mim e me ama. Não: tu olhas para ti e te amas. E o que está certo. O que te escrevo continua e estou enfeitada" (97). With these words, the narrator shows what Charlene Spretnak states to be one of the most important goals for ecofeminist groups; that is, "To care empathetically about the person, the species, and the great family of all beings, about the bioregion, the biosphere, and the universe is the framework within which ecofeminists wish to address the issues of our time" (12). These words can be applied to Lispector's *Água viva* as well as to other texts of hers such as *A hora da estrela*, her final short stories of *A bela e a fera* and several chronicles that are compiled under the significant title *A descoberta do mundo*. In all of them, the narrator expresses a

strong social commitment to the environment or the so-called "inferior" world in what Eve Cole describes as "a move beyond the alienated unemotional self, the abstract context devoid of natural human response" (48).

Although the theory of value that has been discussed previously has a different focus of attention than the theory of agency – "outcomes and their values in the former case, actions and choices and the mechanisms producing them in the latter" (Goodin, 115) –, they can be connected if both derive from common theories of humanity and society. This is the case in *Água viva* when the narrator's values concerning humanity and nature lead her to prefer social forms that are more in harmony with nature even in an advanced industrial society such as hers in Rio de Janeiro. It is important to consider at this point the agencies that are consistent with the values that the narrator of *Água viva* defends as the good ones. Goodin states that the theory of agency "requires an analysis of the nature of the actors who are supposed to be performing [good actions]" (115), that is, an analysis of the role of the narrator and her actions within Lispector's text. According to Goodin, a theory of agency is one that urges action for change; it has to be a positive theory; it has to

analyse what human agents are really like, what makes them tick, without passing any normative judgment on the matter either way;. . . it must of course report [empirical facts] fully and faithfully, and it must respect them as best as it can, consistently with respecting other facts of similar standing, in its theorization of the phenomenon. (114-115)

Rewriting mythology and recovering pagan religions are part of a feminist strategy to reconsider the cultural image women have had in patriarchal societies, especially that of women as goddesses. From the standpoint of ecofeminism, female mythological figures can provide for women an important spiritual force – called the magic and the sacred – that enables them to recover the social role they had in pre-industrial societies. The recovering of these pagan deities and this spirituality is a

step towards women's emancipation in that it provides with a way of liberating themselves from social domination. According to Irene Javors (211-214), it is possible for contemporary women in urban societies to find these nurturing values in both Western and Asian female pagan deities of destruction (Hecate-Kali), conservation (Selene-Karuna) and creation (Artemisa-Shaki).

In her essay, "Witchcraft as Goddess Worship", Rosemary Ellen Guiley comments on the increasing interest in Western witchcraft that women are transforming from a magic ritual into a religion:

From the writings that have been made public, Witchcraft as a religion appears to be a post-World War II phenomenon that has invented itself as it has grown, drawing its strength from a popular interest in the occult and mythology, a disaffection from mainstream religion and the rise of feminism. The religion as it is currently practiced has a patchwork mythology borrowed from other religions. It has a creed and philosophy, but no liturgy beyond a few fundamental rituals. There is very little dogma and no central authority. There is a great deal of diversity and invention. (411-412)

Guiley explains that these rituals are considered important because they are seen as a manifestation of the powerful social role of the female body in pre-industrial societies as it represented a connection with the moon and other elements of nature which were an essential part of the group's existence. According to her studies, women were considered then as intermediary between humanity and nature. Each culture is involved now in the process of recovering the powerful role of these female figures.

The narrator of *Água viva* engages in this agency through the rewriting of the traditional figure of Diana, Greek goddess of the forest and symbol of female fertility. In opposition to her lover's unemotional individuality, the narrator describes Diana's territory, the forest, as a vital locus where she can experience not only the emotions she is longing for, but a new type of humanity which, through the use of linguistic oxymoron, she presents in her text as a new birth: "Como morta ando entre o

capim alto na luz esverdeada das hastes: sou Diana a Caçadora de ouro e só encontro ossadas. Vivo de uma camada subjacente de sentimentos: estou mal e mal viva" (25-26). However, the image of Diana that the narrator presents in her text – virginity, fertility and silent nature – is different from the traditional myth constructed by male ideology. In *Água viva*, the narrator avoids any association with the human aspect of the myth and adopts, instead, natural manifestations of Diana's locus, that is, animals and plants. By rejecting the human appearance, the narrator also avoids being identified with the social role of the goddess: maternity. Instead, the narrator redefines Diana's social role by introducing characteristics opposite to the traditional ones:

Renuncio a ter um significado, e então o doce e doloroso quebranto me toma. Formas redondas e redondas se entrecruzam no ar. Faz calor de verão. Navego na minha galera que arrosta os ventos de um verão enfeitado. Folhas esmagadas me lembram o chão da infância. A mãe verde e os seios de ouro – é assim que pinto a marca de Satã. Aqueles que nos temem e à nossa alquimia desnudavam feiticeiras e magos em busca da marca recôndita que era quase sempre encontrada embora só se soubesse dela pelo olhar pois esta marca era indescritível e impronunciável mesmo no negrume de uma Idade Média – Idade Média, és a minha escura subjacência e ao clarão das fogueiras os marcados dançam em círculos cavalgando galhos e folhagens que são o símbolo fálico da fertilidade: mesmo nas missas brancas usa-se o sangue e este é bebido. (26).

By transforming Diana from a goddess into a witch – through the (re)covery of Diana's pagan features symbolized in the power of Satan –, the narrator tells her reader that it is possible to change the meaning of words, such as "woman" and "nature", and she creates a new space in her text that, like alchemistic transformations, comes from the combination of contradicting elements.

In her essay, "Power, authority and mystery: ecofeminism and earth-based spirituality", Starhawk explains that the

experience of the mystery or the sacred is an essential element in the process of transformation undergone by women, and it adopts different manifestations depending on the cultural roots of the individual or group:

I think that the spell we need to cast, the model we need to create, has to be open to mystery, to the understanding that we don't know everything about what's going on and we don't know exactly what to do about it. The mystery can be expressed in many ways. For one person it might be expressed through ritual, through celebration, chanting, and meditation; in some groups it might be expressed through humor, through making fun of what everybody else is doing. In some groups it might be expressed both ways. We can't define how a group or individual is going to experience it, but we can attempt to structure things so that we don't have dogmas and party lines, so we remain open to the possibilities of the sacred. (78)

In the case of *Água viva*, the narrator finds them in the syncretism of different traditions that exist in Brazil where she lives; that is why she combines in her text African traditions with Amazonian and European myths. The latter are present in her text when she refers to the Western witches:

Mas conheço também outra vida. Conheço e quero-a e devoro-a truculentamente. É uma vida de violência mágica. É misteriosa e enfeitiçante. Nela as cobras de água pingam na obscuridade fosforescente da gruta. Nesse escuro as flores se entrelaçam em jardim feérico e úmido. E eu sou a feiticeira dessa bacanal muda. Sinto-me derrotada pela minha própria corruptibilidade. E vejo que sou intrinsecamente má. É apenas por pura bondade que sou boa. Derrotada por mim mesma. Que me levo aos caminhos da salamandra, gênio que governa o fogo e nele vive. E dou-me como oferenda aos

mortos. Faço encantações no solstício, espectro de dragão exorcizado. (72)

Considering the text in its totality, the image of this female figure represents, as Diana, the changing force of nature. It is this changing force that the narrator seeks in order to liberate herself from previous forms of domination: "O preço de quem tem um passado que só se renova com paixão no estranho presente. Quando penso no que já vivi me parece que fui deixando meus corpos pelos caminhos" (75). Once she breaks with previous female representations, she is ready to accept future changes. These are presented in her text through a plant called "prímula":

Orgulho-me de sempre pressentir mudança de tempo. Há coisa no ar – o corpo avisa que virá algo novo e eu me alvoroço toda. Não sei para quê. Naquela mesma primavera ganhei a planta chamada prímula. É tão misteriosa que no seu mistério está contido o inexplicável da natureza. Aparentemente nada tem de singular. Mas no dia exato em que começa a primavera as folhas morrem e em lugar delas nascem flores fechadas que têm um perfume feminino e masculino extremamente estonteador. (64)

By using elements of nature – "prímula," "tajá", and "vítória-régia", – as well as mythological references to the female figure or nature, Diana, the narrative voice is finally engaged in the act of agency because she manages to change traditional representations of nature and women. This act can be considered a formulation of green political theory because it comes from the combination of a theory of value and a theory of agency. The narrator explains it through these words:

Não é um recado de idéias que te transmito e sim uma instintiva volúpia daquilo que está escondido na natureza e que adivinho. E esta é uma festa de palavras. Escrevo em signos que são mais um gesto que voz. Tudo isso é o que me habituei a pintar

mexendo na natureza íntima das coisas. Mas agora chegou a hora de parar a pintura para me refazer, refaço-me nestas linhas. Tenho uma voz. (24)

Goodin explains that any theory of value should be combined with a theory of agency "analyzing the nature of the mechanisms by which its recommendations are to be given practical meaning" (113). In the case of a literary text such as *Água viva*, this is done through the act of writing using rhetorical devices, oxymoron, lyricism and poetic images to liberate the female narrator from domination and alienation created by society and Western philosophy and discourse. The result is a text that represents a human action that not only liberates the protagonist but that recommends interaction among individuals. This is specifically expressed in the protagonist's desire to extend her liberation to her former dominator. In spite of the connections between *Água viva* and green programs, the former is still a literary text and therefore has its limitations with respect to identifying a precise theory of agency that will finally become a political theory. However, I believe that Lispector manages to present this need for agency through her narrator's commitment to actions that are morally worthy, such as the defense of oppressed groups and abused nature. She also commends literary techniques that, although individual, can be applied by other individuals which, in effect, may result in a collective agency. It is also important to point out that these changes or actions are done in a nonviolent way because they cause no harm to others. The political acts that can be derived from this individual agency lie beyond the limits of a literary text such as Lispector's *Água viva*. However, it can be considered as politically committed since it recommends actions that are a transgression of values that dominate nature as well as other groups. According to Goodin, "greens are egalitarian not only on distributional questions but on social issues more generally. They strive for a society in which the oppression of one person by another is abolished" (198). Thus they can be considered pluralists because they "count respect for diversity as one of their key values and they cherish diversity in its social every bit as much as in its biological form" (199).

In this brief ecological reading of *Água viva*, I have highlighted Lispector's socio-political commitment to Brazilian

society and humankind in general, through a narrator who crosses the boundaries that separated her from what her society defines as the Other, whether it is nature, poor people, Afro-Brazilians or other women. I have also shown how Lispector, without betraying the lyricism, the ambiguity, the universal and the androgynous character of her text and her narrator's voice, seeks to make the reader aware of the spiritual beauty, longevity and complexity embodied by the Brazilian environment, which she specifically manifests through her depiction of the Amazonian water lily. In this sense, Lispector's ecological intention parallels that of Roberto Burle-Marx, a Brazilian landscape designer who dedicated 60 years of his life to bring his nation's rich flora out from Europe's shadow and to be a defender of the Amazon forest before it became fashionable to do so.³ Considering Lispector's constante fear of being interpreted exclusively as a feminist, I hope that the term "ecofeminism" I apply in my interpretation would be much more acceptable to her, because it combines feminist, ecological and humanitarian goals, a global project that she tried to present through all her writing.

NOTES

¹ An important issue in Diamond's and Orenstein's book is that they are aware of the differences between the concerns of women from industrialized countries and those of women from the less developed countries, especially in rural areas where women's struggle "is of necessity also an ecological struggle" (x).

² In Jungian psychology individuation is known as the unique process of psychic growth and maturation of the personality, that is, becoming an individual, that takes place in our psychic system. According to Jung:

The realization of the uniqueness in the individual is the goal of the process of individuation. . . This process takes place in man (as well as in every other living being) by itself and in the unconscious; it is a process by which man lives out his innate nature. Strictly speaking, however, the process of individuation is real only if the individual is aware of it and consciously makes a living connection with it. [. . .] Man certainly is able to participate consciously in his development. He even feels that from time to time, by making free decisions, he can cooperate actively with it. This co-operation belongs to the process of individuation in the narrower sense of the word. (163-164)

One way to achieve this desired individuation or wholeness is to be aware of the difference between opposites, such as, masculinity and femininity, and therefore one can incorporate an owned portion of the opposite gender into his or her dominant identity.

³ Roberto Burle-Marx died in June, 1994. He was a tireless champion of Brazil's orchids, palms, water lilies and bromeliads, which he used in his multiple landscape projects in twenty nations.

WORKS CITED

- CASTILLO, Debra. *Talking Back. Toward a Latin American Feminist Literary Criticism*. Ithaca & London: Cornell UP, 1992.
- COLE, Eve Browning. *Philosophy and Feminist Criticism. An Introduction*. New York: Paragon House, 1993.
- DIAMOND, Irene and Gloria Feman. *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990.
- FALCÓN MARTÍNEZ, Constantino, Emilio Fernández-Galiano and Raquel López Melero, eds. *Diccionario de la mitología clásica*. Sexta reimpressão. Madrid: Alianza, 1990.
- FERREIRA-PINTO, Ana Cristina Caldas. "The Female Bildungsroman in Brazil. 1938-1954." Diss., 1989.
- FITZ, Earl. *Clarice Lispector*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985.
- . "Discourse of Silence: The Postmodernism of Clarice Lispector." *Contemporary Literature*. 28,4 (1987): 420-436.
- . "Freedom and Self-Realization: Feminist Characterization in the Fiction of Clarice Lispector." *Modern Language Studies*. 10,3 (1989):51-61.
- GOODIN, Robert E. *Green Political Theory*. Cambridge: U.K.: Polity Press, 1992.
- GRIFFIN, Susan. *Women and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her*. New York: Harper & Row, 1978.
- IRIARTE, Ana. *Las redes del enigma. Voces femeninas en el pensamiento griego*. Madrid: Taurus Humanidades, 1990.
- JUNG, Carl. *Man and His Symbols*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1976.
- LARRINGTON, Carolyne, ed. *The Feminist Companion to Mythology*. London: Harper-Pandora, 1992.
- LISPECTOR, Clarice. *Água viva*. 4. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1980.
- . *Stream of Life*. Trans. Earl Fitz and Elizabeth Lowe. Prólogo. Hélène Cixous. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1989.
- . *Perto do coração selvagem*. São Paulo: Círculo do Livro, 1980.
- . *A hora da estrela*. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1988.
- . *A descoberta do mundo*. Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1992.
- MILLS, Patricia Jagentowicz. *Woman, Nature, and Psyche*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1987.
- PAYNE, Judith A. y Earl Fitz. *Ambiguity and Gender in the New Novel of Brasil and Spanish America. A Comparative Assessment*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1993.
- PLANT, Judith, ed. *Healing the Wounds: the Promise of Ecofeminism*. Philadelphia: New Society, 1989.
- QUINLAN, Susan Cauty. *The Female Voice in Contemporary Brazilian Narrative*. New York: Peter Lang, 1991.
- SÁENZ DE TEJADA, Cristina. "The Eternal Non-Difference: Clarice Lispector's Concept of Androgyny." *Luso-Brazilian Review*. 31:1 (1994):39-56.

- SPRETNAK, Charlene. "Ecofeminism: Our Roots and Flowering." *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990. 3-14.
- STARHAWK. "Power, Authority, and Mystery: Ecofeminism and Earth-based Spirituality." *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*. São Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990. 73-86.
- WATTS, Alan W. *Nature, Man and Woman*. New York: Random House, 1970.