

Abstract

The topic of this thesis is the relationship of literature to the outside. This should be understood in two different senses. In the first sense, this means literature's relationship to the practices of living and narration that form its immediate material and discursive context (its matrix, as it were, to borrow the term beloved by so many of the sciences). Far from aspiring to be hermetically sealed off, literature has always actively maintained at least some semblance of a participatory relationship to the world that it exists in. We would do well here to remember the most ancient etymology of "world"—an etymology that phenomenology knows well but that popular memory forgets—yields us not the earth or the globe or nature, but the "age of man" (*An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, 723). Of course, that insistence upon the world as distinct from earth and nature should not to be taken as suggesting that the space-age imaginary's vision of an "age of man" that is not conditioned (that is to say, not *said-with*, the Latin *condicio* made up of *con-* from *-cum* meaning *with* and *dīcō* meaning *I say*) by the natural world, but rather as the first step meant to lead us to this dyad of utterances: literature must be said with the world, which must be said with nature (*An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, 128).

The goal of this thesis is both to arrive at a literary theory which makes the Soviet-era Russian author Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope usable in ecologically-minded literary studies, and to use it as the basis of a reading of the Iranian-British writer and philosopher Reza Negarestani's 2008 novel *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials*. This thesis, then, is meant to be as much a piece of literary theory as it is a contribution towards scholarship on Negarestani's novel. As such, the literature surveyed here and put to use in this thesis consists not only of secondary sources dealing with *Cyclonopedia*,

but also with a number of texts drawn from the world of ecologically-minded literary studies, philosophy, sociology, and critical theory.