

Nature and Cultural History in Nick Joaquin's "Doña Jeronima"

Lily Rose Tope

University of the Philippines

ABSTRACT

The native natural world in colonial discourse has been regarded as a representation of the barbaric unknown—confusing, suspected, loathed yet desired by the colonizer. It has been also the object of increasing colonial acquisition as it struggled to remain a free space for a local culture and an old world to flourish. The native natural world is expressed in different tropes—as cultural originary, spiritual refuge, a sinister unknown, a haven for a pursued people, among others. But it is also a site of conquest and cultural imposition. In Nick Joaquin's "Doña Jeronima", a deserted isle, a river, a cave become methods of articulation of the intrusion of Spain into local Filipino culture thereby giving the Filipino natural world a chance to tell a differently worded history. It becomes a site of cultural misapprehension and contestation between the intruder and dweller. In this ecocritical and postcolonial examination of the novella, the mix of natural images makes the natural world an actor in history, its occupation and martyrdom a node in a nation's unwritten history.

KEYWORDS

ecocritical, postcolonial history, cultural resistance, nature and resistance

National Artist Nick Joaquin is one of the most anthologized and studied writers in the Philippines. He has been read from the critical eye of Formalism, Marxism, Poststructuralism, Postcolonialism and of different disciplines such as Linguistics, Language Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, and Cultural Studies. His works have the complexity to accommodate multi-modal, multidisciplinary readings and challenge tried and tested literary approaches. As new ways of reading emerge, so are new perspectives on Joaquin offered.

One of the most recent methods of understanding historical phenomena comes from the field of science. Recent natural events that have affected lives worldwide such as climate change seem to have reignited interest in the role of nature, not only as a method of explaining the empirical but also as an articulator of the historical and the cultural. Not exactly new, this approach to literary texts has taken on refurbishment, combining with other disciplines to promote a more inclusive representation, not limiting discourse to a human one but including non-human elements as well.

I would like to offer a new reading of a Joaquin story based on his use of natural elements. This is based on an observation that Joaquin has used a range of natural imagery as expressions of ideological and philosophical engagements in his narrative as well as carriers of the thematic grip in his fiction.

The most famous would be the dramatic multi-pronged death of Connie Escobar through water, fire, and air in *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* (1961). The presence and use of nature in Joaquin's fiction makes for a privileging position in the sense that he attributes to the natural a separate though not necessarily opposite way of psychological and historical articulation. Connie Escobar who is suffering from a neurosis brought about by two periods of colonialism is killed and resurrected, erased but invented into a new self by natural immolation. Nature plays a significant role in rehumanizing this character, healing her colonial trauma through natural elements.

But Connie Escobar's narrative has usually been read against the post-colonial impetus of her psyche. I take note of a perspective that could have expressed culture and history in another way.

I focus my lens on Joaquin's depiction of the physical environment and his use of natural objects and formations as articulators of discourse. Using the ecocritical paradigm, I would like to examine Joaquin's fictional play with the Filipino natural world and how the representations that emerge from it bring new insights into Philippine culture and history.

At this point, a simple definition of ecocriticism is in order:

Ecocriticism examines the representation and relationship between the biophysical environment and texts through ecological theory. Environment and text are both inclusive categories: environment comprises flora and fauna, soil and water, climate and weather, industry and commerce; texts comprise artifacts as diverse as literature, film, the Internet, journalism, policy papers, rocks, spoor and trees. (Mason et al. 1)

There are countless theories and philosophies that ecocriticism draws from and just as many types of texts studied. Expectedly, one of the knowledge sources would be the natural sciences but ecocritical impulse looks at the natural phenomena not only from a scientific point of view but also through a host of paradigms that could provide phenomena with wide ranging explanations and perceptions. Ecology is considered as not exactly science. In fact, it is seen as "a countermodel against 'normal' analytic science" (Haise 509) in that it has advocated a more holistic, more balanced view of environment. It pursues "stability, harmony and regeneration. A fully mature ecosystem, the climax community of classical ecology, consists a set of animals and plants ideally adapted to their environment" (Haise 510). Using the science of ecology, ecocriticism promotes an equal privileging of man and environment. It provides us a second pair of eyes that puts humans on the same level as the environment. Ecocritic Lawrence Buell calls ecocriticism as a "spirit of commitment to environmental praxis. One can treat literary texts not as detractions from but as contributions to our interaction with the natural world" (qtd. in Phillips 584).

The privileging of the natural world however has brought about great debate regarding whose welfare is more important, human or non-human. When conservation and preservation prevent alleviation of hunger, promote

disease or human displacement, how does one make a fair decision? I think it will not be good to think in terms of binaries and that an inclusive solution is possible. Suffice it to say here that the framework is not without its contentious aspects, but nonetheless, it still provides a dynamic lens by which literature and the environment can be examined and appreciated.

Ecocriticism's broad concerns are held together by what Ursula Haise calls "the triple allegiance to the 1) scientific study of nature; 2) the scholarly analysis of cultural representations, and 3) the political struggle for more sustainable ways of inhabiting the world" (506). She also mentions issues often asked in ecocriticism such as: "In what ways do highly evolved and self-aware beings relate to Nature? What roles do language, literature, and art play in this relation? How have modernization and globalization processes transformed it? Is it possible to return to more ecologically attuned ways of inhabiting nature and what would be the cultural prerequisites for such a change?" (504).

Human life and nature are closely intertwined in many Asian systems of belief. Taoism and Shintoism, for instance, practice great reverence for nature. Hinduism and Buddhism include nature in the hierarchy of beings and do not privilege human life over non-human.

Ecocriticism however includes issues of modernity, how the natural world is exploited for profit and progress:

This domination strips nature of any value other than as a material resource and commodity and leads to a gradual destruction that may in the end deprive humanity of its basis for subsistence. Such domination empties human life of the significance it derived from living in and with nature, and alienates individuals and communities from their rootedness in place. (Haise 507)

Nature tends to be dismissed as simple and easy to conquer. But as Dana Phillips asserts, "nature is complex; nature is thoroughly implicated in culture and culture is thoroughly implicated in nature" (577-78).

As a critical lens, ecocriticism contains several tropes. I would like to cite examples that will be useful to my discussion later. One would be the

land trope or land narratives. This pertains to the assumption of humanity's primordial attachment to land and how human incursion, technology, and industry have wrenched man's connection to it. bell hooks, an African American writer, claims that "black people 'were first and foremost a people of the land' with a strong love for nature before their lives were fundamentally altered by industrial capitalism in Northern cities" (qtd. in Gerhardt; hooks 53). In our own literature, there is NVM Gonzalez' *A Season of Grace* (1954) where Doro and Sabel undergo the hardships of slash and burn farming or *kaingin* agriculture. They encounter crop failure due to natural threats such as pests. They withstand the isolation and danger of illness in uninhabited forests. To us humans, the couple is an example of the Filipino's indomitable spirit against hunger and dispossession. From an ecocritical point of view, the land is resisting human intrusion. Forests are burnt because of *kaingin*. Consequently, animals lose their habitat and trees that have existed hundreds of years are cut down for houses and commerce. The peasants do not even consider reforestation or giving back what they took. Land is something to be conquered and used. The land loses its peace and balance. It has to fight back, even if it is a losing battle.

Another trope significant to my study is animal narratives. Ecocriticism recognizes that non-humans such as animals are also part of the natural world and should not be deprived of opportunities to be lead actors instead of just supporting ones. Like land, animals have a primordial relationship with humans, helping humans survive even if some see them as part of the food chain. As humans have domesticated land, they have also domesticated animals. The process of domestication contains the animals, depriving them of freedom of movement and abilities to be wild, often making them dependent on humans for food and shelter.

Christine Gerhardt examines Alice Walker's essay "Am I Blue?" which deals with a horse in captivity named Blue. "I was shocked that I had forgotten that human animals and non-human animals can communicate quite well," writes Walker (5). Walker links Blue's predicament to that of the African American slaves. She looks into the horse's eyes and says, "It was a look so piercing, so full of grief, a look so human, I almost laughed (I felt too sad

to cry) to think there are people who do not know that animals suffer” (7). When Blue’s mate was taken away, the author once more looks into Blue’s eyes and sees his grief: “If I had been born into slavery and my partner has been sold or killed, my eyes would have looked like that” (7).

My Philippine example is more idyllic but no less poignant. Manuel Arguilla’s short story “Midsummer” is a courtship story set in rural Ilocos. Arguilla devotes pages depicting the closeness between a young man and his carabao. The young man feeds, bathes, and pets his animal. But once a young woman becomes a powerful presence in the story, the animal is somewhat marginalized. The ending is subtle and liminal. The young woman invites the young man to her house and the three of them walk single file—the woman, the carabao, and the man.

There have been many classroom debates about this sequence. The woman takes the lead and Arguilla gets approval from feminist readers. But the animal walks before the man or even between the man and the woman. Is this saying that the friendship between animal and man is more important than the romantic connection between the man and the woman? Has man surrendered his place to a special being that ensures his survival? Is nature recognized and given its rightful place? Animal narratives have always emphasized the intimacy between a human and his/her animal. The story opens itself to various ecocritical readings that explore this intimacy.

Just like any theory, ecocriticism has turned in the direction of many ideological corners and its multidisciplinary nature has generated myriad engagements. I would like to pursue one corner where it has turned. Ecocriticism’s concern for the right to live naturally has led it to the alley of postcolonial theory. This is almost inevitable because postcolonial theory is, among other things, a critique on power (Vadde 565) and the resulting iniquities in its use. Ecocriticism examines the ecological effects of such iniquities on both human and non-human communities while postcolonialism centers its interrogation on human ones. Postcolonial ecocriticism conflates the critical intentions of the two:

Post colonial ecocriticism, one of the fastest growing subfields within post colonial studies, maintain the salutary features of the post colonial

by directing our attention to the specifically environmental dimensions of literary work. For example, post colonial ecocritics have focused on the often overlooked non human elements within canonical literature and brought attention to contemporary literature that responds to histories of settlement and conservation, ecological disaster, and the inequitable distribution of resources and waste. Engaging diverse practices of representation in classic and emergent literature, these critics place renewed pressure on the nature/culture and human/animal binaries that facilitate imperial privilege and colonial dispossession. (Vadde 565)

Gerhardt points out several convergence between ecocriticism and postcolonialism. One, both “situate their analyses in the historical contexts from which specific mechanisms of exploitation have evolved and both are inextricably linked to social and political activism.” Two, both “entail a large scale critique of Western power structure”. Three, “ecocriticism and postcolonialism are concerned with the complex relationship between the social and political center and its margins”. As Dominic Head puts it, “ecocriticism de-privileges the human subject while postcolonialism decenters colonizers and their discourse” (qtd. in Gerhardt par. 6). Both attempt to “recenter the silenced other” (Gerhardt par. 6).

Using postcolonial ecocriticism, this article will examine Nick Joaquin’s story, “Doña Jeronima,” to uncover or produce meanings previously neglected or unexplored. “Doña Jeronima” is one of the short stories in Joaquin’s collection titled *Tropical Gothic* (1972). The main character, a Manila archbishop, finds himself in the beginning of the story shipwrecked and marooned on an isle. He stays on that isle for a year. The land narrative begins with the description of the isle as “a desert isle, a dry isle that was but a tip of a reef in the sea” where the archbishop lives “on fish and prayer, on rain and water (“Doña Jeronima [DJ]” 57). It is obviously uninhabited, barren, and indifferent to human needs. It is also too small to be noticed by ships, isolated by water, bereft of civilization and comfort. Despite the human presence, the isle remains unperturbed, oblivious to its guest and his human necessities.



Fig. 1 The short story “Doña Jeronima” also appears in the collection *May Day Eve and Other Stories* by Nick Joaquin. The book cover that appears here is from the 2017 edition of the book published by Anvil Publishing.

The guest is no ordinary mortal. He is the Archbishop of Manila, a man with vast religious and political power. As a young man, he realizes early that the “Church was the quickest avenue to high places in the world” and he puts on the robes, “craving not piety but power” (DJ 58). He is no ordinary Archbishop either. He contends with other representations of power—“the grandees of the land,” the merchants, other religious, and most especially the Viceroys. He topples governor generals and leads warriors in battle against the Moros, the Chinese, the English, and the Dutch. He enjoys a fullness of power that fuses the spiritual and the temporal” (DJ 59). He is on his way

to Mexico on a galleon ship to claim recognition for that power when he is shipwrecked.

The isle blocks his further ascent to power. Instead, it divests him of position, of human comfort and company, of glory and fame, of ambition and recognition. On the desert isle, he is “stripped of more than his purple, the Archbishop has reigned over a few feet of barren rock” (DJ 59). He leaves Manila to a “tumult of bells, banners, fireworks and music, a fine blaze of a man, handsome and vigorous” (DJ 57). One year later, he is accidentally found—now “a bowed, mute, shrivelled old man squatting motionless and cross-legged there, stark naked and half blind and burned black as coal, all his hair turned white and his white beard trailing down his navel, and hardly able to stand or move or speak or grasp...terrible altered, terrible aged, merely skin and bones and wild eye...” (DJ 57).

In its isolation and unperturbed condition, the isle divests the Archbishop of the accoutrements of power, greed and ambition, reducing him to the level of what Giorgio Agamben calls “bare life.” Used in animal criticism, “bare life is a conceptual threshold between the human and the animal, and also between life and death. The abyss of incomprehensibility that separates human and the animal is likened to human incomprehensibility of death, and both notions are ways of expressing the bare life” (Bensterien and Callicott 44). Instead of an animal, the isle can be used here as the site of the animal-like existence of the Archbishop. The isle has reduced his life to a barrenness similar to that of the isle, a death-like existence that demotes him to sheer biological functions and erases the import of his previous ambitions and achievements. The isle does not recognize his purple robes. His nakedness, the shrinkage of his flesh and vigor are its way of reconstructing him from human to animal.

The postcolonial implications of the isle can be derived from its nature. The isle, small and undiscovered, becomes a prison to the most powerful man in colonial Philippines. This man, ruling an entire Roman Catholic archipelago with the heart of a conquistador, is halted, contained, stripped, reduced, and transformed by an uninhabited island. The power of nature overcomes colonial, political, and religious power simply by being itself. Land

subverts, quietly but totally. When the Archbishop is found and returned, he is no longer the same man. He is no longer moved by the visions of accolade or the possibility of regaining power. What the countless local rebellions could not achieve, the isle is able to. It has tamed or impaired colonial power.

When the Archbishop is returned to Manila, he realizes that the lesson the isle has been teaching him is not complete and the search for answers continues. He sets up a retreat by the banks of the Pasig, a small *nipa* hut where he ruminates on his life on the isle, returning to his office only to answer the call of duty. Here, another object of nature becomes central to the Archbishop's transformation—the river. A river is a waterway or a large natural stream of water flowing into other bodies of water such as a lake, a sea, or another river. The role of rivers in history cannot be denied. They usually function as seats of civilizations and are linked to the development of human communities. They provide food and mobility to their inhabitants, and later, commercial and political access to the hinterlands. They are channels of change.

In the story, the river referred to is the Pasig. The Pasig River links Laguna de Bay, the biggest fresh water lake in the Philippines, and Manila Bay, the entrance to the country by sea. It provides an invitation to resources as well as acts as the gate to it. Its twenty-five kilometer length bisects the city of Manila into north and south, and it has created tributaries that flow into nearby cities and towns.

For the Archbishop, the river serves as an objective correlative of his life and emotions. Upon his rescue from the isle, he knows his epiphany has been interrupted and he goes to the river to find the stillness he covets. His relief is short-lived because the river begins to rage, foretelling the crisis the advent of Doña Jeronima will create. Just like the two big bodies of water that the Pasig connects, Doña Jeronima and the Archbishop are also connected by the river. The Pasig has been the joy of their childhood and the site of and witness to their young love. The Pasig performs its originary function as a place of beginnings and idealistic emotions.

It is interesting that the Pasig River is a tidal estuary. The flow of water depends on the tide ("Lake Hydrology"). During the summer season, the

water level in Laguna de Bay is low and so the Pasig flows toward it. During the rainy season, the water level there is high and so the Pasig flows toward Manila Bay. The ebb and flow mirror the connection between the two lovers. While the river brings them together, it also separates them when the time and circumstance demand it. Doña Jeronima waits for the return of her lover, for the river to flow back, but her young man has been swallowed by the sea of pleasure and power.

Both characters return to the river to find spiritual solace. The Archbishop finds it only at the end. First, the river becomes a raging tormentor, denying him peace and violently articulating the chaos within:

The river that he could no longer bear to see, that had roared through his delirium, now rushed through his mind, through his despair, never still, never stopping, until it seemed the hemorrhage of the unstaunched wound of his life. The river that was childhood's friend and youth's matchmaker had become the old man's fiend. (DJ 73)

His peaceful life by the river is destroyed by a white veiled woman who presents to him her case of injustice, of being loved by someone who promised to return. The man never returns, instead he marries another woman, and forgets his pledge while she waits for years. The woman is Doña Jeronima, the man the Archbishop, and the other woman the Church. Remorseful of his debt of love, the Archbishop is nonetheless forced by Doña Jeronima to honor his promise. But at the last moment, she backs down, confesses the selfishness of her desires, and instead vows to live the life of an ascetic and a penitent. The Archbishop suggests a nunnery but Doña Jeronima scoffs at this and chooses the cave across the river where the bats live.

Describing the river as “apocalyptic” (DJ 79), the Archbishop confronts his guilt, here toward Doña Jeronima, but also toward his soul. As a man, he has done an injustice against a woman. As a man of God, he is instrumental in a conquest of bodies and souls. The isle would have divested him of power and desire but the river does not easily forgive or give absolution. As water cleanses, so does suffering. The Archbishop knows he has to pass his wild river (DJ 72).

Doña Jeronima's Pasig seems to be pristine, pre-colonial. It is the site of youthful love accompanied by nurturing natural elements. In her agony, she retreats to it, embracing its freedom and isolation, becoming one with it, finding spiritual ecstasy in it. While the Pasig is most likely instrumental in the spread of colonialism, the Pasig Doña Jeronima represents has a virginal quality that is devoid of external influence. The river here represents an older past, an older order that governs the relationship between humans and nature.

It is not just to the river that Doña Jeronima retreats but to a cave that is part of the river system. For Doña Jeronima, the cave is not a product of a shipwreck; neither is she marooned. She has once occupied the cave as a young girl and has had trysts there with her young lover who is now the Archbishop. The dark unlighted cave may have been an object of fear, especially since it is the abode of bats. To the young Jeronima, it is the place of youthful love and passion. Its darkness allows her to love undisturbed but it is also the site of her waiting and despair. When her lover does not return, the cave becomes deathly quiet. It is also to it that she returns to repent for her sins of desire. It is there where she experiences the bare life. Now dressed in "foul rags, her face shrouded in sacking," she turns her back on beauty and romantic passion, choosing solitude and the overcoming of the flesh. She becomes a "wild" object, not human but a creature of nature no different from the cave or its bats who are witness to her agony and sorrows as can be witnessed in this scene:

Hardly had master and servant positioned themselves when the air flapped with the huge wings and the moonlight darkened to a swarm of bats wheeling over the cave. As though they were bell or clock sounding, the woman emerged from the dark cave, in her rags and shroud of sacking. Prostrating herself on a slab of stone, she began to pray; and such a keening rent the stillness, it seemed that here wailed the whole world's conscience in contrition. The moon rose high, and still higher, and the night chill sharpened, but still the prostrate woman prayed, moaning and groaning, lifting imploring hands to heaven like some mythic victim of the gods chained to a rock. But at last silence seized her, and more than silence; and the watchers on the rock above saw her as though dragged up to her feet, her arms opened

wide and her veiled face wrenched toward heaven by a bliss that shook the air. The tremor lasted but a moment and she fell, as though dropped on her knees, where she stayed a while, swaying and shivering, her face in her hands. Then she rose and disappeared into the darkness of the cave. (DJ 80)

In ritual and ecstasy, in Christianity and pagan worship, Doña Jeronima is not only anchorite and penitent, but also priestess and nymph. Most importantly, she is the creature of the cave.

Caves are hollow spaces on the ground formed by natural elements; it takes millions of years to form a cave. Caves have served as shelter not only to early humans but also to a variety of animals, and have acquired a reputation for nurture and threat. Because caves have nurtured early civilization, they have acquired a connotation of refuge and protection; because they are usually hidden, they have also acquired a connotation of secrecy. In contrast, because caves are dark and unexplored, they also represent the threatening unknown. In the story, Doña Jeronima uses the cave not only as a place of nurture but also as a repository of her love and agony. The darkness protects her in her acts of pleasure and suffering. The cave's interiority and connection to the bowels of the earth provide the psychic depth to the nature of her love and penance, her renunciation and eventually her transformation.

Because they provided shelter for early humans and recorded early human culture in their walls, caves like rivers are also regarded as representations of the originary. Doña Jeronima's retreat to the cave divests her of self-centered aspirations in the same way that the isle divests the Archbishop. But unlike the isle, the cave is Doña Jeronima's natural originary; it is her habitat, and the divestment seems more like a willing return to one's beginnings rather than a shearing of possessions. Unlike the Archbishop who becomes the isle's unwelcome guest, Doña Jeronima becomes the cave's creature, blending with other organisms in the cave's ecosystem.

Her persona in the cave becomes most palpable in her relationship with the bats. Both the cave and the bats are objects of fear for the villagers who try to lynch Doña Jeronima. Both traditional lore and Christianity have rendered both as suspect. Bats are the second largest group of mammals. Mostly nocturnal, they live in caves and feed on fruits and smaller animals.

But because of one species—the vampire bats which feed on blood—bats have been seen as creatures of darkness, death, illness, and malevolence. Their anatomy—wide-webbed wings and rat-like body, rodent-face and human-like fingers—contributes to the alleged bizarre appearance and fearsome reputation. These bats look like birds but they are not, making them susceptible to misconstruction and discrimination. They live in dark caves so they seem sinister. However, scientists look beyond their ugliness and marvel at their amazing design, especially their web-like wings that end in fingers. Unlike most Westerners, the Chinese believe they bring luck.

Unlike the villagers, Doña Jeronima is not threatened by the bats. In her youth, their departure means it is time for her lover to come. Their return means her lover must go. As she becomes a creature of the cave, she is transformed into being just one of the cave's inhabitants. She co-exists with the bats; no human language is exchanged. In the darkness, the bats can hardly see her because bats cannot see well. They cannot see her rags or the sack that covers her face. Instead, they can hear her. Having good echo locators and a high degree of hearing, they perceive not her appearance but her emotions. They hear the animal keening she makes at the mouth of the cave. They witness and participate in her bare life. The Archbishop himself acknowledges that as guardians of darkness, the bats are wise “to shun daylight and choose darkness, when the world drops its mask and lies unguarded in the innocence of sleep...only the bats saw the world naked” (DJ 71). As the intimacy between the woman and the bats deepen, she, too, becomes the object of misconstruction and discrimination:

In one's memory existed a time when bats haunted this region, but now a swarm of them flocked around the cave of the woman on the riverbank; they came at her call; she had been spied talking to them and fondling the black beasts and the villagers whispered that the woman had herself turned into a bat at night and roamed the countryside, seeking the blood of sleepers. Therefore was her cave shunned by the villagers and stoned by children; and she dared to set no foot outside her grove on the riverbank. (DJ 76-77)

Human eyes cannot comprehend the spectacle of bare life between the woman and the bats. The woman is rendered non-human in her relationship with the fearsome creatures; she cannot but be a *manananggal*, half-human, half-bat. As she casts her lot with the bats and retreats into the cave, she dies a kind of death that cuts her ties with the outside world and makes her return to the inner earth. In her preference for darkness and the natural world, Doña Jeronima is rendered strange, monstrous even, othered. She eventually dies but her story becomes a myth and in that myth, she becomes a young woman again visited by her lover.

In the story, the other woman is the Church, seductive and encouraging in its pursuit of power. Mistress of the body and soul of the colonized, the Church is a daunting rival. The religious caverns in the Cathedral where the Archbishop received supplicants is a far cry from the cave across the river. Here, proofs of colonial conquest of souls can be readily observed. Doña Jeronima dares to enter the caverns, seeking justice but defeated by a power stronger than a woman's love. This powerlessness is caused by the historical inevitability of colonialism. In the Archbishop's cavern, she becomes a disempowered supplicant, unable to escape the shackles of religious and colonial power. Her retreat to the cave allows her to escape material desires but also allows her to liberate herself from religious and colonial containment. Returning to the originary earth, "the river that had been niggard now gave fish in abundance, rain fell in its season and fell prodigally; field and orchard flowed with fruit; cattle fattened and multiplied; barren women suddenly quickened" (DJ 76). Her presence in the cave returned nature's fecundity, returning to her a different kind of empowerment that does not destroy but instead sustains. As she descends into the bare life, she also ascends into myth, a form of resistance that fuses love and nature.

These natural images and narratives in "Doña Jeronima" provide one lens by which Nick Joaquin can be appreciated. The mix of natural images makes the natural world an actor in history and culture and makes nature a node in a nation's still unwritten history.

WORKS CITED

- Arguilla, Manuel. "Midsummer." *Philippine Short Stories 1925-1940*. 1975. Edited by Leopoldo Yabes, University of the Philippines Press, 1997, pp. 199-205.
- Beusterien, John, and J. Baird Callicott. "Humor and Politics Through the Animal in Cervantes and Leopold." *Sustaining Ecocriticism: Comparative Perspectives*, special issue of *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2013, pp. 43-63.
- Gerhardt, Christine. "The Greening of African-American Landscapes: Where Ecocriticism Meets Post-colonial Theory." *The Mississippi Quarterly*, vol. 55, no. 4, January 2002, pp. 515-534. ProQuest, <https://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.upd.edu.ph/central/docview/213521762/fulltext/3C50CFCD32BF4AEDPQ/1?accountid=47253>.
- Gonzalez, NVM. *A Season of Grace*. Bookmark, 1956.
- hooks, bell. "Touching the Earth." *At Home on the Earth: Becoming Native to Our Place. A Multicultural Anthology*. Edited by David Landis Barnhill, U of California P, 1999, p. 53.
- Heise, Ursula. "The Hitchhiker's Guide to Ecocriticism." *PMLA*, vol. 121, no.2, March 2006, pp. 503-516.
- Joaquin, Nick. "Doña Jeronima." *Tropical Gothic*. U of Queensland P, 1972, pp. 57-83.
- . *The Woman Who Had Two Navels*. Bookmark, 1961.
- "Lake Hydrology." *Laguna Lake Development Authority*. <http://llda.gov.ph/laguna-de-bay/>. Accessed 2 September 2009
- Mason, Travis, et al. "Introduction to Ecocriticism Among Settler Colonial Nations." *Ariel*, vol. 44, issue 4, 2013, pp. 1-11.
- Phillips, Dana. "Ecocriticism, Literary Theory and the Truth of Ecology." *Ecocriticism*, special issue of *New Literary History*, vol. 30, no.3, Summer 1999, pp. 577-602.
- Vadde, Aarthi. "Cross Polination: Ecocriticism, Zoocriticism, Postcolonialism." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 52, no. 3, 2011, pp. 565-573.