

Literature is the Best Tool of Awakening Moral Understanding and Evaluation: Wendell Berry's  
*The Long-Legged House*

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**Abstract:**

The researcher examines Wendell Berry's *The Long-Legged House* (1969) and addresses his engagement with the interlocking bonds between ecological degradation and socioeconomic, psychological, and spiritual disorientations through literature; the researcher also explores Berry's critiques of the dynamics and implications of environmental racism along with his depiction of his locale, concepts of home and community, history, mythology, tradition, , and the vivisectional imperatives of capitalism and imperialism that have wreaked havoc upon his home place. These contested terrains have suffered the ramifications of environmental discrimination, which targets them for toxic strip-mining projects. Throughout this paper, the researcher essentially applies environmental-justice approaches, but also refers to theories of global capitalism, and deep ecology, as they are all intertwined through their search for alternative forms of eco-resistance. Hence, I build on critiques by such scholars as Murphy, Buell, Cornell, and Roach, among others, to provide the ideological, hermeneutical, socio-political, and aesthetic filters through which the nonfiction essay can be given fresh and original examinations. This theoretical synthesis cements my corroboration that global capitalism and maldevelopment go hand in hand with imperialism and androcentrism, constituting an intricate nexus of hegemonies.

*Key words:* awakening, degradation, ecology, environmentalism, resistance, tradition

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*The Long-Legged House* (1969) is not set in pristine wilderness vicinities; the events take place in populated terrains—in the city, in open-pit coal mines. This work “questions and confront our most popular assumptions about ‘nature’ and ‘nature writing’ by inviting us to take a hard look at the contested terrains where increasing numbers of poor and marginalized people are organizing around interrelated social and environmental problems” (Adamson, 2001, p. xvii). Thus, Berry strives to reimage and negotiate the culture-nature divide and establish himself as an equal, sentient member of his biotic community. He constructs a dramatic understanding of how environmental racism affects cultural and environmental spaces, and he proposes new formulas to our social and environmental failures. In general, he outlines the ways in which interrelation with and commitment to the land constitute an exigency necessitating a mixture of local and global environmental justice awareness; he appeals to organic past models and reminds us that there are people whose lives hinge on the well-being of their ecosystem and whose proper relationship with the land leans toward a binding spirituality.

Berry renavigates and reintegrates customs that have been systematically subsumed by an unbridled confidence in techno-scientific “progress” and global capitalism. Hence, *The Long-Legged House* features the disruptions kindled by imperialism, industrial capitalism, and “maldevelopment” on communities deeply rooted in the land and attached to a particular territory. In his portrayal of the earth as a source of life and renewal, the writings of Berry—contrary to mainstream views on land as something to be subjugated, subdued, and parceled—function as crucial forms of resistance against the ecological and sociocultural injustices and crises facing the disenfranchised poor in the U. S. Specifically, Berry enacts an emancipatory discourse prioritizing vested communal environmental rights and humanity’s urgent need to reconnect with nature to avoid the destruction of both, finding meaning in traditional ethics and cosmologies underrated in the mainstream. In so doing, his writings corroborate communal aesthetics and myths as valuable tools not only in sustaining people and nature, but also in disclosing the impasses and hypocrisies of capitalism and imperialism.

Berry's writing encompasses questions of environmental justice in a larger scheme of redefining and renegotiating what it means to be a human in a world of shifting identities to inhabit places that are incessantly constructed, reconstructed, and destructed, due to ethics of modernity and global capitalism. Thus, he writes ecohistory from a holistic perspective, foregrounding the strong interrelation of self with land and community. In short, Berry's writings remap the whole world as home, breaking down the nature-culture and human-nonhuman dichotomies. Particularly, the writings of Berry, which resonate with echoes of tradition from which to draw sublimity, have the power to conflate “ethics” of exploitation and commodification and promote an ethic of subsistence and wholeness. Therefore, Berry proffers rhetorical devices for political engagement that can play a decisive role in thwarting any stultifying, separatist practices that legitimize environmental and social racism. Perhaps more than anything else, Berry offers his works to the world with the hope of transforming and purging injustice through revising Western

metaphysics. His discourses are tied to political agendas and forms of activism that aim to transform our imagination and thus mobilize resistance to current global ecological crises. Lawrence Buell (2005) posits, “Western metaphysics and ethics need revision before we can address today’s environmental problems . . . Environmental crisis involves a crisis of the imagination the amelioration of which depends on finding better ways of imagining nature and humanity’s relation to it” (p. 2).

Berry’s prose and poetry endeavor to reinstate lost traditions, the responsibility and answerability of ethics for one’s deeds, and revitalizing such principles as sustainable agriculture, innocuous technologies, rootedness to place, and the interconnectedness of life as compelling mechanisms to curb environmental degradation. Goodrich (2001) describes Berry’s prose as forming a “constellation of place, community, and self [that] cannot be separated” (p. 13). Beginning with an awareness of widespread homelessness in our era, Berry stipulates that attachment to place and “beloved communities” comprises an effective antidote to “the specialization and abstraction of intellect” in the modern world: “Man cannot be independent of nature. In one way or another he must live in relation to it” (Berry, 1969, p. 41). Such familiarity with place is the first imperative for awareness, and this consciousness will lead to a moral reform that enshrouds the whole community and the whole world—those who belong and those who don’t belong to one’s culture.

In a similar vein, the spirituality expressed in Native American writings is of an earth-centered bent. Native Americans conceive of the land and themselves as intertwined entities, and their writing is often provoked by an imperial-driven divorce of land from community. They do not place humans above other living forms; instead, all forms of life, including animals, trees, and rivers, are integral parts of the ecological web, which is a vigilantly balanced holism that guards against fragmentation and reduction. Berry (1996) advances feasible views about the interdependence of all entities and insists that no real culture can exist in abstraction from place and that the “concept of health is rooted in the concept of wholeness” (p. 103). He describes our environmental crises in terms that should be applied to our understanding of public life: “We have given up the understanding—dropped out of our language and so out of our thought—that we and our country create one another, depend on one another” (p. 22). As one begins to unravel the complex fabric of nature and the indispensability of every aspect of the natural web, the need to be a caretaker of place becomes requisite, and the failure to do so will be calamitous: “human and plant and animal are part of one another, and so cannot possibly flourish alone . . . our culture and our place are images of each other and inseparable from each other” (p. 23).

For Berry, this individual failure to understand the interconnectedness of life is one of the U. S.’s worst national fiascos: “the assumption that when a man has exploited and used up the possibility of one place, he has only to move to another place. This has made us a nation of transient, both physically and morally” (Berry, 1996, p. 85). Here, he decries coal-mining and agribusiness companies for leaving the land in wreckage and the people in pecuniary adversities. He, in effect, gives voice to environmental ideas that are about to fade away from all cultures because of global capitalism. He thus plays the role of the disruptor who seeks to protect his home and traditional ways of life because they are more humanly, ecologically, and ethically rewarding

and more conductively true. Berry's abundant images of eroded, denuded land mark his vision of how our current farming models betray the human and non-human communities that uphold them. His emphasis on the importance of ethics, history, and art in unmaking the devastation of the earth is part of what makes Berry such an imperative environmental voice.

As an eloquent spokesperson for small, family-operated farms and place-based, community-oriented commitments, Wendell Berry envisages the agriculturist as a servant who worships through replenishing the ecosystem that sustains him or her. He farms land that has been in his family for generations, land that he came back home to revive as a working farmer; therefore, his agricultural ethics and place-based thinking spring from a long familiarity with his own practice. In fact, his corpus of writing manifests a profound recognition of humanity's potential while at the same time grieves our failure to develop it. There are those who are skeptical about Berry's focal postulates, alleging that his wisdom is impractical, and others who romanticize his writing and thus diminish its impact. On the contrary, I argue that Berry's vision of local communities as places of healing advances a strident environmental justice critique that can be applied both locally and globally. In fact, he uses the predicament of his community as a microcosm of the crucial interactions between socioeconomic factors and major environmental problems. Accordingly, the value of his writing extends beyond the borders of his home place to encapsulate the whole world: His concentration on the local does not obviate concern for the global. Yet Berry's notions of environmental justice are often misconstrued, and he is often pigeonholed as a vehement propagandist of the Southern agricultural heritage. Cornell (1983) explains that once Berry's criticism "leaves the literary studies that place him within a particular genre tradition—southern regionalism, romantic nature writing, pastoral agrarianism—it often focuses on his politics and even more particularly on the viability of his personal political stance" (p. 7). Berry's critiques of industrialized agriculture that devours small, family-owned farms have mistakenly aligned him with romantic nature writing and pastoral agrarianism.

The idea of progress has garnered a specialized material value with those who are ironically trying to improve creation, or to reduce its diversity, but they never apply progress to human conduct. The principle of mercy should always be there, and there should be no separation among the ecological, the scientific, the economic, and the moral. Smith (2001) argues that confronted with the fallout of corporatized agribusiness, nature writers, especially ethicists, are rallying to seek an "alternative *modus vivendi* to save communities and topsoil" (p. 216). By deifying, for instance, "cost benefit analysis" at the expense of the "common good," corporate agribusiness and "maldevelopment" have also managed to annul the productive dimensions of the family farm system and eliminate its economic and environmental advantages, particularly as they relate to building genuine communities. Berry lucidly states that we belong to nature, but it belongs to nobody, critiquing the capitalist idea that "a man may own the land in the same sense in which he would own a piece of furniture or a suit of clothes: it is his to exploit, misuse or destroy altogether should he decide that to do so would be economically feasible" (1969, p. 15).

Attending to the aftermaths of industrializing and mechanizing agricultural practices, Berry promotes small farms, the regeneration of rural communities and local economies, and place-based commitments as viable means to reformulate and re-envision our present ethical and political

contortions and solve the vicissitude of small farms. Berry advocates small, family-operated businesses and healthy communities in which each person produces enough food, clothing, and shelter for his or her consumption. Given his dismissal of planetary activism, Berry holds that relations with the local integrate everything fundamental in people's lives.

Hence, people should be environmentally conscious in their interactions with their neighbors—humans and nonhumans. Berry calls for seceding from global capitalism to a local, community-based economic system—"from industrialism to agrarianism." He urges urban dwellers to make contact with their land and community, wherein urban and rural realms share concerns and responsibilities for each other. He abhors lack of connection to places as a consequence of technology and materialistic values that strand not only the self, but harm culture and nature. According to Berry (2003), "In a sound local economy in which producers and consumers are neighbors, nature will become the standard of work and production." Consumers who understand their economy will not "tolerate the destruction of their ecosystem . . . as a cost of production" (p. 116). In contrast, the global economy "institutionalizes global ignorance, in which producers and consumers cannot know or care about one another, and in which the histories of all products will be lost. In such circumstances, the degradation of products and places, producers and consumers is inevitable" (p. 117).

In Berry's eyes, our most serious ecological problems are rooted not in government policies, but in our daily lives and attitudes. At the root of his quarrel with environmentally exploitative practices and institutions is the belief that only individuals can properly define and enact their relationship with the world, through actions whose impact is specific and tangible. For Berry, conservation organizations can only define relations with the world in general terms. Instead of delegating one's ecological and social responsibilities to such movements and activists, he encourages all people to situate their political ideals in the center of their daily lives and to think and act in accordance with their duties, not only in their political activities, but also in their work and play. Berry's ecological stances go in line with environmental justice transformative characterization of environmental studies as necessarily encompassing the whole universe—the rural and the urban.

Here, Berry's effective discourse aims to rejuvenate pre-modern traditions or to look for other alternatives in other cultures such as the ethics of thanking in Native American cosmologies. He reiterates his opposition to professional environmental activists on the ground that they tend to fall victims to the very forces and reductive epistemological and ideological superstructures they seek to subvert. Berry's writings and activism are essential steps in this direction: Focusing on capitalist exploitations of nature should supplement the status of nature in our epistemological formulas.

Because of global capitalism, the urban world has dissociated humans from themselves, other fellow humans, and the earth: "The failure of the modern cities, I think, is that they have become, not communities, but merely crowds of specialists and specializations" (1969, p. 60). Berry warns against "the loss of the future," calling Americans "an exceedingly destructive people" and informing them that they "are guilty of grave offenses against our fellow men and

against the earth . . . It is deeply disturbing, and yet I think it is true, that as a nation we no longer have a future that we can imagine and desire” (Berry, 1969, p. 46). Specialization serves as a point of escape from culpability; worse is the emphasis on doing one’s responsibility to a system or an organization at the expense of self-integrity and the separation between work and character or home—the separation, or even the invalidation, of roles. In order to deflate such illusions of autonomy and self-sufficiency, Berry assumes the disciplines of unity, knowledge, and morality. No longer can we have that paltry “objective” knowledge so prized by the academic specialists. “It is impossible to divorce the question of what we do from the question of where we are—or, rather, where we think we are” (Berry, 1969, p. 47).

To combat the feelings of entrapment and instability that he sees as indicative of his contemporary society, Berry posits and actualizes the need to return to his ancestral birthright and natural place. Buoyed by a firm moral foundation, Berry demonstrates an ethical imperative to return to his agrarian roots and replant himself in his native soil of Port Royal, Kentucky, where he grew up on his family’s land. Thus, he literally and symbolically returns to his home place. In returning, he espoused the indigenous ground, to live, farm, and write as one who has “made a marriage with the place” (Berry, 1969, p. 166). As Kimberly Smith (2003) states, “Berry’s return to Kentucky baffled his friends, but in retrospect we can see it as an early manifestation of the broader social trend in the 1960s toward ‘dropping out’ and pursuing alternative lifestyles” (p. 14). Smith maintains that Berry possesses an anti-institutional flair, given the agrarian tradition from which he arises: “Berry’s critical perspective on politics continues a long tradition of hostility toward politicians and government in democratic agrarianism . . . Berry advocate[s] withdrawal from a political system that has become hopelessly corrupt” (Smith, 2003, p. 179-80). This trend explains Berry’s recurring analogies between the ecological degradation of Kentucky and the Vietnam War, as both are driven by big environmentally destructive capitalist hunger. He parallels the violence inflicted by the war to the degradation of East Kentucky: “I am opposed to our war in Vietnam because I see it as a symptom of a deadly illness of mankind—the illness of selfishness and pride and greed which, empowered by modern weapons and technology now threatens to destroy the world” (Berry, 1969, p. 29).

The moral requirements of the writer should be linked to responsibility for the land and environmental justice. Berry indicts industrialization and professionalization for grounding a simultaneous “physical and metaphysical” split between culture and nature and sees literature as a chief medium to encourage morality and bridge this gulf. Cook (1996) comments, “Common to Berry’s view . . . is the belief, first, that literature ought to function primarily as an instrument of moral understanding and evaluation, that it ought to be governed by standards of truth or propriety or decorum” (p. 503). One should be held accountable for what one says, whether in real life or in literature, and the idea of specialization, or literature as surrogate religion, is a disappointment because all fields are connected, and the writer is a reformer, not a separate esthete. Modern “specialist-poets” have abandoned any “responsible connection between art and experience” (Berry, 1969, p. 9). Therefore, Berry feels responsible for enlightening people about the ecological and social problems the world is facing and for envisioning solutions to these complex crises.

The divorce between words and action is a fallacy that needs to be rethought seriously. Cook argues that the process of denying “truth-value to literature has been going at least since Kant developed his concept of the ‘aesthetic idea’” (1996, p. 504). Berry claims that literature has lost its designative power, and culture, in general, has been “driven into the mind” because, increasingly since the Age of Reason, we have been uprooted simultaneously both from any “beloved community” to which we belong “by history, culture, deeds, association, and affection” (Berry, 1969, p. 58). We have been cut off from any established niche in the total “order of creation” (p. 59).

Environmental racism—which refers to the fact that only certain groups of people or races are subjected to disproportionate exposure of pollutants—lies in institutionalizing false pragmatic systems of hierarchical thought and ideologies that perceive of creation in terms of disjuncture and utilitarianism and subject-object relations, where the subject has the power necessary to exploiting the object. The division between culture and nature is not hierarchical in that nature is “evil” or can be stamped out more easily as much as the human is given the lead for the faculty of reason and choice to use the nonhuman “in the right way.” Nature writers view the nonhuman world as a composite system that should be cherished and observed; otherwise, the human will lose or spoil the essence of his or her existence. Thus, we need a system of values that will curb our longing and thirst for material benefits and to protect us from our own selves, for the principles of class, competition, and free-market announce a war and a contest among people, where material accumulation is all that matters. With such diminutions, not only nature but also human communities, especially the ones who rely on nature for their everyday life, are vaporized and imperiled.

Our relationship with the environment is the originator of value, and it should administer the ground of our being: Without consideration for the consequences of our activities (in culture) on the human and nonhuman others, the world will crumble. The value of land changes when a person thinks in terms of a relationship with, rather than ownership of, the land. It is only by “staying in place” that one can begin to “conceive and understand action in terms of consequences . . . The meaning of action in time is inseparable from its meaning in place” (Berry, 1969, 88). To paraphrase, belonging to a place and a community morally orients one’s stances toward land as he or she becomes accountable for this location. Then, one’s powers and prerogatives will be restricted, “limited by responsibility on the one hand and by humility on the other” (Berry, 1969, p. 55).

Although it is nonfiction prose, Berry (1969) injects the stories of the furniture-maker and Mr. Curtis Collier, whose plight exemplifies the ecological grievances of his hometown. It thus constitutes the most extensive record of how Berry comes to appreciate what it means for him to be a “placed” person, rather than the kind of “displaced person he finds more typical of modern America” (Knott, 2002, p. 140). The furniture-maker lives in an impecunious house; few are willing to buy what he makes, and he cannot afford to send his children to school as a result of the excessive technological advancements that cripple manual skills. His penury exemplifies the degradation of Kentucky’s ecosystem instigated by coal-mining companies. Although he is skillful with his hands, the furniture-maker is unable to increase his income, because his hometown

is degraded by the capitalist, fraudulent coal companies. Here, Berry juxtaposes the furniture-maker's work that causes no harm to the environment to the damage inflicted by these companies on the ecosystem. The furniture-maker, with his customary, eco-friendly tools, who sticks to the work inherited from his ancestors, regardless of all the financial hardships and obstacles he faces, is better than the coal companies that pollute the environment and dispossess its inhabitants.

Berry (1996) introduces the phrase "nature as measure," which indicates working within the limits and capacities of nature. Thus, any technological advances and economic growth must be measured in accordance with the harm that they inflict on the other and thereby subordinated to the ecological, communal, and spiritual in the sense of good, evil, just, or unjust: "A properly scaled human economy or technology allows a diversity of other creatures to thrive" (p. 16). To make this continuity between nature and culture, we have only two sources of instruction: nature "herself" and our cultural tradition (p. 20). Berry (1996) explains that "In the Great Economy, each part stands for the whole and is joined to it; the whole is present in the part and is its health" (p. 73). There is no "outside" to the Great Economy, no escape into either specialization or generality, and no "time off." Even insignificance is no escape, for in the membership of the Great Economy everything signifies; whatever we do counts (p. 75). With its closely associated revolution in agricultural productivity, industrialism has, in truth, increased the agricultural productivity, but "the solution has been extravagant, thoughtless, and far too expensive" (p. 206). It has damaged soil and shaken human communities loose from their traditional ways of life and forced millions of rural farmers into urban wage-laborers living in disconnected, degraded environments. Instead of "the technological end-run around biological reality and the human condition," Berry advocates local agricultural values and practices that preserve the land and its inhabitants. Since nature is the standard, people will operate within its limits and capacities and modify their practices as such. Neglecting these ecological and social lessons, humanity will capsize and perish.

Notwithstanding the adoration Berry exhibits toward nature and the links he establishes between nature and culture, he tends to feminize land and associate it with women. This problematically fashioned logic of dualities that aligns women with nature and men with culture grounds the processes of objectification and patriarchy in society; it also intensifies the subservient status of women in patriarchal cultures. In doing so, he reinvigorates and unleashes a "naturalized" domination of both women and nature entailing forms of social and patriarchal misperceptions. Although the association of women with nature is seemingly used to promote an ecocentric consciousness as the "love your mother-earth," mother-earth, and Gaia maxims and innuendos imply, many ecofeminists agree with Roach (1996) that:

engendering the earth as female mother, given the meaning and function traditionally assigned to "mother" and "motherhood" in patriarchal culture will not achieve the desired aim of making our behaviors more environmentally sound, but will instead help to maintain the mutually supportive, exploitive stances we take toward our mother and toward our environment. (p. 53)

The earth is expected to give unconditionally inasmuch as the “ideal mother” is expected to sacrifice her needs for those of her family, especially her children. It is a fundamental ecofeminist endeavor to “see clearly the Earth as Earth and not as the mother or female we have imagined the earth to be” (p. 55). Critics—feminists and ecofeminists—agree that this androcentric idealization of women and nature, which alienates both women and nature from masculine-encoded culture, is a dangerous ideology that necessitates reconsideration and reformation. Adams (1993) draws attention to what she calls a process of “transference,” which she identifies as metaphorizing what is considered as other to other realms on the basis of association and naming, where to name is to control and to be performative telling the truth (p. 1).

Endorsing and praising many of Berry’s contentions doesn’t mean that I overlook the problematic nature of his rhetoric which sometimes employs Gaia, or Mother Earth, imagery, and thus reinscribes what Murphy (1996) calls Western patriarchal “sex-typing.” Indeed, Berry’s work is marred by some intensely problematic assumptions about socially designated roles and gender issues. Murphy (1996) notes, “It seems highly unlikely that Gaia imagery can be used without invoking any of the Greek patriarchal baggage attached to the symbol” (p. 59). The Western predisposition to render the planet in female gender terms is very problematic, as it, in Davis’s (1986) words, “reinforces our own prejudices toward each other” (p. 152). Berry’s land is represented as a woman, and his ideal farmer is projected as a nurturing male, “a protector of his mother and mate” (Murphy, p. 60). He also evokes themes of stewardship and responsibility of the male for the *female* earth. Doughty ecofeminist pioneers Gray and Plumwood (1993) have addressed how the celebrated “mother nature” metaphor engenders subordination and exploitation. Gray elaborates that in patriarchal Western culture, masculinity is defined not only as independence, but as “not-dependent” on any other entity (p. 40). To Gray, the same transference is at work in Western culture’s relationship with nature. Men have put into practice with “Mother Nature” this same “dominance/submission flip-flop,” as Gray puts it. By their technologies, men have “worked steadily and for generations to transform a psychologically intolerable dependence upon a seeming powerful and capricious ‘Mother Nature’ into a soothing and acceptable dependence upon a subservient and non-threatening ‘wife’” (p. 42).

Along the same line, Plumwood imputes to Western metaphysics and ontology this invidious association of women with nature and the pejorative ideas it connotes like wilderness, irrationality, domesticity, and violence, contrary to men’s correlations with reason, culture, civilization, and rationality. Scrutinizing the root causes of the women-nature equation, Plumwood points to a “route of escape from the problematic that the traditional association between women and nature creates for feminists, to opposition which neither accepts women’s exclusion from reason nor accepts the construction of nature as inferior” (p. 20). She suggests that the subordination and instrumentalization of women and nature have originated in the phallogocentric, materialistic charge of perceiving both nature and women as “limitless providers of life,” and the backgrounding of the needs of their own existence. The other downside of connecting woman to nature is that this correlation has been established in Western metaphysics from a male-centered perspective, one that excludes women from the realms of reason.

Murphy (1996) deprecates Berry's reinvigoration of Gaia images, which has led to "a presentation of the land as not only female but also feminine in a stereotypic sense of being passive, of waiting to be seeded and shaped . . . His agricultural division of labor for women and men and his sex-typing of the planet go hand in hand" (p. 65). Berry's relationship to the land is that of a husband; he believes in "man's" ability to nurture wild landscapes; it is his moral mission to appreciate the wildness and mystery of the world, to be at home in the world. And through this act of nurturance, people will be directed in life; immersion in the wilderness teaches Berry propriety. Knott (2002) echoes a comparable attitude, stating that "Berry resists the common tendency to oppose culture and nature, the wild and the domestic, and finds meaning and health in their interaction" (p. 133). He consistently draws parallels between the covenant of marriage and the commitment of a farmer to the land. Berry's gendering of land as female is related to the patterns of environmental conservation and exploitation evident in Western metaphysics. "Virgin" lands are valued while "raped" land is discarded as damaged. But Berry wanted to revive the damaged land. He did not just move onto an established farm; he built it, cultivating the land and building the house. The gendered land is at stake when reading Berry's work, as the male farmer is consistently wedded to a feminized land. I recognize the problems of continuing to see land in a gendered tradition characterized by exploitation of the feminine and posit that Berry's vision of a covenantal relationship with the land is a suitable model for Western culture. Berry acknowledges the feminization of land and offers a model in which the feminine may be a respected partner. In a parallel vein, Berry's stance vis-à-vis the human other reaffirms dialectical hierarchies, given the complete absence of racial and gender-based paradigms from his critiques.

### Conclusion:

The researcher has demonstrated the ways in which *The Long-Legged House* disrupts power relations and subverts superimposed separations in order to claim common denominators and junctions among human communities and interconnections with nature, underlying the fact that we exist in relation to human and more-than-human others. The far-reaching scope of environmental justice is problematic to many critics who view this theory as a protean mishmash lacking intellectual consistency and focus. On the contrary, the researcher argues that this approach integrates valuable tools to forcefully address environmental crises. All systems of oppression verge on and perpetuate the logic of dualistic thinking—retaining notions of demonization and otherness and relegating traditional thought, women, nature, and indigenous communities to the realm of the irrational that should be subjugated and subdued. These divisions engender environmental devastation and other related social and political inequalities.

Such intersections between nature and culture necessitate a multifaceted critique of these discourses in conjunction with the ecological entanglements they trigger. This is what this study has chiefly endeavored to accomplish: to codify environmental struggles within social, gender-based, class-based, and political realities and operations, thus eschewing deep ecologists' deficient engagement with the causes and manifestations of the environmental turmoil. Intriguingly, Berry directs his energy to writing and protesting against environmental injustice and hegemonic relations. He articulates conspicuous environmental justice and anxieties and imagines and formulates compelling frames for deconstructing the ideals of Western-oriented modernization.

Not only does Berry dramatize and problematize the interwoven socio-ecological struggles at hand, but also carves viable paths of resistance and allow readers to envision feasible alternatives to the existing trends of patriarchy, racism, and unsustainable progress. In place of the damaging logic of materialism and global capitalism that retain patriarchal and imperial residues, Berry commends rethinking our behavior, ethos, and ethic codes in order to undo self-other exclusions and reestablish ethical and spiritual interdependences and attachments, not only with other fellow humans, but also with the environment at large. Berry candidly declares that reviving traditional and communal axiology and practices can preserve the earth and its inhabitants against the avarice of coal-mining companies.

He imputes social injustice and economic deprivation to ecological deterioration and employs interrelated strategies of resistance to preserve the environment and boost readers' awareness of future apocalyptic corollaries, if the current trajectory of environmental maldevelopment persists. Berry features stark situations in which the poor are predominantly affected by environmental devastation that has institutionalized and reinforced hierarchical structures. He demonstrates that such marginalized classes or categories are deprived in consequence of capitalist denudement and erosion of their ecosystems and means of subsistence by transnational corporations that tend to collaborate with the few local ruling elite. I have chosen to examine the intersections of these dynamic tensions and stress that they cause one another. Truly, environmental degradation brings all other kinds of deprivations, especially in places where the local people rely on land, fish, forests, and hunting to secure their basic necessities.

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