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AFFECTIVE TURN OR ECOLOGICAL TURN: MARY OLIVER'S POETRY REVISITED

Abstract

When it comes to discussions about affects, human beings become the center of attention. Yet, there are times when we find ourselves in some sort of in-betweenness, where we cannot resolve whether we exert our influence on the non-humans, or it is the non-humans that trigger our bodies to respond in a certain way. The liminality witnessed at such times sheds light on the overlapping tendencies between ecocriticism and affect theory and encourages us to probe this issue more deeply. Accordingly, one may claim that a case study of Mary Oliver's poems can fulfill the main objective of this short study regarding the fact that the mutuality of affect theory and ecocriticism can pave the way for gaining further insight into investigation of her poems, stemming from the fact that the speaker-poet's body and mind are the intersections of affective encounters with the rhythms of nature. The main conclusion that can be drawn from this research is that the application of the selected approach to Mary Oliver's poetry will offer a workable solution to the mind/body dualism, whereby we witness the formation of various identities as a result of the effect of actions on other bodies and affective states.

Keywords: Mary Oliver, affect theory, ecocriticism, liminality, affect

Introduction

Widely known as a great poet of nature, Mary Oliver is of great literary importance, and her contributions to the canon of American literature are shedding light on her reliance on nature and attending to it as a "sacred home" (Davis 605). In an interview with Steven Ratiner, she talks about her childhood solitary walks in nature and describes the area as "pastoral," "an extended family," to which she attributed some affinity whose origin she herself was not sure of, yet she felt "[i]t was right there" (Oliver, "Poet Mary Oliver"). In order to offer her firsthand experiences with the world of the non-human to the reader, she neither prioritizes nature nor underestimates the inspiring influence of it on her character. Within her writings, we often witness nature as "an invitation / to happiness" ("Poppies") which grants her the vision to share those moments of felt experiences so lively with the readers that they are capable of joining the speaker-poet's affective revelations. Thus, her poems are the "stored energy, a formal turbulence, a living thing, a swirl in the flow . . . a renewable source of energy, coming, as they do, from those ever-generative twin matrices, language and imagination" (Rueckert, qtd. in Glotfelty and Fromm 108). Moreover, Oliver believes the voice of a poem is a "flesh and bone voice" (*Long Life* xiii) and reminds us that the task of writing poems, unifying thought and affect with all the limitations language brings about, may sound weird to nature, "for we are first of all creatures of motion" ("Building the House"). To reduce the weight of the seemingly laborious task of composing poems, Oliver chooses to write while she walks in the Blackwater Woods.

Writing in motion inspired by nature empowers her to "be alive and glad to be there." She has learned from her masters to "observe with passion, to think with patience, to live always caringly" ("Sister Turtle"). However, Oliver has her own style and declares she has no taste for the confessional poets and feminist writers, intending to unite the reader in an all-inclusive effort (Macdonald 20). As for the poets, she believes they must not only "read and study" but also "learn to tilt and whisper, shout, or dance" (*Long Life* xiv). Closely related to her viewpoint with regards to poetry and poets is her stress on the active role of the reader in a poem where they can take their own measure and decide their own response. That said, Oliver's emphasis on the reader's part in an "implicit author-reader pact" encouraged us to conduct the present research in some sort of an affective-ecocritical perspective in an effort to demonstrate the fact that hers is the poetry of conscious, affective encounters with the natural, as a result

of which we see the procession of the speaker-poet from an affective intra-being to an ecological inter-being with the natural. Following the argument that for Oliver the poems have to be written in an "emotional freedom," since they are not the "language but the content of the language" (Oliver, *Poetry Handbook* 3), it will be shown that sensing the places actively in her poetry results in the wedding of the physical landscapes to "the landscape of the mind, the roving of the imagination" (Basso 107). Accordingly, it will be claimed that the overlapping principles of affect theory and ecocriticism can contribute to the fresh mode of reading and analyzing Oliver's poems which not only relies on the influence of nature on the speaker-poet, but it also takes into account the affective transformations of the speaker-poet in the embrace of nature.

Affect Theory and Ecocriticism: An Overview

The world of the non-human and its intricacies have long been the staple of many writers and poets. While many postmodern approaches to literature clouded humanity's vision of the ecological crisis and extended the rift between self and the other—that is, nature—ecocriticism came into being in the 1990s to minimize that provisional gap and offered "a promising hermeneutical horizon in our interpretations and understanding of the natural world and literature" (Oppermann 103). One very important step it has taken is an effort to reveal the "need to consider the interconnections, the implicit dialog between the text and the environmental surroundings" (Love 16). To that end, the advocates of this theoretical standpoint maintained that they need to stand against Western dogmatism, which gave culture superiority over nature and brought about more division between people and nature (Howarth 77). Accordingly, they maintained that the way the environment is viewed in the lives of the individuals needs some modifications. Therefore, the exclusive mode of thinking needs to be replaced by an unrestrictive attitude which regards humanity as "the individual-in-environment" rather than apart from it (Evernden, qtd. in Glotfelty and Fromm 97). The reciprocity implied here results in a total transformation of our mode of consciousness, the result of which is the creation of "a new language" and "a new sense of what is to be a human" (T. Berry 42). Such a new language includes the correlation between humanity and nature which has been overlooked for so long. Yet, with the advent of ecocriticism and its by-product, biocentrism, something within the human spirit was tapped, which countered the concept of alterity attributed to nature and informed human beings that

we are "neither better nor worse than other creatures . . . but simply equal to everything else in the natural world" (Campbell, qtd. in Glotfelty and Fromm 128). This symbiotic correlation, claiming that we are "both a part of and apart from" nature (Bate 33), also underscores the sanctification of the humanity and all the existing natural states (Vannucci 75) and the uncontrollable aspect of the environment (Woodruff 3).

That said, ecocriticism's stressing the interdependence between man and nature casts light on some mode of inter-being that echoes the basic premise of the affect theory that is seen "in those intensities that pass body to body" and make it possible for human body to "act and be acted upon" in close company of the non-human (Gregg and Seigworth 1). As the name implies, proponents of affect theory define affect "as visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion—that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension, that can likewise suspend us (as if in neutral) across a barely registering accretion of force-relations, or that can even leave us overwhelmed by the world's apparent intractability" (1). The conviction that affects precede emotional states is the central idea lying at the heart of affect theory and is of key value in this research. Though affect and emotion are used interchangeably in most texts, the main argument of this study is to reinforce affect theory's combining mind and body as a move away from the linguistic turn of the mid-20th century to counter the belief that language is the primary way to understand the world on the one hand, and emphasize the significance of the preconscious experience of intensity in birthing the affective turn and its later combination with the ecological turn in an interdisciplinary style on the other hand.

Affective Ecocriticism: An Applied Reading

The human body's potential to move and feel at the same time demonstrates that there is an "intrinsic connection between movement and sensation" whereby one calls the other one up (Massumi 1). One direct outcome of this ability is the production of a "qualitative difference" because each movement in each region can arouse some feeling within us. As a result, we may conclude, our body can move at the same time it feels something and can "feel itself moving" (1). We, similarly, use our bodies and its potentials not only to understand what is going on around us but also to grasp "the environments that surround them, including the deliberations, emotions, and actions of nonhuman agents and even

the movements of inanimate objects" (Mossner 16). From this point, we can understand that affects have an intersubjective role that lead us from the "micro-scale of the individual to the macro-scale of the institutions, nations, and the planet" (Houser 223). In other words, the interrelation referred hereto shows the crossroad at which ecocriticism and affect theory meet and gives birth to an affective ecocriticism and the emergence of collective bodies. As its main principle, affective ecocriticism claims that we are in need of a better affective, better say effective, ecocriticism (Bladow and Ladino 3). While practitioners of affect theory have often disregarded the effect of the environment on affective encounters and ecocritics have "neglected the affectivity of human bodies in their eagerness to champion greater attention to the more-than-human world," the common ground between these two critical approaches is that both aim to counter the "poststructuralist focus on discourse and the dogged pursuit of ideology critique" and criticize the Cartesian dualisms in an effort to "recuperate terms" (4) that had long been overlooked.

Affect theory's concentrating on the sense of place and ecocriticism's emphasis on the one-to-one relationship between humanity and nature is, therefore, at the forefront of the overlap between the two. The invitation on the part of both encourages us to concur with the view that "affect is ecological 'by nature,' since it operates at the confluence of environments, texts, and bodies—including nonhuman and inanimate bodies" (8). Oliver's stressing the role of passion in her place informed poems serves as a good justification for the point that "familiar places are experienced as inherently meaningful; their significance and value being found to reside in . . . the form and arrangement of their observable characteristics" (Basso 108). As witnessed in "Why I Wake Early," Oliver addresses and appreciates God as the Creator of the orderly universe, whose creation touches her deeply to the point she states, "Watch, now, how I start the day / in happiness, in kindness." Though rather spiritual, the inception of this inner transformation seems to be the "pre-cognitive, non-linguistic bodily sensation" (Cooke, qtd. in Wolfreys 10) that cannot be explained in linguistic terms and works as a stimulus response for the poet, acknowledging:

> Though I play at the edges of knowing,
> truly I know
> our part is not knowing,
> but looking, and touching, and loving ("Bone")

Oliver's placing emphasis on our inability to act consciously in affective incidents and the forthcoming bodily transformations resonates with the role of the other bodies and environments in shaping the bodies in contact.

Deriving from affect theory's interdisciplinary characteristic, one may be convinced that Oliver's goal in composing poems is beyond verbalizing and depicting revelatory insights to the reader. Besides doing the job of a nature poet, she pictures the affective confrontations in a way that the so-called transformative moments signify the existence and relationality of the worlds, bodies, and forces involved. For her, writing a poem, "is a kind of possible love affair between something like the heart (that courageous but also shy factory of emotion) and the learned skills of the conscious mind" (*Poetry Handbook* 7) that come across each other in the environmental surroundings she gains inspiration from. Then, she continues, "If it is *all* poetry, and not just one's own accomplishment, that carries one from this green and mortal world—that lifts the latch and gives a glimpse into a greater paradise—then perhaps one has the sensibility: a gratitude apart from authorship, a fervor and desire beyond the margins of the self" (9). As a result, Oliver's ability to immerse in nature, despite the seeming awareness of nature's radical otherness, is the foremost factor that contributes to the emergence of an affective-ecocritical transformation observed in her poetry, foregrounding the notion that consciousness leads her to "develop a concern for the self" as well as for the "other selves" and "improve the art of life" (Damasio 7).

Affective Inspiration and the Art of Writing Poems

In *A Poetry Handbook*, Oliver writes, "Good poems are the best teachers. Perhaps they are the only teachers" (10). Rueckert believes that

> [p]oems are green plants among us; if poets are suns, then poems are green plants among us for they clearly arrest energy on its Path to entropy and in so doing, not only raise matter from lower to higher order, but help to create a self-perpetuating and evolving system. That is, they help to create creativity and community, and when their energy is released and flows out into others, to again raise matter from lower to higher order (to use one of the most common descriptions of what culture is).
>
> (qtd. in Glotfelty and Fromm 111)

Rueckert's comparison of poems with the green plants is congruent with Oliver's view of poets, both shedding light on the great responsibility of the poet to educate the readers and grant them further insight into life. Apparently, such strong interaction between the poet and the reader in Oliver's poetry springs from the affective influence of the place on the poet which enables her to share that experience in a way that empowers the reader to take active part in this reciprocal pact. Through the act of reading, we see the initiation of affects on a microscale level which extends to a macroscale one, implying that the experience of affect passes from the speaker-poet to the readers; this, also, intensifies the belief that "[n]othing exists for its own sake, but for a harmony greater than itself, which includes it" (W. Berry 85). Any work of art that accords with this notion "honors the Creation, and becomes part of it" (85). Being part of Creation, clearly, suggests that affective inclinations include "a lively material world" where we share an inter-being with other creatures (Bladow and Ladino 8). For Oliver, such intermingling with the non-human gives her the chance to write poems "in which nothing is neglected / not a hope, not a promise". Her purpose is composing poems

> that look into the earth and the heavens
> and see the unseeable. I want them to honor
> both the heart of faith, and the light of the world;
> the gladness that says, without any words, *everything* ("Everything")

Seeing the unseeable and the forthcoming bliss is possible when the speaker-poet chooses to write "while crossing the fields / that are fresh with daisies and everlasting and the / ordinary grass" ("Everything"). Being in the heart of the non-human for her means leaving the room to "see the wordless, singing world" which makes her happy. The feeling of joy she finds in the morning rain shows the central role of the environment in shaping our feeling and "cognitive understanding of how we feel about that environment" (Mossner 52).

In order to reach the realm of cognition and full consciousness and help the reader share in the same inspirational experience, the poets need to see the unseeable—namely, the affects—in close company of nature for themselves and transform those unconscious motives into understandable emotive reactions which are as much ecocritical as they are affective. At this point, human emotions and the appeal of nature meet each other, emphasizing the fact that "[a]ffective forms happen as singular events" (Stewart, qtd. in Berberich xv); yet, they have such a remarkable impact on human spirits. This is vividly seen in

the "North Country," in which the speaker-poet recalls the song of the thrush as the only song with which "the very elements of your soul / shiver nicely." The thrush is an inseparable part of the affective landscape the reader finds the speaker-poet fascinated by. Affected by this ecological encounter, the speaker-poet believes the thrush's arrival year after year is reminiscent that we can live a better life, "be softer, kinder" ("North Country"). The realization Oliver comes to and puts in words for the reader here plays havoc with the long-held Western belief in the predominance of human mind and cognitive reasoning and affirms that affects "cross-cut the boundaries between brain, body and world" (Ingold 244) and gives rise to the collective responses to affective impulses.

The Rapturous Confluence of the Non-Self and the Self

As Keats writes in "On the Grasshopper and the Cricket," "The Poetry of earth is never dead" (*Poetry Foundation*). Such poetry has "a pulse, a breathiness, some moment of earthly delight" (Oliver, "The Swan"), which suggests "the interdependent nature of the world" and inspires the reader "into action in new ways" (Bryson, *West* 2–3). Within this nature informed type of poetry, the engagement with affects leads to the elevation of "human experience as it interacts relationally with the world around it" (Berberich et al. 3). The rationality seen in Oliver's poems derives from her love of nature which, as Sara Ahmed believes, turns into a form of dependence that is different from the self, being also a part thereof (*Cultural Politics* 125). The attentiveness of Oliver's poetry to what it is brings her affective encounters to life and helps the reader live those moments one more time. In fact, her identification with the non-human is an effort to effectuate the likeness, rather than to cause a "being-alike" effect of the non-human, and it consequently produces "an approximation that binds them together" (128). Despite the influential role of nature in her poetry, Oliver is fully aware of the otherness of the non-human that foregrounds the approximation. Referring to the Freudian psychoanalysis and its regard of love as an affect-based bond, Ahmed confirms, "love then becomes a form of dependence on what is 'not me,' and is linked profoundly to the anxiety of boundary formation, whereby what is 'not me' is also part of me" (125), which accounts for Oliver's choosing to watch

> the white heron
> rising
> over the swamp

and the darkness ("White Heron Rises Over Blackwater"),

than try to write a poem, for she thinks the white heron is the poem she wanted to write.

The inspiration Oliver receives from the white heron proves that "a single individual may react directly to his environment and bring the rest of the group to share consciously or unconsciously in the influence exerted upon him" (Sapir, qtd. in Fill and Mühlhäusler 13). The affective influence of nature on Oliver stems from the consideration and attention she gives to the nature. Believing that a poem "is an instance of emotion, of noticing something in the world" (74), the speaker-poet experiences an affective awakening whereby she resolves that "if the heart has resolved itself to love, there is / not a single inch of emptiness" ("Honey Locust"). By taking action from that place of affect, Oliver becomes whole again as she journeys from a pre-perception mode of knowledge to the perception of other bodies in nature, which draws the world into her, as an immediate perceiver, and acts as a path to the ecological being with the non-human. She has devoted herself to the nature and enjoys her at-oneness with it when she gathers "handfuls of blossoms" and eats "of their mealiness." The lovely existence of the honey locust tree in June and the bees diving into it, "working like farmers," eventually ends with the sweet taste of honey left in the speaker-poet's mouth and enlivens her spirit ("Honey Locust"). The act of tasting the honey shows that "a body is much outside itself as much in itself" (Seigworth and Gregg 3).

Through being outside itself, the body is ready to take in the affective influences, and through being in itself, it can undergo an ecological transformation, as in Oliver's "What Is There Beyond Knowing," in which the speaker-poet mentions there is no joy beyond going on "drifting, in the heaven of the grass / and the weeds". She states, "Life so far doesn't have any other name / but breath and light, wind and rain". In truth, it is her desire to "fuse with the beloved" and lose her identity (Ben Ze'ev, qtd. in Ahmed, *Cultural Politics* 128).

Oftentimes, we witness the speaker of Oliver's poems merge with nature, which acknowledges "the self's mutability and multiplicity" (Graham 353) in the process of identification with nature. The speaker-poet's insistence on immersing in nature exhibits the poet's ability in creating affinities between humanity and nature. Such transaction is achieved through the poet's innovative imagination and her true-to-life mode of giving voice to the affective-ecologi-

cal confrontation with the natural world, representing the movement from the "sensuous contact to copying to becoming, and in the process, offer a way back to nature, to the 'real,' from which language separates us" (355). Thanks to the help of the mimetic faculty, Oliver employs poetic language in a such way that it sutures "nature to artifice" and brings "sensuousness to sense" via "sympathetic magic," "granting the copy of the character and power of the original, the representation the power of the represented" (Taussig xviii).

What looms large here is that bodily sensation, which is considered distinct from direct emotional recognitions and is influential enough to move Oliver and touch her mood and behavior, specifying the centrality of various states of being in an affective communication with nature, more than the precise emotional manifestations, because affect induced the states that can be experienced prior to the perceiver's ability to recognize and interpret them. This accounts for Oliver's compulsion to tie with nature and be the fish, the thrush, the owl, and the like; however, it lasts for a short time. Were it not for trying to assume different identities, the speaker-poet would not reach the recognition that is necessary to "step outside the boundaries we draw around ourselves and become, not just another, but many others" (Graham 355) and to comprehend the value inherent in nature and its non-human elements. With the help of poetic imagination and the impact of the affects she receives from nature, Oliver can live many lives besides that of her own. Upon seeing the otter's joyful playing in the water, the speaker-poet resolves to go the summer lake, reaching out into the loveliness, "where the leaves of the trees / almost touch, where peace comes / in the generosity of the water" and floats on her back to think of "a poem or two" ("Swimming with the Otter"). This influential moment prepares her to welcome the ecological-affective transformation, which leads her to a greater sense of perfection, as she is seen quite pleased in the end.

Whether experienced in person or in a different way, the impact of happiness is so crucial that it makes room for the creation of a wholeness of the self that "puts us into intimate contact with things" (Ahmed, "Happy Objects," qtd. in Gregg and Seigworth 31). For Oliver, watching "Ms. Violet / in her purple gown" is as pleasurable as watching the "careful fingers" of the children picking them. Though "we have been through it / many times," she believes, "there is still nothing" as joyful as watching "the children bringing home" the happiness of Spring "in their small hands" ("Children, It's Spring"). The innocence of children intertwined with their being entranced "by what has happened / to the

world" demonstrates the integrity of the self in their character that is, at times, difficult to be obtained by the adults. As an inspirational moment, watching this scene prepares the speaker-poet to rise to integrity too, be "happily affected in the present of an encounter" (Ahmed, "Happy Objects," qtd. in Gregg and Seigworth 31) and experience an affective-ecocritical inter-being with nature.

Affective Reactions and the Language of Integration

Oliver's emotional responses originate from a transformational power of affects to trigger human sensations and give rise to the personal reactions of an affected individual (Berberich et al.1), developing a new language that focuses on the relational experiences of human beings with the world around them (1). The Oliverian "green language" is therefore a go-between force that facilitates the transition from an affective intra-being into an ecological inter-being with nature, whereby we witness an interchangeability between the affective turn and the ecological turn, washing out a borderline between the two, as the speaker-poet assumes different identities in the presence of the non-human. The way Oliver personifies the scene of the citrons, mauves, and petunias, "flashing their / tender signals of gratitude" and the roses nodding back "so very politely" to the cosmos, four-o'clocks, and the sweet alyssum in the "First Happenings" emphasizes Oliver's devotion to the nature from the moment of observation of it to the focal recognition of an intersectionality of multiple presences embodied therein (Christensen, qtd. in Bryson, *Ecopoetry* 143). As a result, watching the "fluttering petals" provides the speaker-poet with an insight to resolve that "wearing such a satisfying body" and "being, with your entire self" is indeed "a quiet prayer" ("First Happenings"). The human qualities attributed to the nonhuman and the wholeness Oliver writes about in the end suggest a destruction of human identity in favor of the emergence of an affective-ecological wholeness that makes the visceral central to its inception.

What is more, Oliver's recollection of such an incident as a quiet prayer informs the reader of the fact that her poems represent "a complex perspective on the relationship between the environmentally aware artist and her nonhuman subjects" (Bryson, *West* 76). Nonetheless, her ecological consciousness is widely influenced by the affective sensations she receives from the environment. Her attempts gesture toward "the way in which physical places matter in shaping both cognition and emotion" (Bladow & Ladino 6). With the help of ecocriticism, "new and neglected affects" (10) are brought into the conversation within

the affective encounters of the speaker-poet with the non-human. One such effort is seen in "Reckless Poem," in which the speaker-poet states, "Today I'm hardly myself. / It happens over and over. / It is heaven-sent." The bursting of green leaves from the tips of her fingers in compony of nature, "in the reckless seizure of the spring," is the "sweet passion of one-ness" that shows the transcorporeal transformation of the speaker-poet and gives credit to the unstoppable flow of the environment through us in numerous ways (Fromm 95).

Laird Christensen believes Oliver's poetry "shows that by opening ourselves to the presence of others, we may follow our threads of connection back toward the fundamental integration that is our larger self" (qtd. in Bryson, *Ecopoetry* 148). In a similar manner, Vicki Graham argues that "[c]ontact leads to contagion" (355) in Oliver's poetry. Oliver demonstrates this process in her account of a meeting with the non-human, when she says, "I have flown from the window of myself / to become white heron, gray whale / fox, hedgehog, camel" ("Reckless Poem"). The symbiosis she is after is achieved "*in spite of* human consciousness and the language to which it is wed" (Zona 127). Though the language "necessarily diminishes presences to objects," remarks Christensen, "Oliver clearly believes that poetry can call attention to the fact that we dwell in a world of presences" (qtd. in Bryson, *Ecopoetry* 140), in which we are being affected by the non-human regularly. For Oliver, being affected by nature coincides with feeling a joyful moment of stepping outside the boundary of the self and inside the integral world of the other—that is, of nature—from which she feels slightly alienated, or not alienated at all, so that she states, "Sometimes already my heart is a red parrot, perched / among strange, dark trees, flapping and screaming" ("Reckless Poem").

A close relationship between Oliver's heart and the red parrot reinforces the fact that being affected "in a good way' involves an orientation toward something as being good" (Ahmed, "Happy Objects," qtd. in Gregg and Seigworth 32). One immediate outcome of such orientation is experiencing "the proximity of objects" and shaping "what is proximate to the body" (32). By declaring that her body "is not yet a temple" but one of God's "fair fields," living the life that Lord has made her live makes it clear for Oliver that her body is "rustic and brash" ("Meanwhile"), intending to be observed by the Lord in the same way the pine trees, a catbird, and the thrush are observed. Thus, she ends her poem with the following lines:

> The world I live in is hedges, and small blossoms.

Lord, consider me, and my earnest work.
A hut I have made, out of the grasses.
Now I build the door, out of all things brash and rustic.
Day and night it is open.
Have you seen it yet, among the grasses?
How it longs for you?
How it tries to shine, like gold? ("Meanwhile")

Touched by all she has seen, the speaker-poet "begins to copy it spontaneously 'miming [it] into being' through ecstatic identification" (Graham 355), in an effort to make an impression, become another, detect "the presence of God's body" (Davis 607), and bring the damage of dualism to an end.

Oliver's attachment with the non-human and the resultant bodily transformation are vividly depicted in "What the Body Says," in which the speaker-poet mentions, "I was born here, and / I belong here, and / I will never leave." Her reluctance to leave that place ties with her willingness to undergo a corporeal process of transformation through the blue heron's gray smoke flowing over her and the wind blowing in all directions until she is "safely and entirely / something else." Hence, this affective process of bodily transformation shows that maintaining an "intersubjective reciprocity . . . is central to Oliver's poetry of the body," verifying the origination of her poems from a direct interaction between the nature and the body (Bryson, *West* 84–85). As further explained by Todd Davis, "it is Oliver the mystic and artist who finds herself enmeshed in the patterns of every creature, reveling in the immanence and unity not only of her own flesh and spirit but of all bodies that compromise the body of God on Earth" (95). In the same way, the reciprocity noticed in her poetry results in "a knowing that transforms the self who knows, a knowing that brings into being new sympathies, new affects as well as new cognitions and new forms of intersubjectivity" (Bartky 71).

Conclusion

A careful investigation of the aforementioned Oliver's poems in the light of the affective-ecological-based approach demonstrated that, by opening herself to other presences, Oliver could see and experience the world of the non-human in its totality. And by relying on the importance of the place-informed affects

and her private inner meanderings, Oliver employed her eco-poetic language in a way that acts as a mediator between the affective and the ecological forces, foregrounding her work and enabling a reader to join her and approach the act of undivided inclusion from an entirely integrated perspective, thus contributing to the speaker-poet's corporeal transformation in the embrace of nature. Hence, it can be concluded that all the above-discussed Oliver's poems advocate a biocentric call to the unification of a divided presences, whose seemingly separation is supplanted by the intervening other-than-language forces, coinciding with the nature-bound impulses in a relational sense.

Last but not the least, the renewed insight she is blessed with touches Oliver on an unprecedented level and allows the world of the non-human to unfold before her as it will; through being open to what might appear indecipherable at the beginning, she becomes one with the infinite world and looks for this all-encompassing essence everywhere, which is why it was argued that the ecological impetus of Oliver's poetry overlaps with the affective influence of the non-human and evokes the liminality observed in the process of tying with the nature and her transition from an affective intra-being with the non-human to an ecological inter-being with it.

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AFEKTIVAN ZAOKRET ILI EKOLOŠKI ZAOKRET: PREISPITANO PJESNIŠTVO MARY OLIVER

Sažetak

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U raspravama o osjećajima ljudska bića postaju središte pozornosti. Postoje ipak trenutci kada se nađemo u nekoj vrsti međuprostora, u kojima ne možemo razriješiti imamo li svoje osjećaje prema ne-ljudima ili su ne-ljudi ti koji pokreću naše senzacije i daju im glas. Ograničenja svjedočenja u takvim vremenima bacaju svjetlo na preklapajuće tendencije između ekokritičnosti i utječu na teoriju te nas potiču da dublje istražimo ovo pitanje. U skladu s tim, istraživači vjeruju da studija slučaja odabranih djela Mary Oliver može ispuniti glavni cilj ove kratke studije, i to s obzirom na činjenicu da uzajamnost teorije afekta i ekokritičnosti može utrti put daljnjemu uvidu u istraživanje njezinih pjesama, proizlazeći iz činjenica da su tijelo i um govornika-pjesnika sjecište sentimentalnih susreta s ritmovima Prirode.

Ključne riječi: Mary Oliver, teorija utjecaja, ekokritičnost, ograničenost i osjećaji