

Ecology and the Language of the Novel

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Abstract

While not arguing that literary criticism should be a social science, there is an argument to be made that the writing and reading of literature, and the novel in particular, are social acts. Societies, cultures and relationships are shaped, expressed and interpreted in language which is used to communicate with others. Looked at sociologically, anthropologically, linguistically or critically, this is what novels do. Novels are not merely abstract grammar rules or theories; they are instances of how we use language in the real world— and the writing and reading of novels are real-world acts — for communicative purposes as we create ideational meanings, interpersonal relationships and texts. In any actual communication, meaning is not just in the sender or the receiver of a message; it is in the relationships between all the participants in the process. For the novel, this network of participants is comprised of the writers, narrators, characters, readers, critics and students who study the novels. In this view, writers and readers are real people, not hyper-real concoctions or theoretical abstractions. We at present lack a body of research that talks to others in ways that help us to expand our knowledge of specific texts as communicative networks. It is suggested that one way we can approach this task is through a better understanding of ethnography and ethnomethodology as literary actions. To do any meaningful ethnography, we need to see the texts we study as ecosystems as well as understand that language is also an ecosystem, as are all the particular instances of it in each novel or

communicative context. When we see and hear texts, we experience them as human creations, but to do these things we need to actually see and hear them on their own terms, not through the blinkers of Theory. We can do this best when we participate in the communication from inside the situation in an ethical way that respects the language of the other participants. It also requires us to provide “thick” data in our ethnography which comes from the participants in the text and a way of analyzing that data that is commensurate with the actual language we find in the texts.

Keywords: ecology, ecocriticism, ecolinguistics, ethnography, ethnomethodology, communication, communicative competence, social context, novels, research methodology

นิเวศวิทยาและภาษาในนวนิยาย

บทคัดย่อ

แม้จะไม่เถียงว่าการวิจารณ์วรรณกรรมควรจะเป็นเชิงสังคมศาสตร์แต่ก็มีการถกเถียงกันว่า การเขียนและการอ่านวรรณกรรมโดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งการเขียนและการอ่าน นวนิยายคือการสร้างสรรค์ทางสังคม สังคมวัฒนธรรมและความสัมพันธ์เป็นไปตามภาษาที่ใช้ในการสื่อสารกับคนอื่น ๆ เมื่อมองในแง่ของสังคมวิทยา มนุษยวิทยา ภาษาศาสตร์หรืออย่างพินิจวิเคราะห์ บทความนี้ ไม่เพียงแต่กล่าวถึงนวนิยายว่า เป็นการใช้กฎไวยากรณ์อย่างเป็นทางการหรือการใช้ทฤษฎี แต่เป็นวิธีการใช้ภาษาที่แท้จริงในโลกของการใช้ภาษาการเขียนและการอ่านนวนิยาย คือการสร้างโลกแห่งความจริง และ-การเขียนและการอ่านนวนิยายก็คือการกระทำในโลกจริง

เพื่อการสื่อสาร ในขณะที่เราสร้างความหมาย ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างบุคคลและตำรา ในการสื่อสารจริงความหมายไม่เพียงแต่อยู่ระหว่าง ผู้ส่งหรือผู้รับข้อความเท่านั้น แต่เป็นความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างทุกคนที่มีส่วนในกระบวนการการสื่อสาร สำหรับนวนิยาย เครือข่ายของผู้มีส่วนร่วมประกอบด้วยนักเขียน นักเล่าเรื่อง ตัวแสดงต่างๆ ผู้อ่านนักวิจารณ์และนักศึกษาที่ศึกษานวนิยาย ในมุมมองนี้ผู้เขียนและผู้อ่านเป็นคนจริงไม่ใช่สิ่งที่ถูกสร้างขึ้นมาโดยทฤษฎีอย่างลอยๆ ขณะนี้ยังขาด งานวิจัยที่จะขยายความรู้เฉพาะเรื่องเพื่อเป็นตำราและเครือข่ายการสื่อสาร วิธีหนึ่งที่สามารถช่วยให้เข้าใจดีขึ้นคือการศึกษารื่องกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์และวิธีมนุษยวิทยา ที่เป็นกิจกรรมทางวรรณกรรม การที่จะศึกษาเรื่องกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์เราจะต้องมองตำราที่เรียนเป็น

ระบบนิเวศเช่นเดียวกับการเข้าใจภาษาในทุกๆด้านให้เป็นระบบนิเวศโดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งในแต่ ละบริบทใหม่หรือการสื่อสาร เมื่อเราเห็นและได้ยินตำราเราจะมองสิ่งเหล่านี้เป็นงาน สร้างสรรค์ของมนุษย์ แต่การที่จะทำสิ่งเหล่านี้เราจำเป็นต้องมองในแง่ของสิ่งเหล่านั้นไม่ใช่ จากแง่ทฤษฎี เราสามารถทำได้ดีที่สุดเมื่อเรามีส่วนร่วมในการสื่อสารจากในสถานการณ์ในทาง จริยธรรมโดยเคารพภาษาของคนอื่น ๆ นอก จากนี้เรายังต้องสามารถให้ข้อมูลมากมายจากชาติ วรรณซึ่งมาจากหนังสือและการตำราซึ่งตรงกับภาษาในวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล

คำสำคัญ :นิเวศวิทยา ecocriticism, ecolinguistics, วรรณนา

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Note on the style of writing in this article

One of my communicative intentions in writing this article is to communicate with my readers, many of whom are students whose first language is not English. Their cultures are firmly oral. I want to motivate them to think and to feel as they do so in a foreign language. One feature of spoken language is its redundancy. In this essay, there are several repetitions of key ideas. This seems to me to be justified when the context in which they are being repeated is new in the text. This redundancy is a way of creating feedback within the text that expands points made earlier or elsewhere. Hopefully, this conversational tone carries much of the interpersonal relationship I hope to have with my readers as I communicate my ideational meanings in the acoustic space of my text. The repetitions sounded here will hopefully refer the reader back anaphorically into the text to earlier soundings of ideas and emotions. While some academics may find this attempt to enliven the written voice distasteful, I can only hope that they will open their minds to what I am trying to say. Speech keeps us grounded in our bodies and so is a way of resisting the dualistic splitting of mind and body that I see too often in conventional academic discourse. When we speak, we keep our

language alive; once we stop speaking, our language is on the way to extinction.

As a mark of respect to other writers who I am trying to communicate with and through, I have included long quotes of their words, so that they can speak in their own voices; not just through my ventriloquism which could distort their ideas through paraphrasing them. I have also kept the same size of print for their words as I use for mine. It may just be a publishing convention to save space, but it often annoys me when I see passages from other writers squashed down in print size and space. In resisting this convention, I am stressing my concern for the visual environment of my text which has been shaped by the ways I construe my relationships with dialogue partners.

Finally: I deliberately use anthropomorphisms when referring to things in the novel. To do otherwise would undermine my point that the novel is a living entity; it would also reinforce the duality between humans and nature that I am writing against when arguing for an ecology of the novel.

Introduction

The logician's dream that men should communicate only by unambiguous digital signals has not come true and is not likely to. (Bateson: 1972, 418)

John Dewey, whose pragmatics and educational ideas have helped to shape much of twentieth century discourse on how we learn to use language to do things in the real world, saw art as experience:

The senses are the organs through which the live creature *participates* directly in the on-goings of the world about him. In this *participation* the varied wonder and splendor of the world

are made actual for him in the qualities he *experiences*. The material cannot be opposed to action, for motor apparatus and “will” itself are the means by which this *participation* are carried on and directed. It cannot be opposed to “intellect.” For mind is the means by which *participation* is rendered fruitful through sense, by which meanings and values are extracted, retained, and put to further service in *the intercourse of the live creature with his surroundings*.

Experience is the result, the sign and the reward of that *interaction of organism and environment*, which, when it is carried to the full, is a *transformation of interaction into participation and communication*. Since *sense-organs* with their connected motor apparatus are *the means of this participation*, any and every derogation of them, whether practical or theoretical, is at once effect and cause of a narrowed and dulled life-experience. Oppositions of mind and body, soul and matter, spirit and flesh, all have their origin, fundamentally, in fear of what life may – bring forth. They are marks of contraction and withdrawal. Full recognition, therefore, of the continuity of the organs, needs and basic impulses of the human creature with his animal forbears, implies no necessary reduction of man to the level of the brutes. On the contrary, it makes possible the drawing of a ground-plan of human experience upon which is erected the superstructure of man’s marvelous and distinguishing *experience*. What is distinctive in man makes it possible for him to sink below the level of the beasts. It also makes it possible for him to carry to new and unprecedented heights that unity of sense and impulse, of brain and eye and ear, that is exemplified in animal life, saturating it with *the conscious meanings derived from communication and deliberate expression*.

(Dewey: 1934, 22-23. Emphasis added.)

Through the repetition of his keywords of “participation”, “organism”, “communication”, “environment”, and “experience” Dewey emphasizes ideas that will later be recognized as essential for how we use language in terms of our relationships with the ecosystems we inhabit. For the purposes of our study, the novel’s communication network may be understood as such an ecosystem.

While the present study focuses on the proper study of the novel in its social context and in terms of the communications we have when we read them as critics, it is important to point out that many of these ideas have implications for the study of how we learn to use language in other educational contexts. This extension into English teaching will have to wait for another occasion.

At present, our tasks are to make clear how the language of the novel may be fruitfully studied in terms of the social environment as that environment is realized in the novel, how that environment is ecological in nature, and the ways that an ecology of language is created and maintained through the communications between writers, narrators, readers, critics and students. In doing these things, we hope to make a contribution to the literature of ecolinguistics and ecocriticism by expanding the horizons they at present have which see the environment only as external to the language, as something that influences and is influenced by language. Instead, what we propose is that language and the novels we find them in are themselves environments.

When we start with the idea that language and the environment are inextricably mixed and that language is best understood in a social context, as say in Halliday’s (1978) ideas of the social semiotic of language, we are moving away from certain paradigms of science that have led to the mechanistic view of the world from which ideas of technical methods have been derived. We are also distancing ourselves from fundamentally mechanistic ideas of poststructuralism

which seem to suggest that texts do not represent anything outside themselves, that texts have no meaning, and that *langue*, not *parole*, is the type of language to be studied.

How we have studied language or anything else for that matter since the time of Descartes has seemed to be a matter of finding a method suited to our preconception of the way language or other things we want to study work or are organized. The particular image we have of this organization allows us to develop ways of thinking about the thing we study. If we think of things as machines or as communicatively dead objects then we study them mechanistically or abstractly.

There is an element of self-fulfilling prophecy in this. If I think of the world one way, and I develop a technique to study that world that is based on the way I see the world, then it should come as no surprise if the image or data produced by my technique resembles the world image I already had in my head before I studied it. I then use this data to support my original conception or image of the thing I set out to study. This is another way of saying that once we believe our theory is true, we only have to fit the evidence, if any, to the theory. This sounds more like paranoid thinking or circular logic than it does a way of doing research in the real world.

When we study or teach/learn methodology in a graduate program this imposition of a narrowly defined technique seems natural. Through it we learn how to belong to the particular research community we are meant to be contributing to. Our success in mastering a particular methodology is a large part of how we gain membership to the community we are becoming a part of. It should come as no surprise that we are not encouraged to question the paradigm or the first principles of the subject we are developing expertise in. And again, this seems understandable. If we question the foundations of the community we say we want to be members of

we are actually implying that we do not want to be a part of that community but to change it. Every community, and a research community is no different in this, has its particular way of thinking and talking about the things it studies. This is the register of language that signifies our expertise and membership.

Because the ways we think and talk of our subject are entrenched in our social position within a research community, it is a hard and slow process to change the paradigm. Most such changes are usually seen as threats, errors or madness at first. This difficulty may be because when we change the ways we think and talk of things, we are also apparently changing ourselves. This seems so because we are who we say we are; we are, or at least we are *in*, the language that we use. Our language defines us. It seems that despite Bacon's and others efforts, we still basically accept truth in terms of consensus and the authority of other people: we can be comfortable in the knowledge that as we begin our search we already know we are right because we are doing what most others are doing in the dominant discourse we espouse our faith in. The ways we consent to the meaning of what we do is a part of how language seems to work. Without such agreement as to the meaning of words and structure, we have no language or community. Language builds our society and our society builds our language.

This mutual reinforcement, while being acceptable to any reasonable person, should not be taken at face value. While it seems to be a view that supports the way we do research, and the ways we think and talk now in our communities, it need not be interpreted that way. If instead of accepting the conclusion as evidence for what we already do, we turn our attention to the statement as a hypothesis or supposition that we develop in another way, we may find that the actual conclusions that we reach seem to challenge the tenets of the way we see things in our present communities of scholars.

What makes such a turnabout possible is that the definition of language that we will develop here is not the definition of language that has been used to support the old paradigms of language since the seventeenth century. These paradigms are still there in Saussure's linguistics and in Chomsky's (2000) Cartesian view of "competence" in language that I have critiqued in *Chaos in the Classroom* (2009). These writers' views shape the basic division between texts and the social world we all live in. Our problem with the conception of language which we need to research and critique is that it rests on the idea of a dichotomy, a duality that we perhaps wrongly have come to believe is a basic principle in the world and in our scientific study of the world. This duality is also the shaping force in our current ways of researching and describing language. While we continue to conceive of language in terms of duality, we will view the world in terms of that duality too. Until we can find a way to language that is not premised on duality we probably will continue to see everything through the language-glasses of duality. This task is the most important research question as I see it in the study of language. Until we can find a way out of the labyrinth of this duality, we will not find other ways of seeing and talking about things or find a way to research that doesn't demand the splitting of science and the humanities into some kind of binary opposition that has impeded thought for too long.

The need to think in other ways remains to be done in the particular fields I am interested in here, that of language and society or sociolinguistics and the research of culture and language or the humanities. Not that I see the two areas as fundamentally different or in any binary relationship. They need not be seen in such terms. In fact, if we continue to think of language and society as different or of language as a separate part of society, we will not be able to think our ways out of the labyrinth of duality because we will probably continue to study language in the dualistic ways we have been studying it for centuries that reinforce our image of language as

a part of a whole that is still separable in our methodological approaches to the study of language as a thing. It is this idea of “thinghood” that needs to be critiqued or even ultimately ignored if we are to find new and better ways to language that do not inevitably produce the image of a dualistic world of thought that has limited our research for too long. While we think in the old dualistic and linear ways, we will continue to see things the way we see them now instead of developing another vision of our subject that offers new insights and possibilities to us as students of literature, language and the teaching of language.

The questions we may develop from our new vision may have important ramifications for the ways we understand our cultures, languages, literatures and the ways we teach or communicate and create them.

Language as an ecosystem

The vision we need to embrace is that language is not only understandable as a part of a larger ecosystem, but as an ecosystem itself. In recent linguistics we have talked of language in terms of webs and trees (webs of words and tree diagrams) which imply that we see language within something else, as a microcosm or as a subsidiary thing. To these images or metaphors, I have argued elsewhere (Conlon, 2003) that we also should add language as a fluid or as water. Up to a point, my own metaphor remains only a partial image that still operates or works to lock language into the role of a thing inside another thing and so to the basic duality-trap that I now see it is necessary to think our way out of.

One way out is to suggest that language is an ecosystem as such. Whether that ecosystem turns out to be related to other ecosystems or is within another ecosystem remains to be seen. When we come to discussing the classroom where we learn most of our ways of

writing about literature as an ecosystem and to suggest that we can fruitfully envisage an ecology of education (Conlon, 2009), perhaps along the lines of Bateson (2007) who argues for an ecology of mind, we will have to consider the limitations of our metaphor again. But for now, I would suggest that such a vision of education seems unthinkable without the idea that language too may be an ecosystem and that the classroom environment may well be included in that ecosystem, and not the other way round. We should keep in mind that what we are dealing with here is a metaphor and that metaphor serves as a theory, at least in the initial stages of our thinking. Even if it turns out that our metaphor has only aesthetic or artistic appeal, such an appeal would satisfy me insofar as it may be a defensible idea in the humanities' way of doing research insofar as we need to be creative and artistic in our study of literature.

As Midgley (2002) argues, we have been concerned, often harmfully, with the debates over the place of science and the humanities in each other. We have found that science and the humanities have been seen as mutually exclusive by most thinkers. One reason for this difference is that the concept of science understood by the protagonists in the debates is basically Cartesian. If we can develop a concept of science more in line with recent developments in the rethinking about science we may overcome the fundamental opposition between art and science that has existed, at least in Western thought, for the past three hundred years. Until we have a better understanding of science, we will continue trying to put the *pieces* back together again and will fail because it is not in the jigsaw pieces that the resolution lies.

What we have to recognize is that when we are looking at verbal art, or more specifically at novels and other creative forms of language, we are not working with a literary system that is in opposition to the linguistic system. And we must likewise accept or understand that when we look at the linguistic system in art we are not looking at

that system as fundamentally in opposition to the literary system. As Lodge (1966, 79) points out, “all literary structure is language, all plots are plots of language” The linguistic system may be in a network relationship with the literary system in a poem or novel and the literary system may also be in a network relationship with the linguistic system at the same time. What makes them synergize is that the basic reality of any novel is its communicative function. Both of these systems are symbiotic in a way that we have yet to understand. The particular ecosystem of words needs to be understood while realizing that each such ecosystem is also particular to the work of art it may be found in. We have to learn to think of a work of art as a particular ecosystem while also understanding it in terms of the ways the ecosystem of the Novel operates or functions. But at the same time, we should accept the possibility that there are not two systems at work, that the sum of the parts are greater than the whole in any ecosystem.

When and if we can bring together the new ways of science which offer a more holistic and open approach to knowledge, we may bring poetry and science together again. If there is an ecosystemic way of understanding language and literature then we must not expect that one part of that system will predominate over other parts or features in the ecosystem. While we continue to try to see poetry only in terms of Science or science only in terms of Art or Poetry we will continue to misunderstand the ecosystem because we will continue to think in terms of paradigms which hegemonically divide the world and its aspects into separate units through an analytical method that is basically anti-humanistic and one-sided.

Another way of expressing the goal for our research and the ways we need to undertake that research is to look for a metaphor...kaleidoscope, not microscope, telescope or glasses/bifocals. This metaphor is suggested by Whorf (1956, 213) when he

explains that we can never be objective in describing the world we live in:

We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds – and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it this way – an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language.

Insofar as this kaleidoscopic flux is the data we have to understand when we read novels, we may also need an image of the way words are organized that is more multi-dimensional than the flat two dimensions of the structuralist vertical and horizontal axes. The chronotope or space/time aspect of words as espoused by Bakhtin (1981) tells us much about the linguistic environment (Conlon 2012): words in texts exist in space and time. If we are to take into account the space/time continuum which suggests that the two dimensions are not as separable as the two axes model suggests they are, and if we are to seek a deeper, more fleshed out dimensionality to words, we must look for these other aspects of language.

One other limitation in this view of language is that it seems to over-emphasize the visual quality of a text; the aurality of a text, especially one that records spoken words, needs an extension of the kaleidoscope as a metaphor to take account of the acoustic space in a text. Once we can conceive of an oral kaleidoscope, much as Bakhtin (1929) hears “polyphony” in the multi-voiced texts of Dostoevsky, we can start to hear as well as see the communication between participants in a novel.

When we remain focused on the linearity of language, vertical or horizontal, we are also working in a basically visual Euclidean geometry. We need another geometry, one that allows for more than two variables or sides to be seen at a time. This is the function of a kaleidoscopic perspective. It may be that we have such an alternative in fractal geometry (Conlon, 2009 and 2012).

Another necessity is to define what we are looking for with our new method. It seems, at least in quantitative applied linguistics which follows the Cartesian lines, that there is only frequency, distribution and mass/volume that are used as units of measurement and meaning. This locks us into a histogram that remains linear or a two dimensional curve on an x/y axis. Such graphs and charts tell us little about each person's actual state of mind when he/she is communicating in the language being studied. Instead, we have means and standard distributions that remain rounded and biased towards frequencies of response. They tell us little about the qualities of the choices reflected in the graphs and charts.

Apart from frequency and mass, we need to consider the possibility of observing other aspects of language: the velocity of words, their tonal aspects, their opaqueness or transparency, their vocalized or sub-vocalized relations with each other, intermentally or intramentally etc. as they are used by people in realized communicative situations.

Traditional grammar, which is marked by the Cartesian view of nature, sees the grapheme, morpheme, syllable, phrase, clause and sentence as a finite straight line. Chomskian grammar also remains bound by the sentence. Such grammars are not good at describing or explaining the dynamics of language beyond the sentence. They cannot account for the ways subsequent grammar that exists in other sentences anaphorically can change the sense of the grammar of a

preceding (past) sentence. Nor can such a grammar lead us to a deeper awareness of the semantics or phonology of the language being studied. It seems then that such grammars are of little use in the development of an ecolinguistic view of language as a whole.

From linguistics, we need to borrow more than these divisions by looking at the possibilities of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis. What such approaches offer are insights into how texts and discourses form loops and feedback networks that can explain more about how language embodies or exists on more than one level. Language is not simply a logical system; it must be able to say concrete or actual as well as abstract things about the mind, matter and life as we use language in our communication with each other. The relationships between language and these other three aspects of meaning may only be explicable in a deep and meaningful way in terms of the environment of words that form and are formed by a text or discourse.

We also need to consider how we can better understand the ways text and discourse are transformed and transform themselves and other texts. This means that we need a better way of studying intertextual aspects such as allusions and whether exophoric references are enough to describe such links between words in different texts in individual writers' oeuvres and between the works of different writers.

But the greatest challenge I see for the study of language is to tackle the issue of inner speech. Within the mind, we may find yet another ecosystem that is turbulent and non-linear (Conlon, 2012). We can conceptualize inner speech as a communicative act with ourselves, as in Vygotsky's (1987) intramentality. This seems to be what we do when we read a novel. We are communicating with ourselves and at the same time with the writer, narrator and characters in what we read. This creates a literary form of the zone of proximal

development which explains how we learn language in social contexts and grounds the study and teaching of literature in the same social context.

Literature and Ethnography

What research methods we use to develop such insights need to be discussed. When we come to accept that not all poets are hopeless sentimentalists and not all scientists are cold-blooded machines, we may relax our boundaries between the two opposing camps of the social sciences and the humanities and nurture an environment in which we can actually talk to each other as equals.

In this spirit, we may suggest that the practices of ethnography and ethnomethodology as found in sociolinguistics and anthropology offer ways of grounding our research in the language used by novelists, narrators, characters and critics to communicate with each other. Duranti (1997, 85) defines ethnography as

...the written description of the social organization, social activities, symbolic and material resources, and interpretive practices characteristic of a particular group of people. Such a description is typically produced by prolonged and direct participation in the social life of a community and implies two apparently contradictory qualities: (i) an ability to step back and distance oneself from one's own immediate culturally based reactions so as to achieve an acceptable degree of "objectivity" and (ii) the propensity to achieve sufficient identification with or empathy for the members of the group in order to provide an insider's perspective – what anthropologists call "the **emic** view"

Seen in this way, ethnography is the immersion of the researcher in the community through something that looks verisimilar to Coleridge's "suspension of disbelief". The critic's job is not to

impose theories on the material or to come to the novel with preconceived ideas about what the novelist is meaning or doing. All we can reasonably say is that the novelists often try to communicate with others. These communicative acts may be understood as speech events.

Hymes (1964) lists eleven parts of what he calls a “communicative event”:

1. Genre (stories, conversations, greetings, etc.)
2. Topic (what event participants are talking about)
3. Purpose (the function being performed by participants and what interaction goals they have in communicating)
4. Setting (the physical environment in which participants communicate)
5. Key (the emotional tone participants use)
6. Participants (the age, gender, social status, ethnicity etc. of participants)
7. Message form (spoken, written, dialects used)
8. Message content (surface level or denotative message)
9. Sequence of acts (turn-taking, interrupting, openings, closings, changing topics, channel maintenance etc.)
10. Social rules invoked (politeness, rudeness, etc.)
- II. Interpretative norms to be used or accounted for in understanding the participants shared knowledge, cultural beliefs etc. so as to decide what is to be focused on in the interpretation as literal or in need of interpretation by the researcher or the participants

These are, by extension, all concerns of any literary critic who interprets or makes judgments on a novel: Who is talking to whom; where are they talking; when are they talking; why are they talking; and how do they talk or use language in their communication. They are also the fundamental concerns of an ethnographer.

Saville-Troike (1989) lists the different sources of data that an ethnographer can use:

1. Introspection. These are the thoughts of the researcher usually recorded in a journal while in the research context.
2. Participant-observation. The researcher communicates with the other participants so as to understand what they do from their perspective.
3. Observation. The researcher remains outside the context as much as possible so as not to influence the communication being observed. This is not easy to do as we change what we see in the act of looking at it as an outsider because the participants are often self-consciously aware they are being looked at.
4. Interview. These are usually formal. Critics can do this by imaginatively constructing such interviews or they can read interviews done by the writer. In some cases, interviews are actually embedded in the novel, as when Raskolnikov is interviewed by the police in *Crime and Punishment* (Dostoevsky: 1867).
5. Ethnosemantics. This is the study of how experience is categorized by participants. We look at their terms for what is happening and what they understand as genres, events, types of language use, etc.
6. Philology. This is the traditional domain of literary criticism and historical linguistics. It looks at how language changes are shaped and how texts have been interpreted in the past by other or earlier members of the speech community. Novels that incorporate other text types within them, as many novels do, would provide examples of these texts as they relate to the text being studied by the critic.
7. Ethnomethodology. This is the study of “the methods used by social actors in interpreting their everyday life” (Duranti: 1997, 10). An interaction analysis is done of their

conversations to understand how speakers use language to do things and to interpret others' language.

All seven of these ways of thinking are often done by the literary critic and the novelist. None of the methods used are necessarily theory-based; they are, instead, coming out of the material the literary critic studies: the novels. Insofar as these approaches are compatible with the social and linguistic environment they study, they may be said to be eco-friendly and ethically sound.

Instead of looking at language as a thing separate from us, as a product that somehow can be objectivized outside of us, we need to understand that language is about relationships, values, perceptions; it lives in us and we live in it because we use it to communicate with each other.

There are signs that within English teaching an environment is developing in which this new paradigm of language will make sense. As we come to see English as a lingua franca (ELF), much as Greek was a lingua franca in the Mediterranean basin and Latin was a lingua franca throughout the Roman Empire, we are seeing how language is being recognized as a self-organizing, self-regulating system and that to an extent this system is also self-generating. To understand this new environment we will have to study the other languages and the literatures of those languages (especially in writers of English language novels) which are shaping ELF. But we have to conduct this research with a new paradigm of the language of the novel, as the old paradigm won't work to explain exactly what is happening and how it is happening.

Each of the new Englishes is developing its own ecosystems and these systems are interacting with each other in ways we have not studied in the old two dimensional paradigm of language. If we continue to try to make our findings fit the old paradigm with its

narrow Eurocentric views on native speaker-based grammar, phonology and semantics, we will distort our perceptions and limit the field of possibilities that this new ecological reality offers to us as researchers.

Instead of focusing on old models such as those implicit in native speaker English, we need to see these new environments from the beginning as much more complex systems of language that are functioning on many different levels at the same time. Describing each of these systems' grammars in terms of the old paradigm of grammar means that we are still trying to put new wine in old bottles or make the new worlds fit the old world perceptions, values and beliefs. All we will wind up doing in such outmoded thinking is making the facts fit our theories.

If we are to develop an ecology of language and ecologies of the novels we read, we need to see more than one thing at a time as ecosystems cannot be atomized or analyzed into parts. Each ecosystem exists in relation to other ecosystems, not by itself. What happens in one ecosystem affects other ecosystems. This is why we can no longer look at each of the old sciences in separation but must see them holistically and in connection with other ways of seeing that have traditionally been excluded from our fields of study. Whether bringing together art and science is a precondition to the healthy development of this new ecological view of language or literature or whether the ecological realities in our new field of ELF will make us bring these two opposing fields of knowledge together remains to be seen.

Once we commit ourselves to an ecological methodology then we accept the perception that has already been recognized in the ecological paradigm of the sciences. In deep ecology, values (social, cultural, psychological etc.) are inherent or fundamental in the things we research and in our experience of these things: we see that

we are IN the ecosystem as we study it. This is a spiritual experience in which we identify the human subjects, ourselves included, with the natural environment we are ALWAYS in. Our role is to identify ourselves in this environment and this environment in ourselves. We do this by communicating with what we find in that environment.

In sociolinguistics, this means that we need to find ways of studying the many voices that are our own voice and the ways our voice shapes the voices of others. The goal of understanding our inner voice is foregrounded in such a focus. The methodology most suited to such a study is that of ethnography. To use such a method in the study of literature requires us to think of the critic, the reader and the novelist as ethnographers. The writer creates his or her world or society through describing the ways his or her narrators and characters communicate with each other so that the reader can enter that world also as an ethnographer to understand the ways all concerned communicate with each other. The critic who thinks this way would then need to write his or her own ethnographic narrative of the novel he or she has experienced or read.

As a student and teacher of language, my concern is to think of ways of bringing the fields of language together again so as to study the ecology of mind in language and the ecology of language in mind. Linguistics, literary criticism, cultural studies, the media all need to be re-thought in terms of the implications of ecology. By going back to the historical horizon, we may indeed be inviting Chaos at first. But this is not my ultimate intention. The complexities of our fields of vision require that we see many things at the same time and in new ways, out of the boxes we have put them in. Our capacity to think in such ways has been severely limited by the technological world view we have inherited from the old sciences which have encouraged us to think in one field at a time.

Some of the most important things we learn from reading literature are ways of seeing and hearing the voices of others within ourselves, and ourselves in others. We are not machines, but people who live in communication networks of flows, relationships, ideas and beliefs that can only be understood together, not apart. But this should not be taken to imply that we need a new unified humanity. We are more than one thing at the same time, not an isolated thing stripped of its culture, history and values. If ecology teaches us anything it may be that when we close our systems off without any possibility of feedback they and we die. When we let things form their own connections in language they and we thrive. The vitality of our cultures depends on this freedom to move and room to think in.

Any theory that demands we see a text as isolated from the world in which we live and communicate with each other should be ignored. Up to this point we have discussed the need for another conceptualization of what, why and how we should study language, especially the language of communication as experienced in the novel. What we need to do now is describe the features of such an ecolinguistics or an ecocriticism which looks and listens beyond the exophoric environment or Nature. At the same time, we must remember that we are not trying to invoke linear and compartmentalized thought patterns as if we begin with such strictures we run the risk of remaining within the old dualistic paradigm. To break our ideas down into the smallest analyzable units at the beginning is to try to think our way out of the labyrinth while we are building onto that labyrinth.

Some key issues to be considered in an ecology of communication

The following list of points is not ordered in terms of a linear argument or a scale of importance. Instead, it is meant to suggest that there is no one correct way to approach the issues being raised and that we need to think of the issues from a number of different

perspectives – kaleidoscopically, fractally, polyphonically. This is one way of collecting “thick” data.

1. While ecolinguistics so far has been seen as a branch of sociolinguistics, it cannot remain isolated within that field as sociolinguistics is presently constituted. Until we have rethought the ideas of structuralism and disentangled those ideas from the goals of sociolinguistics we may continue to think in terms of the linear and binary limitations of structuralism.
2. We need to re-ask the question “What is language?” in relation to the question “What is life?” We want to look at the life of words and we need a new conceptualization of what life is if we are to avoid the trap of thinking of life as a collection of molecules or language as a collection of phonemes or graphemes that our old science has taught us to think of analytically. Words live and breathe in our voices and in the texts where we sound those voices.
3. Is there a DNA of language and, if so, is that DNA only in the brain or the mind or is it also on many different levels in all that we do? Is a phylogenetic explanation desirable at this point let alone possible? Just as the double helix may have described biological DNA but has not told us anything about what life is or means, so the DNA of language seen abstractly may fail to provide answers to the kind of questions we want to ask of language.
4. While we may have described the molecular structure of words, such an analysis tells us nothing about how these structures have combined historically or psychologically to form more complex structures. Our arguments are a-

historical. This is one of the problems with Chomsky's theory.

5. If these random molecules or phonemes etc. combine, they do so in a social and cultural context that must be explicable in historical terms. At the same time, we should be willing to countenance the idea that such organizations are self-generating and self-regulating open systems that may best be described at this stage in our thinking through the ideas of Chaos or Complexity Theory. Here we need to reconsider the practices of discourse analysis and stress less the analytical aspects and more the open horizons of discourse as discourse has been developed over the centuries in the humanities.
6. How are the mind and brain connected in terms of language? Here we need to re-read Vygotsky's work in the context of Bateson's ideas of the ecology of mind. In doing this, we should try to foreground the ways these writers saw art and science as related through their emphasis of the social context in shaping the language of the mind. In other words, we need to recognize the fundamental role played by creativity in the ways these writers thought and expressed their ideas.
7. A new question needs to be asked: What is consciousness when we talk of language and culture and how is this consciousness historically shaped? This idea of consciousness may be usefully discussed in terms of Wertsch's (1991) "voices of the mind" we communicate in with ourselves and others as writers, narrators, characters, readers and critics of novels.
8. If words in an ecosystem of discourse are seen as living organisms, then what are the ways these organisms work together to form or shape our consciousness in society and in our cultures? Pointing out the formal connections in

traditional grammars has not in itself managed to do this. Here, the field of literary criticism in conjunction with Halliday's (1978) systemic functional grammar may have insights to offer as well as ways of organizing information we find as we look more closely into this matter. Words are the shapers of consciousness and the medium of communication which embody our thoughts.

9. Linear thinking may not be the best way to approach the definition of communication channels at the level of the smallest analyzable parts of language. We need to see and hear the ways these parts form larger wholes that have their own environments that depend on each other and shape each other without necessarily doing so in linear causal ways. We should not reach for a cause and effect structure as our starting point.
10. We should not look for an over-arching unified theory of all things. Our fallibility ensures that we don't know enough about the ecology of language to do this and until we are free from dualistic models for theory we will continue to fall back into the trap of Cartesian thinking on such matters. To start with such a unified theory is to risk turning that theory into an old technology that overlooks the more chaotic aspects of what we are trying to see, hear, feel, taste and touch as experience.
11. Insofar as we talk of living, dying and dead languages we already have a linguistic source for our view that language is in some ways a living organism. For this reason historical linguistics and the study of "old" texts should be included in an ecological approach to our subject.

12. It seems contradictory to assume that society is a living organism but that culture and language are not. One way in which we can regain contact with such a life-giving spirit in language is to go back and look at the ways magic, alchemy, kabala, Gnosticism, neo-Platonism and other forms of mythic thinking have worked in the past and somehow are still powerful in society and culture today. Ideas do not die, but they may be forgotten for a while only to be resurrected later when the intellectual environment is more favourable to their reception. Such ideas seem to survive in underground streams of thought that demonstrate the futility of arguing that ideas or words are obsolete or superseded or supplanted by out latest new theories.
13. There is now a crisis in language studies that is related to the crises in our societies and cultures. Insofar as we can point to a poverty of language in our media and in our educational institutions we know that the need for an ecology of language that addresses this poverty is related to the ways we should address the issues of how other ways our life are debased and in danger. How we address these issues in the linguistic ecosystem will influence our responses in other ecosystems such as business, politics, literature, ethics, etc. These other systems will also influence the ways we develop our understanding of the ecology of language. If we want to take ethical actions based on our new ecology of language then we need to include these other systems in our ecology from the beginning. To try to apply a linguistic idea that has been developed in isolation from these other systems is to invite recourse to the old technological approach and will fail insofar as such an ecology will be by definition abstract and will face the problem of convincing others that the solutions being proposed are pragmatic and achievable in those other fields. We cannot change perceptions by cloaking our new

perceptions in terms of the old perceptions that stand in our way. Here, the question of the educational institution's ecology needs to be addressed. The mental health of our universities is related to the mental health of our discipline. The current plethora of Quality Assurance schemes that still operate within basically Cartesian parameters will impede the development of an ecology of education.

14. To see language holistically we cannot stop at the borders of language as these borders do not exist when we see ecology in the "deep" sense of the relations between ecosystems. We cannot abstract the human factor in language from the whole environment of language nor can we abstract language from the human aspects. Here, Hegel's (1807) idea of Mind as something larger than the individual human's mind may be useful. As we develop our sense of belonging to the cosmos, as in it and seeing that it is in us, we are moving towards thinking on a spiritual level that brings us close again to the power of myth in language and society. Language belongs in us and we belong in language. This is one of the main tenets of Heidegger's (n.d.) view of the world: we dwell in the house of language and we are its guardians, as he argues in his essay "The Way to Language".
15. Extending the anthropological linguistics work of Boas and Whorf, E.T. Hall (1966) drew attention to the roles body language and proxemics play in our communication. His research led him to see "communication as culture" (1966, I) and that "we must begin seeing man as an interlocutor with his environment" (1966, 6). The ways we communicate in and with our literary or physical environment are the embodiments of our cultures in the material world. In this view, our use of language to communicate builds our ecosystems in society. The novels we read are cultural spaces

that are shaped by our communications with them. This view led Hall to “use literary texts as data rather than simply as descriptions” ((1966, 94). He found that “great writers perceive and communicate the meaning and uses of distance as a significant cultural factor in interpersonal relations” (1966, 94). In his description of Kafka’s rendition of space, he stresses the impact of the great writer’s words on the reader’s body expressed as a sense of culturally shaped space: “His oppressive kinesthetic spaces release in the reader hidden feelings engendered by past architectural harassments, reminding him again that his body is more than a shell, a passive occupant of x number of cubic feet” (1966, 99). In Hall’s terms, literature is a sensory experience created through the acts of communication.

16. In developing a view of the novel as an ecosystem in the language of which we live as readers and critics, we will need to study the language in different ways that ground our search in the physical world of communication. We need to sensually experience the language as ethnographers experience the societies they study. Our data for this study will be “thick” in terms of it coming from many sources and in many different ways. When we do this, we are actually doing what any novelist does: novels are ethnographic creations of social realities that exist in the narrations of the novels.
17. We need to go into the deep linguistically shaped political structures of language and see the historical and psychological forces that shape the language. Here, the work of Raymond Williams (1973) and E.P. Thompson (1963) may be relevant. For these writers, literature always exists in the ecosystem that is the history of the work from its initial social conditions through to the ways we understand it now. As society changes, so does the way we write and read novels.

All great novelists are sensitive to the ways we change our world and our language through the acts of communication.

18. We need discourses that can accommodate the dynamic flows that are always present in the ecosystem of the novels we communicate with in order to study. Such discourses need to be ethnographic narratives of the ways we communicate with what we are studying as we study it. In writing these narratives, we are telling the story of how we learned to communicate with the texts in order to find out the questions and theories embodied in the text, not imposed from distant unhistorical theories we bring to our study as a priori versions of the truth. This is another way of saying that we need to approach the novel as ethnomethodologists who see through the senses of the writers and characters how they make sense of their world as that world is realized in the novels where they live. If, by communicating with the novelist, the narrator and the characters, we can evince our sympathy and empathy with them as communicators, then we may say that we have successfully communicated as readers and critics. In this way, we learn more about ourselves as human beings who communicate in the social contexts of the novels we read.
19. Any student of literature, history or any other form of knowledge needs to keep an open mind about who they are communicating with in the discourses they study. Isaiah Berlin makes this point when he says: "Members of one culture can, by the force of imaginative insight, understand (what Vico called *entrare*) the values, the ideals, the forms of life of another culture or society, even those remote in time and space. They may find these values unacceptable, but if they open their minds sufficiently they can grasp how one might be a full human being, with whom one could

communicate, and at the same time live in the light of values widely different from one's own, but which nevertheless one can see to be values, ends of life, by the realization of which men could be fulfilled" (Berlin: 1997, 9). Here, the issue is one of communication made possible by the use of our imagination in an open way that doesn't seek to prejudge what we find or impose our own preconceived ideas on it. If we keep to our own theories we have no opportunity to communicate with those we study; we are not studying to prove that we are right, but to affirm our humanity by recognizing the humanity of those we communicate with in order to study their societies and cultures.

20. If we are to think and communicate through the networks imbedded in our ecology, we need to have a better understanding of the idea of influence. While we may influence others without dominating them, we also need to understand the ways our language and thoughts are influenced. These influences cannot be isolated as they are part of the feedback system itself which we see as language. This means that we need a deeper cultural understanding of the ways language develops these networks and feedback loops in an ecosystemic way. Up until now, the study of these loops has been shaped by the old technology and remains locked in the still mechanized field of cybernetics. We will have to re-define cybernetics if we are to utilize ideas that we draw from there. This is part of what I have referred to as our need to criticize all of the things that we think and do in language. We have yet to countenance the possibility that river systems may be a better model for these networks than the telephone is in Shannon's theory.

21. We need to look at the system of interdependencies that binds language together as an ecological whole. While

Halliday's social semiotics has done much to deepen our understanding of this interdependency in the social context, it remains to be seen how the model of semiotics that sees things in terms of signifiers and signifieds can escape the duality trap. While it appears that a semiotic system already thinks in an ecological way, this has not been brought out consciously yet and the ramifications for this deeper ecological view have yet to be applied to the ways we practice communication. Here, ethnographic research based on broad, deep and thick evidence will be invaluable. At present, the human values of semiotics remain obscured under the weight of ideas that see signs as empty of intent, as neutral or mechanical things, which they are not. The failure of semiotics in literary studies to enunciate a humanistic value system is a sign in itself that a lot of work remains to be done in relating semiotics to the issues raised in the humanities' communicative approaches to culture and art as well as to language. While semioticians remain focused on texts as material to be worked on by their methods, they cannot see how these texts exist in symbiotic relations with their methods. This has led to a dominant trend among the semioticians and their students to fetishize the technique at the expense of seeing semiotics as part of a larger whole. Insofar as we can link this poststructuralist way of thinking to the rise of hyperreality (Conlon: 2009), we must insist that semiotics be responsible for its contributions to the hazards of intellectual life in the crumbling edifice of the university. The failure to produce criticism or actions that actually connect in tangible ways to the social and cultural challenges that face the intellectual has limited the possibilities of semiotics contributing to life outside its presently defined narrow perimeters. When we recognize that there are values and an ethics inherent in all things in the world, we cannot refuse to judge or change that world or

learn from it how being a good academic means being an ethical person whose knowledge is related to everything else in the ecosystem. We and nature, society and culture are indivisibly whole. While this may sound abstract and even religious, this holistic vision of humanity in the world has been a feature of human thought that myths have tried to express for millennia. While semiotics remains tightly linked to Saussure's *Langue*, it will remain mechanistic and so not flexible to address wider ethical issues of language and culture as created through the acts of real human communications in real social contexts.

22. The social context is the source of our relationships and our actions in our ecosystems. How these relationships and actions are conceived and have effect depends on how we communicate them.
23. When we are studying literature as language, in terms of society and culture, we must always remember that the point of our thoughts and actions is to contribute to the life of our world. A healthy relationship with the subjects we study requires us to find ways of putting ourselves into the systems we study and live in, not ways to abstract us out of them. Here, the importance of the voices we use and the personality of the thinker must be emphasized, much as Erasmus, Rabelais, Montaigne and others did in the Renaissance. We cannot abstract or banish the author or the artist from the art any more than we can abstract ourselves from our criticism. To do so is to act in bad faith as even such a gesture is still a cultural act. Emotions, intentions, biography are all important elements in the ecology of any work of art.
24. No one science or art can be placed in precedence or ranked in importance over any of the other arts or sciences as such a

solitary source seems inevitably to lead to binary thinking in which each of the other areas is measured against the dominant one. Such thinking maintains the top-down power structures that limit the world by closing it off to other sources of ideas. We cannot divide things in such hierarchies without choosing between art and science etc. Such choices are signs that we remain within the old paradigm that seeks authority in logic and in argument that asserts the need to have an ultimate test of truth. This argument seems to always lead us back to the idea that the truth is out there waiting to be discovered once and for all in a manifest way. Instead, we can bring to our research the values Popper advocates as verisimilitude which he traces back to Xenophanes whom he recognizes as “a poet and perhaps the first literary critic” (Popper: 1963, 539). If we remain in the mind-set of *proving* that our theories are “true” we may never grasp the meaning of life in an ecological world view; instead of putting our ideas together, we will remain competitive and divisive.

25. When we think of language we need to focus on issues such as multi-sensory awareness, the multiple intelligences that we all need to develop if we really are to communicate with each other in an ecosystemic way, and the ability to see our various discourses as related to each other comprehensively. While we are very good at dividing language, we have yet to develop ways of bringing it all together in ourselves and our studies.
26. At first, this new synthesis may appear chaotic and overly complex. But it isn't. We see it that way if we remain bound by the old models of knowledge and thinking that keep our language locked in the discourses of communities that have lost their ability to communicate with what they study as humans. Here, the surrealists, particularly Breton and Dali,

have much to teach us. So do poets such as William Blake. Their discourses need to be studied closely, not as curiosities or aberrations but as ahead of their times. We should take them at least as seriously as we take any “reasonable” academic discourse and probably more than we take discourses that remain locked in uncommunicative abstractions called theories.

While these are some of the things that an ecology of language needs to consider, we should now spend more time on the ways things work in ecosystems so that we can develop our depth of perception and representation so as to study language in ways that are also ecologically sound.

Our study of the ecosystem is itself a part of the ecosystem and shapes it as we study it. It does this because we are communicating with what we study. Our communicative acts are what keep the ecosystem healthy or alive. Such life is produced by the ways we feedback into the system we are in.

This relationship between ourselves as readers and writers leads to a commitment to study ethically; if we don't do this, we harm the ecosystem we are in. This often occurs in communicative events when one or more of the participants refuse to recognize those they are meant to be communicating with as equal partners in the communication process. Once we accept the need to communicate with the novels we read, we can be judged by the quality of our communication which keeps the language of the novels alive in our own world.

What is to be done?

To study the novel in an ecofriendly way, we need to think of what methods we can draw from the novels we study. This is basically what ethnomethodology proposes.

If novels require us to understand them as communication and are often about how we communicate, then we need a communicative approach to those novels; not an imported genetically modified theory that comes from another, alien, system which more often than not destroys the ecosystem.

Insofar as the novel in English rises with *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), we have evidence that ethnology was there in the development of the genre. As we trace this view of people in different social contexts historically, we find that novels have often foregrounded this aspect of their world;. This is also clear in Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*, Melville's stories of the South Seas and whaling and London's sociological study of the East End in *People of the Abyss* (1903) and his focus on the sociologist Freddy Drummond as his hero in "South of the Slot" (1909) who writes ethnographies of the working class in San Francisco. It seems fitting that we critics use the same ways of thinking and writing found in the materials we study: if we are to understand the ways novels communicate, we need to describe those novels in ways that focus on the language as communicative in intent and from a number of different perspectives. This way to the novel is perhaps best followed when we use ethnographic materials in our research. Such an approach requires us to recognize that novels are often describing the ways people talk to each other and the situations they are in when they talk; they give us voluminous "thick data" in a narrative which stands or falls critically on our response to it as verisimilar to our own experiences or feelings as communicators. Once we can enter the situations emicly, from the inside, we are in a position from which we can interpret what we read based on what we find there, not on what we try to impose on the material we experience.

This way of understanding what is happening in novels seems impossible from a poststructuralist perspective, as Lodge (1966, 299) points out when he responds to charges that “expressive realism” is “untenable” and “literally unthinkable”:

They [literary texts] are intentional acts and their manifest intention is to communicate (even if what is communicated, as in many modern texts, is the difficulty or impossibility of communication). The gaps, contradictions, aporias which deconstructive critics delight to trace in the texts that come under their scrutiny, are only interesting, only perceptible, because they occur in and in spite of the manifest communicative project of the author, to identify which (from the text) must be the initial move of all reading. (299-300)

When we approach a novel with our own communicative intentions, we need to have a firm idea about what we are doing as we read ethnographically. The more clear our understanding of an author’s “communicative project”, the more we can see or experience the novel from the inside, as a participant-observer in its communication process. This quality of experience relates to the ecology of the novel’s environment and explains how we learn about ourselves and the language we use from reading novels.

These ideas are not new; they are implicit in the history of the novel. Any student with a breadth and depth of experience in reading novels should recognize that novels have from the beginning practiced what ethnographers in sociolinguistics and anthropology have been doing for the past hundred years too. Instead of being wary of imposing alien frames on our study, we should understand that we are bringing out what has become obscured by more recent criticism that seeks to block communication rather than foster it. In this way, we draw our approach from the novels themselves, not from Theory. In doing this, we are experiencing them in a verisimilar way to that envisaged by John Dewey which is where we

started our journey into the environs of the novel – every reader, like an ethnographer, begins a journey into a novel's environment once he or she begins to read it. If the novel we chose to engage with is communicatively intended, we can use our real world knowledge drawn from our social experiences to understand and to help others understand what we are talking about. We can also draw on our real world experience as communicators with other human beings to understand what is happening in a novel: communication. To describe and understand these experiences should be of paramount importance to a humanistic critic who wants to make novels relevant in the real world.

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