

Interdisciplinarity, Multidisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity in Humanities

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Edited by

Banu Akçeşme,
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and Eugene Steele

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INTRODUCTION

CARMEN DUTU

The present book is the outcome of the International Conference on *Interdisciplinarity, Multidisciplinarity, and Transdisciplinarity in the Humanities* organised at Erciyes University in May 2014, in collaboration with Melikşah University (Kayseri), Çankaya University (Ankara), and Dimitrie Cantemir University (Bucharest). In effect, the conference was designed as a continuation of earlier events held at Çankaya University (*Studies on Translation* 2013) and Dimitrie Cantemir University (*Eurofringes. Intercultural Networking; Challenging Stereotypes* 2013). In 2014, our three universities decided to join forces and organise a comprehensive scholarly platform for the debate of a recent topic in language and literary studies, namely the question of the relationship between Transdisciplinarity, Interdisciplinarity, and Multidisciplinarity in humanities.

Since the late twentieth century, the field of humanities has been increasingly concerned with its ontological status under the influence of multi- and inter-disciplinary research, especially triggered by the reception of philosophy and critical theory. The domination of single subjects in academic programmes and institutions is being called into question. Not only does scholarship conducted from the standpoint of a single subject tend to offer a limited point of view on culture, but it also makes certain forms of expertise the exclusive preserve of a given disciplinary field. At the same time, the identity of academic subjects has increasingly become subject to question. For example, “literary studies” are going through an identity crisis that raises the question of their position and legitimacy within the field of social sciences and humanities.

Considering the rise of cultural studies, literary studies is currently opening itself up to the epistemological renewal that other fields can offer. It is increasingly borrowing theoretical tools from other subjects in order to analyse the historical, socio-political, and institutional conditions of the production of literary texts to identify the general discursive circumstances in which they emerge, and to study the relationship between literature and other media. Similarly, while subjects such as sociology, history, and political science have always been closely related—if not literally spinoffs from one another, as in the case of sociology *vis-à-vis* anthropology—

what becomes of their specificities when they borrow from geography to address space-related issues, from psychology to understand social actors' individual motivations, or from literary studies to make sense of individual or collective narratives?

Subjects are highly disputed truths, so that interdisciplinary dialogue can be both a necessity and a source of tensions and conflicts, as is often seen in collaborative work on common projects. But this dialogue also fosters the development of conceptual frameworks and methods that may turn differences and divergences into a more fruitful reflection on the production and evolution of knowledge. While multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity have long been integral to the methodologies of both the social sciences and humanities, transdisciplinarity emerged in the 1990s as a way of crossing disciplinary boundaries and is today understood as a form of systematic exchanges among the subjects. Due attention should be given to the causes of this transition and its possible impact on academic institutions. Such a relation has long existed in humanities, but has today become more problematic because of its complexity.

Therefore, our volume aims to account for experiments in research that overstep disciplinary boundaries by analysing the new fields and methodologies emerging in the contemporary globalised academic environment, which puts a strong premium on synergism and linkages. Moreover, it aims to assess current theoretical reflections on inter-, multi- and transdisciplinarity as well as research grounded in it, and to measure their impact on the evolution of scholarship and curriculum in the fields of literature, language, and humanities. Transdisciplinarity will thus be approached both as an epistemological issue and a research method.

The diversity of thoughts and visions may provide us with different views and enlighten us for a better future. History provides us with a panoramic view of human past, psychology with the inner world of people, sociology with the human population, and economy with money and industry. Each of these subjects aims to create a better future for humanity. Yet, each of them has its own threats and problems. We need all the windows to have a comprehensive view of human nature. I hope we will open as many windows as possible in this meeting to view the beauty in each direction from the house of people.

Please allow me to express my thanks and gratitude to the Rector of Erciyes University, Prof. Dr. Fahrettin Keleştimur, for his unfailing support with the various stages of this conference. I would also like to express my thanks to all my colleagues who made this volume possible: Doğan Bulut, Banu Akçeşme, Hasan Baktır, Seniye Vural, Tolga Kayadelen, Yiğit Sümbül, and Neşe Şenel.

PART I:

LITERATURE AND CRITICISM

IF ANARCHISM IS NOT ENOUGH,
THEN WHAT IS?
GENERATIVE INDETERMINACY
IN LAURA RIDING JACKSON

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Abstract: The first half of the twentieth century witnessed the modernist invitation to challenge the givens of the conventional theoretical perspective on language, specifically on poetic language. The intense interest of the modernist authors of the period in language is indeed indicative of deeper epistemological concerns. These figures, among whom Gertrude Stein, Louis Zukofsky, and Laura Riding Jackson can be mentioned, consider art as a mode of knowing with specific emphasis on authorial subjectivity. Of these authors, the theoretical project of Laura Riding Jackson will be discussed here by analysing one of her early works, *Anarchism Is Not Enough*, a manifesto against systematized thinking on poetry and poetics.

Anarchism Is Not Enough is Jackson's most radical work in her early period in terms of its questioning the contextualisation of modernist criticism. In this work, the author places the orientation towards the unknown in poetic language in the foreground through emphasis on the unbecoming process rather than stable definitions. Arguing that such a deconstruction does not destroy poetry but brings new insights into modernist criticism, she turns language upside down and incites the reader to question the linguistic body of the text as well as the self-conscious subjectivity of the author. Thus, human and linguistic identity rather than aesthetic certainties are at work in her understanding of poetic language. This lack of certainty leads to the generative indeterminacy that Jackson posits in "designed waste," in her own terms. In this context, this paper aims at exploring the "designed waste" realm with Georges Bataille's notion of "expenditure" in general economy.

Key Words: poetic language, Laura Riding Jackson, designed waste, Georges Bataille, general economy

Anarchism is Not Enough is the most radical work in Laura Riding Jackson's early period in terms of its questioning and contextualising of modernist criticism. In this work, she places the orientation towards the unknown in poetic language in the foreground through emphasis on the unbecoming process rather than on stable definitions. She mentions that "we draw the circumference, like spiders, out of ourselves," and "it is all criticism of criticism" ("The Corpus," 31). Contrary to the general view, she argues that this situation does not cause an impasse and destroy poetry; instead, it brings new insights to modernist criticism. She turns language upside down and invites the reader to question the linguistic body of the text as well as the self-conscious subjectivity of the author. In this view on poetic language and criticism, human and linguistic, rather than aesthetic, identities are at work. This lack of certainty leads to the generative indeterminacy posited in "designed waste" by Laura Riding Jackson. Another significant point to be mentioned here is that her renunciation of poetry is closely related to her literary views. Therefore, before exploring the "designed waste" realm through Georges Bataille's notion of "expenditure" in general economy, brief information will be given about her life.

Laura (Riding) Jackson, who was dropped from many anthologies because of the "practical decanonisation" concern, was indeed a prominent avant-garde poet of the 1920s and 1930s, and a member of Vanderbilt University's Fugitives Group with Robert Penn Warren, John Crowe Ransom, and Allen Tate. In this period, she lived and collaborated with novelist Robert Graves and they operated a small publishing press where they published such writers as Gertrude Stein. However, Laura Riding Jackson renounced poetry in about 1940, and married the critic and poetry editor Schuyler B. Jackson. Together, they worked on a study of language project until her death. Like many of her colleagues, her interest focused on challenging the givens of the conventional theoretical perspective on language, specifically poetic language. At first glance, it may seem difficult to understand why such a prolific author renounced poetry at an early age. However, at a deeper analysis, it is seen that her decision was taken as a result of her views on the essential character of poetics, as Tom Fisher points out in his article "Reading Renunciation: Laura Riding and the End of Poetry":

[A]s she will repeatedly state in her post-poetry writing, her renunciation was mandated by what she took as the essential and immutable character of the poetic itself. Reading Riding in this way becomes an exercise in thinking about poetry as such, exploring, however tentatively and cautiously, an essence of poetry as what Riding will call "a crisis point" which its renunciation clarifies and fulfills. (3)

In this sense, it may be claimed that her renunciation is a consequence of the way she reads and understands modernism. In other words, it is the necessary consequence of the essential character of modernist poetry. Of course, the traces of these concerns can be followed in her early works. In this paper, her essay “Jocasta” (in *Anarchism is Not Enough*) will be considered; it will also be suggested what such a manifesto against systematised thinking on poetry and poetics may tell about the nature of poetry.

Laura Riding Jackson does not see poetry as an effect of experience; instead, she claims that a poem is, “the result of an ability to create a vacuum in experience” (“What is a Poem?” 17). This argument ends in the conclusion that a poem, which is a vacuum, is indeed nothing, and that it can only lead to destruction since it is impossible to reproduce it: “A vacuum is unalterably and untransferably a vacuum—the only thing that can happen to it is destruction. If it were possible to reproduce it in an audience the result would be the destruction of the audience” (*Ibid.*). Then, one can raise the question of how poetry is related with the productive design if it is nothing. The common understanding that literature is an act of production is challenged by the author. In Laura Riding Jackson, the only productive design is the designed waste. The activity considered as productive here can only lead to the destruction of the designer since it is all made and it has already become what it is. Here, the author talks about how an energy that makes sense as a numerical increase in the sum of things may return to itself as unused. In fact, this is the point where one can relate “designed waste” to Georges Bataille’s understanding of general economy, “in which the ‘expenditure’ (the ‘consumption’) of wealth, rather than production, was the primary object” (*The Accursed Share, Vol 1*, 9). Consumption is what both authors focus on since there is a close connection among consumption, excessive energy that returns to itself unused, and destruction. In addition, Laura Riding Jackson establishes a relation between these and anarchism:

Energy that attempts to make in the sense of making a numerical increase in the sum of made things is spitefully returned to itself unused. It is a would-be-happy-ness ending in an unanticipated and disordered unhappiness. Energy that is aware of the impossibility of positive construction devotes itself to an anticipated unhappiness, which, because it has design, foreknowledge, is the nearest approach to happiness. Undesigned unhappiness and designed happiness both mean anarchism. (“What is a Poem?” 18–19)

Bataille argues that what may be said of art, of literature, of poetry, is in a close relation with the movement of excessive energy. He mentions that

energy is always in excess on earth; thus, the question must be posed in terms of extravagance when the relation between production and consumption is analysed (*The Accursed Share, Vol 1*, 23). In order to elaborate on this point, Bataille gives an overview of general economy throughout time. The difference between the former times and the present is striking—while value is given to unproductive glory in the past, the criterion for value is production today; hence, “precedence is given to energy acquisition over energy expenditure” (*Ibid.*, 29). In this understanding, glory can only be justified in the sphere of utility. Then comes the question—where does excess result from? In fact, no real excess occurs before the growth of an organism, an individual, or a group reaches its limits. During energy acquisition, some is spent; however, there is a part of the remaining energy at the same time. Throughout production, some part of this surplus energy is used, but this results in the production of a larger surplus. As the process continues, it becomes difficult for the system to grow since it is no longer capable of using surplus. Based on this argument, Bataille expresses, “what *general economy* defines first is the explosive character of this world, carried to the extreme degree of explosive tension in the present time,” and adds that:

The exposition of a general economy implies intervention in public affairs, certainly; but first of all and more profoundly, what it aims at is consciousness, what it looks to from the outset is the self-consciousness that man would finally achieve in the lucid vision of its linked historical forms. (*Ibid.*, 41)

The surplus energy that is in question here opens the path towards the realm of utility. A man who is obliged to work in everyday life consumes the product without which production will not be possible and, in this sense, he belongs to the realm of utility. However, there is another realm—that of sovereignty. Differing from the man of utility, the sovereign man “consumes rather the surplus of production,” and “truly enjoys the products of this world—beyond his needs” (*Ibid.*, 198). In Bataille’s terms, life beyond utility is the domain of sovereignty. If the sovereign enjoys the world beyond his needs, it can be said that he experiences the present with nothing else in mind but the present. When the character of art is considered, it is indeed possible to place it in the realm of sovereignty as well. Bataille establishes the connection by raising the question: “What is the meaning of art, architecture, music, painting or poetry if not the anticipation of a suspended, wonder-struck moment, a miraculous moment?” (*Ibid.*, 200). While questioning the meaning of art and placing it in the realm of sovereignty, one faces the matter of knowledge and con-

sciousness. Knowledge can only be gained at the end of an effort that is calculated beforehand. In this sense, it is a kind of operation that is useful to some end. However, what is meant by knowledge should not be confused with the last moment or the end of operation since it actually covers the whole process. Considering the nature of “sovereign,” Bataille claims that: “Knowledge is never sovereign: to be sovereign it would have to occur in a moment. But the moment remains outside, short of or beyond, all knowledge” (*Ibid.*, 202). As the moment remains outside knowledge, we can conclude that the consciousness of the moment can only be perceived in *unknowing* which dissolves into *nothing* in the end. At this point, Laura Riding Jackson’s idea that a poem is a vacuum in the experience and Georges Bataille’s notion that unknowing dissolves into nothing intersect in terms of the way consciousness is understood. In both views, consciousness grasps a vacuum, therefore nothing, at every point of which it is active; that is, consciousness is indeed the consciousness of itself. Depending on this fact, it may well be said that poetry is in the realm of sovereignty, not because it takes place outside a system, but because it is in the realm of unknowing, which is beyond the realm of utility.

While talking about the realm of utility, one should first raise the question of “what is useful?” In general, individual effort is considered useful if it is reducible to production and conservation, which are considered as fundamental necessities. However, human activity cannot be reduced to production and conservation since there is consumption as well. Yet, it is not enough to add the category of this schema because it is also of different parts as productive and non-productive. When the place of art is examined, it is observed that it is reduced and its role has become subsidiary since it cannot be evaluated in terms of utility. Bataille sees art in the category of unproductive expenditures since the activities here—luxury, mourning, war, cults, the construction of sumptuary monuments, games, spectacles, arts—have no ends beyond themselves. Going beyond the realm of utility, art takes its place in sovereignty and does not submit itself to the useful: “Works, all works, had as their final and inaccessible end that miraculous element that illuminates being, transfigures it and grants it, beyond the poverty of the thing, that royal authenticity which never lets itself be reduced to the measure of humiliating labour” (*The Accursed Share, Vol 2*, 226–7). The artist gets the knowledge of the unity of the sovereign moments on subjective experience and, by becoming conscious of these moments, he finds himself in a domain where he has no hold. Bataille claims that “the artist is nothing in the world of things” (*Ibid.*, 257).

On the other side, Laura Riding Jackson expresses the same idea by proposing that, “the only position relevant to the individual is the unreal”

(“Jocasta,” 69). Although the “unreal” seems like a position at first glance, the author immediately urges the reader that the “unreal” is where the artist grasps and becomes his self by expressing his subjectivity. Similarly, Georges Bataille sees the “unreal” as a position of sovereign art, and argues that “sovereign art signifies, in the most exact way, access to sovereign subjectivity independently of rank” (*The Accursed Share, Vol 2*, 423). In his view, knowledge of sovereign moments is given on the basis of subjective experience; therefore, “[w]hoever speaks on behalf of a sovereign art places himself outside a real domain on which he has no hold, against which he is without any rights” (Ibid., 233). Furthering their arguments, both authors draw attention to the close relation between reality and becoming. In Jackson’s view, the individual is an “unbecoming,” and the categories the “becoming” and the “become” are derivations. In this respect, “unbecoming” can be thought of as a movement away from reality and, in a sense, from the become. After elaborating on this view, Jackson argues that the become and the becoming are opposed to unbecoming: “The become and the becoming are both oppositions to the unbecoming; the become from which the becoming is derived is a static order organized against the unbecoming, the become is the matter of disintegration” (“Jocasta,” 74). The person who grasps the fact that unbecoming is a movement not towards but away from reality recognises the reality of the unreal as well as of the unbecoming. Such recognition changes one’s view about the notion of thinking. As a process, thinking fluctuates between integration and disintegration so it is capable of negating itself at every point. As a subject, the individual takes place in the centre of this process and becomes a believer in the unreal once he grasps the nature of thinking:

Man, as he becomes more man, becomes less nature. He becomes unreal. He loses homogeneity as a species. He lives unto himself not as a species but as an individual. He is lost as far as nature is concerned, but as he is separated from nature, this does not matter. He is in himself, he is unreal, he is secure. (Ibid., 64)

Laura Riding Jackson claims that the “unreal” is the only position relevant to the individual because, “it is not a position but the individual himself” (Ibid., 69). She thinks that the occasion of self is a stage in an evolutionary form, the end of which is chaos. The definition of the individual by the author is similar to that of the sovereign artist by Georges Bataille. Both construct and deconstruct their selves through becoming conscious of each single moment on a subjective basis. Like Jackson, Bataille’s sovereign artist reaches a final point where he completely negates himself: “I am NOTHING: this parody of affirmation is the last word of sovereign sub-

jectivity, freed from the dominion it wanted—or had—to give itself over things” (*The Accursed Share, Vol 2*, 422). In addition, Bataille mentions that not only the sovereign artist but also any person who places himself inside the domain of sovereign art is nothing, since this realm is outside the domain of the real. Thus, it may well be claimed that both unreal self’s and the sovereign artist’s final destination is the unbecome; therefore, nothingness. Indeed, this is the realm of art for Laura Riding Jackson and Georges Bataille. The nothingness, which seems to be the ultimate end of the individual search, serves as a domain where art, specifically poetry, can exist. Since it is only unknowing that is sovereign, this is actually where the sovereign artist continues to produce his works. However, this is not enough for Laura Riding Jackson, as there is still a system to be attacked: “I think this system should indeed be attacked in so far as it is a system and in so far as is necessary for a preservation of integrity. I do not think it should be replaced. I want the time-world removed and in its place to see—nothing” (“*Jocasta*,” 62–3).

As a conclusion, it is seen that one can obtain authenticity as both an individual and an artist in “nothingness.” However, this should not be a simple rejection of the system. As the system is formed by the collective mind, one should separate oneself through the consciousness of each single moment and reach his unreal self. In fact, the space created by such an effort is more than nothingness: it is a designed waste where poetry exists by means of loss. For this reason, it becomes impossible to define poetry as a product of discursive thought. It is outside the system and the discourse; yet, this is not enough. This realm should be generative so that anarchism can be enough. However, under current circumstances, *anarchism is not enough*.

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GREEN LITERATURE:
CROSS-FERTILIZATION
BETWEEN LITERATURE AND ECOLOGY
IN LATIFE TEKIN'S *BERJIN KRISTIN:*
TALES FROM THE GARBAGE HILLS

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Abstract: Literature has been greening since the 1970s, and the last two decades have opened up the age of ecology and ecocriticism, both of which celebrate interdisciplinary, multicultural, multinational, and multi-ethnic approaches. The present paper aims to focus on the Turkish novelist Latife Tekin and her novel *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* to find out how her imagination has been influenced by global ecological crises. This is a story about the rise of slums on a garbage disposal area surrounded by factories. Tekin, with her feminist ecological consciousness, touches on the problems of the destructive and detrimental effects of industrialisation, capitalism, urbanisation, the uprooting of villagers, the extinction of rural life, homelessness, toxic waste disposal, recycling, environmental injustice, and the lack of eco-ethics in the health of both nature and humans. Constructing nature as a speaking subject, Tekin gives voice to the physical environment, which interacts with people in a very symbolic language. She intends to bring about ecological enlightenment by showing that "everything is connected to everything else" in the ecosystem, and this interconnectedness and interdependence of human culture, civilization, and nature are foregrounded in her fiction through the multiplicity of discourses—fairy tale, apocalypse, magic realism and folklore—that she brings together in a very fruitful interaction.

Key words: literature, ecology, eco criticism, interdisciplinarity

Latife Tekin is one of the most important contemporary novelists in Turkish literature. She has always been a political activist and feminist intellectual, bringing up current social and political issues in her works. She devotedly addresses the socio-economic, environmental, and political problems that disadvantaged and underprivileged communities are faced with. Her acclaimed novel *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*, written in 1984, raises the issues concerning environmental degradation, environmental injustice, environmental racism, selective victimisation, urban segregation, public health, urban planning, housing, and the struggle for land rights in Turkey. In the novel, Turkey is seen as on the verge of evolving into a rapidly developing country, undergoing the processes of urbanisation and industrialisation that create serious ecological problems.

Tekin transforms the first-hand experiences and accounts of the squatters who were packed into makeshift slums on the outskirts of Istanbul in the 1960s into fictional tales of the impoverished communities who are unwanted and undesirable, and thus dumped along with the trash of the city. In this sense, *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* can be seen as a parable of a modern society where not only socio-politically but also economically and environmentally disadvantaged and marginalised communities who are ineffectual in fighting against environmental injustices are looking for ways of existence and survival among the piles of city trash on the dumping area, which is later invaded by polluting factories. Tekin, by recounting the rapid transformation of this informally founded slum town into an officially recognised neighbourhood and a consumer society, makes visible different forms of exploitation and victimisation of economically depressed and ecologically abused subaltern communities of the society who are denied a voice and subdued to carry the burden of industrial capitalism.

Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills depicts the rapid and massive establishment and flourishing of the ghetto towns and factories in a very complex but colourful and multi-layered narrative interlaced with symbolic evocations and poetic language. It is, in fact, a magic-realist fairy tale, in which the fantastic and the ordinary are successfully blended. Tekin derives the literary inspiration from local storytelling traditions, and hence the story is tinted with the local colours of oral literature traditions, customs, folk tales, superstitions, chanting, rumours, and songs, which at the same time inspire hope and relief, empowering the residents to withstand their miseries and predicaments.

In the novel, the politics of place is of great significance. Tekin unmasks how the spatial organisation of the urban reflects and reveals the ethnic, racial, and class ideologies. Ecological and political discourses are

effectively embedded in the literary discourse of the novel to give support to the environmental movements and to raise awareness about environmental injustices, racism, and garbage imperialism. Tekin, in this respect, can be regarded as the Rachel Carson of Turkey. Carson, a leading Eco critic, was a scientist and published *Silent Spring* in 1962, in which she dealt with industrial waste and the extreme use of chemical pesticides, especially DDT, in agriculture in the USA. Carson challenged the patriarchal notions of progress and development, and was criticised for being extremely sentimental by her male scientist colleagues. However, *Silent Spring*, in spite of harsh critiques, became one of the most influential books of the twentieth century. Carson provided the main source of inspiration and incentive for the upcoming environmental movements, including environmental justice and ecofeminist movements. Like Carson, Tekin aims to raise the public awareness of the manipulation of industry to control nature, which gives rise to detrimental results. Tekin is more concerned with the environmental injustices the least-advantaged members of the society who are driven into the ecological sacrifice zone are exposed to, since polluting industries make profits at the expense of these people and the environments they live in.

Takin's novel can be categorised as eco-fiction in the sense that it demonstrates how environmental injustice operates spatially. Like people, some spaces, lands, and locations are made other and marginalised depending on the identities of the people inhabiting them. As Martin Melosi puts it, intentionally or unintentionally, polluting industries and waste-disposal facilities are exclusively located in neighbourhoods where low-income families or minorities predominantly live (xi). Ironically enough, the slum neighbourhood in the novel happens to be known as Flower Hill, although it is founded in such an environmentally disenfranchised space and populated by social, racial, and ethnic minorities.

Environmental injustice can be described as the unequal distribution of environmental problems ("distributional justice" as put by Daniel Faber, 12) and the disproportionate impacts of environmental depredation on people of low income, colour, or ethnicity who are not a part of the socio-political and economic structures that produce these environmental adversaries. This is what Daniel Faber (*Ibid.*) describes as, "productive justice." Since local governments or companies build environmentally detrimental infrastructure in minority and low socio-economic communities, these people are inequitably victimised and made to carry the burden of environmental hazards inflicted by the exploitative economy, although they are not beneficiaries of the wealth produced by the industry. Environmental injustice originally emerges as a natural consequence of imperialism and

colonial expansion. The main impetus of the colonising countries for their colonial enterprise was to transfer raw materials for their industries from indigenous lands they conquered to their own countries. For this purpose, they ignored the environmental destruction they engendered and sacrificed nature for their economic benefits and material gains. They even ruthlessly plundered the riches of nature, including soil nutrients and nitrates, to restore the agricultural productivity of the soil in their own lands.

As a counter-reaction, environmental justice appeared as a political movement in the 1980s. This modern environmental justice movement is based on seven separate social movements, as suggested by Daniel Faber (6): the civil rights movements, which address environmental racism; the occupational health and safety movement, which struggles for the labour rights of non-union immigrants and undocumented workers; the indigenous lands movements in which indigenous communities maintain and protect their traditional lands; the environmental health movement, which developed out of the mainstream environmental movement; the community-based movements for social and economic justice, which raise the issues of lead poisoning, abandoned toxic waste dumps, the lack of parks and green spaces, poor air quality, and human rights; the peace and solidarity movements; and the immigrant rights movement. Environmental (in)justice takes care of issues like the dumping of industrial toxic wastes, disputes over water rights and quality, hazardous work sites, substandard housing, and deteriorating infrastructure.

Environmental justice describes the environment as, “where we live, work, play, and worship.” The definition of environmental (in)justice is broadened to include ethnicity, class, race, and gender, which play significant roles in environmental marginalisation and segregation and in determining the dumping and toxic waste areas. It draws attention to people who are at high health risks both at home and in their workplaces because of disproportionate exposure to high pollution and hazardous chemicals due to their social class, ethnicity, or race. Martin Melosi explains the goal of environmental justice as, “urban-focused, and essentially political, directed at the government, private industry and what they believed to be a white middle-class-dominated environmental movement more interested in nature preservation than human health and well-being” (xi).

In *Tales from the Garbage Hills*, everything starts with the building of eight shanty houses on the slope where the trash of the city is disposed of. After simit [pretzel] sellers disseminate the news that eight slum houses have been built overnight, janitors, simit-sellers, pedlars, and rural migrants flood into this hill with pickaxes to build shanty houses to settle down. The sprouting of the slum turns the garbage place from an undesir-

able location to a neighbourhood with an increasing land value, attracting various investors.

Not all people in Tekin's novel are equally polluted by what Daniel Faber calls the "polluter-industrial complex" (8). The development of the slum houses next to the city trash dumps is not a coincidence. There are several reasons why Garbage Hills become a place of attraction for thousands of people. The formation and expansion of this informal garbage hill settlement can be mainly attributed to the rapid and mass migration from rural to urban, high unemployment, poverty, inefficient and poor urban planning, lack of affordable public housing, social, racial, and ethnic segregation and exclusion, and the informal economy. The dwellers of this neighbourhood are the poor villagers who immigrate to Istanbul to find jobs, the poorest segments of working, low-income classes, ethnic minorities like gypsies, redheads (Shiites), and other underclass or underrepresented people. Migration and dislocation/displacement, bringing separation from or loss of their own lands and communities, make these people more vulnerable to environmental degradation. Now, they have to work and live on industrially polluted lands over which they have no say or control. They all end up in socially, physically, and environmentally degraded urban environments as they are the first available places, and no other residential accommodation can be legally found for them. Since they fail to get affordable or suitable housing, and since they are not in a position to own private property, this disempowered population is forced to erect ghettos in the garbage-disposal and industrially polluted areas. What is worse, they have to tolerate or ignore environmental inequalities they are exposed to because these very inequalities have provided them with jobs.

The existence of these people depends entirely on the garbage. They become garbage scavengers who separate edible or any usable garbage from the trash, and they make their living by selling the plastics, glasses, iron, paper, etc. they collect from the Garbage Hills to the warehouses nearby. Recycling of the garbage is the only option available to them for survival. However, there exists an on-going power struggle even for the ownership of garbage. The Garbage Agha, the representative of a capitalist economic system, claims ownership of the garbage. Since he does not want to share the garbage with other scavengers, his men burn down some of the slums, which is recorded as the "Great Garbage Fire" in the history of Flower Hill. After this, the men are left jobless, but children and women now start to collect, sell, and recycle garbage to earn a living.

The quality of the housing in the slums is so poor that the squatters keep watch to protect their shanties not only from officials and rival scavengers but also from nature. These shanty houses have substandard struc-

tures, with makeshift roofs and walls. People have to live in whatever shelter they can create with the materials they can find from the garbage hills, such as paper, plastics, rusty cans, tins, baskets, broken plates, cartons, glasses, irons, etc. Most of these dwellings have only one room occupied by large families, with men, women, and children packed inside without the comfort of furniture. Since the squatters have not established a harmonious relation with nature and the environment, and since they try to survive in spite of nature rather than coexist with it, nature appears as a hostile force. The residents have to fight against life-threatening environmental conditions since these shanty houses do not provide any protection from natural elements like heavy rains, thunder, howling winter storms, and piercing winds. Since the shanties are not durable enough, the squatters have to rope down the roofs and nail supports to the walls to prevent them from being uprooted and swept away. In spite of all the precautions they take, during the winter their houses collapse or burn down since their chimneys can easily catch fire. With the first snow of the year their fragile roofs are torn away, and babies in cradles are swept hundreds of yards away by the strong wind. Even birds make fun of the flying roofs and babies, with their comic imitations of birds in flight. Moreover, these slums have no public infrastructure facilities like water piping, clean drinking water, electricity, basic health care, sewers, or paved roads.

The shanty town is demolished 37 times by the local authorities, but the squatters never give up and on the very night of the demolition they always rebuild their slum houses with what is left over. However, each time the houses get smaller, more shapeless, and more unlike houses. After each demolition, the hill gets bleaker.

Because of the on-going war between the squatters and the demolishers, this place is initially called "War Hill." After the neighbourhood is officially recognised, the local authorities rename the place "Flower Hill." After this name change more people flood into the place, believing it must be beautiful. Kurdish Kemal, one of the residents, finds a way to make profit out of this growth. He puts into practice his plan for the slum expansion. He spreads the rumour that the forest lying below Flower Hill has been changed into heathland and is thus open to public construction and development. One evening, he encourages factory workers to enter into the wood to knock down the trees and clear the land, after which trucks start to come, carrying construction materials. Kurdish Kemal sells the parcelled land so that more slums can be built. He collects all the jobless young men and equips them with guns, knuckledusters, and money to prevent any demolition by the authorities.

After gaining legal status, Flower Hill becomes rapidly industrialised.

The number of factories grows to such an extent that dwellers do not have to collect, select, or recycle the garbage to earn their living any more, since these factories provide new job opportunities. However, this contributes to the deteriorating quality of life in the neighbourhood. Unregistered and illegal factories also soon appear one after another, and their numbers increase every day, producing substandard and fake goods including detergent, fruit powder in all colours, fruit juice, chocolate, bleaches, and soaps. The residents now wash their clothes with these fake detergents, drink fake fruit juices, and eat fake chocolate. Tekin highlights the close association between industrialisation, economic development, and continuous environmental degradation. Due to the quick growth of production and consumption, intensive industrialisation creates a great amount of pollution and waste, bringing about a detrimental ecological impact that is not taken seriously because only a marginalised population is suffering from it.

Latife Tekin attacks capitalisation for its environmental injustice. In this neighbourhood, economic development triumphs over environmental and public health because of widespread poverty. When polluting and environmentally hazardous industries and production processes are carried to this hill, these people are doubly victimised by what Rachel Carson calls “malignant side effects” of industrial capitalism. The labourers who are exposed to industrial toxins inside the factory are at the same time the community residents who are exposed to this pollution outside the factories, since their neighbourhood is adjacent to the factories whose production processes are sustainable neither for the ecosystem nor for the community. The factory workers who are employed to do the unhealthiest tasks are placed at risk in a workplace that has no protective health and safety programs because the local industries and multinational corporations are reluctant to spend money on pollution prevention and control, environmentally sound disposal methods, and environmental restoration. Tekin draws attention to the absence of efficient and important governmental controls and regulation. Thus, these factories spread like mushrooms with every right to degrade all living forms, releasing massive quantities of pollution and toxic waste into the land, air, and water without taking the trouble to worry about its harmful effects on the public health of people—who have nowhere else to go—and non-human entities. The snow-like powder emitted into the air and the blue waste water pumped into the land by the factories add to the magical realism the narrative is built upon, the magical description creating a contrast to its seriousness. The industrial poisoning of the environment reaches crisis proportions in a very short time. Air pollution blankets the garbage hill. The heavy metals released, along with pollution, penetrate deep into the skin, organs, and

bloodstreams of the community residents.

The environmental threats the residents in the Flower Hill are faced with are not coincidental. Environmental degradation cannot be thought of independently of human rights violations including “the right to health,” “the right to property,” “the right to equality,” and “the right to participate” (Picolotti and Taillantin, xiv) in the community-based environmental decision-making processes. On the contrary, there is a symbiotic relation between these two. Industrial complexes and waste disposal areas are not randomly selected or located, as already discussed. In the novel, the minority and low socio-economic communities are selectively victimised and intentionally targeted not only by corporate and industrial polluters but also by local governments, as is seen in the patterns of human settlement and land use in Istanbul. This can be explained in terms of environmental racism. These communities lack socio-economic and political power and have a lower capacity to organise themselves into effective groups to raise political opposition, and are therefore less likely to mobilise the public for action to resist against the violation of human rights. They are therefore deprived of the right to live and work in a safe environment. With no awareness and impetus to fight for clean water, air, food, and soil, they allow for their own victimisation. Although they can see the hazards of toxic chemicals in nature and their immediate environment because of the toxic waste dump, they cannot display any act of resistance since the factories provide jobs for them. Whenever they organise themselves to struggle against the poisoning companies and factories, they are sacrificed for the capitalist system that demands more benefits and more profits in the name of economic progress. People plus organisation cannot speak louder than the money and influence of the corporations and factories.

Environmental justice goes hand in hand with economic and social justice because of the close “connection between poverty, racism, and ecological problems” in urban neighbourhoods and poor rural communities of colour (Faber, 6). In the novel, the labourers form coalitions and unions and start to talk about the working class and the exploitation and abuses they are exposed to. Factory workers are told that they have such great power that they can change the world. Their strikes arouse hopes that permeate into the whole neighbourhood for the time being. The residents who have wishes write them on small pieces of cloth, and bring them to the striking factories so that they will come true. They mainly wish for jobs, roads, public transportation, and schools. However, these striking and resisting workers cannot endure the economic pressure since their resistance and struggle put their jobs in jeopardy. They are threatened with workforce reductions or downsizing. They cannot be expected to demand environ-

mental justice when they are faced with “job blackmail” (*Ibid.*, 21) in the form of job insecurity, the increased laying off of permanent workers to employ temporary workers at lower pay, and the speeding up of the production process. They are not even invited to sit at the table for negotiation talks. The workers who have mobilised themselves into labour movements, demonstrations, and strikes are declared to be potential threats and enemies who should certainly be driven away from the neighbourhood. Thugs appear soon after, practicing physical violence over those who ask for redress, insurance, and union. Workers’ strikes, along with the unions, labour movements, and various struggles to demand labour rights, create fragmentation in the community, and conflicts arise between the workers who go on strike and those who work no matter how bad the working conditions are. The unions have been of little help, and both union and non-union workers under economic pressure have to accept to work longer hours with low wages in miserable health and safety conditions. After the factory workers, the residents are also mobilised to fight against industrial pollution, toxic dumping, and the other environmental dangers facing them. However, the resistance of a local organisation through acts of civil disobedience does not bring any results.

The link between ecological degradation and adverse public health effects is another issue Tekin brings to our attention. Day by day, the appearance of the slums improves; the ghetto dwellers start to enjoy a relative abundance after the establishment of the factories around which the land fills with hazardous chemicals. However, they suffer from various health problems including cancers, miscarriages, infertility, birth defects, developmental problems, skin disorders, and immune system problems. There is also a rapid spread of epidemic diseases because of a lack of sanitation and safe water supplies and because of poor nutrition. Unusual diseases and wounds that people have never seen before become widespread. Babies no longer grow up, men with their bent necks look like scarecrows. When these perilous and fatal consequences are considered, the practices and decisions carried out in this neighbourhood, both economic and environmental, can be taken as genocidal acts.

It is ironic that the medicine factory, which is supposed to offer cures for diseases and illnesses, produces hazardous and poisonous chemicals that people initially mistake for snow because of its colour. It is accompanied by an unbearable smell, harming the fauna and flora within three days. All the trees and flowers dry up and chickens die. People cannot keep their heads straight up any more. Children grow purple and fall into a sleep from which they never wake. The residents, to get rid of the factory and its adverse effects, attack it for days. However, an agreement is nego-

tiated between the residents and the owners of the factories due to displays of generosity and good intentions. The bosses apologise to the residents for the inconveniences and troubles they cause by sending yoghurt, towels, soap, sugar, and milk to the squatters as gifts and send a doctor to examine them, which change all the swearing and curses into prayers for the factory owners. These efforts are welcomed by the workers, and they become extremely grateful to their bosses. After earning the prayers of the residents, the owner of the medicine factory releases blue hot water, which turns the neighbourhood into a carnival. The residents celebrate the hot water, completely unaware of the fact that it is harmful. They even establish a fountain to use the water to wash their clothes, kitchen utensils, rugs, and even their children. They feel privileged because, although it is winter, they can enjoy the luxury of having a bath with hot water in the snow. However, their happiness lasts for only three days. They start to observe some changes taking place in their bodies—their skin comes off, their faces get purple, blue marks appear on the faces of children, and their hair grows white. The only precaution these people can take to protect themselves against the harmful chemicals is to keep their windows and doors closed and eat yoghurt so as not to get poisoned.

Similarly, one of the legendary figures of this place, Bay Izsak, who constructs a refrigerator factory in the same manner that slum houses are built, can be given as an example of how workers are systematically victimised and deceived with small bribes for which they feel extremely grateful. First, he dresses like a worker and goes to the factory along with the other workers, declaring all to be his brothers. He is attentive to their problems, and he even gives them pocket-money for their children. However, he undergoes a radical transformation after he gets familiar with the rules of the capitalist economy. He hires a manager who has been educated abroad, which becomes a turning point in the relationship not only between workers and bosses but also among the workers themselves. There is no more premium payment. A new system of wages is introduced and workers are now paid according to the amount they produce. This means workers should work more and faster. The workers are also pressured to resign from the labour unions. Izsak's factory is expanded underground to include a graveyard, which leads to rumours that he will bring the dead to life and replace them with the living, who will die of the refrigerant gas soon, especially after he embellishes the Hills with skulls and bones for children to play with. The small rooms built underground are illuminated to distinguish them from the graves. After that, he is associated with the symbol of evil, trouble, and misfortune. In order to regain the trust of the workers, for a year he distributes milk to those who are poisoned by the

gas and builds a mosque next to his factory, which he later uses as storage for his goods. His efforts please the workers and, thanks to them, he starts the production of new goods such as washing machines, radios, and ovens.

The industrial poisoning of the environment reaches crisis proportions in a short time. The disposed waste of the factories changes the colour of the soil to scarlet. The clouds also become colourful, and colourful clouds bring colourful rains. As a result, natural species and habitats in this neighbourhood disappear. The hills become completely barren. Birds fly away never to come back again, and chickens no longer accept food from the hands of women. Even the sound of the wind is silenced and replaced by the howling of the factories.

Like industrialisation, capitalism also intrudes into every corner of the neighbourhood. Capitalism and ecology have always been opposed to each other in their interactions. Capitalism, which aims at unlimited economic growth at any price, is seen as one of the leading causes of environmental degradation. Ecological problems are never seriously dealt with in capitalism since nature and natural resources are seen as inexhaustible, replaceable, renewable, or dispensable. After the boom in factories and workshops in Flower Hill, a bank branch is opened, bringing in the tide of the competitive capitalist economy. This gradual penetration of capitalism entices the residents to enter into fierce competition to obtain more goods, which increases household consumption to a great extent. Whenever one family buys a new item, the other neighbours get the same thing the next day. In a short time, all the houses are decorated with identical items. This competition among the residents leads to competition among the salesmen, who flood into Flower Hill to sell more goods to them. However, more consumption means more factories, and more factories means greater use of materials and energy and the dumping of more waste into the environment, which worsens the ecological degradation.

The ethnic minorities in this slum community suffer not only from human rights violations and environmental destruction, but also from the culturally established prejudices and biases. Gypsies are lured to the hills by the flow of the colourful smoke emitting from the factory chimneys. They build new slums with empty cartons, covering the floors with magazines and hardcover books and the roofs with the feathers of seagulls. The insides of the houses are embellished with glittering papers and broken dolls that they find among the piles of garbage. However, gypsies and red-heads become the target of teasing and physical attacks. Many rumours and stories are made up to offer justifications why these “homeless,” “religionless,” and “filthy” people have always been undesirable. They are not wanted in Flower Hill for the fear that they will turn this place into an un-