人間・人物・市民 ー アメリカ諸文学の一検証

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Humans, Persons, and Citizens: An Inquiry into American Literatures

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How do we define ourselves as entities? The question may sound more or less hard to answer immediately, but it becomes to some extent answerable when we specify what kind of milieus we are in. This study's primary purpose is to reorient ourselves in relation to others who inhabit social and/or natural environments; in other words, it is to demonstrate that we are in many senses inseparable from other entities, including natural phenomena and business corporations. To this end, the essay refers to several literary works as vehicles of cross-boundary exchange, and each of them has been accepted as representative of American literatures, such as Jewish American, Native American, and even sci-fi literatures. Overall, an interdisciplinary attempt will be made in this essay to lay the foundations for incorporating selected perspectives on our varying position in an interconnected whole into the vast universe of critical discourse on entities.[1]

1. On Anotherness

In his 1917 essay entitled "A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-Analysis," Sigmund Freund explicates how our universal narcissism has suffered three serious blows from the following scientific researches: Copernicus's heliocentric theory proved that the earth is by no means "the stationary center of the universe," which means that "the self-love of humankind suffered its first blow, the *cosmological* one" (140);

Darwin put an end to the assumption that humans occupy a central position in the animal kingdom wherein they think of themselves as different from and superior to other animals, and thus "[t]his was the second, the *biological* blow to human narcissism" (141); Freud himself demystified the then commonly-held belief that "man feels himself to be supreme within his mind," by discovering that "[t]he ego feels uneasy; it comes up against limits to its power in its own house, the mind"— and this "third blow, which is psychological in nature, is probably the most wounding" (141). In this manner, Freud decentralizes our homocentric positions located in cosmological, biological, psychological milieus. To put it another way, he deconstructs our self-centrism in its literal sense or humanism in its negative sense, while attaching particular importance to his discovery of unconsciousness as repressed consciousness.

In addition to the abovementioned researchers, as we know, Jacques Derrida and many other deconstructionist/poststructuralist practitioners, such as postcolonialists and multiculturalists, have also questioned the existence of a center by problematizing Western metaphysical model of self and other. Consequently, a wide variety of contemporary studies are increasingly tending to see our relative positions in various environments rather positively. Indeed, a large number of nature-oriented or eco-centered studies have placed great emphasis upon the clearer realization of interconnectedness between humans and their fellow creatures. An example of those studies is ecofeminism that has laid claim to the closer interrelation between women and nature, especially in terms of biological reproduction and patriarchal exploitation.

Along with the advent of ecofeminism "as a movement within particular political locations" (Sturgeon 3) has emerged ecocriticism as, simply defined, "the study of the relantionship between literature and

physical environment" (Glotfelty XVIII). Given these are both eco-discourses, they should certainly never be seen as competimng nor conflicting voices, yet it is worth particularizing them so as to elucidate their individual goals: if ecofeminists examine human-nature relationships from gender perspectives that reveal women and nature as the oppressed, then ecocriticics do so from gender-free perspectives that reveal humans and nonhuman entities as interacting subjects. It is true that both of the discourses are mutually affinitive in the sense of rendering viable a wide diversity of human relationships with nature. Broadly speaking, however, the ecofeminist's voice is often exclusive due partly to her acute attnetion to sexist domination and partly to "the critique of the connection between women and nature and the desire for a positive verstion of that connection" (Sturgeon 29). On the other hand, the ecocritic's vocie is rather embracive due partly to her holistic approach to inhabitation and partly to her broad stance upon "environmental implications and human-nature relationships in any literary text, even texts that seem, at first glance, oblivious of the nonhuman world" (Slovic 160). Thus, ecocriticism is essentially concerned with biosphere,

> literature, and the assumption that all texts are at least potentially environmental (and therefore susceptible to ecocriticism or ecologically informed reading) in the sense that all texts are literally or imaginatively situated in a place, and in the sense that their authors, consciously or not, inscribe within them a certain relation to to their place. (Kern 259)

The keynote of ecocritical discussion offered above is, to a certain extent, typified by Patrick. D. Murphy. In an essay on recent multicultural literatures of America, for example, he propounds the concept of anotherness as well as that of inhabitation as an ecologically and environmentally alternative form of otherness:

> If the possibility of the condition of "anotherness," being another for others, is recognized, then the ecological process of i nteranimation—the ways in which humans and other entities develop, change and learn through mutually influencing each other day to day—can be emphasized in constructing models of viable human/rest-of-nature interaction. (42)

With anotherness in his mind, Murphy posits the need for "interanimation" between "humans and other entities" in an effort to realize and actualize "viable human/rest-of-nature interaction." In other words, he articulates one-anotherness between those entities, exploring its practicability in contemporary literary works of various genres such as nature-oriented, sci-fi and multicultural literatures of America—and as an introductory attempt to expand our critical horizons, the section that follows is concerned with illustrating anotherness described in Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath.*

A collection of critical and biographical essays entitled *Steinbeck and the Environment* was published in 1997. Roughly speaking, it has served as an example of criticism of nature-oriented literature in the sense that it addresses interrelated aspects of his selected works—that the individual contributors give in-depth insights into the author's ecologist and environmentalist philosophy. In the section to critique *The Grapes of Wrath*, for example, Lorelei Cederstrom conducts an ecofeminist analysis of the three female characters, Granma, Ma Joad and Rose of Sharon, all of whom are claimed to be representative of Mother Nature.[2] At the same time, the novel is inarguably analyzable from an ecocritical perspective, too. In particular, its intercalary chapters are worth reexamining in that they manifest themselves in ecocritical materials, just as the twenty-fifth chapter shows:

> Behind the fruitfulness are men of understanding and

> knowledge and skill, men who experiment with seed, endlessly developing the techniques for greater crops of plants whose roots will resist the million enemies of the earth: the molds, the insects, the rusts, the blights. These men work carefully and endlessly to prefect the seed. (362)

Supposing that the word "men" is a gender-neutral term indicative of "humans," the passage above can be fully drawn into ecocritical discourse in that it delineates the one-anotherness between "men" and "plants." "In order to perfect the seed," the men continue to animate the plants by "endlessly developing the techniques for greater crops." At the same time, the plants continue to animate the men by endlessly generating the seed. Here, the seed implies its pivotal role in recurring the cycles of life, particularly vegetable life. Through the seed, in other words, life goes on:

> The men who graft the young trees, the little vines, are the cleverest of all, for theirs is a surgeon's job, as tender and delicate; and those men must have surgeons' hands and surgeons' hearts to slit the bank, to place the grafts, to bind the wounds and cover them from the air. These are great men. (362)

"The men" take "tender and delicate" care of "the young trees, the little vines," all of which have come into being through seeds. Such a careful treatment of young little plants is reasonably overlapped with a parental treatment of young little babies. In this sense, the men's surgical yet parental support of the plants is suggestive of their mutual anotherness attainable through "human/rest-of-nature interaction." The novel is hence susceptible of various nature-oriented interpretations.

Significantly, Murphy's conceptualization of anotherness is applicable not only to ecological milieus but to many other ones as well. For instance, he refers to the college literary classroom as a locus to

practice anotherness. In his opinion, an introductory course in literature is not necessarily about literature itself, for, more often than not, it is "about thinking and being in the world" ("Coyote" 163) and therefore "requires students to stop reading on the binary model of 'self and other,' identity and difference, and begin reading on the basis of relational difference, self and another and myself as another in relation to others" ("American" 30). This distinction between otherness and anotherness is crucial to establishing meaningful relationships with classmates and characters from different backgrounds, precisely because "it enables students to realize that identification and affinities do not mean assimilation or denial of differences" ("Coyote" 169). What kind of text can we, then, refer to as an apt illustration of the realization and actualization of anotherness in such a social milieu?

As discussed previously, Steinbeck was concerned with what we suppose as anotherness between humans and other entities. On the other hand, Bernard Malamud was concerned with that between humans themselves. In such works as *The Assistant*, he depicts the one-anotherness between those from different backgrounds. Notably, their mutual anotherness is attained through literary works. Indeed, the Italian Frank (who aspires to study at NYU) and the Jewish Helen (who does study at NYU) become closer and closer to each other through the classics such as "*Madame Bovary, Anna Karenina and Crime and Punishment*" (127). The same holds true for "The First Seven Years," in which the classics serve to form an interpersonal relationship between the shoemaker's helper and the shoemaker's daughter, namely Sobel the Jewish European and Miriam the Jewish American. At one time, Feld the shoemaker (who was originally an immigrant from Sobel's homeland Poland) notices that "with his books and commentary, Sobel had given Miriam to understand that he loved her"

(19). As a consequence of his inner struggle, he allows his assistant to propose to her in two years when she will be twenty-one years old, which suggests that the father is becoming another for Sobel.

Here it is worth referring to Paul Auster's *City of Glass*. The reason is that he, or his protagonist named Paul Auster, gives the following description of New York in a rather different manner from Malamud:

> New York was an inexhaustible space, a labyrinth of endless steps and no matter how far he walked, no matter how well he came to know its neighbourhoods and streets, it always left him with a feeling of being lost. Lost, not only in the city but within himself as well. Each time he took a walk, he felt as though he were leaving himself behind. And by giving himself up to the movement of the streets, by reducing himself to a seeing eye, he was able to escape the obligation to think, and this, more than anything else, brought him a measure of peace. (4)

Given that Auster is a Jewish American, the guoted passage reveals that he stands in stark contrast to Malamud. Whereas New York is, to the former, characteristic of solitariness rather than loneliness in the sense that "it provides him with both "a feeling of being lost" and "a measure of peace," it is, to the latter, characteristic of anotherness rather than togetherness in the sense that it presents itself in multiculturality. In this very respect, Malamud's Jewish-populated district of New York can be said to perform an idiosyncratic function as a sort of multicultural classroom, in which "students" learn to acquire a sense of anotherness, mostly through "books and commentary." By situating them in such an intimate environment, in other words, he employs literature as a vehicle not for "reading on the binary model of

'self and other,'" but for "reading on the basis of relational difference, self and another and myself as another in relation to others."[3]

What we have seen so far is that the concept of anotherness is of high significance in resituating ourselves in both natural and social environments. In the vase universe of critical discourse, humans are situated as being another for each other and for many others as their biological brethren.

2. On Personhood

The discussion so far was based on the fact that we are humans. More must be made of this fact, though. For instance, if we see ourselves as persons, then our sense of anotherness will be further intensified: "Because of our increasing biological knowledge, the gap between human individuals and animals is becoming less distinct. Among the implications of proximate personhood is the realization that animals such as the African apes are at least quasi-persons" (Walters 97). That is to say, biology enables us to find ourselves proximate to, hence another for, "quasi-persons." Taken together, such holistic concepts as anotherness and personhood serve to envision ecology as a society that consists of a heterogeneous group of persons being mutually another.

The dual representation of ecology/society is seen in Leslie Marmon Silko's oft-anthologized "Lullaby," which ends with the lullaby sung by Ayah the Native American:

The earth is your mother,
she holds you.
The sky is your father,
he protects you.

Sleep,
sleep.
Rainbow is your sister,
she loves you.
The winds are your brothers,
they sing to you.
Sleep,
sleep.
We are together always
We are together always
There never was a time
when this
was not so. (51)

It is plain that Ayah's song, which "makes evident the interrelationships between Navajo culture and nature" and "indicates the vitality of oral tradition" (Wilson 3202), personifies "the earth," "the sky," "[r]ainbow," and "the winds." These phenomena as "persons" convey a collective sense that has long been shared among Navajos or, in this story's case, among Ayah, her grandmother and mother who have sung the lullaby to her, her husband Chato, her children Ella and Danny. At the same time, her lullaby conveys a sense of anotherness for "mother," "father," "sister," and "brothers," all of whom promise their forever togetherness with her family—"We are together always." Silko can thus be said as a portrayer of ecology and society, both of which exist together in harmony.

It is important to note here that the question of personhood can be addressed not only from natural scientific—biological and ecological—but from social scientific perspectives as well. It is well known that the law—corporate law, to be accurate—speaks of business corporations as

legal persons capable of owning properties, entering into contracts, and suing or being sued in their own names. Having said that, a number of questions must come to mind:

> Is a corporation a real entity with its own will and purpose in society, or is it a mere association of real individuals forming a contract among themselves? Is its legal personality a truthful representation of the underlying social reality, or a fictitious or artificial being breathing only in the province of law? (Iwai 584)

In this way, the corporation's personality is literally open to question. In actual fact, however, the above-posed questions are concerned exclusively with the following: is a corporation a person or a thing? As is often the case with such a binary question, the answer lies in the middle: a corporation is characterized by both its personality and its thingness. Legally speaking, the corporation performs a double function as a thing and as a being, since "a corporation as a legal person can own things and a corporation as a legal thing can be owned by persons" (Barca, Iwai, Pagano, and Trento 17).

In the United States, the corporation's thingness has been brought to light by mergers, which "have exerted a substantial influence on the structure of the U.S. economy" (Gwartney and Stroup 284). The concept of the merger makes it explicit that the corporation is but a thing which can be sold and bought; in other words, the merger is one of the ways to eliminate the corporation's legal personality. As we know, mergers are inseparable from acquisitions, and the procedure for mergers and acquisitions (M & A) is quite simple: "it is to have someone own more than fifty percent of its shares. That someone then recommends a majority of block of votes in shareholders meetings and acquires an absolute control over the corporation" (Iwai, "Persons" 21).

Although many countries have laid down a variety of rules to protect the interests of minority shareholders, M & A has been popularly practiced in many capitalist nations, especially in the United States. Admittedly, an incorporated firm acts as a legal person capable of owning corporate assets and of having external relations with such persons as creditors and customers, but it reveals its thingness when it comes to M & A, which has been far less prevalent in Japan than in America.

Historically, Japanese corporations have made themselves relatively autonomous by establishing their close network of cross-shareholdings. It is well known that Japan has six major corporate groups, the so-called Big Six: Mitsubishi, Mitsui, Sumitomo, Fuyo (Fuji), Sanwa, and Daiichi-Kangin (DK). The primary trait of these groups lies in their corporatization through cross-shareholdings. "For instance, Sumitomo banks holds shares of Sumitomo Marine Insurance, Sumitomo Corporation, NEC, Sumitomo Metals, etc.; Sumitomo Marine Insurance in turn holds shares of Sumitomo Bank, Sumitomo Corporation, NEC, Sumitomo Metals, etc.; and so on" (Iwai, "Persons" 609-611). The fundamental purpose of such an exclusive alliance is to protect themselves from M & A. In Japan, therefore, cross-shareholdings allow member firms to eliminate their dominant owners as natural persons, thereby preserving their legal personalities.

In principle, an accepted code of human society is that one is prohibited from owing another—and this is strangely true of Japan. As explained above, Japanese corporations have tended to refrain from merging and acquiring each other, because they recognize each other as a legal "person."[4] Perhaps herein lies part of the reason why Japanese capitalism has been considered peculiar among Westerners: "To many Western observers, Japan is mysterious and enigmatic. Its economic system is often portrayed as different from and even diametrically

opposed to more familiar types of capitalism" (Bernstein 441). Japanese and Western economic systems are different from one another, and it becomes apparent when it comes to legal personality. What if, then, Japanese capitalism starts to be Americanized? What if, in other words, Japanese corporations start to regard other corporations not as beings but as things? What then? These are what-if questions posed by Kurt Vonnegut in *Hocus Pocus*.

The abovementioned novel's storyline goes like this: a Japanese corporation sets out to open up a market in America and to buy up a number of American corporations and institutions as things. While dealing with the Japanese corporation's takeover of U.S. business, Vonnegut directs his attention not to the corporation, but to the relation between Eugene Debs Hartke—a prisoner as well as a narrator—and the employee, Hiroshi Matsumoto, who works as the warden of a maximum-security prison operated by his corporation called "the Japanese Army of Occupation in Business Suits." The prisoners, including the narrator, become antagonistic to the prison, thereby revolting against the corporation: "Yes, and now the Japanese are pulling out. Their Army of Occupation in Business Suits is going home. The prison break at Athena was the straw that broke the camel's back, I think, but they were already abandoning properties, simply walking away from them, before that expensive catastrophe" (286). Generally speaking, corporate law ordains that the legal owner of corporate assets is neither any of the employees nor any of the shareholders, but the corporation itself; that is, the law permits corporations to behave as "persons" who can own things as their properties. It is by no means surprising, then, that all the employees of the Japanese Army of Occupation in Business Suits abandon the corporation's properties as no more than things, when they are forced to return to Japan.

The transformation of properties into things is representative of the corporation's death as a legal person, in the sense that it is no longer capable of owning anything. Of equal importance is that the death of the legal person leads inevitably to the return of the natural person. Given that the prisoners have been imprisoned in the institution as a thing owned by a legal person, their prison break can be interpreted as their human revolt to struggle for their subjective position in relation to things, excluding living things. That the corporation's takeover of the prison is destined to result in failure is hence indicative of the novel's subject matter that anyone is incapable of owning anyone else. Near the novel's end, Hartke refers to Adolph Hitler's anti-Semitism, Thomas Jefferson's slaveholding and James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*, each of which has close relevance to ownership or dictatorship as one's unfair treatment of others as natural persons.

Considering that he has placed great weight on family and community, Vonnegut can be seen as skeptical of ownership and critical of dictatorship: ownership jeopardizes, and dictatorship hierarchizes, human relationships. Noting that "the greatest number of children [are] known to have come from the womb of just 1 woman," Hartke ends his memoirs with: "Just because some of us can read and write and do a little math, that doesn't mean we deserve to conquer the Universe" (324). The ending conveys not only Hartke's but also Vonnegut's humanistically-oriented opinion that any person, whether s/he is a natural or legal one, is neither an owner nor a conqueror, as long as s/he is situated in "the Universe."

3. On Citizenship

If a corporation is allowed to act as a person, then is it allowed to act as a citizen? The question has been frequently posed as immediately relevant to the ongoing issue of "corporate citizenship" (CC). Not surprisingly, CC has always been a charged issue since 2002—the year when the business world was in severe state of shock due to a series of accounting scandals, especially those triggered by Enron, WorldCom and Global Crossing. They have demanded rethinking not only corporate personality that permits autonomizing the corporation, but also corporate responsibility for those both inside and outside the corporation, i.e. insiders (e.g., directors, top officers, middle managers, and regular workers) and outsiders (e.g., creditors, suppliers, customers, and temporary workers). A great number of failed corporations have accordingly led us to "draw attention to the reality that many people do, in practice, separate their morality and their humanity from economic and business decisions" (Waddock 34).

To recapitulate, the problem confronting us is how to deal with the corporation's "morality" and "humanity" as a legal person who does harm to natural persons. It must be mentioned in this context that corporations have affected both social and natural environments as a consequence of their toxicological treatment of nature, just as revealed by the natural scientist Rachel Carson.[5] More often than not, we have consumed natural products possibly injurious to our health. If CC is to some extent acknowledged, then can corporations, as quasi-citizens, behave themselves toward the environment? If not, as envisioned in Vonnegut's *Galápagos*, should humans themselves evolve into something eco-friendly with smaller brains that have literally no idea of money?

Galápagos takes the reader back million years to A.D.1986 so that it can imaginatively objectify what humans have done. The author or his narrator, Leon Trout, views large-brained humans as quite unnatural, exactly because they are "Homo sapiens," meaning "wise men," who do environmental and ecological harm to their environment. While they are destined to die soon in the novel, all the rest of them, over the course of millions of years, evolve into penguin-like creatures skilled exclusively at catching fish. On the Galápagos Islands, at which they arrive as tourists and then survive as creationists, they pass on their newly-acquired biological information as "genetic materials of a perfectly cohesive human family" (273). Thus, they as "a perfectly cohesive family" form an entirely new community wherein no money is required at all.

Vonnegut's new species is, consciously or not, true to what is called "the economy of nature," which provides her wealth without such negative spin-offs as air pollution and habitat destruction. Looking back upon the year of 1986 when (in the fiction) capitalism culminated in global hyperinflation, the narrator reports: "wealth was increasing steadily, even though the planet itself was growing ever poorer" (227). Suggestively enough, "wealth" is material to practicing ecocriticism. An obvious example is Kenney Ausubel's earth-centered idea of wealth in his *Restoring the Earth.* In the chapter entitled "Eco-nomics," he asserts: "Most of the real wealth in the world either comes directly from the Earth or relies on the Earth's biological processes in various ways for its existence" (146). The point of the author is to redefine the general notion of economy as the ecological notion of that, and central to his "eco-nomics" is to "realign ecology and economics to bring them into phase with the biological truth of the natural world upon which we all depend" (145). Here again, ecology and society are holistically

articulated as the environment as a whole, in which all persons including corporations are required to adhere to, as it were, "eco-nomy."

In reality, however, we are still in the process of finding common grounds upon which we can all stand agreeably with corporations not merely as persons but also as citizens. Accordingly, it is fair enough to draw the following down-to-earth conclusion: "While corporations therefore 'are' not [yet] citizens (in the sense of status) we contend that corporations could reasonably claim to act 'as if' they were metaphorically citizens in that their engagement in society resembles that of citizens" (Moon, Crane, and Matten 448). Corporations are urgently required to equip themselves with an acuter sense of place so that they, as future citizens, can make broader sense of their varying surroundings. Lastly, if it is somewhat feasible to put forward the present fact "that their engagement in society resembles that of citizens," then it is in no way unreasonable to assume our further recognition of them as capable of internalizing our increasingly deepening sense of belonging to an interrelated whole. There is hence an interdisciplinary open space for critics to participate in pursuing the question of CC. Can corporations become citizens of the environment as an entire society of beings?

Notes

[1] This paper is based on the presentation given at the 27th Annual Conference of the American Studies Society of the University of the Ryukyus, Japan, November 26, 2005.

[2] To quote: "Granma, Ma, and Rose of Sharon manifest the three ages of the Great Mother: hag, mother, and nubile daughter" (80). Similarly, Mimi Reisel Gladstein maintains that Ma Joad is "a nurturing mother to all" (118), that Rose of Sharon is "an extension of Ma" (125), and therefore that they are "mother goddesses inspiring and

protecting their hero sons" (126).

[3] In addition to "The First Seven Years," Malamud's "The German Refugee" is also worth noticing as a story of interpersonal relationships between the American and European Jews, Martin Goldberg and Oskar Gassner. The former reflects on his close friendship with the latter as a refugee from Germany: "He took to his bed. I took to the New York Public Library. I read some of the German poets he was trying to write about, in English translation. Then I read *Leaves of Grass* and wrote down what I thought one or two of them had got from Whitman" (104).

[4] It is still fresh in our memory that Takafumi Horie, president of the IT company, Livedoor, has resorted to LBO of Fuji TV. At present, however, it is perhaps too early to conclude whether his action can be seen as a break with tradition of business morality in Japan. During the trial over subscription rights, Livedoor acquired the majority of the shares, whereas Fuji acquired the second largest number of shares. Consequently, Fuji holds veto right of Nippon Housou—another major TV company in Japan—against which Fuji has already announced TOB. Thus Horie's original attempt ended in failure.

[5] The following argument can then be reasonably supported in conceptualizing ecology and society as an interconnected whole: "It is one of the great mistaken ideas of anthropocentric thinking (and thus one of the cosmic ironies) that society is complex while nature is simple" (Love 23).

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論文要約

人間・人物・市民－アメリカ諸文学の一検証

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本稿はアメリカ諸文学における作品（具体的には、John Steinbeck、Bernard Malamud、Leslie Marmon Silko、Kurt Vonnegutの作品）を批評しながら、様々な環境における存在の在り方を議論している。たとえば、自然環境における人間は、その環境の一員であり、この意味において他の生物―「生」きる「物」としての「生物（living things)」―とは「共者（another)」の関係と捉えることが出来る。とすれば、生物学において人間は「ヒト」と呼称されるように、それら生物をヒトと類比した存在と捉えることは、あながち人間中心主義的ではなく、互いを共者として再定義することを可能にする。この「ヒト」という概念は、社会という環境においても適用できる。たとえば「法人(legal person)」という人物は、主体としての「人」であり、客体としての「物」でもある「人物（person)」であり、少なくとも法律における扱いは「自然人（natural person)」と類比的な存在である。この認識を基盤とすれば、アメリカ資本主義社会における人間と法人の関係は、必ずしも対立関係ではなく、共者同士の関係として再解釈できる。そして法人の活動は、いまや環境に対する責任能力を求められている。すなわち「企業の社気的責任（corporate social responsibility)」という問題は、「企業の市民性（corporate citizenship)」という問題と不可分である。法人が「市民（citizen)」としての地位を獲得することの是非は、環境における存在の在り方を問ううえで重要である。かくして本稿は、以上のような人文科学としての文学研究における発想および課題を提示する。