

**Environmental Concerns in Andrea James' *Yanagai!*
Yanagai! and Drew Taylor's *The Berlin Blues*: An Eco-
Critical Perspective.**

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Abstract:

Within the initiative taken by Cheryll Glotfelty, the new discipline and theory known as ecocriticism came into existence. Ecocriticism explores the relationship of literature with the natural world and further examines the role the environment and the natural surroundings play in the minds of writers during the creative process. The present paper aims to examine two plays from the Australian and Canadian works of literature; the first play is *Yanagai! Yanagai!* (2003) by Andrea James, while the other is *The Berlin Blues* (2008) by Drew Taylor. In these two plays, James and Taylor reveal colonization's effects and assert that Eurocentric ideology is based upon making the occupied lands subordinate to the colonizer's powerful hegemony. The prevailing conception is that the colonization of Aboriginal Australia was about controlling their land, the real treasure. Aboriginal Australian and Canadian playwrights have portrayed the environmental degradation of their lands at the hands of White settlers. In this paper, the interest in revealing environmental degradation has been dramatized by playwrights, whose plays incisively reveal the extreme danger of such an ecological crisis in the past, present and future.

Keywords:

Canadian literature, Australian Literature, environment, eco-criticism, Berlin Blues, Yanagai! Yanagai!

المخاوف البيئية والنقد البيئي في ياناغاي! ياناغاي! (٢٠٠٣) لأندريا

جيمس وبرلين بلوز (٢٠٠٨) لدرو تايلور.

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ملخص البحث

ظهرت نظرية النقد البيئي ضمن المبادرة التي اتخذتها شيريل غلوتفيلتي. ويحاول النقد البيئي استكشاف علاقة الأدب بالعالم الطبيعي والبيئة المحيطة. ويدرس كذلك الدور الذي تلعبه البيئة المحيطة في افكار الكتاب المبدعين أثناء كتابة الأعمال الابداعية. تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى دراسة مسرحيتين من الأعمال الأدبية الأسترالية والكندية. المسرحية الأولى هي ياناغاي! ياناغاي! (٢٠٠٣) لأندريا جيمس، والآخرى هي مسرحية برلين بلوز (٢٠٠٨) لدرو تايلور. في هاتين المسرحيتين، تمكن جيمس وتايلور من الكشف عن آثار الاستعمار على البيئة مؤكدين أن الأيديولوجية الأوروبية المركزية تقوم على جعل الأراضي المحتلة خاضعة لهيمنة المستعمر. المفهوم السائد هو أن "استعمار السكان الأصليين في أستراليا كان يتعلق بالسيطرة على الأرض، والثروة الحقيقية للسكان الأصليين في جميع أنحاء العالم. وقد صور الكتاب المسرحيون الأستراليون والكنديون الأصليون التدهور البيئي لأراضيهم على أيدي المستوطنين البيض. في هذه الورقة البحثية، تم تصوير الاهتمام بالكشف عن التدهور البيئي من قبل الكتاب المسرحيين، الذين تكشف مسرحياتهم بشكل قاطع عن الخطر الشديد لمثل هذه الأزمة البيئية في الماضي والحاضر والمستقبل.

الكلمات المفتاحي:

الأدب الكندي، الأدب الأسترالي، البيئة، النقد البيئي، برلين بلوز، ياناغاي!

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Introduction:

A distinguished playwright, Andrea James who belongs to the Yorta Yorta people has been awarded an Arts NSW Aboriginal Arts Fellowship. Her best-known play, *Yanagai! Yanagai!* (2003), reveals the struggle of the Aboriginal Yorta Yorta people to with back their original and located around the Murray River. Like other works reflecting James's conflicting issues, the play sheds light upon the environmental consequences of the Aboriginal people's disposition of their land. These issues include the damage caused by "changing the course of this river forever", which results in getting a "rotting carcass" and "stinking flesh" (James 36). The Eco-critical concerns are thus, the White settlers' demand for their entitlement to the Murray River and its land, which results in a change of the course of the Murray River, affecting the inhabitants and the surrounding land.

A keen observer of contemporary Native life, Drew Hayden Taylor is a native Canadian playwright whose literary production varies, including plays, short stories, and critical essays. His writings, particularly the dramatic works, explore the possibilities of living in the city and its opposing polar of country life. For him, the theater is a way of making the Native voice distinctive. In his essay "*Alive and Well*," Taylor states that "theater has become the predominant vehicle of expression. Theatre is a logical extension of the storytelling technique... taking your audience on a journey" (61). This line of thought is evidenced in *The Berlin Blues* (2008), which engages with land ownership in an intensified way. The play dramatizes a group of Germans who offer the inhabitants of Otter Lake the opportunity to change the lake into a theme park. The

examination of the ecocritical approach to touristic development is based on mapping the theme park in a way that echoes the ecocriticism theme is related to the division of the lake and is motivated by the Germans' wish to exploit the land.

Discussion:

James and Taylor's plays record the playwrights' dramatic responses to disastrous environmental degradation. The two plays were published in the first two decades of the new millennium. They also draw upon significant environmental events in the history of Australia and Canada and refer to their historical contexts. Thus, the new millennium is an important period to consider for many reasons. The first reason concerns the increased awareness of and protests against environmental degradation, as to be reflected in the two plays. The second involves ecocritical dimensions, which have abolished the old idealized nature writing inspired by the Romantics. The plays assert both White and indigenous playwrights' resistance to impending ecological disaster caused by the intrusion of the Whites into indigenous lands.

Moreover, the two plays are grouped to trace the destruction of the land in which the indigenous people live. Considered as a whole, these ecocritical plays deserve to be acknowledged for their contribution to how the intrusion of the Whites changes the ecosystem of the environment. Thus, they are in the line with Buell's assertion that ecocriticism "amounts to nothing less than a new Copernican revolution that the world must no longer be thought of as revolving around us" (*The Future* 105-106). The playwrights portray the interconnection between humans and nonhumans on the stage, which opens the perspective of the role of the theatre not as a mere place but rather as a space with no boundaries.

The plays in this paper also explore the intimate relationship between the environment and Aboriginal people, therefore, the ecocritical concerns traced in the plays follow the viewpoints of

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Buell, who believes that “at most, we can attempt to speak in cognizance of the human being as ecologically or environmentally embedded” (*The Future* 8). The viewpoints expressed by Greg Garrard, an influential professor of environmental ecocriticism, are also of paramount importance, for he strongly advocates that “ecocriticism demands attention to literal and irreducibly material problems such as ozone depletion” (189). His major concern is to “grasp the planet as a biosphere, as distinct from the primary political and economic globe of globalization,” and he is in agreement with Huggan’s and Tiffin’s views regarding ecocriticism and refers to their views in his ecocriticism (193). Gerrard focuses on the ambitions of postcolonial ecocriticism “to make exploitation and discrimination of all kinds, both human and nonhuman, visible in the world; and, in so doing, to help make them obsolete” (Huggan and Tiffin 16).

Furthermore, the ingenuous world becomes irrational. Everything is unimportant and without order. Thus, their existential crisis in an absurd world reaches its highest point beyond any resolution. They are caught in a situation in which they become absurd beings entrapped in the irrational world around them, therefore; this paper adopts an existential philosophy based on the views of the influential thinker Albert Camus, whose *The Myth of Sisyphus*, around which the analysis revolves, includes key existential themes that can be related to the status of the indigenous people. In each play, the indigenous people’s connection to the environment is established through the detailed icons of nature with which they have a special relationship. Essential to the significance of the environment is the revelation of the impossibility of finding a place that can replace their own. This issue adds much to the indigenous existential crisis which “loss of meaning and security becomes inevitable” (Yang et al. 53).

Aboriginal Australian playwrights have portrayed the environmental degradation of their own lands at the hands of White

settlers. In this paper, the interest in revealing environmental degradation has been dramatized by several playwrights, whose plays incisively reveal the extreme danger of such an ecological crisis in the past, present and future. To some extent, the indigenous who dwelled in Australia and Canada, share ancient and intimate mythological roots. This intimacy is promoted by the connection between the indigenous and their environment. Many literary scholars have tried to create and recreate the Aboriginals' vision of their environments. This vision is overlapping, because of the previous presence of the British, and conflicts with others, due to the effects of colonization. Thus, writing about Australian and Canadian indigenous people cannot dispense with the consideration of the unwelcome British intrusion in the land. The centrality of the land to indigenous lives drives indigenous studies to focus on the interaction between the indigenous and the British settlers, on one hand, and the indigenous and the nonhuman environment on the other.

The ecocritical issues function as driving forces and are developed by White settlers to control and alter the land drastically, relegating its inhabitants to a marginalized status. Thus, Australia and Canada become sites of conflict where the indigenous are denied the right to possess the land, forcing them to live in an unending abyss. Therefore, they fall into an existential crisis. While "a crisis can originate when an event disturbs normal functioning to a high degree, environmental crisis (appear) to become an existential crisis" (Yang et al. 56). The characteristics of the existential crisis are evident in roles played by the principal characters of the plays ranging from "loss of meaning, despair(to) loneliness and dissolving of the future" (58-59).

In this respect, the plays raise questions concerning indigenous existence. Many of them, steeped in existentialist thought, articulate a philosophy of life before and after the arrival of White settlers and apparently engaged in an infinite cycle of disorder. In addition, considered as a whole, the plays stress a doubtful ending, nothing is certain, regarding that will be the next measure to be

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taken to remediate the devastated land. After the destruction of their environment, the indigenous world becomes irrational; everything becomes unimportant and without order, and their achievements become empty and without value. They are therefore entrapped in an existential crisis in which they become absurd beings separated from the world around them. When existence is absurd, there is no meaningfulness; this is precisely the driving force that creates the existential crisis of the characters.

In Australian theatrical productions, the body of studies treating the intersection of human and nonhuman worlds as subjects to the environmental crisis has substantially, but the number of literary studies examining the impossibility of interaction between humans and nonhumans remains deficient. James belongs to the Yorta Yorta people and vividly portrays the people's struggle for claiming possession of the Murray River and the land. As the title suggests, through its use of the command to go away, *Yanagai! Yanagai!* Recounts how the Aboriginals, though struggling in the courts, have been denied any right to claim the native title - roaming hopelessly in an absurd world. The play features the arrival of Munara to save the degraded Aboriginal land by searching for Curr, the White man who is responsible for bringing other Whites to exploit the land. However, Munara fails to take revenge on him; thus, the play ends with her waiting for a drastic change that never comes.

The play is "a war cry," to use James' precise description, that the Whites are not welcome and should leave and go away (James 1). This is in consideration of the fact that the Murray River, as part of the natural environment that has been eliminated as a result of the change of its course by the Whites, forms an integral portion of the play's backdrop. Accordingly, an ecocritical approach to read the play focuses on the critical issue of "entitlement" which, as Huggan and Tiffin advocate, can be seen to amount to a continuing record of justified dispossession couched in the

language of historical necessity (129). This entitlement reserves the Whites the right to dispossess the Aboriginals' land based on the historical belief that the Aboriginals' right of entitlement with history and become part of the past. In significant ways, the Whites' denial of entitling the Aboriginals to land is the driving force leading to environmental degradation.

It is pertinent to highlight that the play is set after the British settlement, specifically during the postcolonial period. Focusing on such a play will explain how Aboriginals, after having been colonized, still experience serious problems in terms of their relations to their environment. The play is also an indictment against the degrading state of the river in postcolonial Australia, in which the laws that connect the Aboriginal and the environment have been contravened by the judges, starting from Judge Howard Olney's Native title judgment between 1994 to 2002, who attempted to "wash away Yorta Yorta people's rights and connections with the ancestral lands" (James V). to achieve his goal of the extinction of the Yorta Yorta, Olney clings firmly to his pretext that "when the tide of history has washed away any real acknowledgment of the traditional law and any real observance of traditional customs, the foundation of Native title has disappeared without any possibility of returning when once lost away" (Reilly 143). James criticizes the court's insistence on the necessity of finding historical evidence for the Aboriginals' Native title. As a result, the Aboriginals lost their entitlement. They were removed from their land to live in missions where they were not allowed to pass on their traditional or Native language to their successors, resulting in "land rights can be considered co-extensive with the history of indigenous theatre" (Huggan and Tiffin 122).

Based on the historical backdrop, the dilemma of the Aboriginals in their own land is notable, as they refused Judge Olney's trial ordering that any connection to land had expired in the nineteenth century. The issue of entitlement of Natives has been a controversial one. Michael Stuckey. In his influential article entitled "Not by Discovery," remarks that "the Australian courts

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have been struggling with the issue of the place of history in several recent Native title cases,' and the Yorta Yorta case is not an exception (21). in this case, the Whites settlers' quest for entitlement to the land "can be seen amount to a continuing record of justified dispossession couched in the language of historical necessity" (Huggan and Tiffin 129). the judge demanded that the Federal Court relied heavily on the historical documentary source entitled " Recollections of Squatting in Victoria", written by Edward M. Curr in 1883 over the oral Native title claim made by the Aboriginal. The Yorta Yorta people's quest for a Native title also demand acknowledgment of their traditional laws and customs related to their land. However, the White settlers refused any consideration of the land being under Aboriginals' relation to the land. Such contravention of the Aboriginals' ecosystem is characterized by the judge, who adopts the ideology of the colonizers in their appropriation of the land. The enterprise is further identified by Huggan and Tiffin as being the primary goal of the White settlers to perform "the use/abuse of the environment for the benefit of the settler" (169). Denying entitling the Aboriginals, the White settlers use the Murray River for their own benefit at the expense of the Aboriginals.

The attempt to change the degraded status quo is conveyed through the trials' failure to give the Aboriginals their due Native title. In this respect, entitlement becomes a critical issue, because "post colonized communities' sense of their own cultural identities and entitlement... represent the ontological basis for their territorial claims to belong... (and) is often a heart ontological rather than the specifically juridical question" (Huggan and Tiffin 20). this quote is applicable to the case of the Aboriginals, whose connection to their territories is related to their cultural identity, especially considering that the Aboriginals are verbally victimized in the face of White judges. The Aboriginals clarify how their land should be saved and preserved, as it is the source of plants feeding

the animals. In “serving the Living land, Maryrose Casey states that “the Physical world in all its aspects is part of a sacred bequest from “Dreaming Creators” (153). The Aboriginals’ sacred sites, being essential parts of their ancestral Dreaming doctrines and cultural relations, drive them to protest in the court against their denied Native title: “we just want our land back!” (James 21). Furthermore, the sense of their dignity, compounded by their respect for the nonhuman environment, lies at the root of their land claim.

On the other hand, rivers in Australia have significantly contributed to environmental debates concerning their history of providing the Aboriginals with essential living resources. To place the Murray River in its historical context, it is the second-longest river in Australia. Accordingly, entitlement, featured in James’s play can illustrate that “to assert one’s right to live in a place is not the same thing as to dwell in it; for the assertion is possession, not belonging, and dwelling implies an at-homeness with a place that the genealogical claim to entitlement may reveal” (Huggan and Triffin 82). Further, the land Lawrence Buell considers should “share the conviction that the Aboriginal environment ought to be more pristine than it is, ought to be a healthy, soul-nurturing habitat” (*Writing* 38).

In James’s play, the description of the river is an important reminder of how it was, and how it became. At the beginning of the play, Tellers 1 and 2 express the beauty of nature to the extent of sublimity. The play opens with references to the beautiful “river systems,” in that “the river is pure, to the bottom, flood makes on the trees, at head height, the smell of water, grainy sand crunching underfoot, and the beautiful river, flowing ever on” (James 2). Through such vivid images of the river, James maintains the relationship of the Yorta Yorta people to the river by stating that it is “(their) lifeblood” (James 2-3). Amid this beautiful river, it is notable that the Aboriginals are dependent on what it provides them with in terms of natural resources, including “fish (and)

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thousands of trees as the eye can see. The grass is soft beneath their feet" (James 1).

Obviously, the river's ecosystem as "a discrete unit that consists of living and non-living parts, interacting to form a stable system "is disturbed by the invasion of the White settlers (Allaby 132). The old Yorta Yorta Uncle, the speaking voice of old people, observes sadly that the old Promises were not kept. A man came here for some peace and quiet Nap. No good talking. Never done anyone any good" (James 5). Uncle hints at the colonial invasion or the tranquility of the land. He also refers directly to the main issue of environmental degradation, which changes the course of the river. He asserts that the course of being shifted at the hands of the British long ago and that its terrain has been damaged. In this regard, in his book, Collapse, Jared Diamond asserts that "land degradation on has resulted from Clearance of native vegetation. . and is causing deteriorating water quality with damage to the Murray-Darling River systems" (399). The consequent issue that arises is the environmentally unsustainable human relationship with the nonhuman elements of the environment.

The whites disregard their obligation toward the river and its inhabitants. They appear Different to the river's sustainability: an ecological term defined as "the development a seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future" (Allaby 376). Huggan and Tiffin further regard sustainability to be a useful banner under which to fight for social as well as ecological justice in the postcolonial world [which) needs to be recognized not just for what it is, but where it is, e.g., in the self-monitoring practices of Indigenous societies" (33).

Huggan's and Tiffin's specification for the self-monitoring practices can be attributed to the Yorta Yorta's support for the Murray River, which is provided by "a strong sustainability framing compatible with Yorta Yorta law, [that] welcomes

positive development in favor of the river's sustainability" (Lynch et al. 115). However, this law is not enacted, Huggan and Tiffin consider the Whites' development in disguise to be the "contemporary transnational dispensation [that] align development with a predatory socioeconomic -global capitalism- that effectively spreads inequality at the same time as it champions its own adherence to freedom, democracy and human rights" (30). Therefore, the seriousness of the river's status drives many writers, such as James, to depict its degradation as a historical phenomenon, and its effect lasts until the present time and are likely to increase in the future since "the deliberate act of changing its course disturbs the balance of its system" (Sinclair 20).

James' keenness to confront the dilemma of the river created by the White settlers is particularly evident because the river features predominantly in the Whites' entitlement to the land. Hence, James brings the immense task of writing about the Murray River into clear focus. The play, as a literary text, with limited boundaries, becomes challenging for James to make clear distinctions between the causes and effects of environmental degradation, as all are inextricably interwoven. However, the play remains James' complex response to the gradual disconnection between Aboriginals and their deteriorated environment. She treats the whites' entitlement to the land and their consequent changing of the river's course as causes leading to environmental degradation and "human disturbance, reducing the river's natural resources in number and quantity" (Rani 92).

From an ecocritical perspective, rivers act as a primary focus when one analyzes the environmental components of a country. They are a source of water supply that is indispensable in a country's organic system. Each river has its own system of rising to a definite basin, and its water passes by a drainage channel to reach either a sea or an ocean reservoir. The general river system, regarding its water, might be diverted into the sea due to new courses. Furthermore, the rivers' channels are typically subject to change and adjustment. Therefore, it is essential to examine the

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representation of the Murray River and its ecological crisis through the lens of James' ecological vision, especially since the river and its surrounding landscape are a significant domain of conflict between the White settlers and the Aboriginals. What follows makes clear that the degradation of the environment includes all its constituents, extending from the impossibility of protecting biodiversity to negotiating the failure of sustainable living in the river.

Clearly, James' anti-capitalist tendencies are illustrated richly through the court sessions, having no choice other than waiting for Justice, which corresponds with "one of the axioms of postcolonial ecocriticism that there is no social justice without ecological justice" (Huggan and Tiffin 35). James' ecological vision unveils the postcolonial orientation toward the environmental exploitation generated by capitalism. The White settlers' capitalist aim is to cut the affordable supplies of water to affect the Aboriginals' economy. Thus, the crying sound of the river is a metaphorical signal to the capitalist ideology of the whites that the river, through changing its course, is to be taken by the Whites. James' unique ecological vision is evidenced by describing the destructive change of the river's course without identifying its newly set process of river flow, and this confirms that the damage is everlasting and eternal. The White settlers deny the river its own right to flow naturally in its own channel. Huggan and Tiffin remark that entitlement to land is much more than "emotional possession of a place based on a perception of belonging" (82). The Whites act passively to possess the river and strip it of its own right to flow naturally. In *The Rights of Nature*, the environmental historian Rodenck Nash stresses that nature has its own right to exist, as it "has intrinsic value and consequently possesses at least the right to exist, [and] should be granted its own independent status away from human intervention," which is referred to as biocentrism, giving nature the centrality equal to that of people (9-10). If Nash's statement is to be

taken into a reference to the Murray River's crying sound in the play, the river is denied its own right to exist peacefully and flow naturally by changing its course forever. The Whites have violated the law of nature to satisfy their demands. Thus, the loss of biodiversity has the potential to diminish the Aborigines' connection to their habitations around the river. The Murray River has not only caused the Aborigines' displacement but also continues to be endangered because of the overuse of its resources including fishing, which is most likely to disappear due to changing its course. For this reason, James has acknowledged the ecocritical legacy of the Murray River and dramatizes it to be represented within the domain of theatrical production.

The Whites' entitlement to the land and their changing the course of the river is described in the play as "trespass" of the White settlers not only on the lives of the Aborigines but also through the dispossession of their land (James 30). The trespass of the White settlers that refers to is later transferred to the Aborigines. To clarify this point, Uncle is the one who refuses and thus transgresses the assigned rules and regulations imposed by the Whites in the court, refusing to abide by their rules. He acts according to what Denis R. Byrne states in "Nervous Landscapes" that "an indigenous minority's presence in and movement through a colonial landscape is specially controlled or constrained by the colonizers, [but they] subverted that system of spatial control, transgressing its numerous finely drawn boundaries" (170).

In addition, in a conversation with Lyall, Uncle reveals a contrast between what the river used to be and its current status. Uncle's remark reveals the degraded status of the river and its grim prospects. The large amounts of water have become gradually low due to the mismanagement of its resources. What happened to the Murray River drives the inhabitants to believe it will never be restored to its original condition. Paul Sinclair asserts that "the Murray will never be restored to its pre-regulation condition and the idea of saving the river simplifies the complexity of Murray's degradation and the significance of what has already been lost. In

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the immediate future, the Murray will become even more degraded")21). In this context, James' role is more like winter and activist who presents the status of the river, warning of its gradual and increasing degradation. Huggan and Tiffin focus on the role of writers as activists simultaneously. They praise Arundhati Roy who considers the term "writer-activist" and her "insistence on the public accountability of the writer is one of the mantras of postcolonial ecocriticism in which writers are not alone in seeking explanations for vital everyday issues, and that social responsibility is a task that needs to be shared" (34).

James emphatically directs the audience's attention to the aftermath of changing the course of the river. She alludes to, as Huggan and Tiffin do, "the literal staging of conflicts of entitlement and belonging" (20). Through the character of Uncle, the aftermath of the conflicts of entitlement becomes evident. James cherishes abundant undisturbed river water enjoyed by its own people. However, changing the course of the river is to be held accountable for creating a vicious environmental circle that causes depletion of organic life in and around the river, which then allows the Whites to colonize the river environmentally and render its "one-hundred-year-old Murray cod under impending danger of extinction" (James 29). This change, James stresses, is a crucial factor that creates a depressing future for ten Aboriginals, not to mention the fact that this river is the cause for the destruction of the ecosystem brought about by the White settlers. However, James' overall implication in the play is that the Aboriginals are driven from their own right to own the river organism, given the fact that "Indigenous water rights were ignored until formal recognition in national water policy in 2004. However, water injustice remains unaddressed in Australia, with Indigenous-specific water entitlements" (Downey 13). James thus responds to the adoption of this policy in 2004 by writing her play.

At the beginning of the play, the chorus's reference to the beauty of the river and its fertile land is the most intimidating component of the environment. The river and its land are adequate providers of natural resources, even though the Whites consume them. In this respect, the land, as envisioned by both DeLoughrey and Handley in their *Postcolonial Ecologies*, is "a primary site of postcolonial recuperation, sustainability, and dignity" (11). James is skillful in referring to both the river and its land as a network, i.e., when Aboriginals lose the river, its surrounding land is disrupted and lost simultaneously.

Taylor stages *The Berlin in Otter Lake*, rooted in a Native land, and describes the quietness of the lake disrupted by the arrival of the Germans to establish a theme park. Their arrival resembles the first step toward European intrusion and exploitation. Although the play proceeds through delineating the German design for the theme park, it ends with them leaving the lake after its destruction. The Germans' arrival is under the disguise of touristic development, an issue discussed in detail by Huggan and Tiffin who advocate that "development is generally recognized to be a strategically ambiguous term, adapted to the different needs of those who use it... based on the enormous cultural assumptions and presumptions of the West" (27). In ecocriticism, Huggan and Tiffin regard touristic development as a form of development that can have both positive and negative effects on both human and the nonhuman world. Conditioned by Huggan and Tiffin, touristic development "can be beneficial if it is molded to local needs and interests; the key is thus to find alternative forms of tourism that benefit local people and have a relatively low environmental impact" (66). However, touristic development remains a threat in that "the sustainability of tourism is no less controversial than the sustainability of development" as tourism implies a constant threat and extension of Western exploitation" (Huggan and Tiffin 66).

In the most expected ways, the lake, a component of the environment, is a space of consumption and tourism without the benefit for the Natives. The relationship between tourism and the

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Native environment becomes "a predator-prey relationship arising from the negative influence of the development of physical infrastructure, and increasing tourism services increase the potential degradation of environmental degradation" (Herandez and Leon 5). Taylor presents the Germans' attempt to reach their targets with ample financial opportunities for the sake of establishing the theme park. To do this, he exposes how the theme park will cause environmental degradation. The Germans 'attempt to create a theme park is to promote development, which "is at best a form of strategic Ruism" (Huggan and Tiffin 28). As their strategy, the Germans' development of the lake involves their strategic cartography of dividing it. The division generates territorial conflicts between the Germans and the Natives.

Birgit, the female initiator and designer of the project, who works for German Recreational Entertainment, Arts, and Technology, recounts the lake's history by "reading all the old Winnitou and Shatterhand stories. [She] even joined one of the clubs where [she] dressed up like Indians" (Taylor 41). Her partner, Reinhart, shares with her the same passion, and has "made this park [his] life's work. This will be [his] legacy" (Taylor 19). Taken together Birgit's and Reinhart's growing concerns culminate in planning "for a Native theme park called] Ojibway World" (Taylor 18).

The development of the lake promotes the intersection between the Germans and the Natives, in Interdisciplinary Measures, Huggan notes that cartography enables the writer to territorial conflicts that "reveal perceptions concerning space and culture" (25). This argument is put forward when Birgit uses the development of territorial strategies rather than conflicts to persuade the Natives to allow her to build Ojibway World. What Birgit does resonates with what Huggan and Tiffin regard as "Western development practices, and uneven development, [which].. . has historically created the rationale for expansion and

the pacification' of local peoples so as to make way for favorable conditions of international trade" (30). Such a development can be traced in the play in the attempt to create the theme park. The strategies are designed by the Germans' ideological assumptions that the lake fits into the space of their colonial imagination. In this respect, Huggan further asserts that "contemporary Canadian and Australian writing is a series of territorial disputes that provoke the hegemony assumed and/or imposed by colonialist rhetoric" (*Interdisciplinary* 23). Thus, Birgit's attempt to articulate the cartographic division is a manifestation of the German's attempt to "reterritorialize" the place, to use Huggan's terms (23). To clarify the term, "deterritorialization," is the deregulated global economy defined by Fredric Jameson as, "acknowledge[ing] capitalism's ability to adapt to changing social and economic circumstances" (qtd. in Chowdhury 132). Birgit cleverly formulates strategies that enable her to design the project. Her first strategy of dividing the lake is to promise the Natives of exploration to validate her colonial project: "Our company has spent the last four years exploring the possibility and viability of such an endeavor," Birgit expresses clearly (Taylor 19).

Next, Birgit gains the acceptance of the Natives, followed by mapping the lake and using the Germans' surveying system. Though the theme of mapping is not stated directly, Birgit's division of the lake into definite places represents accurately what the cartographers do when mapmaking. Such mapping, Birgit's second strategy, becomes a definitive operative mode, enabling her to designate the directions of the theme park and its accompanying buildings. She assigns that "over here we have the Medicine Ferris Wheel. Here's the Four Directions shuttle service to get everybody around. Turtie Island Aquanum. whiskey jack Pub and Bar The hotel will be called the Haida-Way. Get it? Haida-Way We've researched this quite extensively" (Taylor 19). In this respect, Huggan argues that "the map is a manifestation of the desire for control rather than an authenticating seal of coherence" (*Interdisciplinary* 23) Accordingly, cartography exemplifies a

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strategy of empowering the Germans at the expense of the Natives. Maps, in Huggan's viewpoint, are not detailed visual paradigms through which one analyzes the exact locations of places, rather, maps form a metaphorical entity, which, as Huggan asserts, suggests "an ongoing perceptual transformation which in turn, stresses the transitional nature of postcolonial discourse" (*Interdisciplinary* 26-27). The transitional nature of the map is what gives the dominant Germans the authority to make a change by mapping the project within the lake.

As such, the clearance of the lake reinforces the Germans' colonial power, a power that can be called "internal power," as Brian J. Harley in "Maps," asserts the exercise of power through its procedures of classifying, categorizing, hierarchizing, normalizing, disciplining, and so on, and that maps work as a form of power-knowledge" (243). Harley further supports this view, believing that "Cartography... reifies] power, reinforcing the status quo and freezing social interaction within charted lines, "which means that cartography is used to maintain the Germans' domination in the lake" (302-03).

The third strategy, renaming the lake from "Otter Lake" to "Ojibway World!" corresponds with what Huggan describes "regarding renaming the places in postcolonial cartography" (Taylor 18). According to Huggan, the arrival of the Germans to occupy the lake space can be compared to the plans following the arrival of the colonizers in dominating the Natives' territories. Taylor introduces Act Two by "performers," who comment on the actions of the play as the members of the chorus usually perform. They address the audience directly:

They came from the East, looking for something.

Even they did know not what

Strangers from attar with even stranger ways

They soon changed things a lot. (Taylor 51)

This comparison between the colonizers and the Germans creates a debatable confluence regarding the cartographic postcolonial issue that the theme park needs to be demarcated. It bears remarking that after exploring the lake, a necessity arises to rename the lake to establish the Germans' authority. The name "Ojibway World" is the direct opposite of "Otter Lake," which constitutes a dichotomy (lake versus world). In this sense, "naming is empowering since it equates knowing with naming, and in this objectification of the world, the language of White men was deemed superior in mastering the land" (Eeden 27). The Germans ostensibly have such naming power with their evocative emphasis on the world as opposed to the lake. Birgit's strategies, therefore, intersect with the Germans' ideology of capitalism, as they believe that "there is a unique opportunity to capitalize on that interest," which is an explicit manifestation of their goal (Taylor 18). Clearly, the development of the lake through the strategic cartography of dividing it intersects with capitalism. Huggan and Tiffin describe such an issue as "capitalism with a conscience, attuned to the contemporary realities of social inequalities" (29).

Birgit's further scheme for the financial investment in the theme park, under the guise of local economic growth, constitutes her fourth strategy "to invest one hundred sixty-four million dollars toward the creation of this park" (Taylor 19). Huggan and Tiffin refer to the Indian Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen, who acknowledges that the use of "Western development practices is to address environmental degradation and the violation of human freedom, "and Birgit practices are an apt example leading to environmental degradation" (29). Also, James O'Connor's viewpoint of development is parallel to Huggan's and Tiffin's. He believes that "the development of forces of production predicated on a narrow understanding of technological progress has brought about the ecological crisis by means of sustained destructive impacts on the environment" (19). Birgit's cartographic strategies of development designing the theme park, marking definite places, and pinpointing directions position her and the Germans who own

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the company-based business in a place to colonize the lake inconspicuously.

When asked about the reason for choosing the lake to launch such a project, Birgit stated that she planned to give the theme park a promising touristic future. The Germans' knowledge of the history of the lake becomes the justification for choosing the location. To empower the Germans, Birgit comes to the lake equipped with previous knowledge about it. Birgit expresses that "there is a great interest in our country for Native people. It goes back a hundred years or so" (Taylor 18). In this context, the act of selecting a territory to use as a place of marketing establishes a continual line of thought between Taylor's play and Rankin's in which the British choice of Maralinga as a suitable testing zone and the Germans' choice of the lake as a tempting touristic territory are parallel.

Moreover, Birgit provides multiple reasons for choosing the lake. She states that "Otter Lake is perfect. It has accessibility. It has a location. It has a workforce. It has many positive qualities that would make this adventure a success. That is why we want to put Ojibway World here" (Taylor 20). Birgit's choice of the lake reveals its significance to the world. The lake's "accessibility" is of paramount importance" (Taylor 20). This distinctive characteristic is central to postcolonial cartography, for "access to traditional lands is seen as essential for indigenous peoples to continue being indigenous. The right to existence implies the right to land" (Wainwright and Bryan 155). Birgit positions the lake as a site worthy of consumption and entertainment due to its accessibility. The location makes the lake worthy of transforming rather than preserving. What attests to the spaciousness of the lake is the reference to "adventure," which becomes exciting when the territory is spacious, as the lake is (Taylor 20). The turning of the lake into a paradise hints at its previous status: a rather empty place. Trailer, a Native "man of little ambition," describes the project

Vividly, declaring that "it sounds like paradise" (Taylor 12, 31). Thus, the spacious but empty lake becomes receptive to the Germans. In the Germans' eyes, the emptiness of the lake makes it a space that needs to be developed and filled with entertainment, for Birgit regards it as "empty to be filled later with entertaining tools" (Taylor 71). Apparently, Non-European lands are seen as apt to be invaded. The "lands and the people and animals that inhabited them [are] 'spaces', 'unused underused or empty" (Huggan and Tiffin 5). The emptiness echoes Johnson's reference to the emptiness in Murray, in which the bush, after digging into the ground, becomes empty.

Moreover, the increasing number of tourists implies that a lake is an uninhabited place. The process of transforming the lake into a park renders it a site that has no sense of privacy. Birgit expresses a transition in the way the lake should be imagined, from an enclosed lake to a completely changed world in terms of its technological level, the number of people visiting, and the many working opportunities for the Natives. Implying subjugation of the Natives, the working opportunities offered by the Germans, as a way of cooperating with the Natives, are only a way to blind the Natives to the oppression that will occur once the lake is transformed into a theme park. Moreover, driven by the greed to control the lake, the Germans' establishment of the park spurs many related projects for entertainment and leisure, such as "the Wigwam Cineplex, which would be the perfect spot for the ILOP, the International Longhouse of Pancakes, the Sweat lodge Spa and Sauna" (Taylor 28). Using entertainment as a pretext, the project has the capacity to blur the demarcation between the Natives and their cultural history due to their low socioeconomic status. What supports this line of argument is that "in a post-modern world governed by postindustrial, multinational capitalism, it can be argued that entertainment economy tends to choose the lowest common denominators, the most obvious stereotypes by which to render other cultures, "and, therefore, the lake is the sailable place" (Eeden 18).

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Conclusion:

With the theory of ecocriticism in mind, this paper explored the issue of environmental degradation in Andrea James' *Yanagai! Yanagai!* and Drew Taylor's *The Berlin Blues*. Significantly, drama has developed an intense awareness of the drastic environmental change the world facing, offering a way for the audience to consider the changing natural environment in both Canada and Australia. In "*Receiving Aboriginality*", Alan Filewod states that "the affinities of the British imperial experience have resulted in structural similarities in the cultures of the two countries" (365). The emergence of a professional public theatre industry devoted to producing local playwrights has followed a remarkably similar path, marked by issues of cultural nationalism and decolonization. Their similar historical patterns, (notwithstanding their complex differences) mean that Indigenous writing has encountered similar problems regarding reception in both Australia and Canada. Environmental degradation is inherent in ecological discourse to denote the damage caused by long-term industrial development. It is defined by Kusam Rani in his article "Environment Degradation" as "the deterioration of the environment through depletion of resources such as air, water and soil; the destruction of ecosystems and the extinction of wildlife" (92). Also, in his account of environmental degradation, Martin J. Pasqualetti, in "*Landscape Permanence*," states that in "the late twentieth century, environmental degradation has grown so much that only with specific intent and effort can we avoid encountering landscapes stripped, trimmed, planed, drained, and otherwise reshaped by the staggering human command of technology" (74). This ecological crisis has prompted many attempts by artists, historians, ecologists,

and literary scholars to address and defend the infrastructure of the natural world. This crisis is similar to what occurred in both Canada and Australia as being formerly British colonized countries and their experiences of environmental degradation have been almost the same. The ecological crisis is created by the Whites 'misuse of the natural environment, which has had deceives and disastrous and disastrous effects on the history of the future of Canada and Australia.

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