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Material Anomaly as Ecocide in Ginsberg's "Ballade of Poisons" and Dickinson's "Agents Orange, Yellow, and Red": Epiphany in Ecological Precarity

Henrikus Joko Yulianto
henrikus.joko@mail.unnes.ac.id
English Department, Universitas Negeri Semarang, INDONESIA

Abstract

Ecocide has been a classic anthropogenic phenomenon from time to time, It dated from the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century to the present post-industrial era of digital technology. This anthropogenic activity correlates with an overconsumption of material things such as fossil fuels and other earth minerals. Despite the merit, these subterranean minerals in fact contain toxic particles that have detrimental impacts on any life form and the physical environment. This study discusses Allen Ginsberg's poem "Ballade of Poisons" and Adam Dickinson's "Agents Orange, Yellow, and Red" as two poetic texts from different periods, the modern and contemporary ones. The purpose of the study is to highlight how these two poems polemicize the anthropogenic overuse of material and chemical products as ecocide that wreaks havoc on any life form. The study uses close reading method by examining ecological aspects in the poems and then contextualize these aspects within ecopoetic perspectives by referring to some notions such as material transcorporeality and its intrusion on human's body. Poetry as one literary genre becomes an agent of social change and an ecological epiphany in this present posthuman precarity. Ginsberg's "Ballade of Poisons" and Dickinson's "Agents Orange, Yellow, and Red" then serve as an agent to actualize epiphany in this present ecological precarity. Their epiphanic poetics evokes one's instantaneous awareness of the hazards of material overuse and of the insubstantial natures of these things through the human's material objectification.

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Introduction

Ecocide has rooted in ancient times. This correlates with human's exploitation of natural resources to fulfill his necessities. The material excess has caused detrimental impacts on the natural environment. Global warming and climate change as one of ecocides has emerged since the old times during the Permian period, 250 million years ago. It was a mass extinction

that occurred on land and in shallow water environments. Paleontologists believed that it was caused by "a slow but inexorable change in climate and sea level when forces of continental drift" caused the physical formation of the continents and this event swept away more than 90 per cent of the Earth's species. Then about 200 million years ago was the second ecological catastrophe in which the mega fauna including dinosaurs, large crocodile-like animals, a few mammal-like reptiles along with coral reefs and most shelled ammonites disappeared from the earth. The cause was "a series of environmental catastrophes" that occurred about 100,000 years or less. The two main causes were "a 1-to 5-mile-wide meteor colliding with the earth" and "the eruption of great lava flows" from the area that is now known as the jungles of the Amazon River valley. Last but not least, about 65 million years ago, the mega fauna such as terrestrial dinosaurs and hundreds of thousands of other land and aquatic species went extinct. The causes of this extinction were climate changes and a sudden change in sea level. The paramount mass extinction took place when "a giant, 6-mile-wide asteroid or comet crashed into the surfaces of the Earth near the Yucatan peninsula". The collision brought "a fiery hell of burning forests over much of the earth's surface, giant tidal waves, and great volumes of poisonous gas". The cataclysmic impact was millions of tons of earth and extraterrestrial debris that blocked the sunlight and exterminated plants and other living creatures (Broswimmer 2002, 14-15). In the late 18th century in England another human ecocide was the Industrial Revolution. Since the industrial activities were very massive, these caused detrimental impacts on human's lives and the natural environment. For instance, the amount of atmospheric carbon dioxide was getting more severe reaching to 280ppvm and in today's time it has increased to 380ppvm (Maslin 2009, 7-8). Ecocide as a nature phenomenon that correlates with anthropogenic activities and thus reveals anthropocentrism deals with several environmental issues that still occur at the present time, including climate change, the plundering of ecosystems, the eradication of species and the pollution of air, land and water (Whyte 2020, 14).

Poetry serves as an ecological agent during this millennium . Words as material elements of poetry convey certain idea, vision and value that aim to evoke one's awareness of his interconnectedness with the natural environment. An American professor of English and an ecocritic, John Felstiner in his phenomenal book, Can Poetry Save the Earth? argued that poems play an important role in shaping one's changing consciousness of the world around us (Felstiner 2009, 4). Then, he quoted an environmental historian, William Cronon's notion that emphasized the interconnectedness between human and its natural environment—"To protect the nature that is all around us, we must think long and hard about the nature we carry inside our heads, whether wild, rural, or urban" (ibid., 2009, 6). Furthermore, he argued if poetry that he calls ecological poetry or nature poems have major roles in responding to many environmental problems, in which most of these are anthropogenic or man-made that many refer to ecocide. Among these include logging, wildland drilling, agribusiness, dynamite fishing, military sonar, oil spills, pesticide overuse, animal poaching,and other related eco-crimes (Felstiner 2009, 11-12). American poetry has expressed its concern about ecocide since modern era through several ecopoems. Even more so, poems that criticized anthropocentrism has begun since the transcendental era in the late 18th century. Ralph Waldo Emerson as one major transcendentalist writer in his poem entitled "Hamatreya" for instance had suggested his critique of this human's craving for land as a material possession while it belongs to the Nature. He describes this through the figure of landlords as the owner of the lands; these landlords tend to be possessive of the lands which suggests human's desires for this material thing—

> *Bulkeley, Hunt, Willard, Hosmer, Meriam, Flint, Possessed the land which rendered to their toil*
> *Hay, corn, roots, hemp, flax, apples, wool and wood.*
> *Each of these landlords walked amidst his farm,*
> *Saying, "Tis mine, my children's and my name's.*
> *How sweet the west wind sounds in my own trees!*

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How graceful climb those shadows on my hill!
I fancy these pure waters and the flags
Know me, as does my dog: we sympathize;
And, I affirm, my actions smack of the soil.'
(Sherman 2017)

In modern era , an American poet, Gary Snyder expressed his concern about ecocide in his poems under the three headings, "Logging", "Hunting" and "Burning" that all refer to anthropogenic activities in extracting and even overextracting natural resources including nonhuman animals. In one poem entitled in number "14" in "Logging" for instance, the poet looked back to the ancient human practice in overextracting trees and deforesting the land that impacted on the environmental catastrophes—

The groves are down
cut down
Groves of Ahab, of Cybele
Pine trees, knobbed twigs
thick cone and seed
Cybele's tree this, sacred in groves
Pine of Seami, cedar of Haida
Cut down by the prophets of Israel
the fairies of Athens
the thugs of Rome
both ancient and modern;
(Snyder 1978, 15)

In contemporary era, new poets at this present time express their ecological concern through experimental and innovative poems. Many of these poets even redefine what they think about ecopoetry.And they raise some polemical issues such as global warming, climate change, and petro culture. Among these include Stephen Collis, a Canadian poet who polemicized human's petro culture in his poem "Take Oil & Hum"; CA Conrad in his experimental poems such as "Tarot as Verb Taroting Meat" that problematizes plastic overuse and consumerism in general; Craig Santos Perez, a Hawaiian poet who similarly critiques human's plastic overuse in his poem "The Age of Plastic", in which he enumerates various plastic derivatives and their use in human's daily products (Staples & King 2017). Their poems exemplify the important roles poety aims to play as an aesthetic text in raising human's ecological awareness of caring and protecting the earth and its material things in fulfilling his daily necessities.

This brief paper discusses two poems of two poets who come from different eras : Allen Ginsberg as one major figure of the Beat Generation, a literary activism in the American postwar era of the 1950-s and Adam Dickinson, a contemporary Canadian poet at this present millennium. Ginsberg's phenomenal work Howl was a collection of poem written in the 1950s. Yet, the poet wrote other great poems from the 1960s to the contemporary era of the 1990s. "Ballade of Poisons" is one of his poems written in 1978 (Mulligan 2006), the era when America had experienced an energy crisis and some environmental problems. There was an ecocide when a company called Hooker Chemical and Plastics used the land near Niagara Falls county, New York to "bury more than 21,000 tons (19,051 metric tons) of harmful chemicals in metal barrels there" between 1942 and 1955. Then in the 1970s, construction "broke the canal's clay seal" and people began to smell strange odors and many children experienced burned hands and faces. In about 1977, the canal's chemicals came out to the surface and "spilled into the Niagara River". Even worse the corroded barrels "broke through the ground and appeared in backyards, swimming pools, and basements." Many residents had been contaminated by the toxic gas and subtances from the barrels. Pregnant women showed birth defects in their babies and other residents had been diagnosed to have high white blood cell in their bodies that led to cancer of the blood or bone marrow. President Jimmy Charter "ordered emergency aid to clean the canal called Love Canal and help to relocate its residents." Since the incident, his government issued the Superfund Act of 1980 that protected people from "abandoned toxic waste sites and holds polluters" be responsible for their industrial practices (Richards 2010, 41-42). The second poem is a contemporary poem entitled "Agents Orange, Yellow, and Red" by a Canadian poet and teacher, Adam Dickinson. Like Ginsberg's, Dickinson's poem also polemicizes human's overuse of chemicals in his daily activities that this practice causes environmental hazards or an action of ecocide itself (Staples & King 2017). Although these two poems come from the different eras and different literary background, one similar

quality is that they all discuss human's excessive use of chemicals and other non-renewable materials that this brings forth ecocide. Two questions that this paper addresses are: first, how the two poems polemicize material things as anomaly and the causes of ecocide; second, how the polemics against the material things evoke one's epiphany in the midst of ecological precarity. In discussing these two questions, the analysis refers to some books and references about ecopoetry, material ecocriticism, transcorporeality, and ecocide (Alaimo 2010; Broswimmer 2002; Hume 2012; Iovino & Oppermann 2012, 2014; Whyte 2020).

Methodology

Analysis in the paper refers to qualitative method by using words in the two poems as the main data. In collecting the data, I did close reading as one research method suggested in New Criticism (Rapaport 2017). The method began with reading the two poems for several times to get the general overview of them. Then, I tried to identify images in the poems that depict material anomaly and that the materials becomes polemic of ecocide. Next, since the discussion on the material anomaly in the two poems also consider the ecological impacts, the analysis refers to some notions on material ecocriticism and transcorporeality to support and give some proofs.

The term ecopoetry consists of two words "ecology" and "poetry" that describes any ecological aspect in poetry. It came from ecocriticism as the study of 'the relationship between literature and the physical environment' (Glotfelty 1996, xviii). Ecopoetry refers to the kinds of poetry that deals with environmental issues such as the impacts of climate change and deforestation on the planetary life including its living creatures. An ecocritic William Rueckert compares poetry with fossil fuels (stored energy). But different from the fuels, poems are "renewable source of energy that emerge from language and imagination" (Glotfelty & Fromm 1996, 108). Street in her essay "The Roots of It" says that poetry in general is ecopoetry since the origin of what any poem describes always foregrounds the natural world. In fact, ecopoetry does not only mean a depiction of natural creatures or life in the natural world, but serves as a 'a kind of paradigm shift' or "the apprehension of real biological selves (as opposed to fantasy selves) inhabiting this planet in their co-existence with one another (Street 2013, xxxviii). Furthermore, Fisher-Wirth and Street mention three main groupings of poetry that deal with environment and its issues, namely nature poetry, environmental poetry, and ecological poetry. Among these three, ecopoetry tends to be experimental and innovative in polemicizing the environmental issues—""it engages questions of form most directly, not only poetic form but also a form historically taken for granted—that of the singular, coherent self" (Fisher-Wirth & Street 2013, xxix). The study of ecopoetry is known as ecopoetics or the study of the interrelationship between ecology and poetry. The Hawaiian poet, Craig Santos Perez in a brief writing said that ecopoetics is "the study of poetry written about the natural world, environmental justice, ecology, and climate change." Ecopoetics also discusses "how formal elements in poetry might embody ecological concepts, transformations, or aesthetics." At this present time, ecopoetics has played major roles in times of ecological precarity including some 'ion and 'ism such as massive industrialization, urbanization, nuclearism, plantationism, militarism, and environmental imperialism. Ecopoetics then can be an agency to criticize anthropogenic activities that cause global warming, climate change and other ecocides (Staples & King 2017, 167).

The word ecocide might be a trendy term about exploitative anthropogenic activities against the natural environment. This term consists of two words 'ecology' and 'cide' that means a killing of the natural environment as the living habitat for any life form. This suggests a human's deliberate action in destroying the natural environment. These actions certainly threaten 'the sustainability of the planet' such as those of "climate change, the demolition of ecosystems, the eradication of species and the pollution of air, land and water" (Whyte 2020, 14-15). This term also often refers to 'the renewed protest movement against climate change' and becomes a frequently used term by academic lawyers and criminologists (ibid., 2020, 16). Ecocide is often associated with capitalism and any human business and industrial activity conducted by any corporation. Capitalism as an economic system

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that is "based on perpetual growth and continual reproduction of private wealth" tends to ignore things related to environmental conservation. Instead, it privileges practices in aggrandizing profit for a group of elites. In a like manner, any business corporation is mostly based on capitalist principles in doing its profit-making activities as maximally as possible. This liable to excessive material activity certainly has greatly contributed to the 'destruction of the planet' (ibid., 2020, 15).

In 1972 Olof Palme, the Prime Minister of Sweden used the term 'ecocide' to describe "the use of napalm and the defoliant Agent Orange during the Vietnam War." This chemical warfare in Vietnam was used "to slaughter people in enemy territory, destroy their villages and wipe out forests and crops." Palme and other world leaders called for ecocide to "be an international crime" and then an international lawyer Richard Falk responded the call by publishing 'a draft Ecocide Convention'. The Convention "provided the legal basis for outlawing the use of chemical substances to clear people from the land in wartime or peacetime." In the Vietnam incident, it was estimated that 4.8 million people "were directly sprayed with Agent Orange and around 400,000 people died immediately." The Vietnamese Red Cross estimated that "a further 1 million people were disabled or suffered severe health problems" because of the chemical substances. A worse situation was that Vietnamese babies "are still born today with congenital disorders" because of the substances in the atmosphere. There were nine different private chemical companies led by Monsanto that had been in charge of "developing and manufacturing Agent Orange for the US military." Yet, some of the companies such as Dow, Monsanto, and Diamond Shamrock like the US military continued "to deny any relationship between health effects on claimants and their chemicals." Among other corporations that are found to be 'the biggest offenders' of the ecocide include ExxonMobil, Shell, BP, and Chevron. In fact, these oil companies have produced fossil fuel emissions since 1965 about 35% and the emissions got more increased in the following years. Several other corporations are Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, Nestle, Danone, Mondelez International, Procter & Gamble, Unilever, Perfetti van Melle, Mars & Colgate-Palmolive (Whyte 2020, 16-18). The crime these corporations have done against the natural environment is by producing non-renewable products such as plastic that contains toxic particles that can pollute the air. They also produce other toxic chemicals such as dioxins and pesticides that hazard water and air (ibid., 2020, 18). Several persistent and damaging chemicals that corporations have used in their products include leaded petrol, bisphenol A (BPA), polycchlorinated biphenyl (PCB), polyvinyl chloride (PVC), Organophosphates, Glyphosate (ibid. 2020, 24-25). These chemicals then become anomaly or things (substances) that "deviates from what is standard, normal, or expected" (Oxford Dictionary of English 2020) in terms of their toxic substances that endanger any living creature and the natural environment.

Historically, the ecocide has occurred in the pre-historic eras in the ancient times. Home sapiens has become "the greatest catasthropic agent" (Broswimmer 2002, 13). These pre-historic people and their activities toward the physical environment have brought mass extinction of various species of plants and animals and their detrimental impacts on the ecosytem itself (ibid., 2002: 13). The first cricis of mass extinction occurred on land and in shallow water environents about 250 million years ago in the Permian period. Paleontologists believe that the cause of the mass extinction was "a slowe but inexorable change in climate and sea level" which occurred when "forces of continental drift caused the Earth's great continents to merge together into a single, gigantic super continent." Then, the continents separated from their tectonic embrace that similarly brought about the extinction of 90% species. This extinction also includes most of the marine and land-living animal life and left "a 200 million-year-long evolutionary history" that was then called the Paleozoic era. The second major crisis occurred about 200 million years ago when "the world's ecosystems reorganized themselves into a series of stable marine and terrestrial communities." In this era,the mega fauna includes newly evolving dinosaurs, large crocodile-like animals and a few mammal-like reptiles. These creatures disappeared from the Earth along with coral reefs and most shelled ammonites. The cause of this extinction was not

a single and rapid one, but "a series of environmental catastrophes occurring about 100,000 years or less." The two main causes include the event when "a 1-to-5 mile-wide meteor collided with the Earth and left a 70-mile-wide crater in Quebec." While, the eruption of great lava flowing beneath the crater is now known as the jungles of the Amazon River valley. All these events greatly created environmental change and produced the second wave of mass extinction. The third great mass extinction took place 65 million years ago. In this era, the terrestrial dinosaurs and hundreds of thousands of other land and aquatic species went extinct. The cause of this extinction the collision of "a giant, 6-mile-wide asteroid or coment into the surface of the Earth near the Yucatan peninsula." The collision produced "a fiery hell of burning forests over much of the Earth's surface, giant tidal waves, and great volumes of poisonous gas." What worse was that "millions of tons of earth and extraterrestrial debris blazed upward and blocked the sunlight." On land and in the oceans, plants perished and this caused the starvation of many creatures. In the 65 million years after the third period, the emergence of 'behaviorally modern humans' and their massive activities produce 'a new major crisis of mass extinction' including the present issues of global warming, greenhouse effect and climate change (Broswimmer 2002, 13-15).

Results and Discussion

Analysis of material things as anomaly and ecocide in Ginsberg and Dickinson's poems begins with an investigation into their form (typography) and then content that polemicizes toxic substances of material things humans use for a social and political aim.

Material Things as Anomaly and Ecocide in Allen Ginsberg's "Ballade of Poisons" and Adam Dickinson's "Agents Orange, Yellow, and Red"

Ginsberg's poem has three stanzas (triplet) and each consists of 10 lines or called decastich and five lines of envoi that represents a classic form of ballad. In each stanza he uses anaphora or the repetition of similar word 'with' in the beginning line:

With oil that streaks streets a magic color,
With soot that falls on city vegetables
With basement sulfurs & coal black odor
With smog that purples suburbs' sunset hills
With Junk that feebles black & white men's wills
With plastic bubbles aeons will dissolve
With new plutoniums that only resolve
Their poison heat in quarter million years,
With pesticides that round food Chains revolve
May your soul make home, may your eyes weep tears.
(Mulligan 2007, 700)

In terms of form, the repetition "with" in the beginning of each line then produces musical effect just as song refrains. The first and fourth lines also have alliteration in the words "streaks streets" and "suburbs' sunset ". Then each line uses rhyme scheme a b a c c d d e d e, which similarly produces a harmonious sound. In terms of content, the stanza above polemicizes a number of material things that become anomalies since these things cause problems. Being problematic then corresponds with the meaning of anomaly as 'something that deviates from what is normal or expected'. Among these material things include fossil fuels such as 'oil', 'soot', 'basemenet sulfurs', 'smog', 'coal black odor', 'junk', 'plastic bubbles', 'harmonium', 'new plutonian', 'poison', 'pesticides', 'four Chains'. These anomalies bring forth ecocide since they do something and cause certain detrimental conditions as the poet describes by using the repetitive word 'with' and 'that'. In the next ten lines in the following stanza, the poet portrays these anomalies through several images of material things that humans consume in their dailies—

With freak hormones in chicken & soft egg
With panic red dye in cow meat burger
With mummy med'cines, nitrate in sliced pig
With sugar'd cereal kids scream for murder,
With Chemic additives that cause Cancer
With bladder and mouth in your salami,
With Strontium Ninety in milks of Mommy,
With sex voices that spill beer thru your ears
With Cups of Nicotine till you vomit

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May your soul make home, may your eyes weep tears.
(Mulligan 2007, 700)

In this second stanza, the poet still uses anaphora and also the repetition in the last line "May your soul make home, may your eyes weep tears". Different from the first stanza that depicts fossil fuels and other related material products, this second stanza catalogues things that deal with human's daily products such as 'chicken', 'soft egg', 'red dye', 'cow meat burger', 'sliced pig', 'sugar'd cereal', 'Chemic additives', 'salami', and 'nicotine'. The material products also stand for anomalies since individual's overuse of these things would cause some hazards. For instance, "red dye in cow meat burger", "nitrate in sliced pig", "sugar'd cereal", "Chemic additives", "Strontium Ninety in milks of Mommy", "Cups of Nicotine" all suggest the danger of these products when humans overuse or misuse them since they contain toxic substances. Strontium 90 itself is "a radioactive isotope produced by nuclear fission" and becomes the major source of calcium in milk products. It is also used in medicine and industry. Like Chemic additives that cause the emergence of cancer as the poet says in line 15, the overuse of this Strontium will also cause the same problem (https://en.m.wikipedia.org). Therefore, these products also cause ecocide since despite giving benefits to humans, their internal properties contain toxics that harm humans physically and certainly the natural environment. In the next ten lines from line 21 to 30 the poet again polemicizes material things that wreak havoc on humans and the natural environment—

With microwave toaster television
With Cadmium lead in leaves of fruit trees
With Trade Center's nocturnal emission
With Coney Island's shore plopped with Faeces
While blue Whales sing in high infrequent seas
With Amazon worlds with fish in ocean
Washed in Rockefellers greasy Potion
With oily toil fueled with atomic fears
With CIA tainting World emotion
May your soul make home, may your eyes weep tears.
(Mulligan 2007, 700)

In this third stanza, the poet portrays human's products and infrastructures including some corporations whose industrial activities have caused some environmental problems. The images "microwave toaster television" exemplify modern lifestyle while these also suggest the poet's critique of modern people's dependence on these electronic appliances that all still make use of fossil fuels as the energy. The next line "With Cadmium lead in leaves of fruit trees" illustrates how the cadmium lead as one earth metal contains toxic particles despite its utility in the electronic appliances. The emission of the metal has contaminated the leaves of fruit trees. The emission of the cadmium in the environment is increased by human's use of chemical fertilizers and corporation activities such as coal and fossil fuels excavation (https://www.unep.org).The line that describes "Coney's Island's shore" that was plopped with faeces suggests a metaphorical meaning that the island had been polluted by debris of human's material products . Then the next line "blue Whales that sing in high infrequent seas" suggests the disappearance of blue whales as rare and endangered species because of anthropogenic activities. Furthermore, the phrases "Amazon worlds", "Rockefellers greasy Potion" and "CIA tainting World emotion" exemplify corporations that have big roles in committing ecocide through their business activities that make use of fossil fuels and their derivative products. These images also become anomalies since these things in their supposed merit for human living have in fact deviated from what individuals in common (lay people—my emphasis) have expected. Thus, what these corporations have done is instead an ecocide. The repeated line "May your soul make home, may your eyes weep tears" serves as an entreaty to humans (those who hold the authority—my emphasis) to change their material-oriented mind to save the earth and the world as the only sustainable habitat for any living creature. The last stanza is an envoi or a conclusion of the ballade consisting of five lines. This contains an entreaty to those who hold the authority such as president and his cabinet members not to excessively implement profit-making and material-indulging policies. Instead, they have to cognize the danger of human's overuse of the non-renewable material products such as fossil fuels toward

the natural environment and any existing life form—

President, 'spite cockroach devotion,
Folk poisoned with radioactive lotion,
'Spite soulless bionic energy queers
May your world move to healthy emotion,
Make your soul at home, let your eyes weep tears.
(Mulligan 2007, 700)

The repetition in the last line aims to evoke human's compassion for the natural environment and any living creature that co-exists with each other. In this envoi, the images such as "cockroach devotion", "radioactive lotion", "soulless bionic energy queers" serve as the poet's criticism of human's overuse of material especially that of non-renewable material things. These juxtaposed images as Ginsberg's typical poetic expressions also represent anomalies that further become ecocide since they serve as toxic materials.

In the next poem "Agents Orange,Yellow, and Red" Adam Dickinson polemicizes material things humans use but that these things then cause some problems to human's life and the natural environment. The poem is in a vertical form that suggests a flowing stream as well as a spontaneous outburst of feeling—

You are either for chlorine
or for the plague.
Right now is the cleanest
we have ever been, and for this
you must love aerial defoliants
or you love communism.
Under the bandage of the one-industry
town closing ranks around staples
of forestry and fish, the wound
is wide-eyed and headstrong.
Through the clearing,freshwater carp
blink past the graves of missionaries
who introduced them to the new world.
(Staples & King 2017, 68)

The lines above have revealed material things as anomalies since these make polemics and that they give impacts to each other thing in the natural environment. Some images such as "one-industry", "defoliants", "staples", "clearing ", "new world" suggest corporations that manufacture material products that further cause the problems. These things refers to ecocide that occurred in Vietnam in the 1960s when the US military sprayed the chemical herbicide and defoliant called "agent orange" to the lush jungle in Vietnam to eradicate communist enemies during the Vietnam War from 1961 to 1971. This agent orange is "a mixture of equal parts of two herbicides, 2, 4, 5-T and 2, 4-D and contains dioxin as the most toxic substance. This herbicidal warfare certainly did not only destroy the forests in Vietnam but also crippled many Vietnamese people physically and psychologically (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agent_Orange). In the next lines, the poet further illustrates how material things as anomalies pollute the natural landscapes such as rivers and cause a kind of environmental precarity—

Northern rivers are warmed
by the paper mill's piss, which,
like making the world safe for democracy,
slowly leaked into my childhood yellowing
the lipophilic paperbacks of my
adipose fat. You are for pulp
or for poverty. You respect
the Constitution or you stare
at the ground lost in bankruptcies
for herring gull beaks or blurred
embryos in cormorant colonies.
(Staples & King 2017, 68)

In the lines above, the poet further portrays how corporations have caused ecocide to the natural environment through their activities such as "paper mill's piss" that suggests waste and debris from the paper-manufacturing company that pollutes the rivers. The images "my childhood yellowing" and "lipophilic paperbacks " exemplify how the material things from the manufacturer serve as anomalies that cause problems to humans and the natural environment. The material transformation from the paper waste into its toxic substances that permeate through one's body suggests what is called transcorporeality of the material thing. It is the material agencies of the product that has hazardous impacts on human's body to make it toxic, too (Alaimo 2010, 17-18). The next lines "you are for pulp or for poverty", "you respect the Constitution or you stare at the ground lost in bankruptcies" and "for herring gull beaks or blurred embryos in cormorant colonies" depict human's socio-political agencies in overconsuming material

things and that this material overuse in turn has detrimental impacts on his bodies, nonhuman creatures' bodies and the natural environmen t. This trajectory exemplifies the toxic traffic from the human's corporation as the agent that causes this ecocide and humans who consume the product in their daily activities (Alaimo 2010, 18). In the last lines, the poet further polemicizes this human's ecocide through his censure for a factual political incident of poisoning Viktor Yushchenko by government agents. They put dioxin in his food. Viktor Yushchenko was a Ukrainian politician and the third president of Ukraine from 23 January 2005 to 25 February 2010 (https://en.m.wikipedia.org; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viktor_Yushchenko)

> *Every erected media platform reduces the problem of war to a problem of tint. During the orange revolution, Viktor Yushchenko was poisoned by government agents who haywired his food with dioxin. His face flared into pages of acne. You are either for the red or the white blood cells, for the tops of trees, or the bottoms. (Staples & King 2017, 68)*

The lines above seem to criticize the herbicidal warfare by the US military in the past during the Vietnam War. These serve as an ecological melancholia that shows concern about the war hazard and its lasting impact on human's consciousness as the poet said in the phrase "a problem of tint" being suggestive of "trace" of the war in human's unconscious mind. The phrase "orange revolution" refers to "a series of protests and political events" that occurred in Ukraine from late November 2004 to January 2005 during "the run-off vote of the 2004 Ukrainian presidential election." The protesters claimed that the election was "impaired by massive corruption, voter intimidation, and electoral fraud." It took place during the presidential election of Viktor Yushchenko in which he contended another candidate, Viktor Yanukovych. Yushchenko received more votes than Yanukovych so that he became the third president of Ukraine (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orange_Revolution). Then, the lines that describe the poisoning of Viktor Yushchenko by government agents reveals the same political incident during that time. The "dioxin" as the poison that they mixed in Yushchenko's food corresponds with the same toxic the US military used in the "agent orange", the chemical herbicide they sprayed to the lush jungle in Vietnam in the 1960s. This coincidence indicates how the dioxin as anomaly still becomes a forceful toxic that can exterminate its victim. The last lines seem to be addressed to the dioxin itself that can cause a variety of cancers when it seeps through human's blood cells. Furthermore, it also polluted the canopy (the tops of trees) as well as soil and sediment. The polluted soil further impaired the food chain and caused illnesses for humans (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agent_Orange) .

Seeking Epiphany in the Midst of Ecological Precarity

Ecocide correlates with consumerism or consumer-oriented society. Looking back to the history from the ancient to the postmodern one, it is clear that any environmental problem would always come from individual overuse of material things (Broswimmer 2002, 13-15). Furthermore, this ecological precarity has lasted since the ancient era, the neolithic period initiated by the 'neolithic revolution'. As humans kept evolving, they began to explore the natural environment and its resources. Thus, the next eras the Mesolithic period or "Middle Stone Age" to the pre-modern era were the times when humans began to intensively domesticate plants and animals. For instance, during the Upper Pleistocene era, people began to domesticate animals such as dogs, goats, sheep, and wild oxen in their daily activities of food production. They began to "alter the biosphere" in a very significant way with their 'extensive tracts of natural systems' that was further called 'agro-ecosystems' or what an environmental sociologist Marina Fischer-Kowalsky called "terrestrial colonization" that initiated "human civilization" itself (Broswimmer 2002, 60-64). Yet, during the pre-modern era or the classic one, people had done ecocidal activities. Among them include the Mesopotamians, Southwest Asia (3700 BCE to 1600 BCE); the Greeks, Mediterranean (770 BCE to 30 BCE);

the Romans, Mediterranean (500 BCE to 500 CE); the Chaco Anasazi, Northwestern New Mexico (700 CE to 1300 CE); the Mayas, Mesoamerica (200 CE to 900 CE); the Easter Islanders, Rapa Nui (700 CE to 1700 CE) (Broswimmer 2002, 69-99). For instance, in the Mesopotamian culture known as the Sumerian civilization during the Bronze Age,people exploited land by means of irrigation that made the land infertile, sedimented and salinized (Broswimmer 2002, 73). They also did an extensive deforestation of cedar forests that similarly led to soil erosion and siltation (ibid., 2002, 74). In a like manner, in the other eras such as the Greeks, Mediterranean, people did ecological damage or ecocide to the Mediterranean landscape. For instance, for expanding the Greek city-states, they destroyed rich pine and oak forests and get the lumber, firewood, and charcoal or "simply to create more pasture lands for their domesticated animals." Not to mention large-scale wars such as the unending Peloponnesian War between Sparta and Athens led to "wholesale destruction of nature" since they always intensively utilized natural resources to "produce weapons and to mount military campaigns." The severe deforestation mostly occurred in the mainland Greece and Asia Minor. People transformed large areas of countryside into "relatively barren wastes, while there were also "much-increased soil erosion and flooding". This similar ecocide also happened to the other epochs of the Romans, the Chaco Anasazi, the Mayas, and the Easter Islanders (ibid., 2002, 80-99). Then the ecocide in the modern era took place by emerging capitalism and corporation. These two institutions privileged on their own more than thought about public's interests.These orientated toward "private property, business, laissez-faire, profit motive, and the pursuit of self-interest" (ibid., 2002, 102). Corporation refers to any human business and the birth of corporation refers to "incorporation" that "involves a process of recognition or registration by a state government." After the corporation is registered, it has "a legal status as an independent entity that is called 'corporate personhood' or 'corporate person' who owns the property and assets of the corporation (Whyte 2020, 28).

This present time is the successor to the modern era. In terms of development and civilization, humans keep doing massive physical development and exploiting natural resources. The reason why they have done the similar ecological demolition from time to time is because human's needs are the same. So people from the ancient and the contemporary times generally need food and other material things to survive and conduct their daily life. The problem is that humans tend not to use the material things or the natural resources judiciously but extravagantly. Accordingly, this exploitative behavior would lead to ecological catastrophes including loss of biodiversity (Wilson 2016,19-27). Ecocide occurs because of "the interaction of economic, political and cultural power along with demographic change" (Broswimmer 2002, 153). The cause also tallies with capitalism or what a political theorist, Manfred B. Steger calls "globalism". This present global trend "coincides with the social process of "neo-liberal globalization" or a phenomenon characterized by transnationalization of production and the presence of transnational corporations (TNCs) as the central engines of economic power." These corporations are "the integral part of the late modern ecocidal juggernaut." The TNCs perpetuate "our progressively ecocidal world and do so by effectively silencing, trivializing, and legimitizing their anti-social and ecological practices"(ibid., 2002, 153-154). Furthermore, globalism that is identical with neo-liberal globalization or global capitalism has created social inequalities and poverty. This social impoverishment becomes one major factor that contributes to "ecocide and environmental degradation" since poor people tend to exploit "open access resources" desperately that in time causes environmental degradation. This environmental demolition in turn "exacerbates poverty and threatens not only the economic prospects of future generations but also the livelihood, health, and well-being of current populations." The examples of the countries that experience "this damaging environmental consequences of this globalism" are Ghana, the Philippines, and Indonesia (ibid., 2002, 157-158).

The word "epiphany" in Oxford Dictionary has two meanings. The first meaning is "the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi" and the second is "a moment of sudden and great revelation or realization" (2020). In this analysis, the word

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"epiphany" refers to the second meaning, which is "a moment of sudden and great revelation or realization. Ginsberg's "Ballade of Poisons" and Dickinson's "Agents Orange, Yellow, and Red" and their vision of ecocide serve as an epiphany to open reader's eyes and raise his/her awareness of the hazards of material things that are polemicized as anomalies and transcorporeal objects because of their toxic substances and their impacts on human's and nonhuman's body and the natural environment. Ginsberg polemicizes the eco-issue in America in the late 1970s, while Dickinson portrays the issue as it is connected with the past history and with the present situation of corporations and their massive activities that have detrimental impacts. The difference in the temporal setting does not really matter since what Ginsberg has portrayed in the poem could serve as a metaphor for any material thing that people in the world make use of excessively. In the envoi for instance, the lines serve as an entreaty not only to the leaders of world countries but also to all people to mind the healthy planet—

President, 'spite cockroach devotion,
Folk poisoned with radioactive lotion,
'Spite soulless bionic energy queers
May your world move to healthy emotion,
Make your soul at home, let your eyes weep tears.
(Mulligan 2007, 700)

Certainly, it is not only President of all world countries who has to take responsibility for caring the planet but also all citizens in the countries who should be aware of preserving their natural environment by judicious consumption of material things in their dailies . The repetition of the last line "make your soul at home, let your eyes weep tears" becomes an epiphany to evoke one's conscience and compassion to cherish the natural life rather than to exploit its resources. As a Beat poet, Ginsberg's poetics of epiphany might be influenced by his correspondence with his companion, Jack Kerouac who initiated a new method in writing by searching for what he called "a new vision" (Charters 1995, 98). This new vision in fact embodies spiritual and ecological aspects in their search for non-materialism and spontaneous affirmation—the two values that show honesty, kindness and compassion for all life (Charters 2007, 563). He also reveals the epiphany through the anaphora "with" in all the stanzas. Besides having a jazzy rhythm , the repetition of "with" serves as a sudden and great revelation of human's interdependent relation with material things . Not only that the material things behave passively but more importantly the things serve as active agents in determining certain conditions. In Dickinson's poem, the poet suggests this epiphany through his criticism of 'agents orange' as the toxic substance that humans used in the past incidents for doing crime against human and the natural environment. The last three lines of the poem—

You are either
for the red or the white blood cells,
for the tops of trees, or the bottoms.
(Staples & King 2017, 68)

serve as a parody to criticize the hazards of the toxic substance such as dioxin and other similar subtances to any life form including human, nonhuman creatures and vegetation in the natural environment. In his essay entitled "Poetics" Adam Dickinson argues that his poems embody scientific and poetic aspects that he calls "pataphysical poetics". He further explains the meaning of "pataphysics" or "the science of exceptions, particulars, and imaginary solutions" as those that deals with "hyperobjects like oil and chemical pollution, which, as they enter human bodies through food and consumer products, constitute a kind of absurd, imaginary science project enacted upon the citizens of the industrialized world without consent." He further argues that by this pataphysical poetic, he aims to be able "to respond to the capacity of petroculturalhyperobjects to influence social formations or alter human metabolism." He gives another name "metabolic poetics" to his poems in which by polemicizing oil and other chemicals he aims to "examine the way oil has become a form of writing in human biological and metabolic contexts based on a toxicological and symbiotic map of my own body (obtained through blood, urine, and microbiome testing)." With this metabolic poetics , he aims to "respond through writing to the ways in which the outside writes the inside, to the ways in which my blood is a form of media expressing

the biology of petroculture, expressing my intimate and uncanny relationship to the energy sources of my historical moment, while also expressing the continuous interchange between self and environment that has marked human evolutionary history " (Staples & King 2017,71-72). What Dickinson argued with his metabolic poetics in this case corresponds with what Stacy Alaimo said about transcorporeality of any material object that seeps through human's body in his/her daily interaction with it (Alaimo 2010, 17-22). At this present time, ecocide has still been a prevalent issue as humans tend to exploit natural resources in producing material things for their daily necessities. Material things have their agency with their pervasive and inbuilt property as a part of its generative dynamism" that means the affects on human and nonhuman's bodies (Iovino & Oppermann 2014, 3; 2012, 449-450). Petroculture has still been a way of life as people still rely on fossil fuels for their daily energy for their vehicles and industries. Yet, often the factories and industries do not care about managing their industrial waste and tend to dispose it haphazardly so that it pollutes land and marine habitats (O'Neill 2019; Weis 2015). For instance, plastic trash as the derivative product of fossil fuels becomes the major environmental problem around the world. World corporations such as Dow and DuPont, LyondellBassell ("the second biggest manufacturer in the world, based across the Netherlands, the US, and the UK"), BASF and Exxon Mobil produce plastics. The US uses plastics mostly for packaging (34% in 2017), for consumer and institutional goods (20%), and for construction (17%) (O'Neill 2019, 145). Plastics are made from petrochemicals and so these contain toxics that cause environmental damage and health risks. A report by the International Energy Agency in 2018 estimated that the petrochemicals will "make up nearly a third of global oil demand by 2030 and a half of global demand by 2050" (ibid., 2019, 146). Among these toxics include Phthalates ("used to keep plastics flexible"), bisphenol A (BPA that is used in water bottles). These particles especially have "long-term impacts on human and animal reproductive systems and brain development". And these toxics in fact have seeped through human's body in certain measurable levels (ibid., 2019, 146). Heap of plastic trash will emit toxic particles to the atmosphere and contributes to the rising temperature or global warming. The drifting plastic trash to the oceans will also endanger marine creatures such as turtles, seabirds, whales as they were often "tangled in plastic or dead from ingesting plastic trash" (O'Neill 2019, 148). Jenna Jambeck et al. (2015) estimated that "4.8 to 12.7 million tons of plastics have entered the ocean, including plastic bags, bottles, caps, microbeads from beauty products, and nylon or plastic fishing nets." The number of discarded fishing nets itself approximately "makes up 46% of ocean plastics" (O'Neill 2019, 148), and the rest include domestic plastic products including shopping bags, bottles, bottle caps, food wrappers, etc. (Weis 2015, 42). Another hazard of this plastics is microplastic that is minuscule in size and comes from any plastic product as well as heap of trash when it is burnt or heated by the sunlight (O'Neill 2019, 148-149; Weis 2015, 44). All this plastic-culture causes the ecocide since the natural environment such as soil becomes arid and degraded by this plastic trash. With its toxic particles plastics serve as anomalies for human and nonhuman creatures. Responding to the hazards that the material things especially the non-renewable and non-degradable ones such as fossil fuels and plastics do, Ginsberg's and Dickinson's ecological criticism serve as poetics of epiphany that evokes a sudden and great revelation of the merit of natural life and the disruptions committed by humans and their backfiring impacts on engendering toxic bodies.

Conclusion

Poetic language is not only an "agent of orange but also of other colors including red, yellow, green and others" that means that it depicts a natural life and its problems because of anthropogenic activities. It does not only portray it but also evoke the reader's awareness of changing their view and behavior toward the natural environment. During the present ecological precarity with the polemical issues such as global warming, climate change, loss of biodiversity and some others, humans need to retreat and re-think of the future of the planet if they persist in their massive activities towards the physical environment. Ecocide is a classic phenomenon as long as humans still exist and need resources from the natural environment. Yet, it should not be a reason for humans to keep their exploitative and despoiling acts toward it

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since these practices will bring catastrophes not only to the natural environment but also to themselves. Ginsberg's and Dickinson's poems apart from the different eras have pointed out epiphany or a sudden revelation of the nature of the physical environment and its material things and how these things will bring catastrophes through human's overuse of these things. Their ecological epiphanic poetics serves as the agent to remind individuals of the need for conserving the natural environment and its biodiversity for a resilient and sustainable planet.

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