

Beyond the Human: Transcorporeal Belonging from Ecotopia to Climate Crisis

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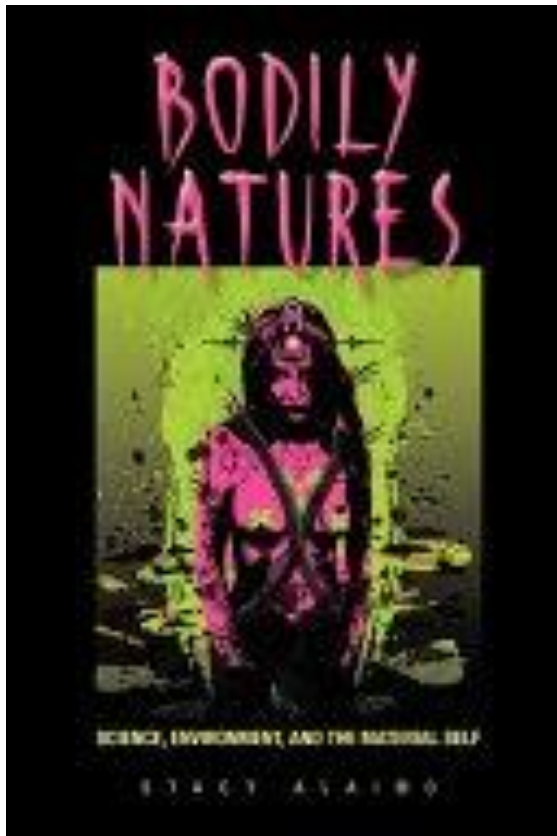
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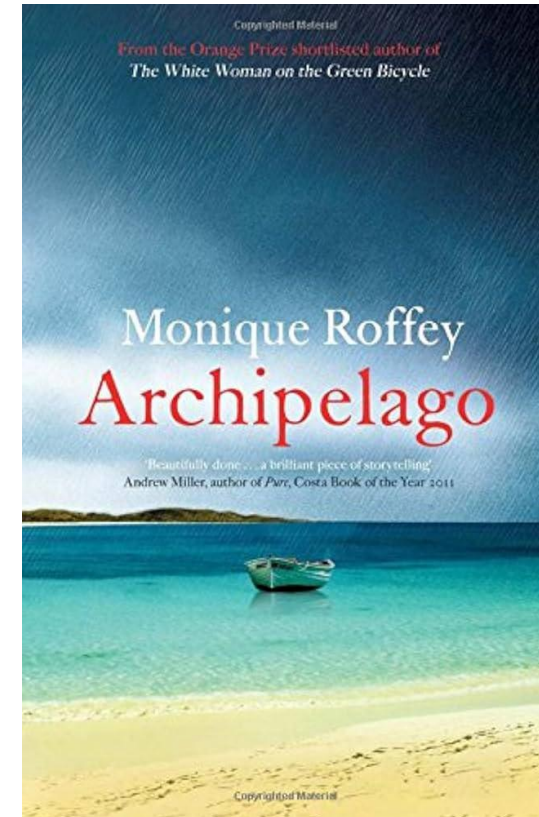
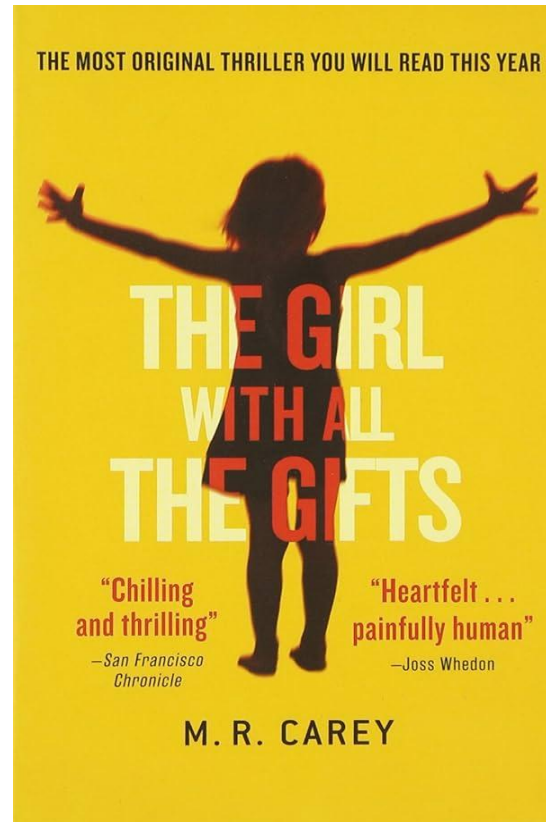
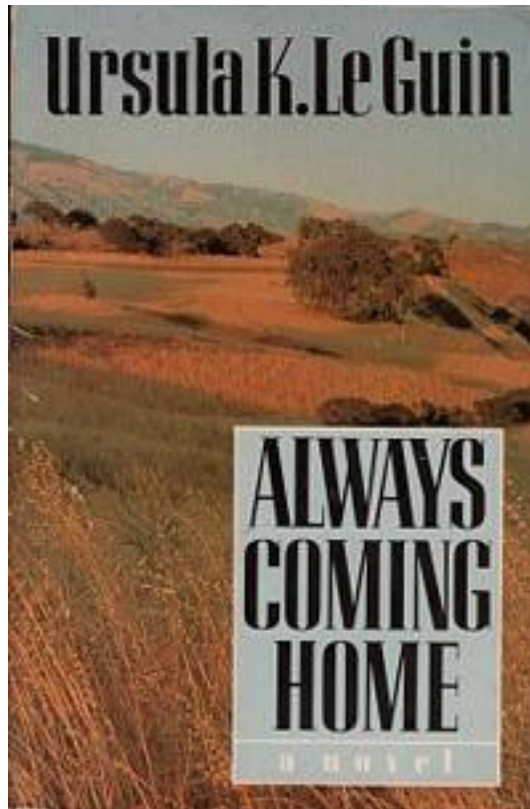
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ГОЦЕ ДЕЛЧЕВ
Избери мудро, делувај храбро

Stacy Alaimo (2010). *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self.*



Imagining human corporeality as trans-corporeality, in which the human is always intermeshed with the more-than-human world, underlines the extent to which the substance of the human is ultimately inseparable from “the environment.” (Alaimo, 2010, p. 2)

Transcorporeality as a bridge between speculative ecologies and lived climate trauma



Always Coming Home (1986)

by Ursula Le Guin

- Life structured around ritual ceremonies. Heyiya-if danced in drought and in fog - aim to restore balance.
- Songs invoke natural forces—streams, pools, rain, and sunlight—reflecting sacred ties to the land.
- Trance singings and dancing align with solstices and seasonal shifts.
- A worldview where nature — sacred, animate, and spiritually responsive.

Maybe housekeeping can sometimes be a bit haphazard, but the language that is spoken there creates an I-Thou equal opportunity for personhood shared between humans, other living creatures, and the geographical landscape. Everything is heyiya or holy. (Lindow, 2022)

Survival is ecological entanglement

- Human–animal reciprocity

On the water something came towards me: the waterskater. It was a big one, moving quickly on its shining hollows in the skin of the water. I said, “I give you what blessing I can, Silent one, give me what blessing you can!” The insect stayed still awhile there between the air and water, where they meet, its place of being, and then it slid away. (Le Guin, 1986 34–35)

- Land as kin, not resource

“We are the people of this place, and the place is our mother and our child” (Le Guin, 1986, p. 125)

“With ceremony, with forms of politeness and reassurance, they borrowed the waters of the River and its little confluents to drink and be clean and irrigate with, using water mindfully, carefully.” (Le Guin, 1986 p.52)

- Narrative form as transcorporeal
- Ecological vision → dissolving self/other for harmony with nature and survival.

The Girl with All the Gifts (2016)

by M.R.Carey

- People become ‘hungries’ primarily through airborne fungal spores: enter the bloodstream and travel to the brain, colonize neural tissue.
 - Higher cognitive function collapses.
 - Lose self-awareness and becomes driven by a compulsive urge to feed on human flesh.
- Second-generation children result when infected pregnant women eat flesh, allowing the fungus to alter fetal development.
- Melanie: Fungal–human hybrid child: exceptional cognition, advanced literacy, emotional attachment, ethical reasoning, controlled hunger.
- Infection blurs human/nonhuman.

Hybridity as evolutionary shift

“But only if you let them grow up,” she finishes. “If you keep shooting them and cutting them into pieces and throwing them into pits, nobody will be left to make a new world. Your people and the junker people will keep killing each other, and you’ll both kill the hungries wherever you find them, and in the end the world will be empty. This way is better. Everybody turns into a hungry all at once, and that means they’ll all die, which is really sad. But then the children will grow up, and they won’t be the old kind of people but they won’t be hungries either. They’ll be different. Like me, and the rest of the kids in the class.

“They’ll be the next people. The ones who make every-thing okay again.”
p.446

Archipelago (2012)

by Monique Roffey

- Storm as encounter.
- Repair and maintenance.
- Healing through relationality.
- Survival is porosity, adaptation, not control.

“We can foster the sense of enfolding, in which the “outside” is always already within, inhabiting and transforming what may or may not be still “human” through continual intra-actions. In this dynamic scenario, matter— nature, if you will—is always an agent of change and always already within and without the permeable membrane of the human. This sense of trans-corporeality may best be understood as posthuman in that material agencies reconfigure the very boundaries of the human as such. (Alaimo, 2010, p. 154)

Bodies shaped by water

How nice it would be to fall asleep into it, into the calm loving arms of the sea, now so hushed. Jump, she whispers; Jump you'll find yourself. and meet yourself, come lie in my bed. How he loved the sea as a younger man; the sea was his first mistress, his first woman... The sea loved him, kept him for herself. The sea offered him her adventures, and her surprises. His body is covered with small scars, wounds from his love affair with the sea: where a man o' war lashed its tentacles around his legs, where a kingfish rib bone pierced his hand, where fire coral burnt his chest, where a tarpon almost took his finger off. (p. 71)

He gets into the shower himself and when he does, it is like being hit by rain, pelting cleansing rain in his face and tears fall too. Tears for his wife and his baby son and tears for the man he has become, the man running away. He sobs in the shower and it is a relief. (p.231)

Conclusion

- We compare three works that stage survival as practice shaped by character and the environment.

Text 1 | Belonging

Text 2 | Transformation

Text 3 | Resilience

- Survival does not depend on defending the boundary between human and nonhuman.
- It depends on recognizing that the boundary was never absolute.
- All three interrogate human exceptionalism thorough trascorporelity.

Conclusion and expansion

If bodies are porous → ethics cannot stop at the boundary of the human.

Ethics beyond purity and beyond domination.

Arne Næss - that the flourishing of human and nonhuman life has value in itself. (1989)

Resilience in (ecological) crisis depends on accepting porous embodiment.

The question these narratives leave us with is not how to resist that permeability, but how to live ethically within it.

Thank you for your attention!