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**HUMAN-NATURE RELATIONSHIPS IN “THE  
OVERSTORY” BY RICHARD POWERS: AN  
ECOCRITICAL ANALYSIS**

**THESIS**

<sup>3</sup> Submitted to the School of Foreign Language – JIA as partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the undergraduate degree in English Literature Programme



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## MOTTO AND DEDICATION

### MOTTO

Embrace curiosity, ignite knowledge.

26

### DEDICATION:

This thesis is dedicated to:

- All members of my family.
- All of my colleagues.
- All of my friends.
- All English Literature Students of 2024.
- All green organizations and environmentalists.



# HUMAN-NATURE RELATIONSHIPS IN “THE OVERSTORY” BY RICHARD POWERS: AN ECOCRITICAL ANALYSIS

ALVIN GAUTAMA

## ABSTRACT

This research examines the novel *The Overstory* through an ecocritical lens, aiming to identify six positions that illustrate the relationship between human and nature within the novel. Additionally, it explores the significant implications of trees for the Earth. The research employs qualitative methods, using Greg Garrard's (2012) ecocriticism framework focused on positions and the Earth. The writer analyzes 32 textual data objects from four chapters of *The Overstory*. The results of the research show that the aspects of the positions in Richard Powers' *The Overstory* are cornucopia, environmentalism, deep ecology, ecofeminism, eco-marxism, and Heideggerian ecophilosophy are portrayed along with all the characters in the novel. Moreover, the significant implications of trees for the Earth are also depicted that trees have intrinsic value practically and personally connected to all the main characters of *The Overstory* which shows their backgrounds that encourage them to preserve nature.

**Key Words:** ecocriticism, positions, the Earth, human-nature relationships

**HUBUNGAN MANUSIA-ALAM DALAM “THE OVERSTORY”  
OLEH RICHARD POWERS: ANALISIS EKOKRITIS**

**ALVIN GAUTAMA**

**ABSTRAKSI**

Penelitian ini mengkaji novel *The Overstory* melalui lensa ekokritik, bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi enam posisi yang menggambarkan hubungan antara manusia dan alam dalam novel tersebut. Selain itu, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi dampak signifikan pepohonan bagi Bumi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif, menggunakan kerangka ekokritik Greg Garrard (2012) yang berfokus pada posisi dan Bumi. Penulis menganalisis 32 objek data tekstual dari empat bab *The Overstory*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa aspek-aspek posisi dalam *The Overstory* karya Richard Powers yaitu *cornucopia*, *deep ecology*, *eko feminisme*, *ekomarxisme*, and *ekofilosofi Heideggerian* tergambarkan bersama seluruh tokoh dalam novel. Selain itu, implikasi signifikan pohon bagi Bumi juga digambarkan bahwa pohon memiliki nilai intrinsik secara praktis dan pribadi yang melekat pada seluruh karakter utama *The Overstory* yang menunjukkan latar belakang pribadi mereka yang mendorong mereka untuk menjaga kelestarian alam.

**Kata Kunci:** ekokritik, posisi, bumi, relasi manusia-alam

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This research is one of the requirements for obtaining an undergraduate program (S1) of The English Department of Foreign Language JIA. In this research, the writer shows human-nature relationships in *The Overstory* novel.

During this research, the writer encountered many difficulties in finding data and processing it into scientific papers. Therefore, I appreciate the participants of this research whose willingness to share their experiences and insight has enriched the depth and breadth of this research. Their contributions are truly invaluable and have significantly contributed to the findings presented in this paper, especially to:

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Bekasi, 23 August 2024



Alvin Gautama



### 3 TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TITLE</b>	
<b>THE APPROVAL SHEET</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY STATEMENT FORM</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>THE IMPROVEMENT SHEET</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>MOTTO AND DEDICATION</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>ABSTRAKSI</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>LIST OF APPENDICES</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
A. Background of The Research	1
B. Questions and Scope of the Research	6
1. Question of the Research	6
2. Scope of the Research	6
C. Objective and Significance of the Research	7
1. The Objective of the Research	7
2. Significance of the Research	7
D. Operational Definition	8
1. Literature	8
2. Human	8
3. Nature	8
4. Human-Nature Relationships	9
5. Ecocriticism	9
E. Systematization of the Research	9
<b>CHAPTER II THEORETICAL DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>12</b>
A. Ecocriticism	12
1. History of Ecocriticism	12

2. Definitions and Principles of Ecocriticism .....	14
3. Ecocriticism Concept.....	17
B. Literary Criticism .....	27
1. Plot .....	28
2. Characters .....	31
3. Point of View .....	36
4. Setting .....	37
C. Research of the Relevance .....	37
<b>CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH .....</b>	<b>40</b>
A. Method of the Research .....	40
1. Time and Place of the Research .....	41
2. Kind of the Research .....	41
B. Procedures of the Research .....	41
C. Technique of the Data Collection .....	43
D. Technique of the Data Analysis .....	43
E. Data Sources .....	44
<b>CHAPTER IV DATA ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>45</b>
A. Data Description .....	45
B. Data Analysis .....	45
C. Interpretation of the Research Findings.....	89
<b>CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION .....</b>	<b>91</b>
A. Conclusion .....	91
B. Suggestion.....	94
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>BIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>144</b>



## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix 1. The Overstory Novel Cover .....	98
Appendix 2. The Overstory Data Findings .....	99
Appendix 3. Thesis Supervision Card Advisor 1 .....	142
Appendix 4. Thesis Supervision Card Advisor 2 .....	143



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the Research

Nature is essential to human life, and humans are essential to the preservation of nature. Herdiana & Najma (2019) stated that the mutual relationship is naturally shaped by nature and humans in the context of ecocriticism. It means that the human-nature relationship is interdependent. Nature is the shelter for all living things on its surface, especially humans. It has massive life-supporting necessities for humans such as water, oxygen, and other materials. The earth serves as a habitat and shelter for a vast diversity of living organisms, and it has been the cradle of life for millions of years. Therefore, humans need to build a relationship with nature so that natural sustainability can be maintained.

In building human-nature relationships, it cannot be separated from the role of humans themselves. As stewards of nature, humans have a duty to safeguard and preserve the environment for both current and future generations. This includes implementing sustainable practices, biodiversity conservation, and environmental justice advocacy to ensure that all creatures can live in harmony with nature. One of the challenges in building human-nature relationship is globalization which has led to various environmental challenges and consequences that cause climate change. Forests act as carbon sinks, absorbing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the atmosphere and helping to regulate the planet's climate. When forests are cut down or burned, the stored

carbon is released into the atmosphere, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions and global warming.<sup>58</sup> Based on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in Rahman (2018),<sup>15</sup> since the Industrial Revolution, atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations have increased by a third, and within the next 100 years, they are expected to double. Consequently, according to *World Wild Life*, since the start of the Industrial Revolution, glaciers have melted rapidly, with about 90% of glacier ice found in Antarctica and the remaining 10% in Greenland. As the result, glaciers have melted, broken off into the sea, and retreat from land areas which has an effect on the sea levels and human activities.

The United States is among the countries impacted by climate change. According to the *World Economic Forum*, North America is affected by large-scale blazes that cause heatwaves. The United States government spent about \$100 million for the reforestation of over 4 million acres of forest. It implies that trees are important thing in preventing climate change and strengthening the human-nature relationship. Therefore, the US Government is aware that planting trees is one way to prevent climate change. This movement also occurred in Indonesia, a country filled with tropical forests. According to the<sup>54</sup> *Directorate General of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Conservation* (KSDAE), the community has carried out reforestation activities in the Mount Merbabu National Park area. This movement adopts the theme “*Gugur Gunung Mbangun Alam*” and was attended by the Vice Governor of Central Java, Taj Yasin Maimoen (Gus Yasin). Therefore, with this movement, it is hoped that

the water infiltration will increase so that there is no water shortage during the dry season and as an effort for the rehabilitation and conservation of the area. With the large number of environmental movements, it is hoped that more and more people will recognize the significance of protecting nature. In preserving nature, people need to be concerned with interdisciplinary such as ecology, literature, and ecocriticism.

In this case, ecocriticism approaches literature and the environment from an interdisciplinary perspective, integrating various sciences to analyze environment issues and develop potential solutions for improving the current environmental conditions (Mambrol, 2016). Moreover, ecocriticism explores the connection between human and nature in literature, focusing on how environmental and cultural issues related to the environment are depicted and examined. The aim of ecocriticism is to analyze how people in society interact with and respond to nature and ecological matters, especially in preserving the environment. Furthermore, ecocriticism can explore more clearly about environmental problems nowadays which is rarely found in research on ecocriticism, but it is also very interesting on problems related to the environment today, especially regarding deforestation many of which are contained in *The Overstory*.

*The Overstory* (2018) is one of the literary works that pinpoint the ecocritical theme. It is a novel written by American author, Richard Powers that was published in 2018 and received critical acclaim, winning the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in the same year. The novel explores themes related to trees,

forests, ecology, and <sup>6</sup>the complex relationship between humans and nature.

Throughout the novel, trees are portrayed not only as important components of nature but also as symbols of connectedness and strength. The characters in The Overstory come to recognize the profound impact of trees on their lives and the planet's ecosystem, leading them to become environmental activists and advocates for the preservation of forests. The book delves into topics such as deforestation, environmental activism, <sup>47</sup>the effects of human actions on the environment, and the significance of caring for the environment. The story tells about <sup>64</sup>the storylines of nine characters namely Nicholas Hoel, Olivia Vandergriff, Adam Appich, <sup>25</sup>Mimi Ma, Douglas Pavlicek, Ray Brinkman, Dorothy Cazaly, Neelay Mehta, and Patricia Westerford. The novel weaves together several interrelated stories, all connected by the central theme of trees and the environment and exploring their individual experiences and connections to trees and forests.

Several compelling reasons for the writer's choice of this novel. First, this novel was written by the famous American novelist Richard Powers, considered one of the best American novels in 2019, and won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, where there were a lot of environmental themes, particularly the importance of trees and forests. Second, this research analyzes the ecocriticism in the novel which has a unique narrative structure, weaving together disparate storylines and characters to explore diverse perspectives on nature and activism. Third, this novel has different character backgrounds, giving rise to responses from each character to individual environmental problems that may



relate to life in the reality.

Novels have unique narratives in preserving the environment. Through rich stories and vivid imagery, they raise awareness of pressing environmental issues, from deforestation to global warming. By immersing readers in the worlds they create, authors awaken empathy for nature and its inhabitants, foresting a deeper connection with the environment. These stories often feature characters involved in conservation efforts, inspiring readers to take action in their lives. Novels also function as catalysts for dialogue, sparking discussions that can result in collective action. Ultimately, through its ability to educate, empathize, inspire, and provoke, novels play an <sup>17</sup>crucial role in preserving the <sup>17</sup>natural world for future generations. All efforts to protect the environment can be described in a literary work as one of the right media to voice the human and nature connections.

Literary works have several forming elements such as imagination, thoughts, and emotions which are portrayed in written form. Klarer defines literature "as the entirety written expression that not every written document can be categorized as literature in the more exact sense of the word" <sup>73</sup>(2004, p.1). The definition as Klarer said that the aesthetic or artistic text is added to <sup>32</sup>distinguish from literary texts of daily use such as telephone directories, newspapers, and academic articles. Literary works can be distinguished based on genre, type of text, and discourse. A long-form work of fictional prose narrative or novel is the most widely favored.

According to Klarer (2004), the novel is one of the classic prose fictions

that relies on the development of well-defined characters, the exploration of various points of view, and plot. The essence of a novel lies in its ability to offer a multi-faceted exploration of the human experience, convey complex narratives, and engage readers on both intellectual and emotional levels. The basis of the novel is its foundational elements that provide structure, substance, and meaning to the story based on a plot.

<sup>8</sup> Based on the explanation above, the writer uses the theory of Garrard's ecocriticism. An ecocriticism theory known as green theory claims that <sup>21</sup> literature and other forms of cultural expression depict and engage with the natural world.

### <sup>3</sup> B. Questions and Scope of the Research

#### 1. Question of the Research

Based on the background of the research, the <sup>8</sup> problem in this research will be identified as follows:

- a. How does The Overstory novel reflect six parts of position in ecocritical analysis?
- b. How does The Overstory novel portray the significant implication of trees for the Earth?

#### <sup>39</sup> 2. Scope of the Research

Based on the background above, the writer limited the research focus only to investigating the portrayal of human-nature relationships within The Overstory this included examining the various ways in which characters in the novel interact with the natural world, form connections

with trees and forests, and finding positions based on ecocriticism point of view by using Greg Garrard ecocriticism key concept of positions and the Earth. Garrard (2012) outlines positions as approaches to understanding human-nature relationships such as <sup>7</sup> cornucopia, environmentalism, deep ecology, ecofeminism, ecomarxism, and Heideggerian ecophilosophy. These positions are used to analyze how literature engages with environmental themes and ideologies.

The dialogue from *The Overstory* is used by the writer in this analysis as examined in four chapters *Roots*, *Trunk*, *Crown*, and *Seed*. Every dialog and narration that has already taken place is examined concerning the issue of the human-nature relationship.

### <sup>8</sup> C. Objective and Significance of the Research

#### 1. The Objective of the Research

- a. To describe six parts of position in ecocritical analysis reflected in *The Overstory* novel.
- b. To determine the significant implication of trees for the Earth in *The Overstory* novel.

#### <sup>8</sup> 2. Significance of the Research

- a. Theoretical Benefit

Hopefully, this research can be helpful for those who are interested in literature and an ecocritical approach. This research enriches ecocritical discourse by applying ecocritical theory to a



specific text, demonstrating the relevance and effectiveness of ecocritical approaches in interpreting literature. In addition, this research <sup>2</sup> can be a source of knowledge for anyone interested in exploring the novel.

b. **Practically Benefit**

This research offers insight into how literature can inspire readers to reevaluate their relationships with nature and participate in environmental activism.

**D. Operational Definition**

**1. Literature**

Literature is a human work that has values of beauty and imagination which must be seen through the aesthetic, moral, and conceptual values of literary works in forms of works such as poetry, prose, drama, and movies.

**2. Human**

Human is a creature that characterized by their intelligence and capacity to influence other creatures, and experience five stages of life such as infancy, childhood, adolescence, and old age which each mark significant phases of physiological and psychological development.

**3. Nature**

Nature denotes the physical world and its natural occurrences, including humans, plants, animals, landscapes, and natural processes, which exist independently of human influence, serving not only human requirements

but also the needs of other living organisms.

#### 4. Human-Nature Relationship

Human-nature relationship refers to the intricate and evolving interaction between people and the natural environment, highlighting how humans perceive, interact with, utilize, and impact the world around them influenced by cultural, social, economic, and technological factors.

#### 5. Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism refers to the interdisciplinary field that examines the connection between literature, culture, and the nature which explores how literature can contribute to environmental awareness, activism, and sustainability.

#### E. Systematization of the Research

In this research, the systemization of this research is intended to make it easier for the readers to understand this research and to make this research in a good composition. The writer organizes the research into five chapters, structured as follows:

In Chapter I, the writer provides a comprehensive introduction to the research, starting with an exploration of the research background and its contextual relevance. This is followed by clear research questions and their scope. Additionally, this chapter outlines the specific objectives and significance of the research, ensuring the readers understand its purpose and potential impact. In addition, operational definitions are defined for ease of

understanding, and the systematization of the research is structured to lead the reader in comprehending the research. Finally, this chapter involves an important foundation and setting the stage for the subsequent chapters.

In Chapter II, the writer discusses the existing literature on ecocriticism, emphasizing core principles and key concepts. The discussion includes an examination of ecology and its relevance in ecocritical discourse, as well as a study of the relationship between human and nature depicted in literary and cultural contexts. In addition, the chapter reviews previous studies that have contributed to the understanding of ecocriticism and its application in literary analysis. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the theoretical foundations of ecocriticism and its implications for understanding human interaction with the environment. Overall, this chapter provides a basis for placing research within the broader framework of ecocritical studies.

In Chapter III, the writer presents the methodology used in this research, which includes the research method chosen, the type of research, procedures, data collection and analysis techniques, and data sources. This chapter outlines the systematic approach adopted to conduct the research, detailing the specific method used to collect and analyze the data. In addition, this chapter provides insight into the general strategies that guide the research. Furthermore, this chapter explains the procedures followed in data collection and analysis, ensuring transparency and rigor in the research process. Finally, this chapter serves as a comprehensive guide to the methodological framework used in this research, providing clarity on how data is collected, analyzed, and interpreted.

In Chapter IV, the writer presents an analysis of data collected from the novel "The Overstory." This chapter <sup>65</sup>provides a detailed description of the data collected and presents the research results obtained from the novel. It provides insight into the themes, characters, and narrative elements explored in "The Overstory," along with their implications and significance. Additionally, the chapter addresses the interpretation of the data, offering a nuanced understanding of the novel's content and broader implications. Finally, this chapter serves as a comprehensive examination of the data extracted from "The Overstory."

In Chapter V, the writer presents the conclusions drawn from the study, providing a concise overview of the research findings. Additionally, this chapter offers a summary of the key points discussed throughout the research process. Furthermore, suggestions for future research directions are presented, highlighting potential areas for further investigation or exploration. By providing these suggestions, the writer hopes to encourage further research in the field. Finally, this chapter serves as the conclusion of the research, covering the core of the main findings and providing guidance for future scientific endeavors.

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL DESCRIPTION

<sup>2</sup> This chapter is a review of related literature that elaborates an overview of a specific subject, including the relevant literature on the theories and related studies.

The writer uses the ecocriticism theory to provide evidence for the significance of <sup>4</sup> the human-nature relationship issue represented in the novel and to further the analysis.

#### A. Ecocriticism

##### 1. History of Ecocriticism

The origins of ecocriticism can be linked to the environmental movements of the 1960s and 1970s (Glottfelty, 1996). History, philosophy, law, sociology, and religion are examples of related humanities disciplines that have increasingly focused on environmental issues since the 1970s. In this era, many environmental problems appear in newspapers, such as oil spills that cause poisoning, waste contamination, animal extinction, nuclear waste, acid rain, and even forest destruction. <sup>28</sup> There have been no journals, specialized terminology, jobs, professional societies, or discussion groups, and there have been no conferences on literature and the environment. During that era, social movements such as women's and human rights entered literary works, while the movement for environmental conservation had little impact. Later in 1978, William Ruecket became the first scholar who included *literature* and *ecology* in its title and was primarily recognized



for coining the term “ecocriticism” in an essay titled *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism*.

The late 1970s witnessed the rise of early forms of environmental literary criticism. Many scholars explored the ecological themes and messages in literature. This early effort laid the groundwork for the advancement of ecocriticism as a distinct field. However, they failed to group themselves into recognizable groups. Their numerous efforts were not acknowledged as being part of a specific critical movement or school. After that, in the mid-1980s, some scholars began to take some collaborative projects in the fields of environment and literary studies. In the early 1990s, the field of environmental literary studies began growing when the work from Frederick O. Waage entitled *Teaching Environmental Literature: Materials, Methods, Resources*, introduced environmental studies to foster concern on literary works in 1985.

Environmental studies grew even more when Alicia Nitecki made a significant impact with her contribution to *The American Nature Writing Newsletter* which focuses on brief essays, nature writing, book reviews, environmental literature, and related topics. It served as a platform for scholars, writers, and enthusiasts keen on the literary exploration of nature and the natural world in 1989. Not long after that, several universities had begun to include literature courses in their curriculum, and the English department had begun to present environmental literature. The University of Nevada, Reno, pioneered the creation of the first academic position

focused on literature and the natural world.

In 1991, environmental literature began to appear in the literary conference program called MLA (Modern Language Association) organized by Harold Fromm in the work entitled *Ecocriticism: The Greening of Literary Studies*. In 1992, it became more popular when the annual meeting of the Western Literature Association formed a new association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE). Later there is no specific name for environmental studies yet. Several names that have emerged, such as environmental literary criticism, ecopoetics, etc. Some scholars argue that a specific name is important. Because it is shorter and can be combined with other terms such as *ecocritical* and *ecocritic*, some academic prefer the term ecocriticism. In addition, they prefer *eco-* over *enviro-* because ecocriticism which is similar to the field of ecology, investigates interactions between objects, in this example, the environment and human culture.

## 2. Definitions and Principles of Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is a branch of science that studies how nature is depicted in literature. As Glotfelty (1996 p.xvii) defined ecocriticism as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment”. It represents how literature reflects our social, cultural, and ecological perspectives. An ecocritic figure who is famous for his work *Ecocriticism the New Critical Idiom*, Garrard (2004) put forward the theory of ecocriticism as the critical analysis of how the human and non-human worlds are interconnected throughout cultural history, as well as a critical

view at the idea of *humanity* in general. In <sup>46</sup>*The Future of Environmental Criticism* (2005), Lawrence Buell proposes that ecocriticism as an ‘umbrella term’ <sup>27</sup>used to make reference to environmentally focused examination of literature and, less commonly, other art forms, along with the underlying theories underlying these crucial methods. Therefore, the states of the experts are in line that ecocriticism analyzes the <sup>30</sup>relationship between the natural world and human depicted in a literary work as a common form of ecocriticism.

Ecocriticism also analyzes which human culture and activities have an effect on the material world which as a consequence of the extinction of several animal species and climate change (Garrard, 2012). Human behaviors, for instance industrialization, urbanization, deforestation, pollution, and resource extraction, can have a major effect on environmental conditions, often leading to environmental degradation and ecological crises. Conversely, the tangible environment also affects human culture. Natural events, ecological changes, and environmental conditions can shape human societies, economies, and even cultural expressions. For instance, droughts, floods, or climate shifts can influence agricultural practices, migration patterns, and the themes explored in literature which are interconnected with each other.

Humans' view of nature has two different standpoints which are divided into anthropocentric and ecocentric. In the relation to the environmental protection and reflecting on the connection between humans and the natural



world, the debate between anthropocentric and ecocentric approaches often arises. The belief or perspective that human interests take precedence over the interests of nonhuman entities. In contrast, an ecocentric approach places value on natural ecosystems as a whole, not just on humans (Buell, 2005). This means that nature has intrinsic value that does not rely on the benefits it provides to humans.

The anthropocentric approach has received critique for not considering the long-term impacts of human actions on the natural world, whereas the ecocentric approach promotes greater respect for biodiversity and the sustainability of nature. It signifies that ecocriticism looks beyond the human-centered view to include the natural environment in its analysis and interpretation of culture, literature, and human interactions. Ecocritics usually believe that “the world” functions as a dynamic and interconnected network of relationships, where the differentiation of animate and inanimate objects has no absolute boundaries (Buell, 2005). Ecocriticism challenges the anthropocentric perspective by expanding or broadening the idea of ecocentric. It means that ecocritics consider the entire ecosphere, which encompasses the Earth’s ecological systems, landscapes, and all living organisms, as an essential element of ecocentric.

The Earth provides the fundamental conditions and resources necessary to sustain life. It underscores the connectedness of all living things to the planet and highlights the significance of maintaining the Earth to ensure the continued well-being of every living organisms. However, to help reform

the Earth, people need a further understanding of environmental problems, whether we have to face the problem or provide solutions to reform the Earth. Humanity is encountering a global crisis not because of the way ecosystems operate, but because of the way our ethical system operate (Worster, 1993, as cited in Glotfelty, 1996). It means that to save the Earth from destruction requires a broad understanding of nature itself. Gain a deep comprehension of the ethical systems and value systems that underlie human actions and choices. This includes examining how an ethical framework can contribute to actions or practices that damage the environment.

### 3. Ecocriticism Concept

Ecocriticism provides a structure for comprehending the complex relationship between literature, culture, and the natural surroundings. Several experts discuss concepts in ecocriticism one of which comes from Greg Garrard (2012). Although not the only figure in the discipline of ecocriticism, Garrard's works have become for many literary ecocritical studies because he provides a substantial foundation for analyzing key concepts within the scope. He outlines several concepts that form the foundation of ecocritical analysis such as; *pollution, positions, pastoral, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, animals, and the Earth*.

#### a. Pollution

Pollution is viewed as a manifestation of humanity's often exploitative and unsustainable relationship with the environment. Pollution

is not merely a physical contamination of air, water, or soil but also a symbolic representation of larger ecological and social problems. According to Garrard's (2012) perspective that he defines pollution as a reflection of humanity's attitudes toward the environment. Garrard shows that environmental problems need investigation in the context of culture and scientific terminology. It means understanding environmental problems requires a multidisciplinary approach that combines both cultural and scientific perspectives. Environmental issues are not solely the consequence of scientific factors like pollution or climate change. However, they are also influenced by cultural beliefs, values, practices, and societal norms.

**b. *Positions***

Garrard refers positions as the various perspectives, attitudes, and stances that individuals or communities adopt concerning in connection to the environment. Garrard (2012) groups positions into six parts, namely cornucopia, environmentalism, deep ecology, ecofeminism, eco-marxism, and Heideggerian ecophilosophy.

**1) Cornucopia**

Cornucopia originates from Greek mythology and symbolizes prosperity and plenty. Within the framework of ecocriticism the term "cornucopia" is described by Garrard (2012) that cornucopians note that over time, the alleged scarcity of ecological resources is refuted by falling prices for food, minerals, and other commodities relative

to wages. As a resource becomes more difficult to obtain, its price rises, prompting capitalist entrepreneurs to find for alternative sources, procedures, or materials. Garrard critiques the idea of comucopian thinking, which is the belief that the Earth has an infinite supply of resources that can fulfill human needs and desires without any negative consequences. This perspective often leads to environmental degradation, as it disregards the limited availability of natural resources and ecosystems.

## 2) Environmentalism

Garrard (2012, p.18) stated that “the very broad range of people who are concerned about environmental issues such as global warming and pollution, but who wish to maintain or improve their standard of living as conventionally defined, and who would not welcome radical social change, will be described hereinafter as environmentalists”. Conversely, Buell (2005) explained that environmentalism is often linked to a radical aspect, whether it is politically charged and confrontational like Green Peace, or even more extreme movements, or countercultural movements such as Wiccan neopaganism. Naes in Buell (2005), called environmentalism a shallow mode of reformism. They provide a clear picture that environmentalists are the people who are environmentally conscious and focused on pressing issues like global warming and pollution. On the other hand, environmentalism

is the movement focused on environmental conservation and the protection regarding the natural world, regardless of whether they are radical or unradical movement. For instance zero-waste movement.

### 3) Deep Ecology

Many deep ecologists set themselves apart from environmentalists by insisting that nature has inherent value, as opposed to 'shallow' methods that advocate for the preservation concerning ecological resources exclusively for the advantage of humans (Garrard, 2012). Likewise, Buell (2005) argued that organisms are interconnected within the complex system of the biosphere. It contrasts this view with shallow environmental campaigns focused on pollution and resource depletion. Deep ecology argues that nature is primarily in relation to its usefulness to humans. In this view, natural resources are valued because they serve human needs <sup>6</sup> such as clean water and air, fertile soil, and raw materials for industry. The preservation of these resources is advocated purely for human benefit, not for any intrinsic value inherent to nature itself. <sup>7</sup> In contrast, deep ecology demands acknowledgement of the intrinsic value of nature. They believe that the natural world possesses inherent worth, independent of its value to people. In this view, natural entities such as plants, animals, and ecosystems have value in and of themselves.



#### 4) Ecofeminism

Ecofeminist perspectives within ecocriticism examine the intersections of gender, ecology, and power dynamics. "Men have been associated with culture, the non-material, the rational, and the abstract, whereas women have been associated with nature, the material, the emotional, and the particular" (Davion, 1993, as cited in Garrard, 2004, p.23). This is also stated by Buell (2005) that ecofeminism or it can be called ecological feminism encompasses a broad variety of rhetorical and practical perspectives which support the concept that the subjugation of women and nature stems from patriarchal systems that have existed since ancient times. Generally, ecofeminism argues that there are significant parallels between the subjugation of women and the misuse of natural resources. It critiques the connection between patriarchy and the control over nature. Thus, it shows how female characters, the Earth, and environment are often interconnected and sometimes exploited or oppressed in similar ways.

#### 5) Social Ecology and Eco-Marxism

Environmental issues do not only occur due to anthropocentric attitudes, but also from structures of control or exploitation of one human being over another. Buell (2005) defines social ecology in both theoretical and applied terms tradition that considers society and its environment as interconnected systems, emphasizing a

rejection of industrial capitalism. While Garrard (2004) explores all of these perspectives, eco-marxism in an approach that integrates Marxist analysis with ecological concerns, examining the methods by which capitalism contributes to environmental degradation and social inequality and explores the intersections of class struggle, ecological damage, and capital expansion while social ecologists oppose the hierarchies and power structures that they believe are endemic to all societies, whether they be capitalist or centrally planned socialist that has visions of sustainable communities and ecologically harmonious societies.

#### 6) Heideggerian Ecophilosophy

Heideggerian ecophilosophy within the framework of ecocriticism draws upon the philosophical insight of Martin Heidegger to explore human-nature relationships and the ontological significance of the environment. "Heidegger's starting point is the fundamental difference between mere material existence and a revelation of 'being', or the thing-ness of things. To 'be' is not just to exist, but to 'show up' or be disclosed, which requires human consciousness as the space, or 'clearing', in and through that it is disclosed: 'At the bottom, the ordinary is not ordinary; it is extraordinary'" (Heidegger, 1993, as cited in Garrard, 2004, p.31). It is focused on the concept of 'being', or the essence of existence. Heidegger emphasizes that modern society, driven by technology

and industrialization, has become detached from its essential nature and the environment.

c. Pastoral

Pastoral is one kind of literary work that represents humanity's relationship with nature. Buell (2005) defined pastoral as artistic depictions of rural life, often characterized by a contrasting and sometimes humorous critique of urbanism. The main focus is on the lifestyle of the pastoralists. The pastoral literary work usually idealizes rural life, depicts beautiful natural scenery, and harmonious interactions between human and the natural world. As stated by Gifford (1999) that he describes pastoral as any literary work that contrasts the rural with the metropolis, whether implicitly or explicitly. It presents an idealized version of nature, highlighting the charm of the countryside and the straightforwardness of rural living.

d. Wilderness

As noted by Garrard (2012), the notion of wilderness conveys the image of unspoiled nature, unaffected by human intervention. These pristine landscapes are valued for their ecological significance, diverse biodiversity, and the raw, untouched essence they embody. The term "wilderness" specifically denotes an area that has not been tamed or domesticated whereas "wildness" describes a characteristic or quality, instead of a specific geographic location (Buell, 2005). In contrast to urban settings, wilderness areas emphasize their natural purity and the



imperative to conserve them. Garrard (2012) also explained that wilderness functions as a haven for those seeking refuge away from the activity and pollution of urban living. Furthermore, wilderness represents a departure from the pastoral concept, symbolizing a “new world” untouched by human presence, in contrast towards the more cultivated “old world” landscapes. This difference is particularly evident in regions including the United States, Canada, and Australia.

e. Apocalypse

The concept of apocalypse has been viewed from various perspectives, with people believing for at least 3,000 years that the end of the world is imminent (Garrard, 2004). Across different tribes and religions worldwide, ideas concerning the apocalypse have been propagated. However, what is crucial is not only the comprehension of this concept but also the collective agreement among individuals regarding its importance for the achievement of the green movement. This consensus prompts people to contemplate and take responsibility for the necessity of caring for the world, ensuring its longevity and averting a premature end.

f. Dwelling

Dwelling, as outlined by Garrard (2004), includes two distinct models: the Georgic and primitive traditions. Within literary works, the Georgic tradition focuses on rural life, agriculture, and the intricate bond between people and the land. Georgic poetry glorifies the cultivation

concerning the land, the rhythm of the seasons, and the agricultural lifestyle, depicting a type of habitation in which humanity is closely intertwined with nature through farming and cultivation. Conversely, the primitive tradition highlights indigenous or traditional societies that have historically lived in alignment with nature. Often depicted as environmentally conscious, native American or indigenous peoples symbolize the “original ecologists,” residing in primitive dwellings and embodying a sustainable connection to their surroundings.

g. Animals

Animals are crucial focuses of analysis because of their integral role in ecosystems, human cultures, and literary representations. Garrard (2012) in his book shows philosophical examination of animal rights and cultural analysis of animal representation, the analysis of interactions between animals and humans is segmented in the humanities. Garrard (2012) makes an analogy of animals with women and black people. Singer (2001) in his book entitled *Animal Liberation* suggests that the rights given to women, rights like the ability to choose are founded on the capacity for rational decision-making, a trait traditionally attributed to men. In contrast, nonhuman animals do not have this capacity and therefore cannot be granted the same rights as humans. This response advocates a distinction between rights granted to humans based on their capacities and rights denied to nonhuman animals because they are thought to lack those capacities. So, animal abuse is compared to slavery

and it is argued that a being's ability to feel pain, rather than their capacity for reason, gives them the right to moral concern.

h. The Earth

Globalization has significant implications for the Earth, both in terms of causality and outcome. It fosters homogenizations, where diverse local cultures are replaced by uniform global cultures (Garrard, 2012). This phenomenon is often attributed to the widespread influence of transnational culture industries, primarily located in North America, Japan, and Western Europe. Some of these corporations have a turnover that exceeds the *Gross Domestic Product* (GDP) of many nations, giving them considerable economic and political influence.

Environmental critics frequently target these large corporations due to their substantial ecological footprint. Operating on a global scale, such companies can exploit natural resources, contribute to environmental degradation, and influence environmental policies. Environmentalists are particularly concerned about the impact of corporate activities on ecosystems, biodiversity, and climate change. Therefore, human activities, particularly those driven by capitalist motives, have a significant impact on Earth's preservation, leading to various environmental problems such as climate change, global warming, ozone layer depletion, and others, viewed from various perspectives.

## **B. Literary Criticism**

Ecocriticism examines the relationship between literature and the natural environment through literary and cultural theory. It means ecocriticism as one of literary criticism that focuses on the relationship between literature and the natural environment. As Tyson (2006) stated literary criticism aims to explain aspects of the literary works creation, meaning, structure, and aesthetic appeal. Critics often criticize each other's interpretation more than the work itself. In contrast to film reviewers or book critics who advise on whether to engage with a film or book, literary critics focus more on explanation than judgment, although their role formally includes assessing the quality of literary works. Several literary criticisms are motivated by the desire to improve the world in literary work such as, ecocriticism, feminism, Marxism, postcolonialism, etc.

Literary work has aspects and values in building a story. Literature is a human masterpiece that contains aesthetic values in written form including thoughts, motivations, experiences, and so on. Long (2004), concluded that literature is the writing of the human spirit, including thoughts, feelings, and ambitions, it is the history of the human soul, and the only history of life expressed in words beauty, and truth. This is different from other types of writing which do not have aesthetic elements such as telephone books, newspapers, scholarly things, etc.

Literature is divided into several genres such as poetry, prose, and drama. Even though poetry and prose are the written forms of literature, they are two distinct forms of written expression with their unique characteristics. According

to Klarer (2004), the novel is one of the important prose fiction which developed in the eighteenth century in England. "The Overstory" is one of the best novels that was published in 2018. It is a multi-layered narrative that weaves together the lives of various characters who are connected by their relationship with trees and the natural world. The novel explores themes of environmentalism, activism, and the interconnectedness of all living beings. To summarize the intrinsic elements of the novel, the readers should know four main elements, namely plot (what happens), characters (who acts), point of view (who sees what), and setting (when and where the events occur).

#### 1. Plot

In ecocriticism, the plot of a literary work can be analyzed through an environmental lens to explore its relationship with nature and the natural world. According to Klarer (2004, p.15), "plot is the logical interaction of the various thematic elements of a text which lead to a change of the original situation as presented at the outset of the narrative". In other words, it is the sequence of events that make up a story. The plot line of the story has four sequential levels those are exposition, complication, climax or turning point, and resolution. In *The Overstory*, the plot is divided into four chapters Root, Trunk, Crown, and Seed.

The exposition of *The Overstory* begins in the *Root* chapter which is divided into nine sub-chapters. Each sub-chapters focus on a specific character's story. The story begins with the introduction of the main characters, each with their unique relationship with trees. It provides



important background information about the characters and their relationship to nature, laying the foundation for the overarching themes and narrative that will unfold throughout the story. Through *Root*, readers gain insight into why the characters are drawn to trees and why they become involved in environmental activism. This chapter provides the basis for the novel's exploration of themes such as the interconnectedness of all living things, and the urgent need for environmental management.

As the story progresses, the *Trunk* chapter raises raising complications for the characters. It reflects the important role played by characters and the plot in the middle stage of the story. In a tree, the trunk is the main part that supports the branches and leaves, so perhaps the *Trunk* marks the stage where the conflict and plot reach their peak or more established. This chapter also focuses on further character development, as well as deepening themes introduced in previous chapters. This can include the growth of relationships between characters, the introduction of new plot elements, and the development of major conflicts that will lead to the story's climax. Apart from that, this chapter can be a place where characters who are previously introduced separately begin to relate to each other and form closer bonds. In this chapter, characters also join forces on their journey toward a common goal, or they may gain new insight or guidance from another character that will influence their decision-making. Therefore, the *Trunk* chapter can be the pivotal point where the web of relationships between characters begins to weave more strongly, enriching the narrative and moving the plot in a

more complex and interesting direction.

The use of the term *Crown* as the title of chapter three in *The Overstory* reflects a climax or turning point in the development of the story. In a tree, the crown is the topmost part consisting of branches and leaves, which is often the center of attention and a symbol of the life of the tree itself. This chapter marks the phase where the story reaches its peak, where the main conflict or theme reaches a point of climax. This will be the chapter where the main characters' actions and decisions reach a breaking point, leading them toward resolution or transformation. Additionally, *Crown* also highlights themes such as power, honor, or leadership, which can be relevant to the story's development at this stage. This becomes a chapter where the main characters find the strength or courage to face their greatest challenges or to pursue their goals with newfound determination. Thus, *Crown* emphasizes the importance of these moments in the narrative journey, where the story reaches its breaking point and the main characters face their greatest tests. This can be a tense and emotional chapter, where everything that has been building over the previous chapters comes to a head.

*Seed* is the final chapter of *The Overstory* that reflects the resolution of the story. *Seed* reflects the themes of regeneration, new hope, and the possibility of change that are the focus of this chapter. As a term that refers to the smallest part of a tree that has the potential to grow and develop into something big, *Seed* indicates the final stage or resolution of the story where the characters and story experience transformation or renewal. This chapter

highlights the characters' attempts to start over, repair, or reflect on their future and their relationship with nature. This can be a time when the main characters find strength in continuity, goodness, or change. Additionally, *Seed* also shows that although the main story may have been completed, there is potential for new stories that will grow and develop from the events that occur in this novel. This gives the impression that even though one chapter is finished, the story will continue in a new form.

## 2. Characters

Characters are one of the most important things in a literary story. Based on Klarer (2004), a character is a figure presented in literary work. Characters are one of the main elements of storytelling, serving as vessels through which the author can explore themes, convey emotions, and engage readers. There are two types of characters such as round and flat characters. A round character is a figure with various distinctive character features. In contrast to a round character, a flat character is a kind of person who only exhibits one main personality quality. Nine main characters are shown in *The Overstory* most of the characters can be classified as rounded characters because they have deeper backstories, motivations, and emotional complexity. However, some characters are closer to flat characters because they appear in the story with a more limited role and do not undergo significant changes, such as Neelay, Dorothy, and Ray. The main characters shown in "The Overstory" are as follows:

a. Nicholas Hoel

Nicholas Hoel is the latest descendant of Norwegian lineage immigrants who settled in Iowa. Departing from his family's agricultural heritage, Nick pursues a career as an artist. From his earliest years, he has been very interested in his family's giant chestnut tree, an obsession manifested in their tradition of monthly photographs. Enrolling in art school in Chicago, he devotes himself to creating drawings and sculptures inspired by trees. Tragedy strikes when Nick loses his immediate family in a devastating gas leak incident. After the incident, he retreats to their home, living alone for years while immersing himself in his art.

b. Mimi Ma

Mimi is the daughter of Winston Ma, a Chinese immigrant, and Charlotte, a white woman from the South, who grows up in Illinois alongside her two younger sisters. Later in life, Mimi finds success as a ceramic engineer. Her involvement in the fight to preserve trees is sparked when a pine forest near her workplace in Portland, Oregon, is threatened with demolition by the city government. It is during this time that she meets Douglas, forming a deep bond as they engage in various activism efforts together. In the protest community, Mimi goes by the nickname "Mulberry", which is an homage to her father's beloved mulberry tree and the site of her tragic death by suicide.

c. Adam Appich

Adam Appich is a psychologist from Illinois who is one of the central characters in the novel. Raised in a troubled childhood marked by bullying from his friends and the disappearance of his older sister, Adam grows up in isolation. His interest in psychology blossoms during his high school years when he reads a book that demonstrates the predictability and herd mentality of humans. Soon, he joins environmental activists to save the redwood forest.

d. Patricia Westerford

Patricia is a botanist who researches research on trees and forests. Patricia's work focuses on understanding the complex communication and social networks that exist among trees. Her research leads her to advocate for the protection of forests and the recognition of their significance in the natural world. Patricia's story intertwines with those of other characters in the novel as they explore themes of ecology, activism, and the interconnectedness of all life.

e. Olivia Vandergriff

Olivia is one of the main characters in the novel. She is introduced as a college student who survives a near-death experience involving a lightning strike. This event profoundly alters her perspective of life, leading her to develop a deep connection with trees and nature. Olivia becomes involved in environmental activism, particularly in efforts to protect old-growth forests.



f. Douglas Pavlicek

Douglas Pavlicek also known as “Douggie”, is one of the protagonists in the novel. Originally from Palo Alto and an Air Force veteran, Douggie initially struggled to find direction in life. He participates in the Stanford Prison Experiment, where he experiences the negative effects of its abusive environment. Later, during the Vietnam War in Thailand, he survives an attack when <sup>42</sup> he falls from a plane and is saved by a massive banyan fig tree, albeit injuring his leg in the process. Upon returning to the United States, Douggie is deeply affected by witnessing clear-cut forests in Oregon. He eventually finds employment planting Doug-fir seedlings in the areas previously logged, seeking purpose in reforestation efforts.

g. Neelay Mehta

Neelay, the child of Indian immigrants, demonstrates extraordinary talent in coding and creates a series of innovative computer games called Mastery. Growing up in Silicon Valley, he is introduced to computers by his father, Babul, who works in the early computing industry. Despite a childhood accident that leaves him <sup>61</sup> paralyzed from the waist down after falling from a tree, Neelay's passion for coding remains undeterred. He gains early admission to Stanford University and begins developing and sharing games at a young age. A transformative experience in Stanford's wild terrarium ignites his imagination, leading him to drop out of school to pursue

coding full-time. This decision sets him on the path to creating Mastery, a groundbreaking game that will have a profound impact on the world.

h. Dorothy Brinkman

Dorothy is a stenographer from St. Paul, Minnesota. She marries Ray Brinkman in the 1970s, and they establish a life together. Dorothy values her independence greatly and is hesitant to commit to marriage, despite her deep love for Ray. Their inability to conceive children leads Dorothy to feel dissatisfied with her life, prompting her to engage in various hobbies and eventually have an affair. However, when Ray suffers a brain aneurysm that leaves him severely incapacitated, their relationship transforms. Over the years, they reconcile and strengthen their bond through shared activities such as reading and exploring nature in their backyard. Dorothy, who was once impatient and temperamental, adapts to Ray's slower pace of life and finds solace in their shared appreciation of the natural world, ultimately finding peace and comfort in their suburban surroundings.

i. Ray Brinkman

Ray Brinkman, the ninth protagonist in the novel, is an intellectual property lawyer residing in St. Paul, Minnesota. He enters into marriage with Dorothy in the 1970s, and the two build a life together. Ray is characterized by his innocence, naivety, and

unwavering sense of responsibility. His professional interest is piqued by the concept of extending intellectual property rights to non-human entities, particularly trees. Despite Dorothy's dissatisfaction with their marriage, Ray remains devoted to her and endeavors to salvage their relationship. However, their lives take a dramatic turn when Ray experiences a severe brain aneurysm, leaving him physically incapacitated and reliant on Dorothy's care. Despite their prior marital struggles, Dorothy commits herself to caring for Ray for the remainder of his life. Following his aneurysm, Ray's cognitive processes slow significantly, leading him to find solace and fascination in observing the quiet growth of trees in their backyard.

### 3. <sup>56</sup> Point of View

Point of view is how a story is presented. It is the vantage point from which the events of the narrative are presented to the reader (Klarer, 2004). There are three types of point of view used in literary works such as first-person, second-person, and third-person point of view. In the first-person point of view, the narrator uses the pronouns *I* and *we* to narrate the events. The readers experience the story through the narrator's thoughts, feelings, and experiences. In the second-person point of view, the narrator uses the pronoun *you*. This point of view is less common in fiction but is often used in instructional or interactive contexts. In the third-person point of view, the narrator uses pronouns such as *he*, *she*, or the character names. "The Overstory", uses a third-person point of view that employs multiple points

of view to tell its complex and interconnected story.

#### 4. <sup>35</sup>Setting

According to Klarer (2004), the setting shows the location, historical period, and social surroundings of the events in literary works. It is the environment in which the events of a narrative unfold. The setting provides the backdrop against which characters interact, conflict arises, and the plot develops. The setting of "The Overstory" novel is in various locations across the United States, with a focus on the Pacific Northwest. The novel spans several decades, beginning in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and continuing into the present day.

#### C. Research of the Relevance

Several researches have been carried out using the ecocriticism approach in which human nature is involved. The first previous research is entitled Collective Consciousness in Safeguarding Forestry in Richard Powers' The Overstory by Anwar & Athallah. (2018). This research uses Thomas, K.'s ecocriticism theory to discover ecocritical aspects that Richard Power's used in the novel. This research aims to identify the concept of collective consciousness that prevents deforestation based on the characters in The Overstory novel. The writers use <sup>2</sup>a qualitative descriptive method to analyze data taken from The Overstory novel. According to the research, the writers find the importance of protecting the forest can be done in many ways such as in the form of demonstration, appeal, and rewilding. Based on the explanation

above, the similarity between their research and this study is that each research examines the same object, namely *The Overstory*, but the difference lies in the theory used and the study objectives which examine the collective consciousness of each character.

The second previous research from Nabilah, R., A. (2020) entitled *Tree and Environmental Wisdom: An Ecocritical Study on Western and Non-Western Traditions in The Overstory* (2018) by Richard Powers. This research illustrates environmental activities against deforestation through environmental wisdom in maintaining ecosystem stability. This research employs the theory of ecocritical approach to examine literary criticism in a literary work. This research aims to reveal how human perception of nature is presented as an entity that has an important role in life and to find out whether there is an influence between cultural perspective and behavioral intentions in carrying out environmental activities. Data are analyzed using the theory from Lawrence Buell. The research concludes that an ecocentric perspective can be found in every character or person and needs to be cultivated and directed. An ecocentric view is the basis for environmental wisdom that influences environmental activities in maintaining balance and harmony to combat deforestation. According to the explanation above, the similarity between our research is the object used is *The Overstory*, but the difference lies in the theory used in the research and the research objectives which examine the ecocentric view in every character for environmental wisdom that influences environmental activities.



Lastly, a research from Safina, P., I. (2021) is Ecocritical Study of Richard Powers' *The Overstory*. Garrard's theory is used in this research. The writer uses a qualitative descriptive research method and the research data used are from words, phrases, and sentences. The research aims to find the pastoral aspects and the environmentalists' reaction toward nature in the novel *The Overstory*. The writer discovers that the novel highlights the contrasting lifestyles of urban and rural areas through Nick's experience on the farmland, and the writer also finds it delves into the theme of deforestation, illustrating characters who strive to safeguard the forests. Additionally, the environmentalists express their viewpoints, sentiments, and emotions regarding ecological harm, which is subsequently categorized into three distinct types. The similarity between our researches is that each research examines the same object and the theory from Garrard specifically the positions of environmentalists. The differences lie in pastoral aspects and positions only to find environmentalists in nine characters, while this research is concerned with the positions among the story characters and the significant implications of trees for the Earth.

Based on the three previous researches above, the writer has provided a similar theoretical framework and focus on an ecocritical approach. However, according to their researches, no research uses a human-nature relationship in the novel *The Overstory*. In other words, this research aims to see the human-nature relationship especially the positions between humans and trees, and to show the significant implication of the trees for the Earth.

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

This chapter outlines the specific methods and procedures used to conduct the research. It provides a detailed explanation of how the research method will be used, implemented, and analyzed.

##### A. Method of the Research

The writer uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Qualitative research is an investigative process similar to detective work in which the main data sources are words and actions (Miles, 1992, as cited in Kurnia, 2014). Qualitative research involves a systematic and thorough exploration of a particular subject or phenomenon. Thus, the object of this research is involved in words rather than numbers. This research involves words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs related to the novel "The Overstory" which will be the data in this research.

The descriptive analysis method itself is a method that is carried out with how to describe the facts which are then followed by analysis. It does not merely describe but also gives understanding and explanation. This research tries to examine, explore, and interpret the data obtained. Sources of data analysis are obtained from written data in the novel *The Overstory* by Richard Powers, in the form of narrative, monologues, and dialogues that show human-nature interaction in the context of ecocriticism, which will then be analyzed.

### **3** 1. Time and Place of the Research

This research is a content analysis research that does not require a specific location. According to Creswell (2002), qualitative research only relies on text and images in analyzing the data. Therefore, in analyzing data, the writer can analyze it in various places such as libraries, home, campus, or other public places. This research has been conducted since May 19, 2023, until the data has been fully collected.

### **2. Kind of the Research**

**8**  
This research is a descriptive analysis because the data in this research is not numbers. According to Kurnia (2014), qualitative research data is not in the form of numbers but analysis that requires literature. The writer uses content analysis research by analyzing the content in the novel *The Overstory*.

### **B. Procedures of the Research**

In this research, the writer divides into three stages of the research procedure namely, preparation, implementation, and finishing. Before carrying out the research, the writer determines the objective, topics, and observations of existing problems against the reality in the field to strengthen the research topic. After going through the preparation stage, the writer carries out the implementation supported by data and theories that follow the facts so that the results of the research can be concluded with conclusions to answer the problem of the research. After going through the preparation and implementation, the writer is tested for the facts and accuracy of the research

in a thesis defense, all of which are in the form of research reports whose validity can be accounted for. The following procedures for collecting data is used by the writer:

1. Preparation

In this step, the writer defines the topic and object of the research.

The writer begins by selecting a broad area of interest. The writer chooses ecocriticism as the topic and "The Overstory" novel as the object of the research. Next, the writer reviews existing literature to know what was already been studied in the chosen area. Then, the writer identifies the literature review and formulates a specific research question or hypothesis that will be the core of the research. Finally, the writer decides research methodology, designs, data analysis, and collection before beginning the research process.

2. Implementation

In the implementation, the writer begins to write the research. After the step of preparation, the writer begins to collect the data by reading "The Overstory" novel and analyzing the data collected to answer the research question or hypothesis. The writer may have some revisions and editing after getting feedback from the advisor to make the research better.

3. Finishing

In this step, the writer composes the data analysis, the position in the human-nature relationships, and the significant implication of the trees for the Earth. After that, discuss the final research with the advisor to

maximize the result and identify any mistakes in the research. Finally, the writer concludes the result of the research.

### C. Technique of the Data Collection

Data collection is a method specifically developed to obtain phenomena to explore and express the content, meaning, or symbolic elements of these phenomena. Krippendorff (2004; as cited in Bengtsson, 2016) underlines that content analysis is the research technique used because the data obtained is written data to make replicable and valid inferences in the context of their use. There are the following steps to collect the data:

1. The writer comprehensively peruses the novel *The Overstory* to understand the intrinsic elements in the novel.
2. Highlight words and sentences that are suitable and relevant to the topic of human-nature relationships.
3. List and understand the novel's intrinsic elements including dialogue and monologue, based on the problem formulation.
4. Classify the data found into several categories related to the research problem.

### D. Technique of the Data Analysis

After collecting the data for this research, the writer started to classify and identify the data that is relevant to the problem being discussed. Then, the writer concludes that the human-nature relationship is through an ecocritical



approach based on Garrard's theory. This data analysis activity is intended to summarize and present the data so that it is easier to understand and determine patterns or relationships in the data itself. So, it can be used to interpret data.

#### E. Data Sources

The Overstory novel written by Richard Powers is the main <sup>26</sup> source of data in this research. The main data source for The Overstory novel is from the text including <sup>2</sup> words, phrases, sentences, or character dialogues that contribute to the human-nature relationship experiences. This novel has 4 chapters those are roots, trunk, crown, and seeds. It has 572 pages. It was published in <sup>66</sup> New York by W.W. Norton & Company publisher in 2018.

The writer also uses secondary sources such as books, articles, news, and information related to this research topic. <sup>31</sup> In order to deepen the knowledge of ecocriticism, the writer uses theory and books from Greg Garrard. Therefore, the writer deepens it by reading lots of books with ecocritical themes such as *Ecocriticism the New Critical Idiom* (Garrard, 2012), <sup>52</sup> *The Ecocriticism Reader Landmarks in Literary Ecology* (Glottfelty & Fromm, 1996).

## 40 CHAPTER IV

### DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the analysis of the data, concentrating on two main points. Firstly, the writer discusses the positions among the characters in the human-nature relationship within *The Overstory*. Secondly, the writer explores the significant implications of trees for the Earth.

#### A. Data Description

Based on the idea of ecocriticism, this research examines data collected for the novel *The Overstory* by Richard Powers which explores the relationship between human and nature. The writer uses the ecocritical approach theory in this research. Human and nature, especially trees, which are approached with the positions and implications of the meaning of trees in the novel, are the data objects in this research.

The cumulative amount of information collected includes data derived from human characters and trees, reflecting various viewpoints such as cornucopia, environmentalism, deep ecology, social ecology or ecomarxism, ecofeminism, Heideggerian ecophilosophy, and the Earth. This research also illustrates the significance of the trees to the Earth.

#### B. Data Analysis

The data originated from Richard Powers' novel *The Overstory*. The data analysis is divided into two sub-chapters to answer each research question, the positions of all characters found in *The Overstory*, and the significant

implication of the trees for the Earth.

# 1. The position of All Characters in *The Overstory*

As outlined by Garrard,<sup>36</sup> ecocriticism focuses on the relationship between literature and the natural environment. It means ecocriticism is focused on analyzing the interaction between human and nature, investigating how each impacts the other. In Powers' *The Overstory*, the portrayal of the human positions towards nature is found 19 data, divided into cornucopia (3 data), environmentalism (4 data), deep ecology (1 datum), ecofeminism (3 data), ecomarxism (4 data), and Heideggerian ecophilosophy (4 data).

In the story, the writer finds several positions based on the narrative as follows:

## a. Cornucopia (3 Data)

As stated in Chapter II, a cornucopian viewpoint frequently appears in writings that depict nature as durable, perpetually beneficial, and able to provide an infinite supply of resources for human growth and consumption rather than emphasizing the constraints or effects of human impact on the environment. This point of view favors technological innovation and human inventiveness as solutions to environmental problems which contrast to ecocritical perspectives. The writer found three data that contain cornucopia viewpoints in the novel and all of the data come from Chapter Trunk. The first datum that occurs in the statement above comes from the game description called Mastery that is

created by Neelay Mehta.

#### **Datum 1**

<sup>1</sup> The player will start in an uninhabited corner of a freshly assembled new Earth. He'll be able to dig mines, cut down trees, plow fields, construct houses, build churches and markets and schools – anything his heart desires and his legs can reach. He'll travel down all the spreading branches of an enormous technology tree, researching everything from stone working to space stations, free to follow any ethos, to make whatever culture floats his state-of-the-art boats.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, pp.233-234, L.30-2)

Mastery is Neelay's major virtual reality game that tells the story of a very intricate and engaging world that the players can explore and develop in. As stated in Chapter II, Neelay Mehta is one of the main characters who works as the developer of Mastery studying at Stanford University. He is inspired by the trees and visions. Mastery symbolizes both the endless desire for growth and consumption on the part of human long-term behavior. Neelay keeps adding areas and resources for the players to take advantage of and control, making everything seem perfect but devoid of happiness despite their ever-growing wealth. Neelay can always add more resources and land. He quits the Mastery to begin a new endeavor known as Mastery 2 after realizing that in reality, this is not the

case because of human unsustainable current rate of growth and consumption, which is destroying both the natural world and humankind as a whole. His new, more enlightened objective is to make a game that can teach people more about the planet they live on by reflecting on the complex web of life and the real world of growing things.

It can be seen through an ecocritical lens as embodying a multiplicity of choices, similar to the symbolic abundance of choices. Described as “many branching paths”, the game offers players many choices and paths to explore, reflecting a comucopia perspective that emphasizes the unlimited potential for growth and development. This relationship underscores the relevance of the comucopia concept to ecocriticism, which explores the interactions between human action and nature.

In contrast with datum 1, datum 2 occurs in real life when Maidenhair and Watchman are involved in a dispute with forest loggers. Maidenhair is the stage name of Olivia Vandergriff one of the main characters, while Watchman is the stage name of Nicholas Hoel also one of the main characters. They are defending Mimas, an ancient tree of redwood when the loggers from a logging company called Humboldt Timber try to cut down Mimas.

#### **Datum 2**

<sup>1</sup> They shout at Maidenhair, tag team. We know these forests. We respect these trees. These trees have killed our friends.



Maidenhair holds still. The idea of a tree killing a person is too much for her to think about.

The men below press their advantage. You can't stop growth! People need wood.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.335, L.21-27)

The statement of the logger can be viewed as cornucopian, which emphasizes that human progress and economic growth are very important. As stated in Chapter II, cornucopians place a high value on economic expansions because they see it as necessary to raise human welfare. The statement "You can't stop growth!" expresses the view that economic growth fueled in part by the exploitation and consumption of natural resources like wood is required to meet the demands of an expanding population. As mentioned in the first datum, Mastery is a symbol of the cornucopian perspective, the third datum comes from Mastery 2 the virtual reality game that symbolizes the real natural world. In the game, Neelay plays and also acts as *Sage*, it is a Mastery 2 Game Master who can control the progress of the game.

### **Datum 3**

Top ranked leaders are pushing for the whole approach to be banned. But even as a Sage, he must acquire sufficient coal, gold, ore, stone, wood, food, honor, and glory to pay for his population growth. He

1 must explore unknown terrain, form trade routes, and raid neighboring settlements, working his way along branching trees for Culture, Craft, Economics, and Technology.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.265, L. 17-23)

In this narration, Neelay creates a game called Mastery 2. It represents a critique of a cornucopia idea that prioritizes unlimited resources only to the endless population growth. The emphasis on acquiring resources such as 1 coal, gold, ore, stone, wood, food, honor, and glory to drive population growth reflects the cornucopian imperative of continued growth and expansion. Furthermore, the gaming system of exploring unknown territories, establishing trade routes, and raiding neighboring settlements for resources can be seen as a manifestation of overcoming resource constraints, in cornucopian places a strong emphasis on how technological advances allow people to discover new resources, increase the effectiveness of resource extraction, and create contingency plans in case of shortages. Thus, this is in line with the cornucopian viewpoint, which argues that the belief that over time, advances in technology and human intelligence will increase the availability of resources and improve the welfare of society.

b. Environmentalism (4 Data)

As stated in Chapter II, an environmentalism viewpoint frequently appears in writings that human should protect the natural environment

and its ecosystems. It includes a variety of viewpoints, attitudes, and actions or social movements that are meant to solve specific environmental problems and advance sustainability. The writer found four data that contain environmentalism viewpoints in the novel and all of the data come from Chapter Trunk. In datum 1, Mother N, a leader figure in an environmental social group named LDF (Life Defense Force) leads an orientation talk in the LDF movement.

#### Datum 1

1 Right now they're in that second-to-the-last stage: cashing out every salable scrap of timber in the inventory. Which in this case means lots of seven- and eight-hundred-year-old trees. Trees wider than your dreams are going into Mill B and coming out as planks. Humboldt is cutting at four times the industry rate. And they're speeding up, before legislation can catch up with them.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.252, L.1-7)

1 Obviously, we can't wait for legislation. The new, efficient Humboldt Timber will have killed all the giants by the time the law catches up with them. So this is the question I ask each of you. What can you bring to the effort? We'll take anything you can give. Time. Effort. Cash. Cash is surprisingly helpful!

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.252, L12-17)

As known, LDF is a social group that Olivia and Nick are the members of, led by Mother N where LDF makes a protest against Humboldt Timber. They cut down trees quickly and on a large scale, even four times the existing industry rate. This can trigger massive deforestation which can result in several environmental problems. This underscores the environmental problems associated with deforestation and habitat destruction.

The rapid rate of deforestation indicates significant environmental impacts. The company's accelerated logging pace also implies efforts to deplete inventories before regulations can be implemented to slow or stop logging activities. Overall, this emphasizes the impact of logging on the environment, particularly the loss of old trees, in line with core environmental principles, which prioritize the preservation of natural ecosystems and the reduction of human impacts on the environment. Therefore, a social movement to prevent deforestation caused by Humboldt Timber is started. To support LDF, the members can give everything that they can give, effort, time, or even cash.

Different from datum 1, the protesters or it can be called environmentalists from datum 1 come from adult ages. In datum 2, environmentalists are kids from grade school. When Mimi and Douglas both of them are the main characters in *The Overstory*, park the car near Forest Service road. They see a group of people on a protest march. The

group consists of many people from every age, grannies and toddlers, college students, and even grade school kids. They gather and take the same social movement to prevent deforestation by logging companies.

## Datum 2

<sup>1</sup> It's grannies with guitars and toddlers with space-age water pistols.  
College students out to prove themselves worthy of one another.  
Preppers pushing baby carriages like all-terrain Hobbit Humvees.  
Grade school kids carrying earnest placards: RESPECT YOUR  
ELDERS. WE NEED OUR LUNGS.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.280, L.29-34)

As stated in Chapter II, environmentalism ideology or social movement to address environmental issues and sustainability. They also make a protest march to preserve nature, especially the trees, people from all ages can be seen as environmentalism as well. This can be portrayed when grade school kids make a protest to the government to save their forest. It is possible to interpret grade school kids holding placards emphasizing the value of protecting trees as an intergenerational responsibility. This emphasizes how important it is for the younger generation to protect the environment and make sure that there is a sustainable future for all future generations. In the placards they carrying, there are words *Elders* and *Lungs*. *Elders* and *Lungs* are metaphorized as



the trees that exist long before human exist and have functions to the oxygen creator.

In datum 3, Mimi and Douglas see a group of protesters surrounding the headquarters of a company. They sing songs together and shake the banners they carry in front of the police. They protest about the logging activities by the company and hope they stop harvesting.

### Datum 3

1 The camera pans across the crowd. People spill down the street past the burnished company sign. They surround the headquarters, nestled lodge-like against a rim of spruce and fir. Not even an apprehensive cameraman can make it seem like anything but democracy in America, the right of people peaceably to assemble. The crowd stands well back from the property line, singing their songs and shaking their bedsheet banners: STOP ILLEGAL HARVESTING. NO MORE DEATH ON PUBLIC LANDS.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.344, L.6-14)

The banners that protesters carried have the meaning of a social movement to protect the environment, especially the trees. The crowd's actions show that they are very conscious of environmental issues, especially the destructive effects of illegal harvesting on public lands. This awareness is essential for promoting sustainable practices and

protecting ecosystems. Public lands should be preserved and managed responsibly, according to environmentalists. Because of their ecological, recreational, cultural, and aesthetic value, public lands are valued.

The words <sup>1</sup> **STOP ILLEGAL HARVESTING. NO MORE DEATH ON PUBLIC LANDS** symbolizes the demand to stop illegal logging on public lands and stems from a desire to keep these lands free from degradation and unsustainable use. Since illicit activities such as logging and harvesting can cause serious environmental damage such as habitat destruction, deforestation, and ecosystem disruption, environmental activists oppose such actions. Regulations are intended to ensure sustainable use and conservation of resources are often ignored by illegal logging.

Different from datum 1,2, and 3, datum 4 is done by Dr. Patricia Westerford herself and is not a form of protest on the street. However, she creates a seed bank to be useful to people who need it. Dr. Patricia Westerford as mentioned in Chapter II is a scientist originally from Kentucky who specializes in tree research. She has had hearing aids since she was a young age despite being born deaf or hard of hearing. Patricia is one of the main characters who spends researching the trees. She and her husband Dennis pack their dirty dishes into their truck and ride it to the town. In their conversation, Patricia wants to start a movement to save forests which are increasingly decreasing in number.

#### **Datum 4**

1 She laughs too hard for the joke, and sobers too quickly. In situ preservation is failing. And I see now it always will. He looks at her and waits. She thinks: *If the rest of the species were as comfortable with looking and waiting as this man, we might yet be saved. I want to start a seed bank. There are half as many trees in the world as there were before we came down out of them.*

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.354, L.6-12)

10 Patricia's statement that she wants to build a seed bank is closely tied to environmentalism, especially in the context of the ecological conservation social movement. Patricia starts this idea by replanting parts of the forest that have been damaged due to deforestation. The decline in the number of trees in the forest due to human activities such as deforestation highlights the need for initiatives such as a seed bank according to Patricia's thought. The seed bank can provide a repository of seeds that can be used for reforestation efforts, helping to restore ecosystems that have been damaged or lost.

In addition, the intention to establish a seed bank is indicative of proactive thinking regarding biodiversity preservation and conservation. As a safeguard against extinction and habitat loss, seed banks preserve seeds from a variety of plant species. It demonstrates an intention to protect genetic diversity and even restore ecosystems in the future.

c. Deep Ecology (1 Data)

Deep ecology as mentioned in Chapter II is a philosophical and environmental movement that advocates radical changes in human consciousness and behavior towards nature. Deep ecology presents an ecocentric (nature-centered) viewpoint that values all living things and ecosystems in opposition to the dominant anthropocentric (human-centered) viewpoint. In this position, the writer found one data in Chapter Trunk that contains a deep ecology idea. The scenario occurs when Patricia Westerford becomes an expert witness in a trial and a dialogue occurs between the judge and Patricia. The judge asks Patricia "And those species that depend on rotting logs and snags: are any of them endangered?" (Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.328, L.33-34).

**Datum 1**

<sup>13</sup> She tells him: everything depends on everything else. There's a kind of vole that needs old forest. It eats mushrooms that grow on rotting logs and excretes spores somewhere else. No rotting logs, no mushrooms; no mushrooms, no vole; no vole, no spreading fungus; no spreading fungus, no new trees.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, pp.328-329, L.35-3)

Patricia's answer represents the concept of <sup>6</sup> deep ecology that emphasizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of all living

things and their environment. It highlights the complex relationships between various ecosystem components, such as voles, fungi, mushrooms, and rotting logs showing how each element depends on the others for the survival and function of the ecosystem. Vole depends on mushrooms for their food, which in turn depends on rotting logs for their growth, and fungi depend on vole to spread their spores which ultimately contribute to the growth of new trees. This also emphasizes the importance of considering the welfare of non-human entities, rather than focusing solely on human interests. This section presents a non-anthropocentric perspective by highlighting the important role of vole, fungi, and mushrooms in ecosystems, without emphasizing human needs or interests.

d. Ecofeminism (3 Data)

Ecofeminism as mentioned in Chapter II is a social, philosophical movement, and viewpoint that investigates the links between environmental degradation and the oppression of women. It aims to comprehend and resolve the ways that environmental exploitation and gender inequality interact. Ecofeminism criticizes the patriarchal capitalist systems. In this position, the writer found 3 data according to ecofeminism thought. In datum 1, Ray Brickman the husband of Dorothy Brinkman, one of the main characters in *The Overstory* works as a property lawyer from Minnesota. He reads an article entitled "Should trees have standing?" (Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.292, L.14). He



focuses on the paragraph in the article.

#### Datum 1

<sup>1</sup> It is no answer to say that streams and forests cannot have standing because streams and forests cannot speak. Corporations cannot speak, either; nor can states, estates, infants, incompetents, municipalities, or universities. Lawyers speak for them.

The key thing is for her never to learn that he knows. He must be cheerful, smart, funny. The minute she suspects, it'll destroy them both. She might live with anything except being forgiven.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.293, L.11-19).

Ecofeminism criticizes hierarchical thinking that places humans above nature and values, certain forms of knowledge above others. The idea that only entities capable of human-like communication have value reflects this hierarchical mindset, which prioritizes human interests and perspectives while marginalizing the voices and agency of <sup>6</sup> non-human entities, including nature such as rivers and forests. The inability of rivers and forests to speak reflects a broader societal structure that prioritizes human interests over environmental interests, reflecting how women have been marginalized and silenced throughout history.

Similar to datum 1, datum 2 portrays patriarchy and a capitalist system that exploits nature. Patriarchy and the capitalist system are also depicted

when Nicholas and Olivia are monitoring the huge Humboldt Timber area, in stark contrast to their situation as environmental activists. This can be seen as a manifestation of patriarchal systems that have historically exploited and harmed women and nature.

**Datum 2**

1 They're so big. Humboldt Timber employs hundreds of people. Thousands of machines. It's owned by multibillion dollar multinational. All the laws are on their side, backed by the will of the American people. We're a bunch of unemployed vandals, camping out in the woods.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.296, L.17-21).

The Humboldt Timber, as a symbol of corporate power, represents dominant forces that have traditionally silenced and marginalized the voices of marginalized communities, including women and environmental activists. In contrast, the unemployed vandals symbolize the struggle and resilience of those affected by environmental degradation and economic inequality. Their actions, although illegal and often considered destructive, can be seen as a desperate attempt to regain their connection with nature and fight back against the forces that have robbed them of their livelihood and dignity.

In datum 3, the loggers want to kick Olivia and Nick out of Mimas.

Mimas is an ancient redwood tree that Olivia and Nick want to protect from the loggers.

**Datum 3**

<sup>1</sup> The next morning, she's debating one of the loggers again when he stops in midsentence.

Hey! Take your cap off for a second. She does. His shock is obvious from two-thirds of a football field away. Shit! You're gorgeous.

You should see me up close! When I'm not frozen and have taken a bath in the last month or two.

The hell you doing, sitting up in a tree? You could have any guy you want. Who wants guys when you can have Mimas?

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, pp.333-334, L.33-8)

The sentence "Who wants guys when you can have Mimas?" reflects freedom and rejection of the norms of traditional, patriarchal society which often prioritizes men over women nature. Mimas is also a symbol of a woman who needs to be protected from a patriarchal system that is overly exploitative.

**e. Social Ecology and Ecomarxism (4 Data)**

Social ecology or it can be called ecomarxism as mentioned in Chapter II is an ideology that integrates ecological and anti-globalization viewpoints with Marxist ideas. It criticizes the capitalist system for

contributing to ecological crises, social exclusion, and environmental destruction. In this position, the writer found four data, and all of the data come from Chapter Trunk which contains ecomarxism ideas. In the first datum, Olivia Vandergriff and her father discuss the situations involving agricultural intellectual property rights. Olivia is upset about her father standing up for the transnational company to prosecute a farmer who just save last year's soybean crop. She thinks that the company is not supposed to own the rights to the living things as in the narrative below.

**Datum 1**

<sup>1</sup> He was helping a transnational company prosecute a farmer who'd saved some of last year's soybean crop and replanted, without paying royalties again. She was outraged. You can't own the rights to a living thing! You can. You should. Protecting intellectual property creates wealth. What about the soybean? Who's paying the soybean for its intellectual property?

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, pp.192-193, L.36-8)

The actions of a farmer who saves and replants soybeans without paying royalties challenge the idea of intellectual property rights over living organisms, which can be seen as an extension of the capitalist exploitation of nature. The dialogue can be interpreted as touching on themes of ecomarxism critique, particularly <sup>18</sup> in the context of intellectual property rights and the ownership of living organisms. Ecomarxism,

which combines elements of ecology and Marxism, often criticizes capitalist systems that commodify nature and exploit natural resources for profit. Olivia's statement, "You can't have rights over living things!" reflects a perspective consistent with ecomarxism criticism, which questions the ethical implications of treating living organisms as commodities.

In addition, the litigation directed at the farmer who preserves and replants soybeans serves as an example of how transnational company control is exploitative. A farmer's attempt to make a living is being exploited by the company or the ruling class, who demand royalties for the use of seeds. The idea of exploitation, according to Marxism, is strengthened by the ruling class appropriating the working class's value of life. Different from the first datum where Olivia's father is on the side of the company, the second datum depicts that <sup>49</sup> Douglas Pavlicek, one of the main characters in *The Overstory*, is trying to plant as many trees as possible. His efforts are being exploited by a logging company.

#### Datum 2

I've walked I don't know how many thousands of miles, sticking seedlings in the ground, trying to roll back progress just a tiny bit. Then I learn that all I'm doing is giving the bastards credits to cut down more and older trees. I'm sorry, but seeing stupidity up close



<sup>37</sup> in that city park put me over the edge. Simple as that.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.241, L.1-6)

In the first datum, the farmer utilizes soybean crops owned by the company, in contrast to the second datum which is the different company that takes advantage of Douglas's efforts to plant lots of new trees. In Douglas' statement, the frustration comes from the realization that efforts to combat environmental degradation, such as planting seeds, are ultimately futile within the capitalist framework that incentivizes the further exploitation of natural resources for profit. His efforts seem futile in light of more significant systemic problems, which weakened his enthusiasm. This is in line with the ecomarxism lens, which argues that under capitalism, the relentless search for profit and economic expansion often outpaces individual or small-scale efforts to reduce environmental damage.

The reference to "giving the bastards credits to cut down more and older trees" highlights more resources that can be exploited. Additionally, the mention of "stupidity"<sup>6</sup> in the context of environmental degradation reflects a critique of the capitalist system's<sup>22</sup> prioritization of short-term gains over long-term ecological health. From an ecomarxist perspective, deforestation is often seen as an example of exploitation of natural resources carried out for economic interests, without taking into account its impact on the environment and the people living nearby. This

is reflected when demonstrators demanding responsibility from a logging company demonstrate peacefully as the leader speaks with a megaphone leading in a protest to the logging company guarded by the police as stated in datum 3,

**Datum 3**

1 Those willing to head on, thank you. We'll cross now. Stay orderly. Stay calm. Do not allow yourself to be provoked. This is a peaceful confrontation.

A portion of the crowd drifts toward the gate. Mimi cocks an eyebrow at Douglas. You're sure?

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.285, L.1-5).

In carrying out this action, the demonstrators certainly found difficulties in this matter, for example facing the police and they are considered criminals "Ten more yards and they are criminals." (Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.285, L.11). And police detain several demonstrators and handcuff them "Then they handcuff the broken links back together. Mimi and Douglas end up with two strangers chained between them and two more on each side." (Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, pp.286-287, L.33-1). This situation can certainly be considered social injustice. In this context, when demonstrators demand responsibility for environmental damage peacefully but are instead met

with harsh action from the authorities, it can be seen as an example of systemic injustice.

From an ecomarxism perspective, the police are often used as a tool to maintain the status quo and hinder social change. Ecomarxism views the actions of arresting and detaining demonstrators as part of a system that protects capitalist interests while ignoring the needs of society and the environment. This is a concrete example of how social injustice and environmental exploitation are often interrelated and reinforced by existing economic and political power structures. Therefore, demonstrators' efforts to demand change and hold demonstrations can be seen as ineffective. Apart from using the police as a "tool" to maintain the stability of the company's operations, companies also use workers as a tool for the continuity of the operations of the company that employs them, so that they become dependent on the company and become awry when confronted, such as in the debate between Olivia and a worker from Humboldt Timber in datum 4.

**Datum 4**

Maidenhair beams down on them, beatific. You guys are too decent.

You can't even make a credible threat!

You're killing our livelihood.

Your bosses are doing that.

Bullshit!

<sup>23</sup> One-third of forest jobs lost to machines in the last fifteen years.

More trees cut, fewer people working.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.334, L.26-32)

Olivia's statement reflects a broader trend in which technological progress, driven by capitalist demands to increase efficiency and reduce costs, is leading to the automation of tasks previously performed by human labor. In the forestry sector, this means machines such as automatic saws, harvesters, and processing equipment replace human workers. Technological progress driven by capitalist interests often causes unemployment for workers whose labor is replaced by machines. This not only damages the environment but also disrupts the livelihoods of people who depend on forests for work. This can cause economic difficulties for communities that depend on natural resources such as forests.

f. Heideggerian Ecophilosophy (4 Data)

Heideggerian ecophilosophy as mentioned in Chapter II is a philosophical view that focuses on the relationship between human and nature. Heideggerian ecophilosophy emphasizes the importance of understanding and respecting nature as part of human existence as well as maintaining the balance between human and nature. It is concerned with the relationship between human existence and nature, often focusing

on the need to “let things live” and recognizing the inherent value in life rather than focusing solely on human needs and desires. In this position, the writer found four data that contain Heideggerian ecophilosophy, and all of the data come from Chapter Roots, Trunk, and Crown. In the first datum, Patricia Westerford expresses gratitude to the tree for the gifts it has provided, such as tools, chests, decking, cabinets, and paneling.

**Datum 1**

2 Thank you for the tools. The chests. The decking. The clothes closets. The paneling. I forget... Thank you, she says, following the ancient formula. For all these gifts that you have given. And still not knowing how to stop, she adds, We're sorry. We didn't know how hard it is for you to grow back.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Roots, p.163, L.12-17)

Patricia critiques modern technology and its role in shaping human existence. There is a sense of gratitude for material goods such as equipment, chests, decking, wardrobe, and panels, which can be seen as a reflection of technology and its impact on people's lives. Modern technology like these items often distances us from an authentic relationship with nature and existence.

This section also contains an apology for not understanding the tree's struggle to grow again. Patricia critiques modern technological society



for its tendency to objectify nature and exploit it for human purposes without fully appreciating its intrinsic value. It also shows a sense of remorse for the damage done to nature, perhaps through deforestation or other forms of environmental degradation. The concept of “letting be” can be seen in the next datum above, the second datum tells about Olivia who finds a book entitled *The Secret Forest*. The book is Patricia’s bestselling book that tells about the trees.

#### Datum 2

<sup>10</sup> You and the tree in your backyard come from a common ancestor. She stops and looks out the transparent wall of their tree house. A billion and a half years ago, the two of you parted ways. She pauses again, as if to do the math. But even now, after an immense journey in separate directions, that the tree and you still share a quarter of your genes.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.313, L. 14-23)

Several sentences from the book portray the concept of Heideggerian ecophilosophy. In the book, trees and humans share a common ancestor, illustrating their fundamental relationship. This relationship transcends the distinction between human and non-human entities and highlights the interdependence of all living things. The deep connection between species is emphasized by the genes that human and tree share. This link

emphasizes how important it is to reject anthropocentric viewpoints and acknowledge and value the intrinsic worth of all living things. Furthermore, to illustrate “letting be”, which acknowledges and respects nature without attempting to dominate or control it, consider the idea that humans and tree share genes.

Since human and tree have similar genetic backgrounds, it is clear that they are both products of the same Being. Their existence together is essential to their existence and not simply a byproduct of their unique experiences. The third datum tells about Patricia who becomes an expert witness in a trial and a dialogue occurs between the judge and Patricia. The judge asks Patricia if it is true that a young, managed, fast-growing tree is better than an old tree.

### Datum 3

The judge asks, Young, straight, faster-growing trees *aren't* better than older, rotting trees?

Better for us. Not for the forest. In fact, young, managed, homogenous stands can't really be called forests. The words are a dam-break as she speaks them.

(Power, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.328, L. 1-5)

The difference between well-managed, young, homogenous stands, and old rotting trees is a reflection of the strict categorization of substance

and the application of human values to nature. In contrast, Heideggerian ecophilosophy encourages a more reciprocal and holistic understanding of forests, recognizing that each stage of a tree's life cycle including decay is critical to the balance and health of the ecosystem. In the fourth datum, after the death of her husband, Patricia read her old notebooks. She flips the page and reads a passage below:

**Datum 4**

12  
*No one sees trees. We see fruit, we see nuts, we see wood, we see shade. We see ornaments or pretty fall foliage. Obstacles blocking the road or wrecking the ski slope. Dark, threatening places that must be cleared. We see branches about to crush our roof. We see a cash crop. But trees – trees are invisible.*

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Crown, p.485, L.1-7)

The idea of “being” in the world is portrayed in Patricia’s notebook. Heideggerian ecophilosophy discusses how objects, such as trees, are often only seen in terms of their use or relation to human interests, such as fruit, nuts, wood, shade, etc. However, the true nature of these objects such as trees is often overlooked or “invisible” in everyday experience. This is consistent with the claim made earlier in this section that human typically view trees based on their use and purpose, rather than assessing their basic properties. Humans also only see that trees are just ornaments

that decorate their gardens, or objects that block the road also block sunlight so that a place becomes dark and needs to be cleaned. Humans often do not see that trees are also living things and have intrinsic value that they need to protect.

## 2. The Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth

One must consider the Earth to be a type of super-organism. The nonliving components of the planet are just as much a part of the whole as the nonliving heartwood of a living tree, rather than just being a rock in space with life clinging to it. In this way, humans view trees as the powerful forces that bind and support others around them. In this sub-chapter, the writer found thirteen data that conclude the significant implication of the trees for the Earth and human as the integral part of their life which all of the data come from Chapter Roots and Trunk. In the first datum, Jorgen Hoel the first generation of Hoel's family plants six chestnuts on his farm and hopes that someday his future children may not be hungry.

### Datum 1

<sup>11</sup> The farm is hundreds of miles from the chestnut's native range, a thousand from the chestnut feasts of Prospect Hill. Each month, those green forests of the East grow harder for Hoel to remember. But this is America, where men and trees take the most surprising outings. Hoel plants, waters, and thinks: *One day, my children will*

*shake the trunks and eat for free.*

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Roots, p.7, L.19-23).

In terms of the significant implication of trees for the Earth, Jorgen Hoel highlights the importance of environmental management and sustainable practices. By planting trees and caring for them for future generations, a person like Jorgen Hoel contributes to the preservation and sustainability of the Earth's ecosystem. Jorgen has a vision of sustainability and a future where humans live side by side in harmony with nature. This reflects a deeper understanding of the interconnected relationship between humans and the environment, where the health of one party has a direct impact on the other.

Each tree species has its role in the ecosystem, contributing to processes such as carbon sequestration, water filtration, and providing habitat for wildlife. By allowing trees to remain standing and fulfill their natural functions, humans can support the health and resilience of the Earth's ecosystem. In the second datum, Bill Westerford the father of Patricia Westerford writes a letter to his daughter.

#### **Datum 2**

*Where the deer bound, where the trout rise, where your horse stops  
to slather a drink from icy water while the sun is warm on the back  
of your neck, where every breath you draw is exhilaration – that is*



<sup>1</sup> where the Aspens grow...

And of her father's beloved tree:

*Let other trees do the work of the world. Let the Beech stand, where  
still it holds its ground...*

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Roots, p.146, L.5-13)

The mention of a Beech tree standing firmly shows resilience and stability in the face of change. The letter implies recognition of the diverse roles trees play in the ecosystem. Each tree species makes unique contributions to ecosystem functions such as carbon sequestration, soil stabilization, and habitat provision. The beech trees mention appear to be valued for their hardness and resilience, indicating recognition of the diversity and importance of various tree species in maintaining ecological balance for the Earth. In the third datum, Patricia tells about the love for trees in her witness in the court.

### Datum 3

<sup>1</sup> These slow, deliberate creatures with their elaborate vocabularies,  
each distinctive, shaping each other, breeding <sup>1</sup> the ground, stabilizing  
the microclimate. Join enough living things together, through the air  
and underground, and you wind up with something that has  
intention. Forest. A threatened creature.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.330, L.10-16)

This section highlights the significant implications of trees on the Earth, particularly with a focus on their role in ecosystems and the wider environment. Trees support a variety of organisms, including slow and strong-willed creatures with different vocabularies. This refers to organisms such as fungi, insects, birds, and mammals that depend on trees for habitat, food, and shelter. Besides that, trees can improve soil fertility and structure through the decomposition of leaf litter, root exudates, and interactions with soil organisms. They stabilize the Earth's microclimates by providing shade, reducing temperature extremes, and influencing local humidity levels.

Trees have an important <sup>53</sup>role in maintaining the balance of the Earth's atmosphere and combating climate change. Additionally, trees release oxygen as a byproduct of photosynthesis, which <sup>41</sup>is essential for the survival of most living organisms, including humans as portrayed in the fourth datum. In this datum, Douglas talks to a stranger in a bar about his effort to plant fifty thousand trees.

#### Datum 4

Who are you planting for?

Whoever pays me.

Lotta new oxygen out there, because of you. Lotta greenhouse gases put to bed.

People have no idea. You know they make shampoo with wood?

<sup>1</sup> Shatterproof glass? Toothpaste?

I did not know that.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Roots, p.219, L.8-12)

The statement of the stranger “Lotta new oxygen out there, because of you. Lotta greenhouse gases put to bed.” Suggests that Douglas’ actions, which may be related to planting fifty thousand trees have had a positive impact on the environment by increasing oxygen levels and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This underscores the importance of trees for the health of the Earth’s ecosystem and the well-being <sup>6</sup> of all living things, especially humans.

Recognizing and respecting the importance of trees is critical to the health and sustainability of the Earth and all its inhabitants is portrayed in the fifth datum when Patricia thinks and remembers about the Buddha’s words.

#### **Datum 5**

<sup>1</sup> What use are we, to trees? She remembers the Buddha’s words: A tree is a wondrous thing that shelters, feeds, and protects all living things. It even offers shade to the axmen who destroy it. And with those words, she has her book’s end.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.261, L.1-5)

The quote provided by the Buddha beautifully describes the interconnectedness of all life and the selfless nature of trees, which continue

to provide us with food even in the face of destruction. Trees are described as extraordinary creatures that provide essential services such as shelter, food, and protection to all living things, highlighting their significant implication for the Earth in maintaining ecosystems. Furthermore, in Buddhism, there is a deep understanding of how all life is interconnected and the importance of showing compassion and avoiding harm to every living being. The Buddha's quote underscores how trees generously provide shelter and food to all creatures, even to those who might harm them. It serves as a reminder of nature's intrinsic value, encouraging humans to appreciate and respect nature.

In essence, the role of trees in protecting the Earth practically has a direct impact on human personal life, affecting the environment and human well-being. In addition to the significant implication of the trees for the Earth, the writer involves the significant implication of the trees for the main characters story line. Apart from having practical benefits, trees also have personal connection significant implication for the main characters in the novel. Trees often have symbolic value in various cultures and traditions. They can represent life, growth, and continuity. Many people have a personal connection to a particular tree, whether it is a favorite place to relax or a tree that has been part of their family history. The writer found some data that shows why the main characters have a relationship with trees and all the data was found in Chapter Roots and Trunk.

Humans in this case are the main characters in the novel, they have

different cultural and occupational backgrounds as stated in datum 6 where Nicholas Hoel is a descendant who comes from Norway where the Hoel family has had a connection to chestnut trees for centuries. The story of the Hoel family's relationship to chestnut trees begins with Jorgen Hoel, the first generation of the Hoel family who has six chestnut seeds and starts planting them.

**Datum 6**

1 That May, Hoel discovers six chestnuts stuffed in the pocket of the smock he wore on the day he proposed to his wife. He presses them into the earth of western Iowa, on the treeless prairie around the cabin. The farm is hundreds of miles from the chestnut's native range, a thousand from the chestnut feasts of Prospect Hill.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Roots, p.7, L.16-21)

Jorgen's action is the beginning of the Hoel family having a relationship with chestnut tree like raising his own child. Year after year he grows six chestnut trees until there is only one tree left. John Hoel, son of Jorgen Hoel, buries his father under a chestnut tree he planted. John purchases a camera called Kodak No.2 Brownie and starts a new ritual for the Hoel family, namely photographing the events and growth of the chestnut tree.

He builds a tripod in the equipment shop. Then he sets a broken



grinding stone on a rise near the house. And on the first day of spring, 1903, John Hoel positions the No.2 Brownie and takes a full-length portrait of the sentinel chestnut leafing out. One month later to the day, from the same spot and the same hour, he takes another. The twenty-first of every month finds him up on his rise.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Roots, p.12, L.29-35)

The ritual of photographing chestnut trees lasts for three-quarters of a century, photos of joy and sorrow have been passed by the Hoel family and the chestnut. Until finally Nicholas Hoel sees an album of thousands of photos of his family and the chestnut tree.

<sup>14</sup> Three-quarters of a century dances by in a five-second flip. Nicholas Hoel thumbs through the stack of a thousand photos, watching for those decades' secret meaning. At twenty-five, he's back for a moment on the farm where he has spent Christmas of his life.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Roots, p.19, L.23-27)

Therefore in datum 6, there are moments where members of the Hoel family feel emotionally connected to certain trees. For example, a chestnut tree around their house has special meaning and is part of the family's identity. This creates a deep emotional bond between human and nature. The Hoel family describes how trees can be part of a family's heritage and

traditions. In the story, the chestnut tree is an integral part of their lives, reflecting their inherited values and collective experiences as a family.

The chestnut tree serves as a symbol of a variety of larger themes, including growth, longevity, and resilience. The Hoel family, as part of this narrative, reflects how trees can be a symbol of strength, history, and emotional connection in a person's life. In datum 7, just like Nicholas Hoel, a descendant of migrants from Norway who has a personal connection to a chestnut tree, Mimi Ma who is a descendant of Muslim migrants from China, has a personal connection to trees, specifically the mulberry tree. However, there is a difference from the Hoel family which has a chestnut tree as a complete object, Mimi Ma only has a jade ring with a carved mulberry tree as its symbol. The jade rings are a legacy from Ma Shouying, Mimi Ma's grandfather to her father, each of which consists of three rings and each ring has its own symbol carved into it.

#### **Datum 7**

<sup>1</sup> Ma Shouying rakes through handfuls of sparkling things considering each for moment, then chucking them back into their trays. At last he sits on what he's after: three rings, like small birds' eggs. Three jade landscapes that he lifts to the light.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Roots, p.31, L.10-14)

After the death of Mimi Ma's father, nothing of value can be passed on

to his children except three jade rings and one family scroll. Each ring is carved with the relief of a tree and a different symbol.

1 On the plate are three jade rings. On each ring is a carved tree, and each tree branches in one of time's three disguises. The first is the Lote, the tree at the boundary of the past that none may pass back over. The second is that thin, straight pine of the present. The third is Fusang, the future, a magical mulberry far to the east, where elixir of life is hidden.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Roots, pp.51-52, L.32-5)

Mimi Ma and her two sisters each share three jade rings and a scroll. Amelia, Mimi Ma's first younger sister, gets a jade ring with a pine tree relief, Carmen, Mimi Ma's second sister, gets a jade ring with a Lote relief, while Mimi gets a jade ring with a mulberry tree relief. These rings will be a very valuable reminder of and identity of the Ma family.

1 On three, there's some light grazing of arms, and each woman finds her fate. When they open eyes, the platter is empty. Amelia has her eternal present, Carmen her doomed past. And Mimi is left holding the thin trunk of things to come.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Roots, p.52, L.12-16)

The jade rings inherited from Mimi Ma's grandfather symbolize a deep connection to her family's cultural heritage and history. Those rings are the symbol of cultural roots and identity that connects Mimi to her ancestors in China. It reflects how family traditions and history can shape a person's personal views and values. The mulberry tree relief on the jade ring connects Mimi Ma to her family's cultural heritage and history in China. The mulberry tree is a plant of cultural and economic value in many parts of China, where it is often associated such as silkworm farming. By including a mulberry tree, the ring becomes a symbol of Mimi Ma's cultural roots and family heritage. Thus, the mulberry tree relief on the jade ring serves not only as an artistic element but also as a deep symbol of Mimi Ma's cultural heritage, resilience, and emotional connection to nature and her family. In addition, by taking a mulberry jade ring, Mimi Ma used the nickname *Mulberry* when she joined in an activist group.

Different from datum 6 and datum 7, in datum 8, personal connection occurs when Adam Appich was still a child. Adam does not receive personal connections through inheritance, but receives gifts directly from his parents. He and his four brothers and sisters are given trees by their parents. And Adam got a maple tree.

#### **Datum 8**

Four springs later, with the leaves' first flush, the Appich kids fight over whose tree is the most beautiful. They fight again when the

seeds come out, and later the nuts, and finally the autumn rush of color. Health and power, size and beauty: they fight over everything. Each child's tree has its own excellence: the ash's diamond-shaped bark, the walnut's long compound leaves, the maple's shower of helicopters, the vase-like spread of the elm, the ironwood's fluted muscle.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Roots, p.59, L.22-29)

Adam Appich grows up in a family that teaches environmental values and a relationship with nature. This creates the basis for his emotional connection with the trees. The maple tree, in particular, becomes a symbol of his childhood experiences and memories, as well as his relationship with his family. In datum 9, a personal connection occurs between a married couple who are also the main characters in the novel, Ray and Dorothy Brinkman. After they married, Ray and Dorothy plant a tree every year to celebrate their wedding anniversary.

#### **Datum 9**

Every year, as close to this day as we can, let's go to the nursery and find something for the yard. I don't know anything about plants. I don't know their names or how to care for them. I don't even know how to tell one blurry green thing from another. But I can learn, as I've had to re-learn everything – myself, my likes and dislikes, the



<sup>1</sup> width and height and depth of where I live – again, alongside you.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Roots, p.86, L.1-9)

Ray and Dorothy Brinkman have trees around their home that play an important role in their daily lives. These trees give them a sense of closeness and connectedness to their surroundings. They often view these trees as an integral part of their family life, rather than simply as a decorative or practical element. In the story, the trees also contain deep memories and symbolism for them. For instance, the trees in their yard can be reminders of important moments in their lives or reflect romantic aspects of their family's identity.

Different from the data above, datum 10 is a personal connection caused and experienced by an incident directly by Douglas Pavlicek. In the story, Douglas Pavlicek is a pilot from the U.S. Air Force who served in the Vietnam War. When Douglas Pavlicek is flying over an area near the Thai border, he is shot down and managed to survive by using a parachute and landing on a banyan tree.

#### **Datum 10**

A giant *farang* hangs above their head, threatening to crash through the branches and fall the last short stretch to the ground. They call up to the foreigner. He doesn't respond. A debate begins on how to reach the man and cut him loose from the stranglehold of fig and

1 parachute. Technical Sergeant Pavlicek wakes to several Thais standing on benches and prodding him. He thinks he's lying on his back, bobbing in a pool of atmosphere, while inverted people lean down and snatch at him from under the mirror surface. The pain from his leg and face crushes him. He coughs up a trickle of red spittle. He thinks: *I'm dead*. No, a voice near his face corrects. *Tree saved your life*.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Roots, pp.100-101, L.29-4)

Based on the narrative above, Douglas Pavlicek's connection occurs when he feels touched by the experience he has in the forest while on duty. After returning from the war, he experiences an existential crisis and a sense of loss. In his search to find meaning in his life, Pavlicek feels a calling to connect more deeply with nature and trees. This experience sparks his determination to get involved in forest protection efforts. Pavlicek becomes heavily involved in the conservation movement and environmental activism. He dedicates his life to fighting logging and environmental destruction, and becomes an important figure in the fight to protect the remaining forests. His motivation and personal connection to trees stem from his traumatic experiences and his desire to find purpose and meaning in his life after the war.

Almost the same as datum 10, datum 11 tells a personal connection to the story of Neelay Mehta who suffered a broken leg after falling from a tree

while climbing a tree. Throughout his days, he can only move around using a wheelchair.

#### Datum 11

<sup>1</sup> He rolls from planter to planter, touching the beings, smelling them, listening to their rustles. They have come from hot islands and desiccated outback, from remote valleys in Central Asia breached only recently. Dove tree, jacaranda, desert spoon, camphor tree, flame tree, empress tree, kurrajong, red mulberry: unearthly life, waiting to waylay him in this courtyard while he was searching for them on distant planets. He touches their bark and feels, just beneath their skins, the teeming assemblies of cells, like planetary civilization, pulse and hum.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Roots, pp.132-133, L.28-2)

Neelay Mehta has an accident that changes his life. After suffering serious injuries in an accident, he undergoes a long period of recovery and during this period, he experiences profound changes in his outlook on life and nature. This experience gives him new insights into the relationship between human and nature, as well as into the meaning of sustainable existence and living. At datum 12, in line with the Appich family, Patricia Westerford grows up with a family that supports her to have a deeper understanding of nature. Her father understands and supports Patricia Westerford in her interest in trees until she grows up to become a researcher

who studies trees.

#### Datum 12

<sup>1</sup> Mile after plowed mile, they hold their roving tutorial. He faces her so she can read his moving lips. She laughs at his stories – thick, slow booms – and stabs enthusiastic answers to each of his questions. Which is more numerous: the stars in the Milky Way or the chloroplasts on a single leaf of corn? Which trees flower before they leaf, and which flower after? Why are the leaves at the top of trees often smaller than those at the bottom? If you carved your name four feet high in the bark of a beech tree, how high would it be after half a century?

She loves the answer to that last one: *Four Feet*.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Roots, p.138, L.16-25)

<sup>63</sup> Her family plays an important role in fostering a love of nature. This experience provides the emotional foundation and motivation to explore and understand more deeply about tree life and ecosystems. Overall, Patricia Westerford's connection to trees stems from a combination of childhood experiences, in-depth scientific research, and dedication to environmental conservation. Through these journeys, she develops a deep and meaningful relationship with trees and forest ecosystems. Similar to the Douglas incident, at datum 13, Olivia Vandergriff experiences an electrocution

incident that almost took her life. Olivia survives due to a “whisper” from the presence of a creature in her mind.

**Datum 13**

<sup>1</sup> The spot on the floor where Davy found her that night feels hot under her bare feet. She's alive, and she doesn't know why. She lies awake at night, staring upward, remembering being right next to the only discovery that matters. Life was whispering instructions to her, and she failed to write them down. The prayer thing becomes easier. *I'm still. I'm listening. What do you want from me?*

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.189, L.23-30)

<sup>5</sup> The empty seat next to her rustles. She turns. There, inches from her face, is the thing she's been praying for. A cone of charged air gusts into her thoughts. They've returned, beckoning. They want her to stand and leave the auditorium. She will do whatever they ask. Down the stone steps in her winter coat, she crosses the icy main quad. She skirts the classroom buildings, the library, a freshman dorm, walking without thinking, drawn along by the presences. For a moment, she imagines her destination is the Civil War cemetery south of campus. Then it's clear she's heading toward the parking lot where she keeps her car.

(Powers, 2018, Chapter Trunk, p.190, L.16-26)



After her death, Olivia has a mystical or spiritual experience. In her post-death state, she feels a deep connection to trees. She is depicted as gaining a new understanding <sup>67</sup> of the world and the relationship between human and trees. There are moments where she feels as if she is receiving “whispers” or messages from nature or other beings, which can be interpreted as a form of communication or understanding that goes beyond the boundaries of life and death.

### C. Interpretation of the Research Findings

The writer involves research in the novel by reading the novel and collecting as many as 32 data found. All research questions have been addressed based on an analysis of multiple sub-chapters. To begin, the novel *The Overstory* contains 19 data points from two chapters, namely Chapter Roots and Trunk. The second research question focuses on the practical and personal connection implications of trees for the Earth, obtaining 5 data points that include significant implications for the sustainability of the Earth and 8 data points that include the personal connection between humans and trees.

After the writer examines the data, it becomes clear that the author describes that all forms of life, including humans and trees are interconnected. Trees are described as integral components of ecosystems, interacting with other organisms in complex ways. This connectedness is reflected in the characters' way of life which is interrelated with the life of the trees and the environment.

The author also emphasizes the characters in *The Overstory* experience personal transformations through their interaction with trees. Olivia Vandergriff's spiritual experiences after the death and Neelay Mehta's creative enlightenment about the natural world are examples of how a deep connection with nature can lead to personal growth and a reassessment of one's life goals.

The author also touches on the limits of human understanding and perception. The novel shows that there are aspects of nature and ecological systems that exceed human understanding but are nonetheless important to the functioning of the Earth. This is reflected in the way the novel depicts trees as both ordinary and extraordinary entities such as the Mimas and chestnut tree of the Hoel family, whose true meaning may surpass our full understanding.

<sup>25</sup> The most important content of the novel, through the characters' activism and efforts to protect the forest, the author <sup>57</sup> conveys a message of hope and the importance of collective action. The novel encourages readers to engage in environmental advocacy and recognize the power of individual and collective efforts in making a difference.

## 51 CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

This chapter summarizes the research findings, discusses their implications, and provides suggestions for future research or practical applications.

#### A. Conclusion

1. Ecocriticism as literary criticism explores the relationship between literature and the natural environment. The aim is not just to “build” human-nature relationships to be better directly and practically, but rather to critically analyze and understand how these relationships are depicted, felt, and influenced through cultural texts. The complexity of the relationship between human and nature is depicted in Richard Powers’ *The Overstory*, according to Garrard’s (2012) analysis, which represents various viewpoints on the positions concepts. The writer finds the following 32 data from *The Overstory* based on the four chapters in the novel.

The portrayal of environmentalism, ecomarxism, and Heideggerian ecophilosophy are the most prevalent positions in *The Overstory* novel. Environmentalism is depicted in a profound and multifaceted way. The author uses a variety of characters and storylines to explore environmental issues and highlight the importance of nature conservation. Some of the characters in *The Overstory* are involved in direct environmental activism. Olivia Vandegriff, Nicholas Hoel, Mimi Ma, Douglas Pavlicek, and Adam Appich for example, are activists fighting against deforestation and other threats to forests. Through their actions, the author shows the many ways

individuals can get involved in environmental conservation and make a difference.

Themes of ecomarxism are also depicted in the context of the struggle against environmental exploitation and the conflict between economic interests and ecological sustainability. This novel depicts how economic interests often conflict with environmental conservation efforts. For example, Humboldt Timber's large-scale deforestation for commercial gain and infrastructure development illustrates how capitalism can exploit and destroy the environment. This conflict represents a critique of an economic system that places short-term profits above ecological sustainability. Several characters in *The Overstory* represent groups who are marginalized or directly impacted by environmental damage, including local communities fighting against large corporations. The author shows how social and environmental injustices are often intertwined.

Heideggerian ecophilosophy which is a major theme in the novel that is rooted in Martin Heidegger's thoughts about existence and human connection to the world, is depicted through the themes of connectedness, existential awareness, and the way humans relate to nature. Heideggerian ecophilosophy emphasizes the importance of understanding the interconnectedness between human and nature. In the novel, the author describes how trees and forests are an integral part of human existence, not just as objects external to human but as entities that shape and influence human existence. For instance, Patricia Westerford's words that humans and



trees come from the same ancestor and are interconnected.

Heideggerian ecophilosophy often criticizes instrumental views of nature that only see it as a resource. The author challenges this view by depicting trees as entities that have intrinsic value and not simply as resources that can be exploited. The conflict in the story between Life Defense Force and the logging companies exploiting the forest reflects a critique of the instrumental view. Characters who fight against tree cutting demonstrate a rejection of the use of trees as mere commodities and emphasize the importance of valuing trees as an integral part of the natural world.

2. In the novel, the portrayal of the significant implications of trees for the Earth is depicted in a profound and multi-dimensional way. The author emphasizes how important trees are for the survival of the Earth and shows how trees influence various aspects of the ecosystem and human life. The author emphasizes that trees have intrinsic value that goes beyond their practical benefits to humans. Trees are considered entities with a right to exist and are valued in their own right, not just for human benefit. Trees also have a significant impact on human emotional connection and well-being. This novel describes how a relationship with trees can provide a sense of peace, inspiration, and meaning. A character like Olivia Vandergriff finds meaning in life and inner peace through her connection to trees and nature. She feels a deep spiritual connection to nature after her death.

In *The Overstory*, the author presents a complex and insightful view of humans' relationship to trees and the environment. Environmentalism is



portrayed through activism and struggles against environmental damage that largely stems from the exploitation of large corporations. Ecomarxism is seen in criticism of capitalist exploitation and social injustice. Heideggerian ecophilosophy is represented by a deep understanding of the interconnectedness and existence meaning, and the significant implication of trees for the Earth is emphasized through the role of trees that are practically vital to ecosystems, and emotionally to humans. The author invites readers to reflect on the importance of protecting and respecting the environment as an integral part of human existence and the sustainability of the Earth.

## B. Suggestion

After the writer outlines the conclusions above, the writer would like to provide several suggestions for future research which are very helpful for readers and writers.

### 1. Writer

- a. Since there are many concepts of ecocriticism to explore, the writer recommends that future writers inspire themselves on the relationship between human and nature. Scholars may focus on a variety of other subjects, such as the factor of characters' personal relationship to the trees.
- b. Other writers can utilize this research as a valuable resource for gathering data for future research.

## 2. Reader

- a. For readers, particularly those learning about ecocriticism or approaching it without specialized knowledge, exploring papers that discuss different perspectives on the <sup>20</sup>relationship between human and nature can be quite interesting. This involves studying topics such as social movements, interconnectedness, <sup>6</sup>and the intrinsic value of nature. To apply this understanding effectively and accurately describe human-nature relationships in practical contexts, a solid understanding of these concepts is essential.
- b. To deepen readers' understanding of ecocritical perspectives and strengthen readers' connection to nature, start by exploring foundational texts and articles in ecocriticism. Note how these writings examine the connection <sup>4</sup>between human and nature, the depiction of nature in literature and culture, and the significant implications of trees for the Earth. Actively engage with literary works that focus on environmental themes, reflecting on how they shape perceptions of nature and influence environmental awareness. By critically analyzing these perspectives and integrating them into personal practice and decision making, readers can cultivate a deeper appreciation of nature's intrinsic value and contribute to sustainable living practices.

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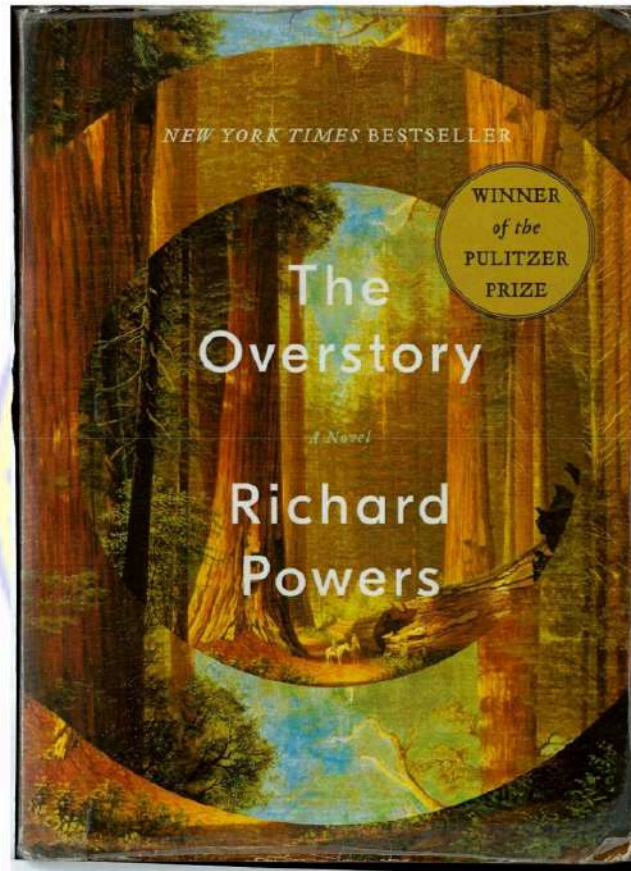
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## APPENDICES

*Appendix 1. The Overstory Novel Cover*





## Appendix 2. The Overstory Data Findings

## 1st Datum of Cornucopia (1)

Think of the code that made this gigantic thing, my  
Neeloy. How many cells inside? How many programs is it  
running? What do they all do? Where are they trying to  
reach?

Lights go on all over the inside of Neelay's cranium. And  
there, in the dark woods, waving his tiny beam and feeling a  
ham come from the towering black column, he knows the  
answer. The branch wants only to go on branching. The point  
of the game is to keep playing. He can't possibly sell the  
company. There's a bit of ancestral code, already present in  
the earliest programs he and his father wrote, that has yet to  
have its way with him. He sees the next project, and it's the  
simplest thing. Like evolution, it reuses all the old, successful  
parts of everything that has come before. Like evolution, it  
just means unfolding.

Now he can't afford to wait until tomorrow to be found. He  
has another brainstorm, much smaller, but more immediate.  
He lifts the cassock off his back and drops it on the ground in  
front of his stuck tire. A push of the joystick and he is free, up  
the path and into the van, where he rides, bare-chested, via a  
thousand steps and subroutines, back down to Redwood City  
and his workstation.

The next day, he calls Digit-Arts and breaks off the deal.  
Their property lawyers threaten and bellow. But the only  
thing they really wanted from the merger was him. He is  
Sempervirens' only capital worth acquiring. Without his  
goodwill, the deal means nothing.

With the merger broken off, he assembles his staff into the  
conference room and tells them how the next project will go.  
The player will start in an uninhabited corner of a freshly  
assembled new Earth. He'll be able to dig mines, cut down  
trees, plow fields, construct houses, build churches and  
markets and schools—anything his heart desires and his legs  
can reach. He'll travel down all the spreading branches of an  
enormous technology tree, researching everything from stone

## 1st Datum of Cornucopia (2)

1 working to space stations, free to follow any ethos, to make  
 2 whatever culture floats his state-of-the-art boats. —

But there's a kicker: other people, real people, on the other  
 end of modems, will each be furthering their own culture in  
 other parts of this virgin world. And every one of those other  
 actual people will want the land beneath any other player's  
 empire.

Within nine months, an alpha copy floating around the  
 office brings Sempervirens to a standstill. Once the employees  
 get playing, they want nothing else. They stop sleeping. They  
forget to eat. Relationships are a minor irritation. One more  
turn. Just one more turn.

The game is called Mastery.

Represent  
 the human need  
 to endlessly grow and  
 consume



Olivia Vandegriff  
 THEY SPEND TWO WEEKS closing the Hoel house, Nick and  
 his drive-by visitor. The Des Moines Hoels come by to buy  
 Nick's car and take possession of the family heirlooms.  
 They're followed by the auctioneers, who put a green sticker  
 on any furnishings and appliances that might fetch anything.  
 Large men with legible biceps load the movable goods and  
 rusting farm equipment into a twenty-four-foot truck and  
 haul it two counties away, where everything will sell at  
 consignment. Nick sets no minimum bids. The accumulated  
 possessions of generations disperse like wind-borne pollen.  
 Then it's the Hoel house no longer.

"My ancestors came to this state empty-handed. I should  
 leave the same way, don't you think?"

Olivia touches his shoulder. They've spent fourteen days  
 and thirteen nights closing up a house together, as if, after

## 2nd Datum of Cornucopia

the divisions of capitalist system

Stumped, the loggers wander into other tactics. "For Christ's sake, it's a crop. It grows back! Have you seen the forests south of here?" (commodities that unlimited resources)

"It's a onetime jackpot," Watchman shouts down. "A thousand years before the systems are back in place." → long term

"What's the matter with you two? Why do you hate people?" → social justice for common people!

"What are you talking about? We're doing this for people!"

"These trees are going to die and fall over. They should be harvested while they're ripe, not wasted."

"Great. Let's grind up your grandfather for dinner, while he still has some meat on him." → power

"You're insane. Why are we even talking to you?" → metaphorical critique

"We have to learn to love this place. We need to become natives."

One of the loggers revs up his chain saw and whacks the branches of one of Mimas's largest basal sprouts. He steps back and looks up, brandishing a limb like a sailboat mast. "We feed people. What do you do?"

They shout at Maidenhair, tag team. "We know these forests. We respect these trees. These trees have killed our friends."

Maidenhair holds still. The idea of a tree killing a person is too much for her to think about.

The men below press their advantage. "You can't stop growth! People need wood." → Capitalist ideology of endless growth

Watchman has seen the numbers. Hundreds of board feet of timber, half a ton of paper and cardboard per person per year. "We need to get smarter about what we need." → resource conservation

"I need to feed my kids. How about you?" → economic pressure faced by laborers and their family

Watchman sets to shout some things he knows he'll regret. Maidenhair's hand on his arm stops him. She's gazing downward, trying to hear these men, attacked for doing what they've been asked to do. For doing something dangerous and vital that they've learned to do so well. within capitalist system

### 3rd Datum of Cornucopia

never fails to quicken his pulse. A click of the mouse, a few keystrokes, and he's face-to-face again with the next virgin continent.

In truth, the game is pathetic. It's two-dimensional—no smell, no touch, no taste, no feel. It's tiny and grainy, with a world model as simplistic as Genesis. Yet it sinks its teeth into his brainstem whenever he fires it up. The maps, climates, and scattered resources are new, each time in. His opponents may be Conquistadores, Builders, or Technocrats, Nature Worshipers, Misers, Humanitarians, or Radical Utopians. Nothing quite like the place has ever existed. Yet going there feels like coming home. His mind has been waiting for such a playground since long before he fell from his betraying tree.

Today he chooses to be a Sage. Rumor is spreading across dial-up bulletin boards from around the globe, about an overpowered victory strategy players are calling *Enlightenment*. Top-ranked leaders are pushing for the whole approach to be banned. But even as a Sage, he must acquire sufficient coal, gold, ore, stone, wood, food, honor, and glory to pay for his population growth. He must explore unknown terrain, form trade routes, and raid neighboring settlements, working his way along branching trees for Culture, Craft, Economics, and Technology. The game presents almost as many meaningful choices as Real Life, or, as his staff has taken to calling it, a little derisively: *RL*. This morning the graphics look a little jagged compared to *Mastery 2*, already in the works. But graphics have never meant much to Neelay. The visible is only a placeholder for real desire. All he and half a million other *Mastery* players need is easy and endless shape-shifting, in a kingdom forever growing.

Something twists in him. He takes a few minutes to recognize the feeling as hunger. He should eat, but eating is such a process. He rolls to the mini-fridge and grabs an energy drink and something that turns out to be a chicken puff, which he downs without even microwaving. Tonight he'll make a real meal, or tomorrow. He's assembling a stack of



## 1st Datum of Deep Ecology (1)

1 The judge asks, "Young, straight, faster-growing trees  
2 aren't better than older, rotting trees?"

3 "Better for us. Not for the forest. In fact, young, managed,  
4 homogenous stands can't really be called forests." The words  
5 are a dam-break as she speaks them. They leave her happy to  
6 be alive, alive to study life. She feels grateful for no reason at  
7 all, except in remembering all that she has been able to  
8 discover about *other things*. She can't tell the judge, but she  
9 loves them, those intricate, reciprocal nations of tied-together  
10 life that she has listened to all life long. She loves her own  
11 species, too—sneaky and self-serving, trapped in blinkered  
12 bodies, blind to intelligence all around it—yet chosen by  
13 creation to *know*.

14 The judge asks her to elaborate. Dennis was right. It is like  
15 talking to students. She describes how a rotting log is home to  
16 orders of magnitude more living tissue than the living tree. "I  
17 sometimes wonder whether a tree's real task on Earth isn't to  
18 bulk itself up in preparation to lying dead on the forest floor  
19 for a long time."

20 The judge asks what living things might need a dead tree.  
21 "Name your family. Your order. Birds, mammals, other  
22 plants. Tens of thousands of invertebrates. Three-quarters of  
23 the region's amphibians need them. Almost all the reptiles  
24 Animals that keep down the pests that kill other trees. A dead  
25 tree is an infinite hotel."

26 She tells him about the ambrosia beetle. The alcohol of  
27 rotting wood summons it. It moves into the log and excavates  
28 Through its tunnel systems, it plants bits of fungus that it  
29 brought in with it, on a special formation on its head. The  
30 fungus eats the wood; the beetle eats the fungus.

31 "Beetles are farming the log?"

32 "They farm. Without subsidies. Unless you count the log."

33 "And those species that depend on rotting logs and snags  
34 are any of them endangered?"

35 She tells him: everything depends on everything else.  
36 There's a kind of vole that needs old forest. It eats mushrooms



## 1st Datum of Deep Ecology (2)

that grow on rotting logs and excretes spores somewhere else. }  
 No rotting logs, no mushrooms; no mushrooms, no vole; no }  
 vole, no spreading fungus; no spreading fungus, no new trees. }

"Do you believe we can save these species by keeping fragments of older forest intact?"

She thinks before answering. "No. Not fragments. Large forests live and breathe. They develop complex behaviors. Small fragments aren't as resilient or as rich. The pieces must be large, for large creatures to live in them."

The opposing counsel asks whether preserving slightly larger forest tracts is worth the millions of dollars it costs people. The judge asks for numbers. The opposition sums up the opportunity loss—the crippling expense of not cutting down trees.

The judge asks Dr. Westerford to respond. She frowns. "Rot adds value to a forest. The forests here are the richest collections of biomass anywhere. Streams in old growth have five to ten times more fish. People could make more money harvesting mushrooms and fish and other edibles, year after year, than they do by clear-cutting every half dozen decades."

"Really? Or is that a metaphor?"

"We have the numbers."

"Then why doesn't the market respond?"

Because ecosystems tend toward diversity, and markets do the opposite. But she's smart enough not to say this. Never attack the local gods. "I'm not an economist. Or a psychologist."

The opposing counsel declares that clear-cutting saves forests. "If people don't harvest, millions of acres will blow down or burn in devastating crown fires."

It's out of her field, but Patricia can't let it go. "Clear-cuts increase windthrow. And crown fires only happen when fires are suppressed for too long." She lays it out: Fire regenerates. There are cones—serotinous—that can't open without flame. Lodgepole pines hold on to theirs for decades, waiting for a fire to spring them. "Fire suppression used to seem like

## 1st Datum of Ecofeminism

Eight forty-two, and he's desperate. He'll do anything now, to deceive her, to make her think he has no idea. Her fit of craziness will run its course. The fever that has turned her into someone he can't recognize will burn away and leave her well again. Shame will bring her back to herself, and she'll remember everything. The years. The time they went to Italy. The time they jumped from the plane. The time she ran the car into a tree while reading his anniversary letter and almost killed herself. The amateur theatrics. The things they planted together, in the backyard they made.

*It is no answer to say that streams and forests cannot have standing because streams and forests cannot speak. Corporations cannot speak, either; nor can states, estates, infants, incompetents, municipalities, or universities. Lawyers speak for them.*

The key thing is for her never to learn that he knows. He must be cheerful, smart, funny. The minute she suspects, it'll destroy them both. She might live with anything except being forgiven.

But concealment is killing him. He never could play anyone but an earnest Macduff. Eight forty-eight. He tries to concentrate. The evening stretches out ahead like two consecutive life sentences. He has only this essay to keep him company and torture him.

*What is it within us that gives us this need not just to satisfy basic biological wants, but to extend our wills over things, to objectify them, to make them ours, to manipulate them, to keep them at a psychic distance?*

The essay flickers under his fingers. He can't follow it, can't decide whether it's brilliant or rubbish. His whole self is dissolving. All his rights and privileges, everything he owns. A great gift that has been his since birth is being taken away. It's a grand, luxurious act of self-deceit, an outright lie, that claim of Kant's: *As far as nonhumans are concerned, we have no direct duties. All exists merely as means to an end. That end is man.*

## 2nd Datum of Ecofeminism

WATCHMAN AND MAIDENHAIR, deep in the redwoods. He lugs a pack of provisions. She holds the camp's video camera in one hand; with her other, she clutches his arm like a channel swimmer hanging from a dingy. Now and then she grabs his wrist, directing his attention to something colorful or darting just outside their comprehension.

Last night they slept on the cold ground, open to the air. Seas of mud moated their fern-fringed island. He lay in one pee-stained 1950s sleeping bag and she in another, underneath creatures of mildness, bulk, and repose. "Aren't you freezing?" he asked.

She answered no. And he believed her.

"Sore?"

"Not really."

"Scared?"

Her eyes said, *Why?* Her mouth said, "Should we be?"

"They're so big. Humboldt Timber employs hundreds of people. Thousands of machines. It's owned by a multibillion-dollar multinational. All the laws are on their side, backed by the will of the American people. We're a bunch of unemployed vandals, camping out in the woods."

She smiled, as at a little kid who just asked whether the Chinese could reach them through a tunnel in the earth. Her hand snaked out of her bag and into his. "Believe me. I have it on the highest authority. Great things are under way."

Her hand stayed between them like a traverse line as she fell asleep.

THEY FOLLOW A SWITCHBACK down into a distant drainage until the path turns into a rivulet of mud. Two miles in, the trail vanishes and the two of them must bushwhack. Light sifts through the canopy. He watches her cross a carpet of starflower massed with sorrel. Mere months ago, by her own account, she was a nasty, jaded, narcissistic bitch with a substance abuse problem, flunking out of college. Now she's—



## 3rd Datum of Ecofeminism (1)

branches crash down from above. The quiet can be even more unnerving. Climbing is all the exercise they get. But in the changing light and floating days, things that would have seemed impossible on the ground become routine.

Mornings are a game of cat and mouse. Or, say, owl and vole, with Watchman and Maidenhair peering down from their damp, freezing aerie onto the tiny mammals scurrying on the floor far below. The crews show up before the fog diffuses. One day, there are only three. The next, twenty, loud in the cockpits of their machines. Sometimes the loggers wheedle: "Come down for ten minutes."

"Can't right now. We're busy tree-sitting!"

"We have to scream. Can't even see you. This is breaking our necks."

"Come on up. Lots of room up here!"

It's an impasse. Different men show up on different days, trying to break it. Crew boss. Foreman. They yell hoarse threats and reasonable promises. Even the vice president for forest products pays a visit. He stands underneath Mimas in a white hard hat, like he's orating on the floor of the Senate.

"We can send you to prison for three years for criminal trespass."

"That's why we're not coming down." ✓

"The losses we're incurring. Huge fines." ✓

"This tree is worth it." ✓

The next day, the white-hatted VP is back. "If you two come down by five p.m. this evening, we'll drop all charges. If you don't, we can't guarantee what'll happen to you. Come down. We'll let you walk. Your records will be clean."

Maidenhair leans out over the edge of the Grand Ballroom. "We're not worried about our records. We're worried about yours."

→ points out the future

THE NEXT MORNING, she's debating one of the loggers again when he stops in midsentence.

## 3rd Datum of Ecofeminism (2)

1 "Hey! Take your cap off for a second." She does. His shock  
 2 is obvious from two-thirds of a football field away. "Shit!  
 3 You're gorgeous."  
 4 "You should see me up close! When I'm not frozen and  
 5 have taken a bath in the last month or two."  
 6 "The hell you doing, sitting up in a tree? You could have  
 7 any guy you want."  
 8 "Who wants guys when you can have Mimas?"  
 9 "Mimas?" *as a symbol of natural world, woman's*  
 10 It's a small victory, just getting him to use the name. *interests, and connection to nature*  
 11 WATCHMAN RELEASES A SALVO of paper bombs onto the  
 12 loggers below. Unfolded, the sheets reveal pencil sketches of  
 13 life at two hundred feet. The loggers are impressed. "You  
 14 drew these?"  
 15 "Guilty."  
 16 "For real? You got huckleberries up there?"  
 17 "Thickets!"  
 18 "And a pool with little fish in it?"  
 19 "There's more."

20 DAYS PASS, wet and icy, each more miserable than the last.  
 21 The sitters that were to relieve Watchman and Maidenhair  
 22 never show. The standoff enters week two, and the ring of  
 23 workers at the foot of Mimas turns angry.  
 24 "You're out in the middle of nowhere. Four miles from the  
 25 nearest person. Things could happen. Nobody would know."  
 26 Maidenhair beams down on them, beatific. "You guys are  
 27 too decent. You can't even make a credible threat!"  
 28 "You're killing our livelihood." *the precarious nature of*  
 29 "Your bosses are doing that." *dependencies on*  
 30 "Bullshit!" *under capitalism industries*  
 31 "One-third of forest jobs lost to machines in the last fifteen  
 32 years. More trees cut, fewer people working." *Kenilworth*  
 33 *dialectical*  
 34 *activist struggle*



## 1st Datum of Ecomarxism (1)

yet, places remember what people forget. The parking lot she sleeps in was once an orchard, its trees planted by a gentle, crazed Swedenborgian who wandered through these parts in rags and a tin pot cap, preaching the New Heaven and extinguishing campfires to keep from killing bugs. A crackpot saint who practiced abstinence while supplying four states with enough fermentable apple mash to keep every pioneer American from nine to ninety half crocked for decades.

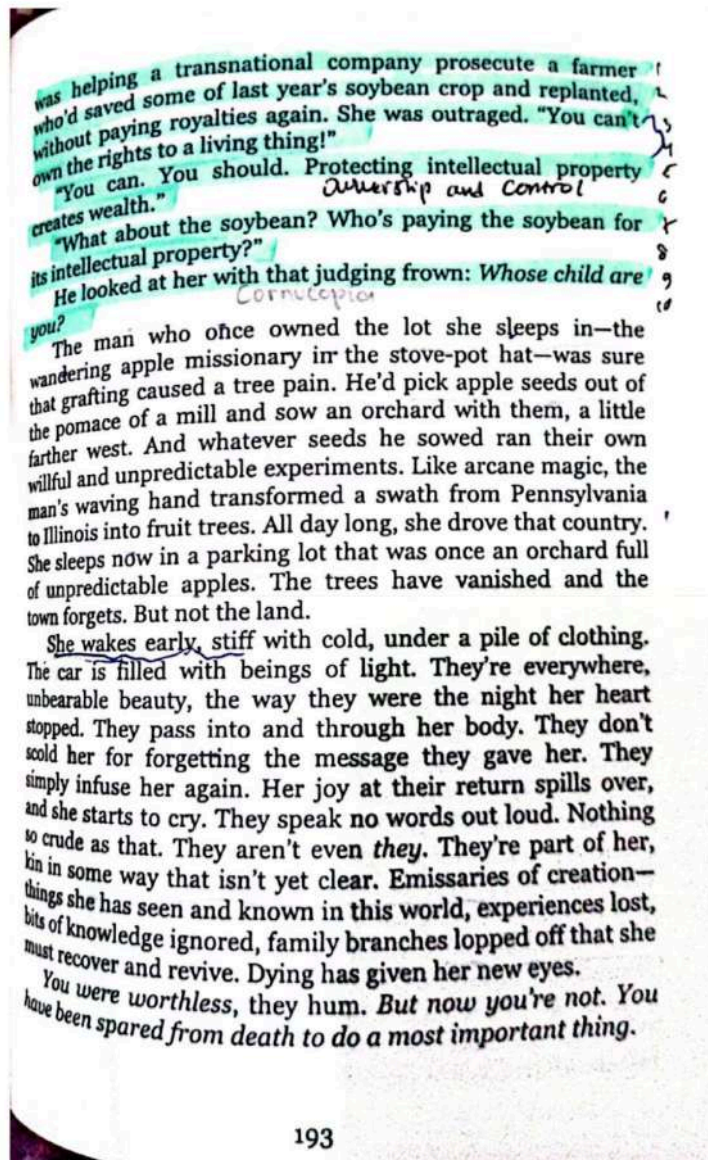
All day long, she has followed Johnny Appleseed's path into the interior. Olivia read about the man once, in a comic her father gave her. The comic made him a superhero, with the power to make things spring up from the dirt. It said nothing about the philanthropist with a shrewd sense of property, the tramp who'd die owning twelve hundred acres of the richest land in the country. She always thought he was just myth. She must still discover that myths are basic truths twisted into mnemonics, instructions posted from the past, memories waiting to become predictions.

Here's the thing about an apple: it sticks in the throat. It's a package deal: lust and understanding. Immortality and death. Sweet pulp with cyanide seeds. It's a bang on the head that births up whole sciences. A golden delicious discord, the kind of gift chunked into a wedding feast that leads to endless war. It's the fruit that keeps the gods alive. The first, worst crime, but a fortunate windfall. *Blessed be the time that apple taken was.*

And here's the thing about an apple's seeds: they're unpredictable. Offspring might be anything. Staid parents generate a wild child. Sweet can go sour, or bitter turn buttery. The only way to preserve a variety's taste is to graft a cutting onto new rootstock. It would surprise Olivia Vandergriff to learn: every apple with a name goes back to the same tree. Jonathan, McIntosh, Empire: lucky rolls in *Malus's* Monte Carlo game.

And a named apple is a patentable apple, as Olivia's father would tell her. She once fought with him over a case of his. He

## 1st Datum of Ecomarxism (2)



## 2nd Datum of Ecomarxism

"I've walked I don't know how many thousands of miles, sticking seedlings in the ground, trying to roll back progress just a tiny bit. Then I learn that all I'm doing is giving the bastards credits to cut down more and older trees. I'm sorry, but seeing stupidity up close in that city park put me over the edge. Simple as that."

"Have you ever been to jail before?"

"Tough question. Yes and no."

The court deliberates. The defendant obstructed a job being done by a private tree-cutting company on city orders in the dead of night. He took no pokes at the crew. No destruction of property. The judge gives Douglas a seven-day suspended sentence, plus a two-hundred-dollar fine or three days of labor, planting Oregon ashes for the city arborist. Douglas chooses the planting. When he rushes from the courtroom back to the motel, his truck has already been towed. The henchmen want three hundred bucks to return it. He asks them to hold the truck until he rakes the money together. He's got some silver dollars buried here and there.

He busts his hump for the city, planting trees for a week—days longer than his obligatory service requires. "Why?" the arborist asks. "When you don't have to?"

"The ash is a noble tree." Resilient as all get-out. Stuff of tool handles and baseball bats. Douglas loves those compound, pinnate leaves, how they feather the light and make life feel softer than it is. Loves the tapered, sailboat seeds. He likes the idea of planting a few ashes, before doing that only thing that anyone really *has* to do.

The harder the man works, the guiltier the arborist feels. "Not the city's finest hour, what happened in that park." It's a small concession, but for a man on the city payroll, it's almost incendiary.

"Shit straight. Cover of darkness. Days before a town hall hearing people were planning."

"Life's a blood sport," the arborist says. "Like nature."



## 3rd Datum of Ecomarxism

"Those willing to head on, thank you. We'll cross now. Stay orderly. Stay calm. Do not allow yourself to be provoked. This is a peaceful confrontation."

A portion of the crowd drifts toward the gate. Mimi cocks an eyebrow at Douglas. "You're sure?"

"Shit yea-uh. That's why we're here, isn't it?"  
She wonders if he means *here*, on the edge of a national forest being sold to the top bidder, or *here*, on Earth, the only entity capable of prospection. She shrugs away all philosophy. "Let's go."

Ten more yards and they're criminals. The roar grows sickening. In half a mile, they're up against human ingenuity at its best. She can name the metal beasts better than she can name the different trees. Down through the clearing, there's a feller buncher, snatching batches of small trunks, delimbing them, and bucking the logs to fixed lengths, doing in a day what a team of human cutters would need a week to get through. There's a self-loading forwarder trailer, stacking the cut logs into itself. Nearer by, a front loader extends the roadbed, and a scraper rough-grades it prior to the arrival of the roller. She's learned of machines that drop their maws onto fifty-foot trees and grind them to the ground faster than a food processor can shred a carrot. Machines that stack logs like toothpicks and haul them to mills where twenty-foot trunks twirl on spits so fast that the touch of an angled blade shaves off the flesh in a continuous layer of veneer.

Hard hats block the road ahead of them. Their foreman says, "You're trespassing."

The megaphone woman, on whom Mimi has developed a schoolgirl crush, says, "These are public lands."

The other megaphone wielder gives the command, and markers fan out across the dirt roadbed. They sit down shoulder to shoulder, spanning the road. Mimi and Doug link arms, joining the solidifying line. Mimi locks in, clasping her hands in front of her. The inward-turned mulberry of her jade ring presses into her other wrist. By the time the loggers see

## 4th Datum of Ecomarxism

1 "Hey! Take your cap off for a second." She does. His shock  
 2 is obvious from two-thirds of a football field away. "Shit!  
 3 You're gorgeous."  
 4 "You should see me up close! When I'm not frozen and  
 5 have taken a bath in the last month or two."  
 6 "The hell you doing, sitting up in a tree? You could have  
 7 any guy you want."  
 8 "Who wants guys when you can have Mimas?"  
 9 "Mimas?" *as a symbol of natural world, environmental*  
 10 It's a small victory, just getting him to use the name. *old-time*  
 11 WATCHMAN RELEASES A SALVO of paper bombs onto the  
 12 loggers below. Unfolded, the sheets reveal pencil sketches of  
 13 life at two hundred feet. The loggers are impressed. "You  
 14 drew these?"  
 15 "Guilty."  
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 22 never show. The standoff enters week two, and the ring of  
 23 workers at the foot of Mimas turns angry.  
 24 "You're out in the middle of nowhere. Four miles from the  
 25 nearest person. Things could happen! Nobody would know."  
 26 Maidenhair beams down on them, beatific. "You guys are  
 27 too decent. You can't even make a credible threat!"  
 28 "You're killing our livelihood." *the precarious nature of*  
 29 "Your bosses are doing that." *capitalism industries*  
 30 "Bullshit!" *resistance*  
 31 "One-third of forest jobs lost to machines in the last fifteen  
 32 years. More trees cut, fewer people working." *disaster*



## 1st Datum of Environmentalism

"Right now they're in that second-to-the-last stage cashing out every salable scrap of timber in the inventory. Which in this case means lots of seven- and eight-hundred-year-old trees. Trees wider than your dreams are going into Mill B and coming out as planks. Humboldt is cutting at four times the industry rate. And they're speeding up, before legislation can catch up with them."

Nick turns to Olivia. The girl is years younger than he is, but he has begun to look to her for explanations. Her face stiffens and her eyes close in pain. Tears roll down her cheekbones.

"Obviously, we can't wait for legislation. The new, efficient Humboldt Timber will have killed all the giants by the time the law catches up with them. So this is the question I ask each of you. What can you bring to the effort? We'll take anything you can give. Time. Effort. Cash. Cash is surprisingly helpful!"

Applause and cheers ring out after her talk, and people retreat to a meal of lentil soup made over several campfires. Olivia helps cook, she who used to steal her housemates' food from the fridge rather than boil a little water for ramen. Nick senses these forest men, some who haven't bathed in weeks, striving for blasé as she serves them, as if a dryad hasn't just dropped down into this meadow next to them.

A band under the supervision of a man named Blackbeard returns from a raid gumming up a parked Caterpillar D8 engine with corn syrup. They glow with accomplishment in the campfire's flicker. They mean to go out again, after dark, to test the company's vigil on larger gear farther up the hillside.

*Sabotage*  
"I don't like property crimes," Mother N says. "I really don't."

Moses laughs her off. "No valuable property has been destroyed except these forests. We're in a war of attrition. We tie the lumber crews up for a few hours, then they repair the machines. But in the meantime, they lose time and dollars."

## 2nd Datum of Environmentalism

1 Douglas leans his good ear toward her. "How's that?" The  
 2 crowd is loud in the circus of their cause, and he's lost a lot of  
 3 hearing from his days in transport planes.  
 4 It still surprises her. A man who bothers to listen. "My  
 5 father used to say that. *What they do?*"  
 6 "What they do?"  
 7 "Yeah. Meaning, *What the hell do those people hope to*  
 8 *accomplish?*"  
 9 "Was he strange?"  
 10 "Chinese. He believed English should be more efficient  
 11 than it is."  
 12 Douglas smacks his forehead. "You're Chinese."  
 13 "Half Chinese. What did you think?"  
 14 "I don't know. Something swarthier."  
 15 The real question, Mimi knows, is *What she do?* She's  
 16 amazed he managed to get her up here for this protest. Her  
 17 only previous political action was a grade school vendetta  
 18 against Chairman Mao. Her grudge is with the city, its  
 19 scheming nighttime raid against her pines. As for these trees,  
 20 so far out of town: She's an *engineer*, for crying out loud.  
 21 These trees are calling out to be used.  
 22 But a pair of lectures and a visit to an organizational  
 23 meeting accompanied by this clumsy innocent have broken  
 24 her heart. These mountains, these forest cascades—now that  
 25 she has seen them, they're hers. So here she is, at a public  
 26 demonstration that would have made her emigrant father  
 27 come pluck her home in fear of deportation, torture, or worse.  
 28 "Look at everyone!"  
 29 It's grannies with guitars and toddlers with space-age  
 30 water pistols. College students out to prove themselves  
 31 worthy of one another. Preppers pushing baby carriages like  
 32 all-terrain Hobbit Humvees. Grade school kids carrying  
 33 earnest placards: RESPECT YOUR ELDERS. WE NEED OUR  
 34 LUNGS. A rainbow alliance of assorted footwear makes its  
 35 way up the trunk to the haul road—loafers and cross-trainers,  
 36 backward sloping sandals, cracked-toe Chuck Taylors, and,

## 3rd Datum of Environmrntalism



1 INCREDIBLY, the police make the video. A year ago, it would  
 2 have been the kind of shaky, blurred proof the police  
 3 destroyed. But the tactics of the lawless are changing. Against  
 4 them, the police need new experiments. Methods that must be  
 5 documented, evaluated, and refined.

6 The camera pans across the crowd. People spill down the  
 7 street past the burnished company sign. They surround the  
 8 headquarters, nestled lodge-like against a rim of spruce and  
 9 fir. Not even an apprehensive cameraman can make it seem  
 10 like anything but democracy in America, the right of people  
 11 peaceably to assemble. The crowd stands well back from the  
 12 property line, singing their songs and shaking their bedsheets  
 13 banners: STOP ILLEGAL HARVESTING. NO MORE DEATH  
ON PUBLIC LANDS. But police wander in and out of the  
 frame. Officers on foot and horseback. Men seated in the back  
 of vehicles that look like armored personnel carriers.

MIMI SHAKES HER HEAD in wonder. "I didn't know this  
 town had so many cops." Douggie limps beside her,  
 bowlegged. "You know we don't have to do this. At least half a  
 dozen people would be happy to stand in."

He spins to face her and almost stumbles. "What are you  
*talking about?*" He's like a golden retriever whacked with the  
 rolled-up newspaper he just so proudly fetched. "Wait." He  
 touches her shoulder, confused. "Are you scared, Meem?  
 Because you don't have to do anything you—"

She can't bear it, his goodness. "Fine. I'm just saying don't  
 be a hero this time."

## 4th Datum of Environmentalism

1 THEY PACK the dirty dishes into his truck for the ride back to  
 2 town. She grabs him at the car door.  
 3 "I'm a rich woman, right?"  
 4 "Not rich enough to run for public office, if that's what  
 5 you're thinking."  
 6 She laughs too hard for the joke, and sobers too quickly.  
 7 "In situ preservation is failing. And I see now it always will."  
 8 He looks at her and waits. She thinks: *If the rest of the species*  
 9 *were as comfortable with looking and waiting as this man,*  
 10 *we might yet be saved.* "I want to start a seed bank. There are  
 half as many trees in the world as there were before we came  
 down out of them."  
 "Because of us?"  
 "One percent of the world forest, every decade. An area  
 larger than Connecticut, every year."  
 He nods, as if no one paying attention would be surprised.  
 "A third to a half of existing species may go extinct by the  
 time I'm gone."  
 Her words puzzle him. She's going somewhere?  
 "Tens of thousands of trees we know nothing about.  
 Species we've barely classified. Like burning down the library,  
 art museum, pharmacy, and hall of records, all at once."  
 "You want to start an ark."  
 She smiles at the word, but shrugs. It's as good as any. "I  
 want to start an ark."  
 "Where you can keep . . ." The strangeness of the idea gets  
 him. A vault to store a few hundred million years of tinkering.  
 Hand on the car door, he fixes on something high up in a  
 cedar. "What . . . would you do with them? When would they  
 ever . . . ?"  
 "Den, I don't know. But a seed can lie dormant for  
 thousands of years."



## 1st Datum of Heideggerian

sprays a dozen stories above her, are still crammed full of cones.

She addresses the cedar, using words of the forest's first humans. "Long Life Maker. I'm here. Down here." She feels foolish, at first. But each word is a little easier than the next.

"Thank you for the baskets and the boxes. Thank you for the capes and hats and skirts. Thank you for the cradles. The beds. The diapers. Canoes. Paddles, harpoons, and nets. Poles, logs, posts. The rot-proof shakes and shingles. The kindling that will always light."

Each new item is release and relief. Finding no good reason to quit now, she lets the gratitude spill out. "Thank you for the tools. The chests. The decking. The clothes closets. The paneling. I forget. . . . Thank you," she says, following the ancient formula. "For all these gifts that you have given." And still not knowing how to stop, she adds, "We're sorry. We didn't know how hard it is for you to grow back."

SHE FINDS WORK with the Bureau of Land Management. Wilderness ranger. The job description seems as miraculous as the outsized trees: Help preserve and protect for present and future generations places where man is a visitor who does not remain. The wild woman must don a uniform. But they pay her to be by herself, carry the welcome weight of a pack, read a topographic map, dig a water bar, look for smoke and fire, teach folks to leave no trace, follow the rhythms of the land, and live wholly within the arc of the year. To clean up after humankind, yes. To gather the endless twisties, baggies, six-pack rings, foil, cans, and bottle caps strewn through meadows of wildflower, on remote scenic outlooks, skewered in the boughs of noble firs, under cold running streams, behind waterfalls. She would gladly pay the government, to do that much.

Her supervisor apologizes for the state of the cabin they give her, on the edge of an ancient cedar grove. There's no



## 2nd Datum of Heideggerian

so down in twenty minutes and are bucked within another hour. When a large one falls, even from a distance, it's like an artillery shell hitting a cathedral. The ground liquefies. Their platform two hundred feet up in Mimas shivers. The largest trees the world has ever made, saved for this final roundup.

IN THE HAMMOCK LIBRARY, she finds a book. *The Secret Forest*. The front cover shows a prehistoric yew, aboveground and below. The back proclaims, *The Year's Surprise Bestseller - Translated into 23 Languages*. "Would you like me to read to you a little?"

She reads like she's in the front of the assembled class, reciting that long freight train of stanzas from *Leaves of Grass* that the entire tenth grade was assigned to memorize. *You and the tree in your backyard come from a common ancestor.*

She stops and looks out the transparent wall of their tree house.

A billion and a half years ago, the two of you parted ways.

She pauses again, as if to do the math.

But even now, after an immense journey in separate directions, that tree and you still share a quarter of your genes.

In this manner, tacking into the breeze of the author's thought, they make their way through four full pages before the light starts to fail. They eat again by candlelight—instant soup mix floating on two cups of water warmed on the tiny camp stove. By the time they're done, darkness rules. The loggers' engines have stopped, replaced by the thousand spectral challenges of night that they cannot decode.

"We should save the candle," she says.

"We should."

It's hours before bedtime. They lie on the long, rocking platform of their pledge, chattering to each other in the dark.

## 3rd Datum of Heideggerian

1 The judge asks, "Young, straight, faster-growing trees  
2 aren't better than older, rotting trees?"

3 "Better for us. Not for the forest. In fact, young, managed,  
4 homogenous stands can't really be called forests." The words  
5 are a dam-break as she speaks them. They leave her happy to  
6 be alive, alive to study life. She feels grateful for no reason at  
7 all, except in remembering all that she has been able to  
8 discover about other things. She can't tell the judge, but she  
9 loves them, those intricate, reciprocal nations of tied-together  
10 life that she has listened to all life long. She loves her own  
11 species, too—sneaky and self-serving, trapped in blinkered  
12 bodies, blind to intelligence all around it—yet chosen by  
13 creation to know.

14 The judge asks her to elaborate. Dennis was right. It is like  
15 talking to students. She describes how a rotting log is home to  
16 orders of magnitude more living tissue than the living tree. "I  
17 sometimes wonder whether a tree's real task on Earth isn't to  
18 bulk itself up in preparation to lying dead on the forest floor  
19 for a long time."

20 The judge asks what living things might need a dead tree.  
21 "Name your family. Your order. Birds, mammals, other  
22 plants. Tens of thousands of invertebrates. Three-quarters of  
23 the region's amphibians need them. Almost all the reptiles.  
24 Animals that keep down the pests that kill other trees. A dead  
25 tree is an infinite hotel."

26 She tells him about the ambrosia beetle. The alcohol of  
27 rotting wood summons it. It moves into the log and excavates.  
28 Through its tunnel systems, it plants bits of fungus that it  
29 brought in with it, on a special formation on its head. The  
30 fungus eats the wood; the beetle eats the fungus.

31 "Beetles are farming the log?"

32 "They farm. Without subsidies. Unless you count the log."

33 "And those species that depend on rotting logs and snags:  
34 are any of them endangered?"

35 She tells him: everything depends on everything else.  
36 There's a kind of vole that needs old forest. It eats mushrooms

## 4th Datum of Heideggerian

No one sees trees. We see fruit, we see nuts, we see wood, we see shade. We see ornaments or pretty fall foliage. Obstacles blocking the road or wrecking the ski slope. Dark, threatening places that must be cleared. We see branches about to crush our roof. We see a cash crop. But trees—trees are invisible.

"It's not bad, Den. A little bleak, maybe." Short, too, she might add. Far smaller than her firstborn. There's so much more to tell, but she's an old woman now, without much time; and there are so many more species still to find and take aboard the ark. The book is a simple enough story. She could have told it in a page or two: how she and several others spent years traveling to all the continents but Antarctica. How they saved a few seeds from a few thousand trees, a fraction of the species that will vanish as the Earth's current custodians watch, bringing countless dependents down with them. . . .

She has tried to hold out hope, to tell every story that might make the truth a little easier. She gives a whole chapter to migration. She describes all the trees already marching north at rates that astonish those who measure them. *But the most vulnerable trees will need to move much faster, to keep from burning up. They can't cross highways or farms or housing developments. Maybe we can help them.*

She spins short biographies of her favorite characters: loner trees, cunning trees, sages and solid citizens, trees that turn impulsive or shy or generous—as many ways of being as there are forest elevations and facings. *How fine it would be if we could learn who they are, when they're at their best.* She tries to turn the story on its head. *This is not our world with trees in it. It's a world of trees, where humans have just arrived.*

One passage keeps springing back, every time fear or scientific rigor makes her prune it. *Trees know when we're close by. The chemistry of their roots and the perfumes their*



## 1st Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth

farm as the symbol a desire of independence from industrialized society

yesterday to anyone who will farm it. Their nearest neighbors are two miles away. They plow and plant four dozen acres that first year. Corn, potatoes, and beans. The work is brutal, but theirs. Better than building ships for any country's navy.

Then comes the prairie winter. The cold tests their will to live. Nights in the gap-riddled cabin zero their blood. They must crack the ice in the water basin every morning just to splash their faces. But they are young, free, and driven—the sole backers of their own existence. Winter doesn't kill them. Not yet. The blackest despair at the heart of them gets pressed to diamond.

When it's time to plant again, Vi is pregnant. Hoel puts his ear to her belly. She laughs at his awe-slapped face. "What is it saying?"

He answers in his blunt, thumping English. "Feed me!"

That May, Hoel discovers six chestnuts stuffed in the pocket of the smock he wore on the day he proposed to his wife. He presses them into the earth of western Iowa, on the treeless prairie around the cabin. The farm is hundreds of miles from the chestnut's native range, a thousand from the chestnut feasts of Prospect Hill. Each month, those green forests of the East grow harder for Hoel to remember.

But this is America, where men and trees take the most surprising outings. Hoel plants, waters, and thinks: One day, my children will shake the trunks and eat for free.

Good relationships (replantation develop new connection) 6-25-25

THEIR FIRSTBORN DIES in infancy, killed by a thing that doesn't yet have a name. There are no microbes, yet. God is the lone taker of children, snatching even placeholder souls from one world to the other, according to obscure timetables.

One of the six chestnuts fails to sprout. But Jørgen Hoel keeps the surviving seedlings alive. Life is a battle between the Maker and His creation. Hoel grows expert at the fight. Keeping his trees going is trivial, compared to the other wars

Ho

## 2nd Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth

1 and invention; and still no man can say how  
 2 many centuries this Oak will endure or what  
 3 nations and creeds it may outlive. . . .  
 4  
 5 Where the deer bound, where the trout rise,  
 6 where your horse stops to slather a drink from  
 7 icy water while the sun is warm on the back of  
 8 your neck, where every breath you draw is  
 9 exhilaration — that is where the Aspens grow. . . .  
 10  
 11 And of her father's beloved tree:  
 12  
 13 Let other trees do the work of the world. Let the  
 14 Beech stand, where still it holds its ground . . .

She never exactly becomes a swan. Yet the senior who emerges out of freshman ugly ducklinghood knows what she loves and how she intends to spend her life, and that's a novelty among the youth of any year. Those she doesn't scare away come sniff her out, this keen, homely, forthright girl who has escaped the stoop of constant social compliance. To her astonishment, she even has suitors. Something about her perks boys up. Not her looks, of course, but an ever-so-slightly head-turning quality to her walk that they can't quite place. Independent thought—a power of attraction all its own.

When boys come calling, she makes them take her for a picnic lunch in Richmond Cemetery—serving the needs of dead people since 1848. Sometimes they flee, and that's that. If they stick around and mention the trees, she'll see them again. Desire, she scribbles into her field notebooks, turns out to be infinitely varied, the sweetest of evolution's tricks. And in the pollen storms of spring, even she turns out to be a more than adequate flower.

One boy sticks around, month after month. Andy, the English major. He plays in the orchestra with her and loves Hart Crane and O'Neill and *Moby-Dick*, although he can't say



### 3rd Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth

1 rational management. But it costs us much more than it has  
2 saved." The counsel for her side winces. But she's in too deep  
3 for diplomacy now.

4 "I've looked at your book," the judge says. "I never  
5 imagined! Trees summon animals and make them do things?  
6 They remember? They feed and take care of each other?"

7 In the dark-paneled courtroom, her words come out of  
8 hiding. Love for trees pours out of her—the grace of them,  
9 their supple experimentation, the constant variety and  
10 surprise. These slow, deliberate creatures with their elaborate  
11 vocabularies, each distinctive, shaping each other, breeding  
12 birds, sinking carbon, purifying water, filtering poisons from  
13 the ground, stabilizing the microclimate. Join enough living  
14 things together, through the air and underground, and you  
15 wind up with something that has *intention*. Forest. A  
16 threatened creature.

The judge frowns. "What grows back after a clear-cut isn't  
a forest?"

Frustration boils over in her. "You can replace forests with  
plantations. You can also arrange Beethoven's Ninth for solo  
kazoo." Everyone laughs but the judge. "A suburban backyard  
has more diversity than a tree farm!"

"How much untouched forest is left?"

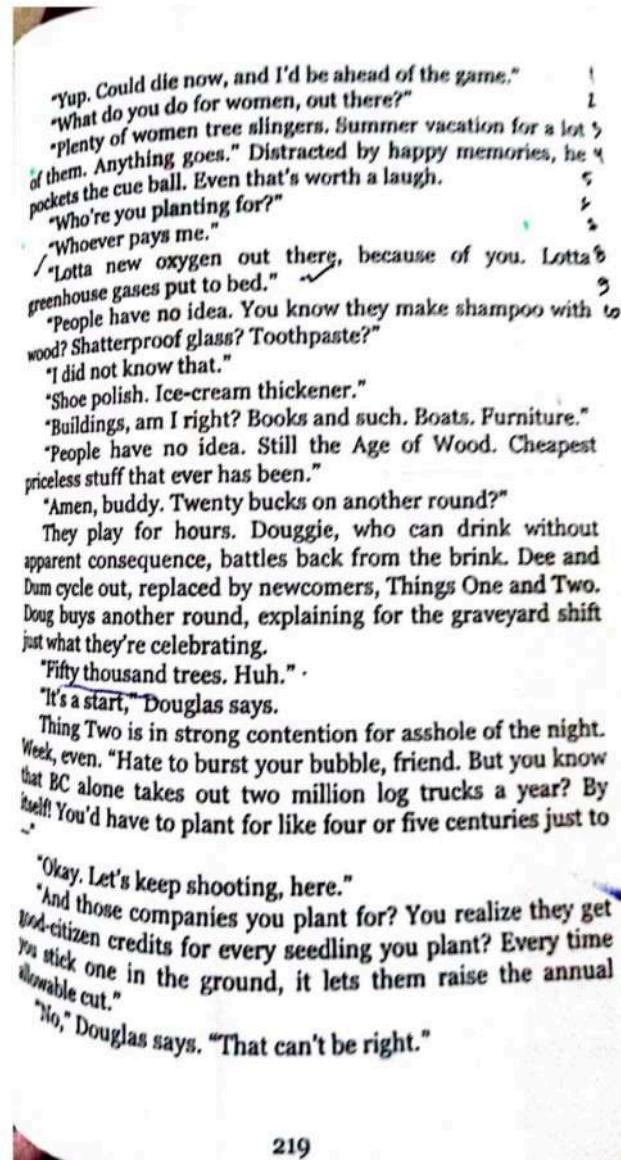
"Not much."

"Less than a quarter of what we started with?"

"Oh, heavens! Much less. Probably no more than two or  
three percent. Maybe a square, fifty miles on each side." What's left of her vow of circumspection blows away. "There  
were four great forests on this continent. Each was supposed  
to last forever. Each went down in decades. We barely had  
time to romanticize! These trees out here are our last stands,  
and they're disappearing—a hundred football fields a day.  
This state has seen rivers of logjam six miles long.

"If you want to maximize the net present value of a forest  
for its current owners and deliver the most wood in the  
shortest time, then yes: cut the old growth and plant straight-

#### 4th Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth



### 5th Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth

that the world is not made for our utility. What use are we, to trees? She remembers the Buddha's words: A tree is a wondrous thing that shelters, feeds, and protects all living things. It even offers shade to the axmen who destroy it. And with these words, she has her book's end.

*1. Summary part*

DENNIS SHOWS AT NOON, reliable as rain, bearing broccoli-almond lasagna, his latest midday masterpiece. She thinks, as she does several times a week, how lucky she has been, to spend these few blessed years married to the one man on Earth who'd let her spend most of her life alone. Game, patient, good-natured Dennis. He protects her work and needs so little. In his handyman's heart, he already knows how few things man is really the measure of. And he's as generous and eager as weeds.

As they eat Dennis's feast, she reads him today's installment on Old Tjikko. He listens, astonished, like a happy child might listen to Greek myths. She finishes. He claps. "Oh, babe. It's just fine." Something deep in her callow green soul likes being the world's oldest babe. "I hate to tell you this, but I think you're done."

It's terrifying, but he's right. She sighs and stares out the kitchen window, where three crows hatch their elaborate plans for breaking into her compost bin. "So what do I do now?"

His laugh is as hearty as if she said something funny. "You type it up and we mail it to your publishers. Four months late."

"I can't."

"Why not?"

"Everything's wrong. Starting with the title."

"What's wrong with *How Trees Will Save the World*? Trees won't save the world?"

"I'm sure they will. After the world shrugs us off."



## 6th Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth

form as the symbol a desire of independence from industrial society

yesterday to anyone who will farm it. Their nearest neighbors are two miles away. They plow and plant four dozen acres that first year. Corn, potatoes, and beans. The work is brutal, but theirs. Better than building ships for any country's navy.

Then comes the prairie winter. The cold tests their will to live. Nights in the gap-riddled cabin zero their blood. They must crack the ice in the water basin every morning just to splash their faces. But they are young, free, and driven—the sole backers of their own existence. Winter doesn't kill them. Not yet. The blackest despair at the heart of them gets pressed to diamond.

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Good relationships (replantation desire and connection)

6-105

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Ho

7

## 6th Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth (2)

1 off on their own, John Hoel is free to chase after the latest  
 2 machines. His equipment shed fills with reapers and  
 3 winnowers and twine-binders. He travels out to Charles City  
 4 to see the first two-cylinder gas-powered tractors. When  
 5 phone lines come through, he subscribes, although it costs a  
 6 fortune and no one in the family can think what the thing  
 7 might be good for.

8 The immigrant's son yields to the disease of improvement  
 9 years before there's an effective cure for it. He buys himself a  
 10 Kodak No. 2 Brownie. You push the button, we do the rest. He  
 11 must send the film to Des Moines for developing and printing,  
 12 a process that soon costs many times more than the two-  
 13 dollar camera. He photographs his wife in calico and a  
 14 crumpled smile, poised over the new mechanical clothes  
 15 mangle. He photographs his children running the combine  
 16 and riding swaybacked draft horses along the fields' headers.  
 17 He photographs his family in their Easter finest, bound with  
 18 bonnets and garroted by bow ties. When nothing else of his  
 19 little postage stamp of Iowa is left to photograph, John turns  
 20 his camera on the Hoel Chestnut, his exact coeval.

21 A few years before, he bought his youngest girl a  
 22 zoopraxiscope for her birthday, though he alone kept playing  
 23 with it, after she grew bored. Now those squadrons of flapping  
 24 geese and parades of bucking broncos that come alive when  
 25 the glass drum spins animate his brain. A grand plan occurs  
 26 to him, as if he invented it. He decides, for whatever years are  
 27 left to him, to capture the tree and see what the thing looks  
 28 like, sped up to the rate of human desire.

29 He builds a tripod in the equipment shop. Then he sets a  
 30 broken grinding stone on a rise near the house. And on the  
 31 first day of spring, 1903, John Hoel positions the No. 2  
 32 Brownie and takes a full-length portrait of the sentinel  
 33 chestnut leafing out. One month later to the day, from the  
 34 same spot and the same hour, he takes another. The twenty-  
 35 first of every month finds him up on his rise. It becomes a  
 36 ritual devotion, even in rain and snow and killing heat, his



## 6th Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth (3)

and the soil too worn by repeated row-cropping to make a profit. Each year, another neighbor is swallowed up into the massive, managed, relentlessly productive monocrop factories. Like humans everywhere in the face of catastrophe, Frank Hoel Jr. goes blinking into his fate. He takes on debt. He sells off acreage and rights. He signs deals with the seed companies he shouldn't. Next year, he's sure—next year, something will come along and save them, as it always has.

All told, Frank Jr. adds seven hundred and fifty-five photos of the solitary giant to the hundred and sixty that his father and grandfather shot. On the twenty-first day of the last April of his life, with Frank Jr. confined to bed, his son Eric travels out to the farm from his home forty minutes away and sets up on the rise to snap yet one more black-and-white, now filled to the frame with exuberant branches. Eric shows the print to the old man. It's easier than trying to tell his father he loves him.

Frank Jr. grimaces at a taste like bitter almonds. "Listen. I made a promise, and I kept it. You don't owe nobody. Leave that damn thing be."

He might as well command the giant chestnut itself to stop spreading.

THREE-QUARTERS OF A CENTURY dances by in a five-second flip. Nicholas Hoel thumbs through the stack of a thousand photos, watching for those decades' secret meaning. At twenty-five, he's back for a moment on the farm where he has spent every Christmas of his life. He's lucky to be there, given the cancellations. Snowstorms sweep in from the west, grounding planes all over the country.

He and his folks have driven out to be with his grandmother. Tomorrow, more family will arrive from all over the state. With a flip through the photos, the farm memories come back to him: the holidays of his childhood, the entire clan gathering for turkey or carols, midsummer

## 7th Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth

and homing pigeons and shortwave radio. The Gold Mountain  
is going to eat you alive." 2

He releases his son's face and leads the way down the hall  
into the bookkeeper's cage, where he unlocks the grate and  
shoves aside a filing cabinet to reveal a wall safe whose  
existence Sih Hsuin never suspected. Shouying extracts three  
wooden flats wrapped in satin rags. Even Sih Hsuin can tell  
what they contain: generations of Ma family profit, from the  
Silk Road to the Bund, sunk into movable form. 9

Ma Shouying rakes through handfuls of sparkling things,  
considering each for a moment, then chucking them back into  
their trays. At last he hits on what he's after: three rings, like  
small birds' eggs. Three jade landscapes that he lifts to the  
light. 14

Sih Hsuin gasps. "Look the color!" The color of greed,  
envy, freshness, growth, innocence. Green, green, green,  
green, and green. From a pouch around his neck, Shouying  
produces a jeweler's loupe. He sets the jade rings in the light  
and peers at them for what will be his last look. He hands the  
first ring to Sih Hsuin, who stares at it as at a rock from Mars.  
It's a sinuous mass of jade trunk and branches several layers  
deep. 21

"You live between three trees. One is behind you. The Lote  
—the tree of life for your Persian ancestors. The tree at the  
boundary of the seventh heaven, that none may pass. Ah, but  
engineers have no use for the past, do they?" 26

The words confuse Sih Hsuin. He can't read his father's  
sarcasm. He tries to hand the first ring back, but his father is  
busy with the second. 27

"Another tree stands in front of you—Fusang. A magical  
mulberry tree far to the east, where they keep the elixir of  
life." He palms the loupe and looks up. "Well, you're off to  
Fusang now." 31

He hands the jade over. It's detailed beyond belief. A bird  
flies above the topmost tangle of foliage. From the crooked 35

## 7th Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth (2)

"By throwing out his stuff?" 1  
 "Distribute. Each thing to the right person." 2  
 "Like solving a big quadratic equation." 3  
 "Carmen. We have to take care of it." 4  
 "Why? You want to sell the house out from under Mom?" 5  
 "Like she's going to be able to take care of it by herself, in 6  
 her state?" 7  
 Amelia puts her arms around them both. "Maybe those 8  
 things can wait for now? We only have a little while to be with 9  
 each other." 10  
 "We're all here now," Mimi says. "It could be a long time 11  
 before that happens again. Let's just get it done." 12  
 Carmen shakes free of the hug. "So you're not coming 13  
 home for Christmas?" But something in her tone is as good as 14  
 a signed confession. *Home* has gone wherever their father 15  
 went. 16

CHARLOTTE CLINGS to a few token things. "This is his 17  
 favorite sweater. Oh, don't take the waders. And these are the 18  
 slacks he wears when we go hiking." 19  
 "She's fine," Carmen says, when the three of them are 20  
 alone. "She's managing. She's just a little weird." 21  
 "I can come back in a few weeks," Amelia offers. "Check in. 22  
 Make sure she's okay." 23  
 Carmen faces Mimi, pre-enraged. "Don't even dream of 24  
 putting her in a home." 25  
 "I'm not dreaming anything. I'm just trying to take care of 26  
 things." 27  
 "Take care? Here. You're the compulsive one. Knock 28  
 yourself out. Eleven notebooks filled with report cards on 29  
 every campsite we've ever stayed in. All yours." 30

THE THREE OPERA HEROINES hover above a silver plate. 31  
 On the plate are three jade rings. On each ring is a carved 32



## 7th Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth (3)

tree, and each tree branches in one of time's three disguises. The first is the Lote, the tree at the boundary of the past that none may pass back over. The second is that thin, straight pine of the present. The third is Fusang, the future, a magical mulberry far to the east, where the elixir of life is hidden.

Amelia stares. "Who's supposed to get which one?"

"There's a right way to do this," Mimi says. "And a dozen wrong ones."

Carmen sighs. "Which one is this?"

"Shut up. Close your eyes. On the count of three, take one."

On three, there's some light grazing of arms, and each woman finds her fate. When they open their eyes, the platter is empty. Amelia has her eternal present, Carmen her doomed past. And Mimi is left holding the thin trunk of things to come. She puts it on her finger. It's a little big—gift from a homeland she will never see. She spins the endless loop of inheritance around on her finger like an open sesame. "Now the Buddhas."

They don't understand her. But then, Amelia and Carmen haven't been thinking about the scroll for the last seventeen years.

"The *Luóhàn*," Mimi says, butchering the pronunciation. "The arhats." She rolls the scroll out on the table where their father used to tie his trout flies. It's older, stranger than any of them remembers. Like someone has been reworking it with colors and ink, from the world beyond this one. "We could take it to an auction house. Split the money."

"Meem," Amelia says. "Didn't he leave us enough money?"

"Or Mimi could just take it for herself. That would be enlightened."

"We could give it to a museum. In memory of Sih Hsueh Ma." The name sounds hopelessly American in Mimi's mouth.

Amelia says, "That would be beautiful."

"And we'd have tax write-offs for life."

"Those of us who are making money." Carmen sneers.



## 8th Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth

The tree arrives before the baby. Adam's father, cursing and blaming, wrestles the burlap-wrapped root ball toward a hole torn out of the lawn's perfect green. Adam, lined up with his siblings on the edge of the hole, sees something terribly wrong. He can't believe no one intervenes.

"Dad, stop! That cloth. The tree is choking. Its roots can't breathe."

His father grunts and wrestles on. Adam pitches himself into the hole to prevent the murder. The full weight of the root ball comes down on his stick legs and he screams. His father yells the deadliest word of all. He yanks Adam by one arm out of his live burial and hauls the boy across the lawn, depositing him on the front porch. There the boy lies facedown on the concrete, howling, not for his pain, but for the unforgivable crime inflicted on his brother-to-be's tree.

Charles comes home from the hospital, a heavy helplessness wrapped in a blanket. Adam waits, month by month, for the choked black walnut to die and take his baby brother with it, smothered in his own clown-covered coverlet. But both live, which only proves to Adam that life is trying to say something no one hears.

4 years  
FOUR SPRINGS LATER, with the leaves' first flush, the Appich kids fight over whose tree is the most beautiful. They fight again when the seeds come out, and later the nuts, and finally the autumn rush of color. Health and power, size and beauty: they fight over everything. Each child's tree has its own excellence: the ash's diamond-shaped bark, the walnut's long compound leaves, the maple's shower of helicopters, the vase-like spread of the elm, the ironwood's fluted muscle.

Nine now, Adam decides to hold an election. He cuts a slit in the top of an egg carton to make a secret-ballot box. Five ballots, five trees. Each child votes for their own. They have a runoff. Emmett buys four-year-old Charles's vote for half a Butterfinger, and Jean changes her vote to Adam's maple out

### 9th Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth

*ecofeminism*

Every year, as close to this day as we can, let's go to the nursery and find something for the yard. I don't know anything about plants. I don't know their names or how to care for them. I don't even know how to tell one blurry green thing from another. But I can learn, as I've had to re-learn everything—myself, my likes and dislikes, the width and height and depth of where I live—again, alongside you.

Not everything we plant will take. Not every plant will thrive. But together we can watch the ones that do fill up our garden.

As she reads, her eyes cloud, and she drives up onto the curb and wraps the car around a parkway linden wide enough to destroy her front grille.

Now, the linden, it turns out, is a radical tree, as different from an oak as a woman is from a man. It's the bee tree, the tree of peace, whose tonics and teas can cure every kind of tension and anxiety—a tree that cannot be mistaken for any other, for alone in all the catalog of a hundred thousand earthly species, its flowers and tiny hard fruit hang down from surfboard bracts whose sole perverse purpose seems to be to state its own singularity. The lindens will come for her, starting with this ambush. But the full adoption will take years.

She requires eleven stitches to close the gash above her right eye, where the steering wheel cut her open. Ray rushes from his office to the hospital. In his panic, he crunches the rear right bumper of a doctor's BMW in the hospital parking garage. He's in tears when they lead him into surgery. She's sitting up in a chair with bandages wrapped around her head, trying to read things. Everything is double. The brand name on the gauze wrappings looks to her like *Johnson & Johnson*.

# 10th Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth

below his kneecap, shatters his tibia, and tears out through the heel of his Leather Personnel Carriers. His scream pierces the air, and his body tumbles into the branches of the banyan, that one-tree forest that has grown up over the course of three hundred years just in time to break his fall.

Branches slash through his flight suit. His silks tangle him in a shroud. Between lacerations and burns, the gunshot wound and his pulverized leg, the airman passes out. He hangs twenty feet above the Earth in friendly territory, facedown and spread-eagled in the arms of a sacred tree bigger than some villages.

A baht bus full of pilgrims comes to pay devotion to the divine tree. They walk through the colonnade of aerial prop roots toward the central trunk, the trunk that crept down around a foster parent it choked to death ages ago. Set into that meandering bole is a shrine covered in flowers, beads, bells, prayer-covered papers, root-cracked statues, and sacred threads. The visitors parade toward the altar through the mazy pergola of spreading limbs, chanting in Pali. Their arms are full of joss sticks, stackable lunch tins filled with *gang gai*, and garlands of lotus blossom and jasmine. Three little children run ahead, singing a *lûk thûng* song as fast as their lips can move.

They draw near the shrine. They add their garlands to the rainbow of offerings already spidering across the branches. Then the sky falls and a missile crashes into the foliage above. Joss sticks, garlands, and lunch tins scatter at the impact. The shock knocks two pilgrims to the ground.

Chaos clears. The pilgrims look up. A giant *farang* hangs above their head, threatening to crash through the branches and fall the last short stretch to the ground. They call up to the foreigner. He doesn't respond. A debate begins on how to reach the man and cut him loose from the stranglehold of fig and parachute. Technical Sergeant Pavlicek wakes to several Thais standing on benches and prodding him. He thinks he's lying on his back, bobbing in a pool of atmosphere, while



## 10th Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth (2)

inverted people lean down and snatch at him from under the mirror surface. The pain from his leg and face crushes him. He coughs up a trickle of red spittle. He thinks: I'm dead. No, a voice near his face corrects. Tree saved your life. The three most useful syllables from his four years in Thailand bubble out of Dougie's mouth. "Mai kao chai." I don't understand. With that, he blacks out again and resumes the long, cyclic task of falling. This time, he keeps on tumbling as the Earth beneath him opens wide and takes him in. He falls deep underground, a long, luxurious drop into the kingdom of roots. He plunges beneath the water table, downward toward the beginning of time, into the lair of a fantastic creature whose existence he never imagined.

THE LOCAL CLINIC won't touch the leg of an American soldier. A staffer drives him to Khorat in a coral-colored Mazda with a Buddhist Wheel flag flying from its antenna. The car sounds like a choking khlong boat and trails a similar cloud of oily fumes in its wake. Pavlcek, drugged to the gills in the back seat, watches the green kilometers slide past. The low, lush landscape, the rolling hills. *In the waters there are fish; in the fields, there is rice.* The entire region will sink like a banana-leaf boat in a typhoon. Charlie will be sunning himself at the Siam Intercontinental, this time next year. A tree saved his life. It makes no sense.

When the injection from the clinic begins to wear off, Pavlcek begs the driver to kill him. The driver waves fingers around his mouth. "*No Angrit.*"

Douglas's shinbone is cored. A doctor at the base in Khorat patches him up and ships him to Fifth Field, Bangkok. All his crewmates have survived—thanks in large part, the after-battle report says, to him. And he—he owes his own life to a tree.

. . .



### 11th Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth

1 TREE. The name excuses nothing and explains even less. It's  
 2 an alien invader, as surely as Neelay.  
 3 He can't decide which is more incredible: the tree, or the  
 4 fact that he's never noticed it. Shapes flicker on the edge of his  
 5 vision. Something is happening behind his back. He has the  
 6 overwhelming feeling of being watched. A silent chorus in his  
 7 head sings: *Turn and look. Turn around and see!* He spins  
 8 the chair in place. Nothing is right. The whole cloister  
 9 courtyard has changed. One hyper-jump, and he has landed  
 10 in an intergalactic arboretum. On all sides, furious green  
 11 speculations wave at him. Creatures built for otherworldly  
 12 climates. Crazies of every habit and profile. Things from  
 13 epochs so old they make dinosaurs look like upstarts. All  
 14 these signaling, sentient beings knock him back in his seat.  
 15 He has never done drugs, but this must be what it's like.  
 16 Plumes of cream and yellow; a purple waterfall that  
 17 evaporates before it touches the ground. Trees like freak  
 18 experiments beckon from out of eight large planters, each one  
 19 a miniature starship ark on its way to some other system.  
 20 Neelay sweeps the chair around the courtyard. His  
 21 paraplegic body tenses as the council shimmers in their  
 22 standing circle, watching him make the circuit. He rolls past  
 23 another Seussian monster as alien as the first. He reads the  
 24 tag: a silk floss tree, from Brazilian forests even now shrinking  
 25 by a hundred thousand acres a day. Sharp-tipped warty cones  
 26 cover the trunk, spines that evolved to fend off grazing beasts  
 27 that went extinct tens of millions of years ago.  
 28 He rolls from planter to planter, touching the beings,  
 29 smelling them, listening to their rustles. They have come from  
 30 hot islands and desiccated outback, from remote valleys in  
 31 Central Asia breached only recently. Dove tree, jacaranda,  
 32 desert spoon, camphor tree, flame tree, empress tree,  
 33 kurrajong, red mulberry: unearthly life, waiting to waylay him  
 34 in this courtyard while he was searching for them on distant  
 35 planets. He touches their bark and feels, just beneath their

### 11th Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth (2)

skins, the teeming assemblies of cells, like whole planetary civilizations, pulse and hum.

The Japanese tourists disappear back to their bus on Galvez. Neelay holds still in the emptied space, like a rabbit evading a raptor. He's alone for no more than a few seconds. But in that interval, the alien invaders insert a thought directly into his limbic system. There will be a game, a billion times richer than anything yet made, to be played by countless people around the world at the same time. And Neelay must bring it into being. He'll unfold the creation in gradual, evolutionary stages, over the course of decades. The game will put its players smack in the middle of a living, breathing, seething, animist world filled with millions of different species, a world desperately in need of the players' help. And the goal of the game will be to figure out what the new and desperate world wants from you.

The vision ends, depositing him again in Stanford's inner quad. The vision, religious and dark green, fades back into its Platonic shadow, wood. Neelay holds still, clinging to what he has just seen, the thing his brain has somehow apprehended, lurking out at the end of the curve of Moore's law. He'll have to drop out of school. No time for more classes now. He must pace himself for the long run. He'll finish the quaint little role-playing space opera he's working on, then put it up for sale. Real money, earth dollars. His fans will howl. They'll smear him on the country's dial-up bulletin boards as the worst traitor. But at fifteen bucks for thirty parsecs, the game will be a steal. The profits from his first foray into alien life will pay for the sequel, a game to surpass the original in ambition many times over. And by such small steps, he'll get to the place he has just seen.

He rolls out of the cloister just as the light vanishes behind the mountains. The hills cast a shadow on themselves, bruise-blue turning to forgetful black. High up, beyond his sight, rocky outcrops crawl with manzanita, shedding their curling, crimson barks. Bay laurels rim the logger-made meadows.

# 12th Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth

1 of place with him that the two boys accept. With them, Dad  
2 may throw softballs and tell bubble-gum wrapper jokes and  
3 play tag. But he reserves his best gifts for his little plant-girl,  
4 Patty.

5 Their closeness bothers her mother. "I ask you. Has there  
6 ever been such a little nation of two?"

7 Bill Westerford takes Patricia with him when he visits  
8 southwestern Ohio farms on his tours as an ag extension  
9 agent. She rides copilot in the beaten-up Packard with the  
10 pine side paneling. The war is over, the world is on the mend,  
11 the country is drunk on science, key to better living, and Bill  
12 Westerford takes his daughter out to see the world.

13 Patty's mother objects to the trips. The girl should be in  
14 school. But her father's soft authority prevails. "She won't  
15 learn more anywhere than she will with me."

16 Mile after plowed mile, they hold their roving tutorial. He  
17 faces her so she can read his moving lips. She laughs at his  
18 stories—thick, slow booms—and stabs enthusiastic answers  
19 to each of his questions. Which is more numerous: the stars in  
20 the Milky Way or the chloroplasts on a single leaf of corn?  
21 Which trees flower before they leaf, and which flower after?  
22 Why are the leaves at the top of trees often smaller than those  
23 at the bottom? If you carved your name four feet high in the  
24 bark of a beech tree, how high would it be after half a century?

25 She loves the answer to that last one: Four feet. Still four  
26 feet. Always four feet, however high the beech tree grows.  
27 She'll love that answer still, half a century later.

28 In this way, acorn animism turns bit by bit into its  
29 offspring, botany. She becomes her father's star and only  
30 pupil for the simple reason that she alone, of all the family,  
31 sees what he knows: plants are willful and crafty and after  
32 something, just like people. He tells her, on their drives, about  
33 all the oblique miracles that green can devise. People have no  
34 corner on curious behavior. Other creatures—bigger, slower,  
35 older, more durable—call the shots, make the weather, feed  
36 creation, and create the very air.



## 13th Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth

They talk for longer than they have in years. She tells him what dying feels like. She even tries to tell him about the presences in the clearing, the ones that showed her things, though she uses words that won't freak him. *Impulses. Energy.* Twice he's on the verge of hopping in the car and driving the 650 miles to bring her back home. She talks him down. Seventy seconds of death have invested her with strange power. Everything between them has altered, as if he's the child now and she the guardian.

She asks for something she has never asked for before. "Put Mom on for a minute. I want to talk to her." Even her mother's fury is Olivia's now to know and soothe. By the end of their conversation, both women are in tears, promising each other crazy things.

SHE'S ALONE in the boardinghouse from Christmas until New Year's. Every intoxicant she owns goes down the toilet. Her grades arrive: two Fs, a D-minus, and a C. The letters are a distraction from that thing she's fighting to remember. Whole days pass when she barely eats. An ice storm coats the town in a lapidary crust. It tears boughs off the oaks and maples. Olivia sits on the bed where her heart stopped, her knees to her chest and her song notebook in her lap. She stands and steps. The spot on the floor where Davy found her that night feels hot under her bare feet. She's alive, and she doesn't know why.

She lies awake at night, staring upward, remembering being right next to the only discovery that matters. Life was whispering instructions to her, and she failed to write them down. The prayer thing becomes easier. *I'm still. I'm listening. What do you want from me?* On New Year's Eve, she's asleep by ten. Two hours later, she awakens to gunfire and bolts up, screaming. Then the clock tells her: fireworks. The nineties have arrived.



## 13th Datum of Significant Implication of the Trees for the Earth (2)

1 Her housemates return in the new year. They treat her like  
 2 she's ill. They're afraid of her, now that her bitchiness has  
 3 vanished. She sits in the kitchen while people around her joke  
 4 and get smashed and try to ignore the ghost at the table. It  
 5 amazes her that she has never felt their sadness or noticed  
 6 their distress. Incredibly, they still believe in safety. They live  
 7 as if a shim and some duct tape might hold them together.  
 8 They have become vulnerable in her eyes, and infinitely dear.


9 On the first day of the new semester, Olivia sits on the rim  
 10 of an auditorium bowl while a brilliant lecturer calculates the  
 11 premiums and payout needed for both the insurance company  
 12 and the dead person to feel that they've won. "Insurance," the  
 13 lecturer says, "is the backbone of civilization. No risk pool—no  
 14 skyscrapers, no blockbuster movies, no large-scale  
 15 agriculture, no organized medicine."

16 The empty seat next to her rustles. She turns. There,  
 17 inches from her face, is the thing she's been praying for. A  
 18 cone of charged air gusts into her thoughts. They've returned,  
 19 beckoning. They want her to stand and leave the auditorium.  
 20 She will do whatever they ask. Down the stone steps in her  
 21 winter coat, she crosses the icy main quad. She skirts the  
 22 classroom buildings, the library, a freshman dorm, walking  
 23 without thinking, drawn along by the presences. For a  
 24 moment, she imagines her destination is the Civil War  
 25 cemetery south of campus. Then it's clear she's heading  
 26 toward the parking lot where she keeps her car.

Inside the car, she understands that she'll be driving for a  
 while. She stops at the boardinghouse to fetch some things.  
 Three trips to her room suffice to salvage everything she could  
 want. She piles the clothes on the back seat. Then she's gone.

The car finds its way to the state highway. Soon she's  
 passing the sedge meadows and oak openings northwest of  
 town. Last fall's stubble dots the snow-covered fields. She  
 drives for a long time, obeying the presences. Like a radio  
 station from another city, their signal wavers between clear  
 and static. She makes herself an instrument of their will.

## Appendix 3. Thesis Supervision Card Advisor 1



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



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**PROGRAM STUDI :** Sastra Inggris

**JUDUL SKRIPSI :** Human - Nature Relationships In The Overstory  
by Richard Powers : An Ecocritical Analysis

**NAMA PEMBIMBING I :** Winda Lutfiyanti, M.Pd.

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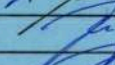


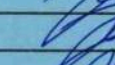
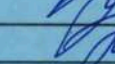
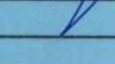
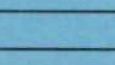
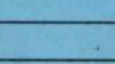
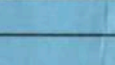


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**PROGRAM STUDI** : Sastra Inggris  
**JUDUL SKRIPSI** : Human - Nature Relationships in "The Overstory" by Richard Powers : an Ecocritical Analysis.  
**NAMA PEMBIMBING II** : Fitria Mondela M.Hum

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*Accepted for thesis defense.*



## BIOGRAPHY



The writer was born in Bekasi on August 19, 1993.

The writer's father Wong Nyan Sen, and mother, Ida Sriwati, have been sources of inspiration and primary motivators throughout his educational and career journey.

His formal education began at SDN 01 Bekasi, where he laid the foundation of his knowledge and character. After completing secondary school at SMPN 18 Bekasi, he continued his education at SMK Ananda Bekasi. His interest in language and culture led him to pursue higher education at JIA School of Foreign Languages, where he studied English Literature.

During his time at the JIA School of Foreign Languages, the writer actively participated in various seminars that enriched his knowledge of language, culture, and cross-cultural communication. He was an active member of the JIA English Student Association (HMIJ) during the 2020-2021 period, engaging in organizational activities.

Additionally, the writer gained valuable work experience in various companies such as PT. Toyogiri Iron Steel, PT. Technoplastika Prima Perdana, PT. Bangun Jaya, and PT. Fajar Surya Wisesa, Tbk. holding various administrative positions.



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