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“DUNE” (2021) WITH ECOCRITICISM PERSPECTIVE**

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# ECOCRITICISM

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the NEW CRITICAL IDIOM



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Indeed, the widest definition of the subject of ecocriticism is the study of the relationship of the human and the non-human, throughout human cultural history and entailing critical analysis of the term 'human' itself. This book will reflect these trends by giving space to both literary and cultural ecocriticism. However, at this point there is a caveat: I will be dealing principally with British and North American literature and culture, although the principles of ecocriticism would of course admit of more general application.

Ecocriticism is unique amongst contemporary literary and cultural theories because of its close relationship with the science of ecology. Ecocritics may not be qualified to contribute to debates about problems in ecology, but they must nevertheless transgress disciplinary boundaries and develop their own 'ecological literacy' as far as possible. I therefore provide brief discussions of some important environmental threats faced by the world today. To consider these in detail is beyond the scope of this book, but it is essential for ecocritics to recognise that there are serious arguments about the existence of the problems, their extent, the nature of the threat and the possible solutions to them. So, for example, in Chapter 5, I consider the problem of 'over-population' from a demographic point of view, before going on to explain how the issue has been refracted through apocalyptic rhetoric.

It may seem obvious that ecological problems are scientific problems rather than objects of cultural analysis. Indeed, when *Silent Spring* was published the agro-chemical industry reacted by criticising the book for its literary qualities, which, they implied, could not coexist with the appropriate scientific rigour. Would we not be recapitulating the propaganda published by the pesticide producers if we read Carson's book using literary-critical tools? John Passmore has proposed a distinction that may help to negotiate the problem. 'Problems in ecology', he maintains, are properly scientific issues, to be resolved by the formulation and testing of hypotheses in ecological experiments, while 'ecological problems' are 'features of our society, arising out of our dealings with nature, from which we should like to free ourselves, and which we do not regard as inevitable consequences of what is good in that society' (1974: 44). To describe something as an ecological problem is to make a normative claim about how we would wish things to be, and while this arises out of the claims of ecological scientists, it is not defined by them. A 'weed' is not a

Romantic verse. Thus, two of the most important works of ecocriticism in the 1990s were studies of Wordsworth and Shelley (Bate 1991 and Kroeber 1994). The questions grow in scope as the list continues, with several of the later ones suggesting gargantuan interdisciplinary studies such as Simon Schama's *Landscape and Memory* (1995).

Richard Kerridge's definition in the mainly British *Writing the Environment* (1998) suggests, like Glotfelty's, a broad cultural ecocriticism:

The ecocritic wants to track environmental ideas and representations wherever they appear, to see more clearly a debate which seems to be taking place, often part-concealed, in a great many cultural spaces. Most of all, ecocriticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis.  
(1998: 5)

We will have reason to question the monolithic conception of 'environmental crisis' implied here, and perhaps to resist the evaluation of 'texts and ideas' against a seemingly secure ecological yardstick: both as a science and as a socio-political movement, 'ecology' itself is shifting and contested. However, the emphasis on the moral and political orientation of the ecocritic and the broad specification of the field of study are essential.

From the point of view of academics, ecocriticism is dominated by the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE), a professional association that started in America but now has significant branches in the UK and Japan. It organises regular conferences and publishes a journal that includes literary analysis, creative writing and articles on environmental education and activism. Many early works of ecocriticism were characterised by an exclusive interest in Romantic poetry, wilderness narrative and nature writing, but in the last few years ASLE has turned towards a more general cultural ecocriticism, with studies of popular scientific writing, film, TV, art, architecture and other cultural artefacts such as theme parks, zoos and shopping malls. As ecocritics seek to offer a truly transformative discourse, enabling us to analyse and criticise the world in which we live, attention is increasingly given to the broad range of cultural processes and products in which, and through which, the complex negotiations of nature and culture take place.

degree, yet for the student of the humanities they can be difficult to assess on their own terms. Academia has been organised into relatively autonomous 'disciplines' and scientific problems seem to require scientific expertise. Nevertheless, the rhetorical strategies, use of pastoral and apocalyptic imagery and literary allusions with which Carson shapes her scientific material may well be amenable to a more 'literary' or 'cultural' analysis. Such analysis is what we will call 'ecocriticism'. This book is a critical introduction to the field of ecocriticism today.

Let us look, then, at some provisional definitions of the subject. The first is from the 'Introduction' to *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996), an important anthology of American ecocriticism:

What then is ecocriticism? Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies.

(Glotfelty 1996: xix)

Glotfelty goes on to specify some of the questions ecocritics ask, ranging from 'How is nature represented in this sonnet?' through 'How has the concept of wilderness changed over time?' to 'How is science itself open to literary analysis?' and finally 'What cross-fertilization is possible between literary studies and environmental discourse in related disciplines such as history, philosophy, psychology, art history, and ethics?'

Ecocriticism is, then, an avowedly political mode of analysis, as the comparison with feminism and Marxism suggests. Ecocritics generally tie their cultural analyses explicitly to a 'green' moral and political agenda. In this respect, ecocriticism is closely related to environmentally oriented developments in philosophy and political theory. Developing the insights of earlier critical movements, ecofeminists, social ecologists and environmental justice advocates seek a synthesis of environmental and social concerns.

It is worth noting also that the questions posed by ecocriticism in Glotfelty's account follow a clear trajectory: the first question, for example, is very narrow and literary, tending to favour the student of

Rhetorical analysis suggests that the meaning of tropes is closely related to their wider social context. They are therefore not fixed entities but develop and change historically. 'Pollution', for example, derives from the Latin 'polluere' meaning 'to defile', and its early English usage reflects its theologico-moral origins: until the seventeenth century it denoted moral contamination of a person, or acts (such as masturbation) thought to promote such contamination. This essentially interior or subjective definition was gradually transformed into an exterior or objective – in fact, specifically environmental – definition between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, to the point where today only its later definition is widely known. The process is exemplary in that it highlights how people had to learn to hate their detritus, as well as indicating the deep cultural roots of the fear attaching to such immoral emissions. Most of the tropes in the book are traced to ancient origins before I explore their modern inflection.

The first citation of the modern sense of 'pollution' in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is from Francis Bacon's *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), a founding text of modern scientific methodology: 'The Sunne . . . passeth through pollutions, and it selfe remaines as pure as before.' Bacon seems here to be writing about a material, not a moral, phenomenon, which constitutes a crucial shift in meaning, and the very birth of a new way of seeing and thinking. Yet a key text in ecocritical history, Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature* (1980), ascribes to Bacon a pivotal role in the construction of an environmentally destructive world view where 'the image of an organic cosmos with a living female earth at its center gave way to a mechanistic world view in which nature was reconstituted as dead and passive, to be dominated and controlled by humans' (1990: xvi). Thus the trope of 'pollution' is historically implicated in both environmental destruction and salvation since Bacon both 'discovered' pollution in the modern sense and, according to Merchant, helped make much more of it. From an ecocritical perspective this reflects the ambivalent role of science as both a producer of environmental hazards and a critical analyst of them. All the tropes examined in this book show some such ambivalence.

Another crucial feature of rhetoric is that tropes are assumed to take part in wider social struggles between genders, classes and ethnic groups. Cultures are not shaped equally by all their participants, nor are



kind of plant, only the wrong kind in the wrong place. Eliminating weeds is obviously a 'problem in gardening', but defining weeds in the first place requires a cultural, not horticultural, analysis. Likewise 'pollution' is an ecological problem because it does not name a substance or class of substances, but rather represents an implicit normative claim that too much of something is present in the environment, usually in the wrong place. Carson had to investigate a problem in ecology, with the help of wildlife biologists and environmental toxicologists, in order to show that DDT was present in the environment in amounts toxic to wildlife, but *Silent Spring* undertook cultural not scientific work when it strove to argue the moral case that it *ought* not to be. The great achievement of the book was to turn a (scientific) problem in ecology into a widely perceived ecological problem that was then contested politically, legally and in the media and popular culture. Thus ecocriticism cannot contribute much to debates about problems in ecology, but it can help to define, explore and even resolve ecological problems in this wider sense.

One 'ecocritical' way of reading is to see contributions to environmental debate as examples of rhetoric. I have already suggested that Carson deploys both pastoral imagery and apocalyptic rhetoric, and will return to these subjects, but there are many other applications of formal rhetorical analysis. For example, Ralph Lutz has attempted to account for the impact of *Silent Spring* by drawing attention to the underlying analogy Carson uses between pesticide pollution and another kind of pollution that was strong in popular consciousness in 1962:

She was sounding an alarm about a kind of pollution that was invisible to the senses; could be transported great distances, perhaps globally; could accumulate over time in body tissues; could produce chronic, as well as acute, poisoning; and could result in cancer, birth defects, and genetic mutations that may not become evident until years or decades after exposure. Government officials, she also argued, were not taking the steps necessary to control this pollution and protect the public. Chemical pesticides were not the only form of pollution fitting this description. Another form, far better known to the public at the time, was radioactive fallout. Pesticides could be understood as another form of fallout.

(2000:19)



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## PASTORAL

Since the Romantic movement's poetic responses to the Industrial Revolution, pastoral has decisively shaped our constructions of nature. Even the science of ecology may have been shaped by pastoral in its early stages of development and we have seen that the founding text of ecocriticism, *Silent Spring*, drew on the pastoral tradition. No other trope is so deeply entrenched in Western culture, or so deeply problematic for environmentalism. With its roots in the classical period, pastoral has shown itself to be infinitely malleable for differing political ends, and potentially harmful in its tensions and evasions. However, its long history and cultural ubiquity mean that the pastoral trope must and will remain a key concern for ecocritics.

What then is this 'pastoral' tradition, and what is its significance for environmentalism? Terry Gifford distinguishes three kinds of pastoral: the specifically literary tradition, involving a retreat from the city to the countryside, that originates in ancient Alexandria and becomes a key poetic form in Europe during the Renaissance; more generally, 'any literature that describes the country with an implicit or explicit contrast to the urban' (1999: 2); and the pejorative sense in which 'pastoral' implies an idealisation of rural life that obscures the realities of labour and hardship. This chapter will explore these three manifestations of the trope.

Himselfe, to be an offering.  
 The scalie herd, more pleasure tooke,  
 Bath'd in thy dish, then in the brooke.  
 (Barrell and Bull 1982: 173)

The obvious hyperbole is further exaggerated by the reference to Noah's Ark: after the Flood, a burnt 'offering' of fowl made by Noah induced God to rescind the curse placed on Adam's farming of the earth. Here, not only is Saxham the Ark, but the offering is to its owner rather than God, his beneficent rule seeming to represent a secular providence that has little need of divine assistance. The cornucopian conceit of self-sacrificing animals is, on one level, a piece of pure hypocrisy that denies the facts of both rural labour and animal suffering. On another level, though, Carew is representing the real distance between his patron and the things that sustain him, in that the ox could well have offered himself up for all the Lord might know. On yet another level, the conceit is so absurd that the text may seem a witty comment on pastoral idealisation. The pastoral poetry of the century after 'To Saxham' becomes even more self-involved and I will not discuss it here, but Williams, Halperin, Gifford and Alpers (1996) have conducted useful surveys.

Classical pastoral was disposed, then, to distort or mystify social and environmental history, whilst at the same time providing a locus, legitimated by tradition, for the feelings of loss and alienation from nature to be produced by the Industrial Revolution.

## ROMANTIC PASTORAL: WORDSWORTH VERSUS CLARE

For Williams, the interaction of Romanticism with the Industrial Revolution brought about a decisive shift in the relations of the country and city of the imagination. He identifies a new sense of sympathetic interrelation of the creative human mind and the creative nature of which it is a part, but from which it seems curiously, painfully, apart (1993: 127). According to Keith Thomas, during the early modern period and the eighteenth century,

there had gradually emerged attitudes to the natural world which were essentially incompatible with the direction in which English society

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## WILDERNESS

The idea of wilderness, signifying nature in a state uncontaminated by civilisation, is the most potent construction of nature available to New World environmentalism. It is a construction mobilised to protect particular habitats and species, and is seen as a place for the reinvigoration of those tired of the moral and material pollution of the city. Wilderness has an almost sacramental value: it holds out the promise of a renewed, authentic relation of humanity and the earth, a post-Christian covenant, found in a space of purity, founded in an attitude of reverence and humility. The wilderness question is also central to ecocriticism's challenge to the status quo of literary and cultural studies, in that it does not share the predominantly social concerns of the traditional humanities. Unlike pastoral, the concept of wilderness only came to cultural prominence in the eighteenth century, and the 'wilderness texts' discussed by ecocritics are mainly non-fictional nature writing, almost entirely neglected by other critics. Much work in this area might easily count as intellectual history or philosophy, thus stretching the bounds of traditional literary criticism.

Wilderness narratives share the motif of escape and return with the typical pastoral narrative, but the construction of nature they propose and reinforce is fundamentally different. If pastoral is the distinctive Old World construction of nature, suited to long-settled and domesticated

landscapes, wilderness fits the settler experience in the New Worlds – particularly the United States, Canada and Australia – with their apparently untamed landscapes and the sharp distinction between the forces of culture and nature. Yet settler cultures crossed the oceans with their preconceptions intact, so the ‘nature’ they encountered was inevitably shaped by the histories they often sought to leave behind. To understand current conceptions of wilderness, then, we must explore the Old World history of ‘wilderness’. Nor can we take for granted the politics of the wild: for many critics, after all, the ‘wildness’ we should seek is epitomised in the American West, which was assumed to be an untrammelled realm to which the Euro-American has a manifest right.

### OLD WORLD WILDERNESS

If pastoral has a dual origin in Judaeo-Christian and Graeco-Roman cultures, the meanings with which wilderness was endowed at the beginning of the eighteenth century seem to be based almost entirely on Judaeo-Christian history and culture. The word ‘wilderness’ derives from the Anglo-Saxon ‘wildeoren’, where ‘deoren’ or beasts existed beyond the boundaries of cultivation. So useful is the word ‘wild’ to designate the realms of the ‘deoren’ that neither its spelling nor its simple meaning have changed in a millennium and a half, although as the forests receded and the wilds were colonised the word attracted new connotations.

Wilderness is, in the history of our species, a recent notion. To designate a place apart from, and opposed to, human culture depends upon a set of distinctions that must be based upon a mainly agricultural economy: for the hunter-gatherer, concepts such as fields and crops, as opposed to weeds and wilderness, simply would not exist (see Oelschlaeger 1991: 28). If farming people define ‘home’ as opposed to the ‘wilderness’ and are inclined to view the fruits of their labour as the consequence of a struggle against nature rather than its blessings, the transition from Palaeolithic hunter-gatherer to Neolithic farmer is for many wilderness advocates a crucial turning point, marking a ‘fall’ from a primal ecological grace. Agriculture becomes both the cause and the symptom of an ancient alienation from the earth that monotheistic religion and modern science then completed. Certainly the Palaeolithic ways of life of Eurasia deserve respect for sustaining human populations

substitutes for its utopian promise an obsession with masculine power correlated to a blankly nihilistic apocalypticism. Thus Birkin, in the pseudo-sequel *Women in Love*, envisages a millennium entirely without humans, arguing 'Man is a mistake, he must go' (Lawrence 1989: 128). It is this biocentric inhumanism that seems to appeal to deep ecologists, although the character of Ursula Brangwen remains as a slight counterbalance: 'She herself knew too well the actuality of humanity, its hideous actuality. She knew it could not disappear so cleanly and conveniently. It had a long way to go yet, a long and hideous way' (ibid.). The contrast between a tragic and a comic apocalypticism is pointed, but there is also a more subtle exposure of the inconsistency of Birkin's view, who is like a man imagining his own funeral, unable to comprehend his own absence. Ursula's perspective suggests that Birkin's inhumanism is self-contradictory, his brand of apocalypticism nihilistic. These limitations afflict other forms of anti-anthropocentrism too, at least insofar as they imagine a blank apocalypse: an *eschaton* without a utopia to follow.

### ENVIRONMENTAL APOCALYPTICISM

Buell has argued that 'Apocalypse is the single most powerful master metaphor that the contemporary environmental imagination has at its disposal' (1995: 285). Several of the most influential books in the environmentalist canon make extensive use of the trope, from Carson's *Silent Spring* through Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (1972) to Al Gore's *Earth in the Balance*. Apocalyptic rhetoric is deployed in the activist literature of Earth First!, the philosophical reflections of Bill McKibben and the poetry of Robinson Jeffers. Even the commonplace notion of 'environmental crisis' is inflected by it.

The most influential forerunner to the modern environmental apocalypse is the *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) by Thomas Malthus, which set out to contradict the utopian predictions of endless material and moral progress made by political philosopher William Godwin (1756–1836). Malthus was the first thinker to insist that social policy be guided by ecological necessity, and his theories of population founded the science of demographics, providing the basis for the theories of natural selection of Charles Darwin (1809–82) and Alfred Russel

drama of apocalypse is shaped by a 'frame of acceptance' that may be either 'comic' or 'tragic'. The choice of frame will determine the way in which issues of time, agency, authority and crisis are dramatised:

Tragedy conceives of evil in terms of guilt; its mechanism of redemption is victimage, its plot moves inexorably toward sacrifice and the 'cult of the kill'. Comedy conceives of evil not as guilt, but as error; its mechanism of redemption is recognition rather than victimage, and its plot moves not toward sacrifice but to the exposure of fallibility.

(O'Leary 1994: 68)

If time is framed by tragedy as predetermined and epochal, always careering towards some final, catastrophic conclusion, comic time is open-ended and episodic. Human agency is real but flawed within the comic frame, and individual actors are typically morally conflicted and ambiguous. The tragic actor, on the other hand, has little to do but choose a side in a schematically drawn conflict of good versus evil, since action is likely to seem merely gestural in the face of eschatological history.

The contrast between comic and tragic modes may be exemplified by the argument between early Christian millenarians and St Augustine of Hippo. Mathematicians of the End Times such as Hippolytus of Rome often appealed to the notion of a 'Great Week', in which each 'day' lasted 1,000 years. The Second Coming of Christ would occur on the cusp of the Sabbath of the Great Week (6,000 years after Creation, or *Anno Mundi* 6000), ushering in the 1,000 years of his reign on earth announced in the Revelation of St John (Rev. 20:1–6). The mathematicians sought to work back through the genealogies of the Bible to calculate the first year of the world, AM 1, from which the date of the End could be extrapolated. Augustine's solution to the destabilising effects of such calculations was to insist on the figurative nature of the Bible's apocalyptic visions, and to mock those who calculated their literal advent. The End would occur as prophesied, but it was not for humans to second-guess God's timetable. The gradual shift from the *Anno Mundi* calendar to the *Anno Domini* system further dampened Christian apocalypticism, to the point where, according to recent studies, the year 1000 passed off without panic (Thompson 1997: 35–55).

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## DWELLING

The tropes that have been examined so far contribute to the ways in which we understand nature, but from an ecocritical perspective they are all faulty in one respect: none suggests a mode of practical existence as an immediate reality. Pastoral and wilderness tropes typically imply the perspective of the aesthetic tourist, while the apocalypse encodes the vision of a prophetic imagination. However, other literatures explore the possibility of coming to dwell on the earth in a relation of duty and responsibility. 'Dwelling' is not a transient state; rather, it implies the long-term imbrication of humans in a landscape of memory, ancestry and death, of ritual, life and work. This chapter will consider models of dwelling in the literature of farming known as 'georgic', before turning to the 'primitive' models supposed by some critics to be exemplary of an authentic dwelling on earth.

### GEORGIC

We have considered the claim that Judaeo-Christian monotheism has provided modern European civilisation with ecologically damaging attitudes. Lynn White Jr. argues that Genesis 1:26, 'And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle,



and over all the earth', constitutes a scriptural licence for whatever exploitation we think fit within the framework of moral laws set out elsewhere. Clearly much depends upon the force and meaning of the word 'dominion', however, and philosophers who argue against White's thesis claim that stewardship or 'usufruct', rather than despotism, is enjoined (Artfield 1983; Passmore 1974). Jeanne Kay has argued that both positions misread nature's role in the Bible: 'Nature is God's tool of reward and punishment, and its beneficence depends on human morality' (Kay 1998: 214). Ecological catastrophe in the Old Testament descends for a whole range of transgressions, on innocent and guilty, humanity and nature alike. Kay proposes that the Bible is neither anthropocentric nor ecocentric, but theocentric in a way and to a degree difficult for the modern reader to fully accept: 'A society which explains destruction of pasturage as the result of God's anger over idolatry or insincerity in Temple sacrifices rather than as the direct outcome of climatic fluctuations or overgrazing may have little to offer modern resource management' (Kay 1998: 219). It is certainly difficult to sustain a direct link between contemporary environmental problems and Judaeo-Christianity as such, be it archaic or modern. As theologian Stephen Clark sardonically observes, 'Maybe "the West" has been more successfully rapacious for the last few centuries, but not because we have been more careful Christians!' (Clark 1998: 46).

Virgil's *Georgics* shares with the Bible an emphasis on the relationship of agricultural productivity and ritual observance, although the Roman obsession with astrology and augury differentiates it from the practices represented in the Old Testament. All non-secular agricultural societies ascribe religious significance to key agricultural practices, but Virgil foregrounds the practical aspects of farming, such as the planting of fertility-enhancing legumes before hungry cereals. His aim is not the dispensation of sacred law to a chosen people, but the promotion of good husbandry and the restoration of Roman social virtues in the countryside. The Virgilian emphasis on agriculture is not depicted as a curse for disobedience, as in the Bible, but rather as the god Jupiter's challenge to human ingenuity. Whereas the Old Testament gives advice of a highly localised nature for inhabitants of a Promised Land, Virgil reflects the scope and variety of the Roman Empire in his careful survey of soil types, climates and crops. It is clearly advice for neither the unlettered peasant

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## ANIMALS

The study of the relations between animals and humans in the Humanities is split between philosophical consideration of animal rights and cultural analysis of the representation of animals. A remarkably recent phenomenon, it derived impetus primarily from Peter Singer's revolutionary *Animal Liberation* (1975), which examined an issue until then discussed in passing by moral philosophers but seldom fully explored.

Singer drew upon arguments first put forward by Utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), who suggested that cruelty to animals was analogous to slavery and claimed that the capacity to feel pain, not the power of reason, entitled a being to moral consideration. Singer gives the label 'speciesism' to the irrational prejudice that Bentham identifies as the basis of our different treatment of animals and humans. Just as, say, women or Africans have been mistreated on the grounds of morally irrelevant physiological differences, so animals suffer because they fall on the wrong side of a supposedly 'insuperable line' (cited in Singer 1983: 8) dividing beings that count from those that do not. Yet it turns out to be impossible to draw that line in such a way that all animals are excluded and all humans are included, even if we turn, as many have done, to the faculties of 'reason' or 'discourse': for Bentham 'a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day or a week or even a month

little extra insight and may not be detectable as such by the viewer, whereas time-lapse photography shows gradual processes under way to great effect and is invariably obvious. 'Tidal Seas' made good use of the latter to show changes at the ocean's edge.

One of the key concerns of wildlife documentaries is that some species may become extinct. Many wildlife biologists believe that we are in the early stages of a mass extinction episode not seen since the annihilation of the dinosaurs at the end of the Cretaceous Period 65 million years ago. Humans have been held responsible for many local extinction episodes; for example, the arrival of human settlers in both Madagascar and New Zealand was followed by the extinction of numerous species of flightless birds. More controversially, Native Americans have been blamed for Palaeolithic extinctions of American camels, elephants, giant armadillos, ground sloths and many other species. Such anthropogenic extinctions are thought to have risen rapidly in the last 200 years from an estimated loss rate of one species per year (already 100 times the natural background rate) at the turn of the nineteenth century, largely as a result of extensive destruction of biologically rich tropical rainforests and coral reefs. Norman Myers, in his *Scarcity or Abundance?* debate with cornucopian Julian Simon estimates that we might be losing 27,000 species a year, but suspects that with a more accurate reckoning the annual total might well become 'a good deal larger' (Myers and Simon 1994: 76).

The most accessible examination of the science of extinction is David Quammen's *The Song of the Dodo* (1996), which shows how and why island ecologies are especially vulnerable to anthropogenic impacts. As Alfred Wallace and Charles Darwin found in their crucial field trips, to the Malay Archipelago and the Galapagos Islands respectively, evolution operates most obviously in the biological isolation afforded by islands. They came independently to the conclusion that a single ancestor species, arriving or becoming isolated on the island in the past, could evolve by natural selection into a variety of different species, a process known to modern ecologists as 'adaptive radiation'. As Quammen shows, island ecologies have given rise to an enormous range of odd species such as the tree-climbing kangaroos of New Guinea and the giant lizard or 'dragon' of Komodo (1996: 137–8). Birds typify the combination of variety of species and scarcity of individuals found on islands such as New

the overstated anti-rationalism and gynocentric dualism of radical ecofeminism. The work of Australian philosopher Val Plumwood offers ecofeminism a sound basis for a much-needed critique of the dynamics of domination as they operate in a range of cultural contexts. A monolithically conceived root cause of environmental destruction, be it labelled anthropocentrism or androcentrism is bound to misrepresent the complexity of causation in the real world. Ecofeminism, modified by dialogue with social ecological positions, can provide insight into the cultural operations of environmental injustice. In this way, the fusion of environmental and social development agendas that has occurred so strikingly within and between global NGOs might come to ecocriticism; *Beyond Nature Writing* (2001), edited by Karla Armbruster and Kathleen Wallace, includes several essays in this emergent field of enquiry.

Ecocritics therefore continue to experiment with hybridised reading practices, drawing on various philosophical and literary theoretical sources. Bennett and Teague's *The Nature of Cities* (1999) reveals a new emphasis on bringing cultural theorists such as Cronon, Ross, Luke and Haraway into dialogue with literary ecocritics, thereby consolidating the field around a critical encounter between genres, perspectives and politics. The work of Richard Kerridge is exemplary in this respect: he writes with as much insight about postmodern risk as he does about Thomas Hardy. Harrison's eclectic *Forests* (1993), which ranges from Grimm fairy tales to the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, fosters the making of connections between disparate cultural phenomena without eliminating their peculiarities. Bate and Buell first published books that identified a single 'environmental tradition' in Britain and the USA, stemming from Wordsworth and Thoreau respectively. In later works, however, they favour an explicitly dialectical approach. In *The Song of the Earth*, Wordsworth's piety is leavened with Byron's wit, and Heidegger's portentousness gets a learned sneer from Theodor Adorno. For Buell, *Writing for an Endangered World* involves juxtaposing urbanites like Theodor Dreiser and Gwendolyn Brooks with the more obvious candidates for ecocritical treatment, Jeffers and Berry. Drawing upon such diverse resources of hope enables ecocriticism to connect with the urban and suburban places in which most of us will continue to live, and will add depth to the ecological critique of modernity; material and economic progress is no more the root of all evils than it is an unalloyed benefit to

people or the natural world. By such means the risk of fostering reactionary politics might be minimised.

There are two key challenges for the future. One is the relationship between globalisation and ecocriticism, which has barely been broached. Sustained attention to the idea of place as locale has provided us with no sense of the place of the whole Earth in contemporary culture. The second is the difficulty of developing constructive relations between the green humanities and the environmental sciences. This is especially problematic in the light of developments in ecology that expose the rhetoric of balance and harmony as, in effect, versions of pastoral. This notion of nature's wisdom is so deeply ingrained in environmentalist discourse and ecocriticism that only sustained research at the borders of the humanities and the new postmodern biological sciences can disentangle it from our systems of basic presuppositions. As Daniel Botkin observes:

As long as we could believe that nature undisturbed was constant, we were provided with a simple standard against which to judge our actions, a reflection from a windless pond in which our place was both apparent and fixed, providing us with a sense of continuity and permanence that was comforting. Abandoning these beliefs leaves us on an extreme existential position: we are like small boats without anchors in a sea of time; how we long for a safe harbor on a shore.

(1992: 188–9)

Gaia, for example, implies unpredictability and dynamism rather than predetermined harmony, but also comfortingly reasserts the tendency of life to maintain equilibrium or balance. Botkin's ecology places rather less faith in the harmonious regulatory functions of living organisms. In both cases, the inflection of Earth as a static, fixed image is shown to be terribly misleading. The Earth is perhaps better seen as a process rather than an object.

Postmodern ecology neither returns us to the ancient myth of the Earth Mother, whose loss some ecocritics lament, nor supplies us with evidence that 'nature knows best'. The irony is that a future Earth-orientated system of values and tropes will have to acknowledge contingency and indeterminacy at a fundamental level, but this only

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## POSITIONS

'Environmentalism' is relatively young as a social, political and philosophical movement, but already a number of distinct eco-philosophies have emerged that seem as likely to compete with each other as to combine in any revolutionary synthesis. Each approach understands environmental crisis in its own way, emphasising aspects that are either amenable to solution in terms that it supplies or threatening to values it holds most dear, thus suggesting a range of political possibilities. Each one, moreover, might provide the basis for a distinct ecocritical approach with specific literary or cultural affinities and aversions.

### CORNUCOPIA

Despite the remarkable degree of consensus that exists amongst scientists about the environmental threats posed by modern civilisation, there are nevertheless some who argue that most, if not all, such dangers are illusory or exaggerated. This 'cornucopian' position is therefore, in an important sense, not environmentalist at all, and is in some cases financially supported and disseminated by anti-environmentalist industrial pressure groups. Free-market economists and demographers are amongst its most outspoken intellectual proponents, arguing that the dynamism of capitalist economies will generate solutions to environmental problems as

Alongside the claims of an endless cornucopia of wealth, growth and commodity production, Beckerman, Simon and others bring criticisms of environmental 'scare-mongering', pointing to inaccurate projections of global cooling and worldwide famine made by ecologists in the 1970s. They point to the acknowledged uncertainty in, for example, species extinction rates or global climatic modelling, and argue on this basis for inaction or, at best, further research.

It is certainly important to remember the vast improvements in measurable human welfare brought about in both developed and developing countries, albeit terribly inequitably, by economic growth and technological progress. Capitalism mobilises problem-solving capacities in humans that it would be wise not to underestimate. However, this position suffers from a major inconsistency: many of the environmental improvements enjoyed by post-industrial nations have not only been achieved by moving damaging industries to developing countries, but have been driven by the political agitation of the environmental campaigners cornucopians now claim are obstructing economic and technological progress. It is not capitalism alone that produces the solutions cornucopians identify, but entrepreneurs responding to morally motivated consumers and government regulations.

A more serious objection is that cornucopians take little or no account of the non-human environment except insofar as it impacts upon human wealth or welfare. Nature is only valued in terms of its usefulness to us. Many environmentalists argue that we need to develop a value system which takes the intrinsic or inherent value of nature as its starting point. This fundamental distinction is evident in the debate between Simon and conservation biologist Norman Myers, from which I have quoted above.

## ENVIRONMENTALISM

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'. Many value rural ways of life, hiking or camping, or are members of one of the mainstream environmental organisations such



drama of apocalypse is shaped by a 'frame of acceptance' that may be either 'comic' or 'tragic'. The choice of frame will determine the way in which issues of time, agency, authority and crisis are dramatised:

Tragedy conceives of evil in terms of guilt; its mechanism of redemption is victimage, its plot moves inexorably toward sacrifice and the 'cult of the kill'. Comedy conceives of evil not as guilt, but as error; its mechanism of redemption is recognition rather than victimage, and its plot moves not toward sacrifice but to the exposure of fallibility.

(O'Leary 1994: 68)

If time is framed by tragedy as predetermined and epochal, always careering towards some final, catastrophic conclusion, comic time is open-ended and episodic. Human agency is real but flawed within the comic frame, and individual actors are typically morally conflicted and ambiguous. The tragic actor, on the other hand, has little to do but choose a side in a schematically drawn conflict of good versus evil, since action is likely to seem merely gestural in the face of eschatological history.

The contrast between comic and tragic modes may be exemplified by the argument between early Christian millenarians and St Augustine of Hippo. Mathematicians of the End Times such as Hippolytus of Rome often appealed to the notion of a 'Great Week', in which each 'day' lasted 1,000 years. The Second Coming of Christ would occur on the cusp of the Sabbath of the Great Week (6,000 years after Creation, or *Anno Mundi* 6000), ushering in the 1,000 years of his reign on earth announced in the Revelation of St John (Rev. 20:1–6). The mathematicians sought to work back through the genealogies of the Bible to calculate the first year of the world, AM 1, from which the date of the End could be extrapolated. Augustine's solution to the destabilising effects of such calculations was to insist on the figurative nature of the Bible's apocalyptic visions, and to mock those who calculated their literal advent. The End would occur as prophesied, but it was not for humans to second-guess God's timetable. The gradual shift from the *Anno Mundi* calendar to the *Anno Domini* system further dampened Christian apocalypticism, to the point where, according to recent studies, the year 1000 passed off without panic (Thompson 1997: 35–55).

Augustine's eschatology is therefore comic and non-catastrophic, emphasising a drawn-out moral struggle going on not between forces of light and darkness, but within the faithful themselves. This ethical subtlety, along with an emphasis upon free will, supplies a sounder moral ideology for a church wary of millennial enthusiasms: if the End may or may not be nigh, believers must live in the light of its possibility whilst refraining from relinquishing their worldly duties in a fit of utopian hysteria. Tragic narratives of the End, on the other hand, are radically dualistic, deterministic and catastrophic, and have tended historically to issue in the suicidal, homicidal or even genocidal frenzies.

Orthodox, Roman Catholic and, for the most part, Protestant Christianity has promoted comic apocalypticism. The imperatives of scriptural authority, history and popular enthusiasm have rendered the trope indispensable, but a tragic frame tends to produce either schisms or perpetual charismatic revolution, and seems unsustainable in the long term. The implications for attitudes to the natural world, moreover, seem worse in the tragic mode. We may recall Lynn White Jr.'s argument that Christianity is a dangerously anthropocentric religion, and perhaps his parenthetical comment that only Zoroastrianism might be comparable to it. White draws attention to the dualistic conception of humanity and nature that the two religions share, but in addition they are both apocalyptic, which may be the key to the question of Judaeo-Christianity's contribution to environmental problems. Established Christianity balances the long-standing notion of the sanctity of Creation against the dualistic idea of transcendence that White noticed, but millenarian Christianity stresses radical discontinuity: 'And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away' (Rev. 21:1). In its emphasis upon Christians as decisive actors in an imminent epochal conflict, millenarians inevitably brush aside the mild anthropocentrism of the established Christian 'stewardship' tradition, recommended by ecophilosopher John Passmore on account of its long-term, conservationist ethic. Environmental crisis serves modern American conservative evangelists just as natural disasters served mediæval millenarians: as a sign of the coming End, but not as a warning to avert it. The coincidence of radical anthropocentrism and millennial zeal is epitomised by Ronald Reagan's first Secretary of the Interior, James Watt, who argued against environmental protection on the grounds that

## GLOSSARY

**Androcentric** system of beliefs and practices that favours men over women.

**Animism** belief that natural objects and phenomena have spirits.

**Anthropocentrism** system of beliefs and practices that favours humans over other organisms.

**Anthropogenic** caused by humans.

**Carrying capacity** maximum number of organisms of a certain kind that an ecosystem can support. Sometimes dubiously applied to human populations, e.g. Callenbach 1998: 22–5.

**Constructionism** belief that apparently natural phenomena, such as gender characteristics, are mainly or wholly enculturated or 'socially constructed'.

**Cyborg** hybrid organism incorporating biological and electro-mechanical elements.

**Dialectic** analysis pursued by means of incorporation of opposed arguments or perspectives.

**Dualism** explanation of the world in terms of two opposed terms, e.g. mind vs. matter, nature vs. culture.

**Ecocide** destruction of entire habitats, rather than just individual organisms or species.

**Instrumental value** possessing value only in relation to human interests, usually narrowly economic.

**Intraspecies** operating within, rather than between, species.

**Intrinsic value** possessing value in its own right, without reference to human interests.

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# Literature, Asia, and the Anthropocene: Possibilities for Asian Studies and the Environmental Humanities

KAREN L. THORNER

THE TERM “Anthropocene,” coined in the 1980s by the ecologist Eugene F. Stoermer and popularized at the turn of the twenty-first century by the atmospheric chemist and Nobel laureate Paul Crutzen, has been used increasingly in the past decade to highlight human activity as a geological force and to underscore the rapidly escalating impacts of human behaviors on the planet—sufficient, many have argued, to launch a new geological age. While geologists and environmentalists continue to debate the validity of Anthropocene as a formal designation, climate change; mass extinctions of plant and animal species; and widespread pollution of sky, sea, and land make clear the extent to which humans have shaped global ecologies.<sup>1</sup> An understanding of Asia—home to more than half the world’s population, an increasingly significant contributor to global carbon dioxide emissions, the site of the Third Pole,<sup>2</sup> and an area acutely vulnerable to climate change and rising sea levels—is vital to an understanding of the physical, chemical, biological, and cultural processes that comprise the Anthropocene.

Asia and Asian studies are important to understanding the Anthropocene—not only because of Asian peoples’ long histories of transforming environments, not only because of Asian peoples’ long histories of environmental philosophies advocating harmonious human-nonhuman relationships, but also because of Asian peoples’ long histories of cultural products exposing and decrying environmental abuse and the vivid global responses to Asia’s environmental crises. Increased engagement with the Anthropocene has the potential to enrich Asian studies greatly.

To be sure, scholars of Asia from a variety of disciplines have grown increasingly attentive in recent years to environmental destruction within and across national and regional borders in Central, East, South, and Southeast Asia. But as Mark Hudson (2014) has pointed out, for a variety of reasons very little research in Asian studies

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<sup>1</sup>A proposal to formalize the term “Anthropocene” is currently being considered by a working group of the International Commission on Stratigraphy’s Subcommittee on Quaternary Stratigraphy (International Commission on Stratigraphy 2014; see also Strömberg 2013). In recent years, conservation scientists have drawn attention to the services nature provides to human beings, creating a different but related type of human-centered science (Voosen 2013).

<sup>2</sup>The Third Pole is the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region, where climate change is accelerated and which has more ice and snow than any location but the North and South Poles (see ICIMOD Foundation 2014).

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mahaman atau cara pandang manusia mengenai dirinya, alam, dan tempat manusia dalam keseluruhan ekosistem. Pada gilirannya, kekeliruan cara pandang ini melahirkan perilaku yang keliru terhadap alam. Manusia keliru memandang alam dan keliru menempatkan diri dalam konteks alam semesta seluruhnya. Dan inilah awal dari semua bencana lingkungan hidup yang kita alami sekarang. Oleh karena itu, pembenahannya harus pula menyangkut pembenahan cara pandang dan perilaku manusia dalam berinteraksi baik dengan alam maupun dengan manusia lain dalam keseluruhan ekosistem.

Kesalahan cara pandang ini bersumber dari etika antroposentrisme, yang memandang manusia sebagai pusat dari alam semesta, dan hanya manusia yang mempunyai nilai, sementara alam dan segala isinya sekadar alat bagi pemuasan kepentingan dan kebutuhan hidup manusia. Manusia dianggap berada di luar, di atas dan terpisah dari alam. Bahkan, manusia dipahami sebagai penguasa atas alam yang boleh melakukan apa saja terhadap alam. Cara pandang seperti ini melahirkan sikap dan perilaku eksploitatif tanpa kepedulian sama sekali terhadap alam dan segala isinya yang dianggap tidak mempunyai nilai pada dirinya sendiri.

Etika antroposentrisme merupakan sebuah cara pandang Barat, yang bermula dari Aristoteles hingga filsuf-filsuf modern. Ada tiga kesalahan fundamental dari cara pandang ini. *Pertama*, manusia dipahami hanya sebagai makhluk sosial (*social animal*), yang eksistensi dan identitas dirinya ditentukan oleh komunitas sosialnya. Dalam pemahaman ini, manusia berkembang menjadi dirinya dalam interaksi dengan sesama manusia di dalam komunitas sosialnya. Identitas dirinya dibentuk oleh komunitas sosialnya, sebagaimana dia sendiri ikut membentuk ko-



munitas sosialnya. Manusia tidak dilihat sebagai makhluk ekologis yang identitasnya ikut dibentuk oleh alam.

*Kedua*, etika hanya berlaku bagi komunitas sosial manusia. Jadi, yang disebut sebagai norma dan nilai moral hanya dibatasi keberlakuannya bagi manusia. Dalam paham ini, hanya manusia yang merupakan pelaku moral, yaitu makhluk yang mempunyai kemampuan untuk bertindak secara moral berdasarkan akal budi dan kehendak bebasnya. Etika tidak berlaku bagi makhluk lain di luar manusia.

Pemahaman etika seperti itu sebenarnya sudah mengalami perluasan. Dalam pemahaman tahap pertama, etika dipahami hanya berlaku bagi makhluk yang rasional dan bebas (*free and rational beings*). Konsekuensinya, etika tidak berlaku bagi mereka yang tidak berakal budi dan tidak bebas, seperti budak, perempuan, dan ras kulit berwarna. Budak dan perempuan hanya sekadar alat di tangan majikan dan laki-laki, yang bebas diperlakukan seenaknya tanpa boleh menuntut perilaku yang bermartabat. Oleh karena itu, apa pun perilaku majikan dan laki-laki terhadap mereka, tidak bisa dinilai sebagai tidak bermoral. Terkait dengan itu, budak dan perempuan, serta ras kulit berwarna, dianggap tidak memiliki hak asasi manusia.

Dari pemahaman etika yang sangat sempit dengan segala dampaknya dalam berbagai bentuk perilaku tidak beradab sepanjang sejarah umat manusia ini, muncul kesadaran baru untuk memperluas etika agar berlaku bagi semua manusia tanpa terkecuali. Dalam pemahaman etika yang baru ini, budak, perempuan dan ras kulit berwarna harus diperlakukan secara bermoral. Semua manusia, tanpa terkecuali (termasuk budak dan perempuan), adalah makhluk yang bebas dan rasional. Puncak dari perluasan etika ini adalah Deklarasi Universal Hak-hak Asasi Manusia. Kendati perempuan di

berbagai belahan dunia masih berjuang untuk benar-benar menikmati hak dan perlakuan bermoral secara sama dengan laki-laki, ini adalah sebuah perluasan cara pandang cukup maju.

Kelemahan cara pandang ini adalah, etika masih dibatasi hanya berlaku bagi manusia. Alam dan segala isinya masih tetap diperlakukan sebagai alat di tangan manusia. Maka, konsep mengenai etika dan perlakuan secara etis terhadap alam, apalagi ide mengenai adanya hak asasi alam, khususnya hak asasi binatang, merupakan sesuatu yang dianggap aneh dan tidak masuk akal. Aneh dan tidak masuk akal bahwa binatang dan tumbuhan mempunyai hak yang sama dengan manusia.

Kedua kelemahan di atas, kini dikritik dan dikoreksi oleh etika biosentrisme dan ekosentrisme. Bagi biosentrisme dan ekosentrisme, manusia tidak hanya dipandang sebagai makhluk sosial. Manusia pertama-tama harus dipahami sebagai makhluk biologis, makhluk ekologis. Manusia hanya bisa hidup dan berkembang sebagai manusia utuh dan penuh, tidak hanya dalam komunitas sosial, tetapi juga dalam komunitas ekologis, yaitu makhluk yang kehidupannya tergantung dari dan terkait erat dengan semua kehidupan lain di alam semesta. Makhluk yang menjalin ketergantungan timbal-balik saling menguntungkan dengan semua kehidupan lainnya, dan hanya melalui "jaring kehidupan" itu ia bisa hidup dan berkembang menjadi diri sendiri. Tanpa alam, tanpa makhluk hidup lain, manusia tidak akan bertahan hidup, karena manusia hanya merupakan salah satu entitas di alam semesta. Seperti semua makhluk hidup lainnya, manusia mempunyai kedudukan yang sama dalam "jaring kehidupan" di alam semesta ini. Jadi, manusia tidak berada di luar, di atas dan terpisah dari

yang agak berbeda dari etika yang dominan selama ini, yaitu etika yang terutama didasarkan pada kasih sayang, kepedulian, kesetaraan dan tanggung jawab terhadap kehidupan lain dalam suatu relasi setara dan harmonis dalam komunitas ekologis.

*Ketiga*, kesalahan cara pandang pada antroposentrisme tersebut diperkuat lagi oleh cara pandang atau paradigma ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi modern yang Cartesian dengan ciri utama mekanistik-reduksionistik. Dalam paradigma ilmu pengetahuan yang Cartesian, ada pemisahan yang tegas antara alam sebagai obyek ilmu pengetahuan dan manusia sebagai subyek. Demikian pula, ada pemisahan yang tegas antara fakta dan nilai. Maka, paradigma ilmu pengetahuan modern yang mekanistik-reduksionistik ini membela paham bebas nilai dalam ilmu pengetahuan. Ilmu pengetahuan bersifat otonom, sehingga seluruh perkembangan ilmu pengetahuan dikembangkan dan diarahkan hanya demi ilmu pengetahuan. Dengan demikian, penilaian mengenai baik buruk ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi beserta segala dampaknya dari segi moral atau agama, adalah penilaian yang tidak relevan. Hal ini melahirkan sikap dan perilaku manipulatif dan eksploitatif terhadap alam, dan pada gilirannya melahirkan berbagai krisis ekologi sekarang ini.

Untuk mengatasi krisis ekologi, perlu ada perubahan paradigma dalam ilmu pengetahuan yang tidak lagi bersifat mekanistik-reduksionistik tetapi bersifat holistik, juga ekologis. Dalam cara pandang holistik ini, tidak lagi ada pemisahan yang tegas antara subyek dan obyek antara fakta dan nilai. Ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi beserta seluruh perkembangan dan dampaknya tidak bisa tidak harus dinilai pula secara moral, termasuk dalam kaitannya



# **The Ecocriticism Reader**



**LANDMARKS IN LITERARY ECOLOGY**



**Edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm**

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### THE REMORSELESS INEVITABLENESS OF THINGS

As a classic textbook by E. Odum on the subject tells us, ecology is always concerned with "levels beyond that of the individual organism. It is concerned with populations, communities, ecosystems, and the biosphere." By its very nature it is concerned with complex interactions and with the largest sets of interrelationships. We must remember Commoner's first Law of Ecology: "Everything is connected to everything else." The biosphere (or ecosphere) is the home that life has built for itself on the planet's outer surface. In that ecosphere there is a reciprocal interdependence of one life process upon another, and there is a mutual interconnected development of all of the earth's life systems. If we continue to teach, write, and write about poetry without acknowledging and trying to act upon the fact that—to cite a single example—all the oceans of our home are slowly being contaminated by all the pollutants disposed of in modern communities—even what we try to send up in smoke—then we will soon lose the environment in which we write and teach. All the creative processes of the biosphere, including the human ones, may well come to an end if we cannot find a way to determine the limits of human destruction and intrusion which the biosphere can tolerate, and learn how to creatively manage the biosphere. McHarg and others say that this is our unique creative role, but that as yet we have neither the vision nor the knowledge to carry it out, and that we do not have much more time to acquire both. This somewhat hysterical proposition is why I tried to write this paper and why, true to the experimental motive intrinsic to me as a human being, I have taken on the question of how reading, teaching, and writing about literature might function creatively in the biosphere, to the ends of biospheric purgation, redemption from human intrusions, and health.

As a reader and teacher and critic of literature, I have asked the largest, most important and relevant question about literature that I know how to ask in 1976. It is interesting, to me anyway, that eight years ago, trying to define my position, I was asking questions about the visionary fifth dimension and about how man is *released from the necessities of nature into this realm of pure being by means of literature*. Four years ago, attempting to do the same thing, I was writing about history as a symbol and about being boxed in the void, convinced that there were no viable concepts of or possibilities for the future, and about literary criticism as a necessary,

irrigation, overgrazing, the cutting of forests by Romans to build ships to fight Carthaginians or by Crusaders to solve the logistics problems of their expeditions, have profoundly changed some ecologies. Observation that the French landscape falls into two basic types, the open fields of the north and the *bocage* of the south and west, inspired Marc Bloch to undertake his classic study of medieval agricultural methods. Quite unintentionally, changes in human ways often affect nonhuman nature. It has been noted, for example, that the advent of the automobile eliminated huge flocks of sparrows that once fed on the horse manure littering every street.

The history of ecologic change is still so rudimentary that we know little about what really happened, or what the results were. The extinction of the European aurochs as late as 1627 would seem to have been a simple case of overenthusiastic hunting. On more intricate matters it often is impossible to find solid information. For a thousand years or more the Frisians and Hollanders have been pushing back the North Sea, and the process is culminating in our own time in the reclamation of the Zuider Zee. What, if any, species of animals, birds, fish, shore life, or plants have died out in the process? In their epic combat with Neptune have the Netherlanders overlooked ecological values in such a way that the quality of human life in the Netherlands has suffered? I cannot discover that the questions have ever been asked, much less answered.

People, then, have often been a dynamic element in their own environment, but in the present state of historical scholarship we usually do not know exactly when, where, or with what effects man-induced changes came. As we enter the last third of the twentieth century, however, concern for the problem of ecologic backlash is mounting feverishly. Natural science, conceived as the effort to understand the nature of things, had flourished in several eras and among several peoples. Similarly there had been an age-old accumulation of technological skills, sometimes growing rapidly, sometimes slowly. But it was not until about four generations ago that Western Europe and North America arranged a marriage between science and technology, a union of the theoretical and the empirical approaches to our natural environment. The emergence in widespread practice of the Baconian creed that scientific knowledge means technological power over nature can scarcely be dated before about 1850, save in the chemical industries, where it is anticipated in the eighteenth century. Its acceptance as a normal pattern of action may mark the greatest event in human his-



organized by Harold Fromm, entitled "Ecocriticism: The Greening of Literary Studies," and the 1992 American Literature Association symposium chaired by Glen Love, entitled "American Nature Writing: New Contexts, New Approaches." In 1992, at the annual meeting of the Western Literature Association, a new Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) was formed, with Scott Slovic elected first president. ASLE's mission: "to promote the exchange of ideas and information pertaining to literature that considers the relationship between human beings and the natural world" and to encourage "new nature writing, traditional and innovative scholarly approaches to environmental literature, and interdisciplinary environmental research." In its first year, ASLE's membership swelled to more than 300; in its second year that number doubled, and the group created an electronic-mail computer network to facilitate communication among members; in its third year, 1995, ASLE's membership had topped 750 and the group hosted its first conference, in Fort Collins, Colorado. In 1993 Patrick Murphy established a new journal, *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, to "provide a forum for critical studies of the literary and performing arts proceeding from or addressing environmental considerations. These would include ecological theory, environmentalism, conceptions of nature and their depictions, the human/nature dichotomy and related concerns."<sup>4</sup>

By 1993, then, ecological literary study had emerged as a recognizable critical school. The formerly disconnected scattering of lone scholars had joined forces with younger scholars and graduate students to become a strong interest group with aspirations to change the profession. The origin of ecocriticism as a critical approach thus predates its recent consolidation by more than twenty years.

### DEFINITION OF ECOCRITICISM

What then *is* ecocriticism? Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies.

Ecocritics and theorists ask questions like the following: How is nature

*criticism* was possibly first coined in 1978 by William Rueckert in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" (reprinted in this anthology). By ecocriticism Rueckert meant "the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature." Rueckert's definition, concerned specifically with the science of ecology, is thus more restrictive than the one proposed in this anthology, which includes all possible relations between literature and the physical world.<sup>6</sup> Other terms currently in circulation include *ecopoetics*, *environmental literary criticism*, and *green cultural studies*.

Many critics write environmentally conscious criticism without needing or wanting a specific name for it. Others argue that a name is important. It was precisely because the early studies lacked a common subject heading that they were dispersed so widely, failed to build on one another, and became both difficult to access and negligible in their impact on the profession. Some scholars like the term *ecocriticism* because it is short and can easily be made into other forms like *ecocritical* and *ecocritic*. Additionally, they favor *eco-* over *enviro-* because, analogous to the science of ecology, ecocriticism studies relationships between things, in this case, between human culture and the physical world. Furthermore, in its connotations, *enviro-* is anthropocentric and dualistic, implying that we humans are at the center, surrounded by everything that is not us, the environment. *Eco-*, in contrast, implies interdependent communities, integrated systems, and strong connections among constituent parts. Ultimately, of course, usage will dictate which term or whether any term is adopted. But think of how convenient it would be to sit down at a computerized database and have a single term to enter for your subject search. . . .

### THE HUMANITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

Regardless of what name it goes by, most ecocritical work shares a common motivation: the troubling awareness that we have reached the age of environmental limits, a time when the consequences of human actions are damaging the planet's basic life support systems. We are there. Either we change our ways or we face global catastrophe, destroying much beauty and exterminating countless fellow species in our headlong race to apocalypse. Many of us in colleges and universities worldwide find ourselves in a dilemma. Our temperaments and talents have deposited us in literature

departments, but, as environmental problems compound, work as usual seems unconscionably frivolous. If we're not part of the solution, we're part of the problem.

How then can we contribute to environmental restoration, not just in our spare time, but from within our capacity as professors of literature?<sup>7</sup> The answer lies in recognizing that current environmental problems are largely of our own making, are, in other words, a by-product of culture. As historian Donald Worster explains,

We are facing a global crisis today, not because of how ecosystems function but rather because of how our ethical systems function. Getting through the crisis requires understanding our impact on nature as precisely as possible, but even more, it requires understanding those ethical systems and using that understanding to reform them. Historians, along with literary scholars, anthropologists, and philosophers, cannot do the reforming, of course, but they can help with the understanding.<sup>8</sup>

Answering the call to understanding, scholars throughout the humanities are finding ways to add an environmental dimension to their respective disciplines. Worster and other historians are writing environmental histories, studying the reciprocal relationships between humans and land, considering nature not just as the stage upon which the human story is acted out, but as an actor in the drama. They trace the connections among environmental conditions, economic modes of production, and cultural ideas through time.

Anthropologists have long been interested in the connection between culture and geography. Their work on primal cultures in particular may help the rest of us not only to respect such people's right to survive, but also to think about the value systems and rituals that have helped these cultures live sustainably.

Psychology has long ignored nature in its theories of the human mind. A handful of contemporary psychologists, however, are exploring the linkages between environmental conditions and mental health, some regarding the modern estrangement from nature as the basis of our social and psychological ills.

In philosophy, various subfields like environmental ethics, deep ecology, ecofeminism, and social ecology have emerged in an effort to understand and critique the root causes of environmental degradation and to formulate an alternative view of existence that will provide an ethical and conceptual foundation for right relations with the earth.



represented in this sonnet? What role does the physical setting play in the plot of this *novel*? Are the values expressed in this play consistent with ecological wisdom? How do our metaphors of the land influence the way we treat it? How can we characterize nature writing as a genre? In addition to race, class, and gender, should *place* become a new critical category? Do men write about nature differently than women do? In what ways has literacy itself affected humankind's relationship to the natural world? How has the concept of wilderness changed over time? In what ways and to what effect is the environmental crisis seeping into contemporary literature and popular culture? What view of nature informs U.S. Government reports, corporate advertising, and televised nature documentaries, and to what rhetorical effect? What bearing might the science of ecology have on literary studies? How is science itself open to literary analysis? What cross-fertilization is possible between literary studies and environmental discourse in related disciplines such as history, philosophy, psychology, art history, and ethics?

Despite the broad scope of inquiry and disparate levels of sophistication, all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it. Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature. As a critical stance, it has one foot in literature and the other on land; as a theoretical discourse, it negotiates between the human and the nonhuman.

Ecocriticism can be further characterized by distinguishing it from other critical approaches. Literary theory, in general, examines the relations between writers, texts, and the world. In most literary theory "the world" is synonymous with society—the social sphere. Ecocriticism expands the notion of "the world" to include the entire ecosphere. If we agree with Barry Commoner's first law of ecology, "Everything is connected to everything else," we must conclude that literature does not float above the material world in some aesthetic ether, but, rather, plays a part in an immensely complex global system, in which energy, matter, *and ideas* interact.

But the taxonomic name of this green branch of literary study is still being negotiated. In *The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology* (1972) Joseph W. Meeker introduced the term *literary ecology* to refer to "the study of biological themes and relationships which appear in literary works. It is simultaneously an attempt to discover what roles have been played by literature in the ecology of the human species."<sup>5</sup> The term *eco-*

BRYAN G. NORTON

## Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism

Bryan Norton is a professor in the school of Public Policy at the Georgia Institute of Technology and a frequent contributor to discussions in environmental philosophy. He has been a long-standing defender of what he calls "weak" anthropocentrism, the view that morally relevant interests consist of the considered preferences of human beings only. Weak anthropocentrism is contrasted with strong anthropocentrism, where all interests are reducible to the felt preferences of human beings. The difference between considered and felt preferences is that considered preferences can be rationally assessed, since one might have felt preferences that, upon consideration, one realizes one ought not to have. According to Norton, "One need not make the questionable ontological commitments involved in attributing intrinsic value to nature, since weak anthropocentrism provides a framework adequate to criticize current destructive practices . . . and to account for the distinctive nature of environmental ethics."

### CRITICAL READING QUESTIONS

1. How does Norton characterize an "adequate" ethic? In what way does he think weak anthropocentrism is an adequate ethic?
2. How, on weak anthropocentrism, is nature a "teacher" of values?
3. In what way does Norton think environmental ethics is distinctive?
4. What is "Parfit's paradox," and why, according to Norton, must appreciation of the paradox drive environmental ethics to focus on wholes, not individuals? What is the whole at issue in Norton's discussion?
5. What is the trust fund analogy supposed to show?
6. What are the two levels of environmental ethic, according to Norton?

### I. INTRODUCTION

[I]n the present paper . . . I address the question of whether there must be a distinctively environmental ethic.

Discussions of this question in the literature have equated a negative answer with the belief that the

standard categories of rights, interests, and duties of individual human beings are adequate to furnish ethical guidance in environmental decision making. A positive answer is equated with the suggestion that nature has, in some sense, intrinsic value. In other words, the question of whether environmental ethics is distinctive is taken as equivalent to the question of whether an environmental ethic must reject anthropocentrism, the view that only humans are loci of fundamental value.<sup>1</sup> Environmental ethics is seen as distinctive vis-à-vis standard ethics if and only if environmental ethics can be founded upon principles which assert or presup-

<sup>1</sup>Bryan Norton, "Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism," from *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 6, no. 2 (Summer 1984). Reprinted by permission.

pose that nonhuman natural entities have value independent of human value.

I argue that this equivalence is mistaken by showing that the anthropocentrism/nonanthropocentrism debate is far less important than is usually assumed. Once an ambiguity is noted in its central terms, it becomes clear that nonanthropocentrism is not the only adequate basis for a truly environmental ethic.<sup>2</sup> I then argue that another dichotomy, that of individualism versus nonindividualism, should be seen as crucial to the distinctiveness of environmental ethics and that a successful environmental ethic cannot be individualistic in the way that standard contemporary ethical systems are. Finally, I examine the consequences of these conclusions for the nature and shape of an environmental ethic.

Before beginning these arguments, I need to clarify how I propose to test an adequate environmental ethic. I begin by assuming that all environmentally sensitive individuals believe that there is a set of human behaviors which do or would damage the environment. Further, I assume that there is considerable agreement among such individuals about what behaviors are included in that set. Most would decry, for example, careless storage of toxic wastes, grossly overpopulating the world with humans, wanton destruction of other species, air and water pollution, and so forth. There are other behaviors which would be more controversial, but I take the initial task of constructing an adequate environmental ethic to be the statement of some set of principles from which rules can be derived proscribing the behaviors included in the set which virtually all environmentally sensitive individuals agree are environmentally destructive. The further task of refining an environmental ethic then involves moving back and forth between the basic principles and the more or less controversial behaviors, adjusting principles and/or rejecting intuitions until the best possible fit between principles and sets of proscribed behaviors is obtained for the whole environmental community. In the present paper I address the prior question of basic principles. I am here only seeking to clarify which principles do (and which do not) support the large set of relatively uncontroversial cases of behaviors damaging to the environment. An ethic will be ad-

equated, on this approach, if its principles are sufficient to entail rules proscribing the behaviors involved in the noncontroversial set. My arguments, then, are not directed at determining which principles are true, but which are adequate to uphold certain shared intuitions. Questions concerning the truth of such principles must be left for another occasion.

## II. ANTHROPOCENTRISM AND NONANTHROPOCENTRISM

I suggest that the distinction between anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism has been given more importance in discussions of the foundations of environmental ethics than it warrants because a crucial ambiguity in the term *anthropocentrism* has gone unnoticed.<sup>3</sup> Writers on both sides of the controversy apply this term to positions which treat humans as the only loci of intrinsic value.<sup>4</sup> Anthropocentrists are therefore taken to believe that every instance of value originates in a contribution to human values and that all elements of nature can, at most, have value instrumental to the satisfaction of human interests.<sup>5</sup> Note that anthropocentrism is defined by reference to the position taken on *loci* of value. Some nonanthropocentrists say that human beings are the source of all values, but that they can designate nonhuman objects as loci of fundamental value.<sup>6</sup>

It has also become common to explain and test views on this point by reference to "last man examples" which are formulated as follows.<sup>7</sup> Assume that a human being, *S*, is the last living member of *Homo sapiens* and that *S* faces imminent death. Would *S* do wrong to wantonly destroy some object *X*? A positive answer to this question with regard to any nonhuman *X* is taken to entail nonanthropocentrism. If the variable *X* refers to some natural object, a species, an ecosystem, a geological formation, etc., then it is thought that positions on such questions determine whether a person is an anthropocentrist or not, because the action in question cannot conceivably harm any human individual. If it is wrong to destroy *X*, the wrongness must derive from harm to *X* or to some other natural object. But one can

harm something only if it is a good in its own right in the sense of being a locus of fundamental value.

Or so the story goes. I am unconvinced because not nearly enough has been said about what counts as a human interest. In order to explore this difficult area, I introduce two useful definitions. A *felt preference* is any desire or need of a human individual that can at least temporarily be satiated by some specifiable experience of that individual. A *considered preference* is any desire or need that a human individual would express after careful deliberation, including a judgment that the desire or need is consistent with a rationally adopted world view—a world view which includes fully supported scientific theories and a metaphysical framework interpreting those theories, as well as a set of rationally supported aesthetic and moral ideals.

When interests are assumed to be constructed merely from felt preferences, they are thereby insulated from any criticism or objection. Economic approaches to decision making often adopt this approach because it eschews "value judgments"—decision makers need only ask people what they want, perhaps correct these preferences for intensity, compute the preferences satisfied by the various possible courses of action, and let the resulting ordinal ranking imply a decision.

A considered preference, on the other hand, is an idealization in the sense that it can only be adopted after a person has rationally accepted an entire world view and, further, has succeeded in altering his felt preferences so that they are consonant with that world view. Since this is a process no one has ever completed, references to considered preferences are hypothetical—they refer to preferences the individual would have if certain contrary-to-fact conditions were fulfilled. Nonetheless, references to considered preferences remain useful because it is possible to distinguish felt preferences from considered preferences when there are convincing arguments that felt preferences are not consistent with some element of a world view that appears worthy of rational support.

It is now possible to define two forms of anthropocentrism. A value theory is *weakly anthropocentric* if all value countenanced by it is explained by reference to satisfactions of felt preferences of human in-

dividuals. A value theory is *strongly anthropocentric* if all value countenanced by it is explained by reference to satisfaction of some felt preference of a human individual or by reference to its bearing upon the ideals which exist as elements in a world view essential to determinations of considered preferences.

Strong anthropocentrism, as here defined, takes unquestioned felt preferences of human individuals as determining value. Consequently, if humans have a strongly consumptive value system, then their "interests" (which are taken merely to be their felt preferences) dictate that nature will be used in an exploitative manner. Since there is no check upon the felt preferences of individuals in the value system of strong anthropocentrism, there exists no means to criticize the behavior of individuals who use nature merely as a storehouse of raw materials to be extracted and used for products serving human preferences.

Weak anthropocentrism, on the other hand, recognizes that felt preferences can be either rational or not (in the sense that they can be judged not consonant with a rational world view). Hence, weak anthropocentrism provides a basis for criticism of value systems which are purely exploitative of nature. In this way, weak anthropocentrism makes available two ethical resources of crucial importance to environmentalists. First, to the extent that environmental ethicists can make a case for a world view that emphasizes the close relationship between the human species and other living species, they can also make a case for ideals of human behavior extolling harmony with nature. These ideals are then available as a basis for criticizing preferences that merely exploit nature.

Second, weak anthropocentrism as here defined also places value on human experiences that provide the basis for value formation. Because weak anthropocentrism places value not only on felt preferences, but also on the process of value formation embodied in the criticism and replacement of felt preferences with more rational ones, it makes possible appeals to the value of experiences of natural objects and undisturbed places in human value formation. To the extent that environmentalists can show that values are formed and informed by contact with nature, nature takes on value as a teacher of human values. Nature need no longer be seen as



a mere satisfier of fixed and often consumptive values—it also becomes an important source of inspiration in value formation.<sup>9</sup>

In the final section of this paper I develop these two sources of value in nature more fully. Even there my goal is not to defend these two bases for environmental protection as embodying true claims about the value of nature—that, as I said at the outset is a larger and later task. My point is only that, within the limits set by weak anthropocentrism as here defined, there exists a framework for developing powerful reasons for protecting nature. Further, these reasons do not resemble the extractive and exploitative reasons normally associated with strong anthropocentrism.

And they do not differ from strongly anthropocentric reasons in merely theoretical ways. Weakly anthropocentric reasoning can affect behavior as can be seen by applying it to last man situations. Suppose that human beings choose, for rational or religious reasons, to live according to an ideal of maximum harmony with nature. Suppose also that this ideal is taken seriously and that anyone who impairs that harmony (by destroying another species, by polluting air and water, etc.) would be judged harshly. But such an ideal need not attribute intrinsic value to natural objects, nor need the prohibitions implied by it be justified with nonanthropocentric reasoning attributing intrinsic value to nonhuman natural objects. Rather, they can be justified as being implied by the ideal of harmony with nature. This ideal, in turn, can be justified either on religious grounds referring to human spiritual development or as being a fitting part of a rationally defensible world view.

Indeed, there exist examples of well developed world views that exhibit these characteristics. The Hindus and Jains, in proscribing the killing of insects, etc., show concern for their own spiritual development rather than for the actual lives of those insects. Likewise, Henry David Thoreau is careful not to attribute independent, intrinsic value to nature. Rather he believes that nature expresses a deeper spiritual reality and that humans can learn spiritual values from it.<sup>10</sup> Nor should it be inferred that only spiritually oriented positions can uphold weakly anthropocentric reasons. In a post-Darwinian

world, one could give rational and scientific support for a world view that includes ideals of living in harmony with nature, but which involve no attributions of intrinsic value to nature.

Views such as those just described are weakly anthropocentric because they refer only to human values, but they are not strongly so because human behavior is limited by concerns other than those derivable from prohibitions against interfering with the satisfaction of human felt preferences. And practically speaking, the difference in behavior between strong anthropocentrists and weak anthropocentrists of the sort just described and exemplified is very great. In particular, the reaction of these weak anthropocentrists to last man situations is undoubtedly more similar to that of nonanthropocentrists than to that of strong anthropocentrists. Ideals such as that of living in harmony with nature imply rules proscribing the wanton destruction of other species or ecosystems even if the human species faces imminent extinction. . . .

Nor need weak anthropocentrism collapse into strong anthropocentrism. It would do so if the dichotomy between preferences and ideals were indefensible. If all values can, ultimately, be interpreted as satisfactions of preferences, then ideals are simply human preferences. The controversy here is reminiscent of that discussed by early utilitarians. John Stuart Mill, for example, argued that because higher pleasures ultimately can be seen to provide greater satisfactions, there is thus only a single scale of values—preference satisfaction.<sup>11</sup> It is true that weak anthropocentrists must deny that preference satisfaction is the only measure of human value. They must take human ideals seriously enough so that they can be set against preference satisfactions as a limit upon them. It is therefore no surprise that weak anthropocentrists reject the reductionistic position popular among utilitarians. Indeed, it is precisely the rejection of that reductionism that allows them to steer their way between strong anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism. The rejection of this reduction is, of course, a commitment that weak anthropocentrists share with nonanthropocentrists. Both believe there are values distinct from human preference satisfaction, rejecting the reduction of ideals to preferences.

They differ not on this point, but on whether the justification of those ideals must appeal to the intrinsic value of nonhuman objects.

Weak anthropocentrism is, therefore, an attractive position for environmentalists. It requires no radical, difficult-to-justify claims about the intrinsic value of nonhuman objects and, at the same time, it provides a framework for stating obligations that goes beyond concern for satisfying human preferences. It, rather, allows the development of arguments to the effect that current, largely consumptive attitudes toward nature are indefensible, because they do not fit into a world view that is rationally defensible in terms not implying intrinsic value for nonhumans. It can also emphasize the value of nature in forming, rather than in satisfying human preferences, as preferences can be modified in the process of striving toward a consistent and rationally defensible world view.

### III. INDIVIDUALISM AND NONINDIVIDUALISM

The distinctions and arguments presented above convince me that, while the development of a nonanthropocentric axiology committed to intrinsic value for nonhuman natural entities remains an interesting philosophical enterprise, the dichotomy on which it is based has less importance for the nature of environmental ethics than is usually thought. In particular, I see no reason to think that, if environmental ethics is distinctive, its distinctiveness derives from the necessity of appeals to the intrinsic value of nonhuman natural objects. Once two forms of anthropocentrism are distinguished, it appears that from one, weak anthropocentrism, an adequate environmental ethic can be derived. If that is true, authors who equate the question of the distinctiveness of an adequate environmental ethic with the claim that nature or natural objects have intrinsic value are mistaken.

There is, nevertheless, reason to believe that an adequate environmental ethic is distinctive. In this section, I argue that no successful environmental ethic can be derived from an individualistic basis, whether the individuals in question are human or

nonhuman. Since most contemporary ethical systems are essentially individualistic, an adequate environmental ethic is distinctive, not by being necessarily nonanthropocentric as many environmental ethicists have argued or assumed, but, rather, by being nonindividualistic.

Standard contemporary ethical theories, at least in the United States and Western Europe are essentially individualistic. By this I mean that the behavioral prohibitions embodied in them derive from the principle that actions ought not to harm other individuals unjustifiably. Utilitarians derive ethical rules from the general principle that all actions should promote the greatest possible happiness for the greatest possible number of individuals. This means that actions (or rules) are judged to be legitimate or not according to whether more good (and less harm) for individuals will result from the action than from any alternative. On this view, the satisfaction of each individual interest is afforded an initial *prima facie* value. Some such interests are not to be satisfied because the information available indicates that if they are, some greater interest or sets of interests of some individuals cannot be satisfied concurrently with them. The utilitarian principle, supplemented by empirical predictions about the consequences of actions for individuals, filters happiness-maximizing actions from others that do not maximize happiness. For present purposes, the important point is that the satisfaction of individual interests are the basic unit of value for utilitarians, and in this sense, utilitarianism (either of the act or rule variety) is essentially individualistic.<sup>11</sup>

Contemporary deontologists derive ethical prohibitions from individual rights and obligations to protect those rights.<sup>12</sup> Individuals make claims, and when these claims conflict with claims made by other individuals, they are judged to be legitimate or illegitimate according to a set of ethical rules designed to make such decisions. Although these rules, in essence, are the embodiment of a system of justice and fairness, the rules adjudicate between claims of individuals, and consequently modern deontology is essentially individualistic.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, both utilitarianism and modern deontology are essentially individualistic in the sense that the basic units of ethical concern are interests or claims of individuals.

the future existence of individuals, it is impossible to refer to those individuals as the basis of guidance in making current management decisions.

Suppose a generation of the entire human species freely decided to sterilize itself, thereby freeing itself to consume without fear of harming future individuals. Would they do wrong? Yes.<sup>16</sup> The perpetuation of the human species is a good thing because a universe containing human consciousness is preferable to one without it.<sup>17</sup> This value claim implies that current generations must show concern for future generations. They must take steps to avoid the extinction of the species and they must provide a reasonably stable resource base so that future generations will not suffer great deprivation. These are the bases of rules of management analogous to the rules for administering a trust fund. They do not have individuals or individual interests as their reference point, but they do govern behavior that will affect future individuals.

It is now possible to outline a weakly anthropocentric, nonindividualistic environmental ethic. Such an ethic has two levels. The distributional level has as its principle that one ought not to harm other human individuals unjustifiably. This principle rests upon the assumption that felt preferences, desires that occur within individual human consciousness, have equal *prima facie* value. Rules for the fair treatment of individuals are derived from the principle of no harm and prescribe fair treatment of individuals, whether regarding benefits derived from the environment or from other sources. Since there is nothing distinctive about the environmental proscriptions and proscriptions that occur on this level—they do not differ in nature from other issues of individual fairness—I do not discuss them further.

Decisions on the second level of environmental ethics, which I call the level of "allocation," cannot, however, be based upon individual considerations. The central value placed on human consciousness is not a result of aggregating the value of individual consciousnesses, because the value of ongoing consciousness cannot be derived from the value of individual consciousnesses—they cannot be identified or counted prior to the making of decisions on resource allocation.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, obligations on this level are owed to no individual and can be called

"generalized obligations." They are obligations of the current generation to maintain a stable flow of resources into the indefinite future and, consequently, they are stated *vis-à-vis* resources necessary for ongoing human life, not *vis-à-vis* individual requirements. Resources represent the means for supporting life looked at from a nonindividual perspective. The individual perspective determines needs and wants and then seeks means to fulfill them. Concern for the continued flow of resources insures that sources of goods and services such as ecosystems, soil, forests, etc. remain "healthy" and are not deteriorating. In this way, options are held open and reasonable needs of individuals for whatever goods and services can be fulfilled with reasonable labor, technology, and ingenuity. The emphasis of this concern, however, is not individualistic since it is not focused on the fulfillment of specifiable needs, but rather on the integrity and health of ongoing ecosystems as holistic entities.

While the long-term nature of the concern implies that the stability of the resource base must be protected, this stability is not the same thing as ecological stability. It is an open (and controversial) question as to what the stability of ecosystems means. Further, there are controversies concerning the extent to which there are scientifically supportable generalizations about what is necessary to protect ecological stability. For example, it is highly controversial whether diversity, in general, promotes and/or is necessary for ecological stability.<sup>19</sup> These controversies are too complex to enter into here, but they are relevant. To the extent that scientists know what is necessary to protect the resource base, there is an obligation to act upon it. Even if there are few sweeping generalizations such as those concerning diversity and stability, there are a wide variety of less general rules that are well supported and are being systematically ignored in environmental policy. Ecologists and resource managers know that clear-cutting tropical forests on steep slopes causes disastrous erosion, that intensely tilling monocultures causes loss of top-soil, and that overexploitation of fisheries can cause new and far less productive species compositions. Further, there is an obligation, where knowledge is lacking, to seek that knowledge in order to avoid unintentional destruction.

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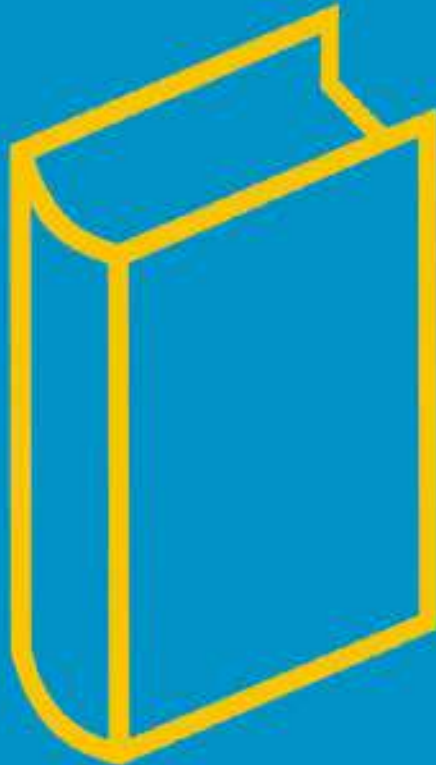
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# An Introduction to Literary Studies

Second edition

**Mario Klarer**



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# 1

## WHAT IS LITERATURE, WHAT IS A TEXT?

Look up the term **literature** in any current encyclopedia and you will be struck by the vagueness of its usage as well as by an inevitable lack of substance in the attempts to define it. In most cases, literature is referred to as the entirety of written expression, with the restriction that not every written document can be categorized as literature in the more exact sense of the word. The definitions, therefore, usually include additional adjectives such as "aesthetic" or "artistic" to distinguish literary works from texts of everyday use such as telephone books, newspapers, legal documents, and scholarly writings.

Etymologically, the Latin word "litteratura" is derived from "littera" (letter), which is the smallest element of alphabetical writing. The word **text** is related to "textile" and can be translated as "fabric": just as single threads form a fabric, so words and sentences form a meaningful and coherent text. The origins of the two central terms are, therefore, not of great help in defining literature or text. It is more enlightening to look at literature or text as cultural and historical phenomena and to investigate the conditions of their production and reception.

Underlying literary production is certainly the human wish to leave behind a trace of oneself through creative expression, which will exist detached from the individual and, therefore, outlast its creator. The earliest manifestations of this creative wish are prehistoric paintings in caves, which hold "encoded" information in the form of visual signs. This visual component inevitably remains closely connected to literature throughout its various historical and social manifestations. In



and textual criticism are, therefore, frequently applied to the cinema and acoustic media. Computer hypertexts and networks such as the Internet are the latest hybrids of the textual and various media; here writing is linked to sounds, pictures or even video clips within an interdependent network. Although the written medium is obviously the main concern in the study of literature or texts, this field of inquiry is also closely related to other media such as the stage, painting, film, music or even computer networks.

As a result of the permeation of modern textual studies with unusual media, there have been major controversies as to the definition of "text." Many authors and critics have deliberately left the traditional paths of literature, abandoning old textual forms in order to find new ways of literary expression and analysis. On the one hand, visual and acoustic elements are being reintroduced into literature, on the other hand, media, genres, text types, and discourses are being mixed.

## I

### GENRE, TEXT TYPE, AND DISCOURSE

Literary criticism, like biology, resorts to the concept of evolution or development and to criteria of classification to distinguish various genres. The former area is referred to as literary history, whereas the latter is termed *poetics*. Both fields are closely related to the issue at hand, as every attempt to define text or literature touches not only upon differences between genres but also upon the historical dimensions of these literary forms of expression.

The term **genre** usually refers to one of the three classical literary forms of epic, drama, or poetry. This categorization is slightly confusing as the epic occurs in verse, too, but is not classified as poetry. It is, in fact, a precursor of the modern novel (i.e., prose fiction) because of its structural features such as plot, character presentation, and narrative perspective. Although this old classification is still in use, the tendency today is to abandon the term "epic" and introduce "prose," "fiction," or "prose fiction" for the relatively young literary forms of the novel and the short story.

Beside the genres which describe general areas of traditional literature, the term **text type** has been introduced, under the

strong connections with the traditional performing arts and its links with fiction's textual features.

## 4

## FILM

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is impossible to neglect **film** as a semi-textual genre both influenced by and exerting influence on literature and literary criticism. Film is predetermined by literary techniques; conversely, literary practice developed particular features under the impact of film. Many of the dramatic forms in the twentieth century, for example, have evolved in interaction with film, whose means of photographic depiction far surpass the means of realistic portrayal in the theater. Drama could therefore abandon its claim to realism and develop other, more stylized or abstract forms of presentation. Photography and film have also had a major influence on the fine arts; novel, more abstract approaches to painting have been taken in response to these new media. The same can be said for post-modern fiction, which also derives some of its structural features from film.

Film's idiosyncratic modes of presentation—such as camera angle, editing, montage, slow and fast motion—often parallel features of literary texts or can be explained within a textual framework. Although film has its own specific characteristics and terminology, it is possible to analyze film by drawing on methods of literary criticism, as film criticism is closely related to the traditional approaches of textual studies. The most important of these methodologies coincide with the ones that will be discussed in the next chapter on literary theory. There are, for example, approaches similar to text-oriented literary criticism which deal with material aspects of film, such as film stock, montage, editing, and sound. Methodologies which are informed by *reception aesthetics* focus on the effect on the spectator, and approaches such as psychoanalytical theory or feminist film theory regard film within a larger contextual framework. The major developments of literary theory have therefore also been borrowed or adapted by film studies.

In spite of their differing forms and media, drama and film are often categorized under the heading **performing arts** because they use

## b)

**Characters**

While formalist approaches to the study of literature traditionally focus on plot and narrative structure, methods informed by psychoanalysis shift the center of attention to the text's characters. A psychological approach is, however, merely one way of evaluating characters; it is also possible to analyze character presentation in the context of narratological structures. Generally speaking, characters in a text can be rendered either as types or as individuals. A typified character in literature is dominated by one specific trait and is referred to as a **flat character**. The term **round character** usually denotes a persona with more complex and differentiated features.

Typified characters often represent the general traits of a group of persons or abstract ideas. Medieval allegorical depictions of characters preferred **typification** in order to personify vices, virtues, or philosophical and religious positions. The Everyman-figure, a symbol of the sinful Christian, is a major example of this general pattern in the representation of man in medieval literature. In today's advertisements, typified character presentations re-emerge in magazines, posters, film, and TV. The temporal and spatial limitations of advertising media revive allegorical and symbolic characterization for didactic and persuasive reasons comparable to those of the Middle Ages.

A good example of the purposeful use of typified character presentation occurs in the opening scene of Mark Twain's, "A True Story" (1874).

It was summer-time, and twilight. We were sitting on the porch of the farmhouse, on the summit of the hill, and "Aunt Rachel" was sitting respectfully below our level, on the steps—for she was our servant, and colored. She was a mighty frame and stature; she was sixty years old, but her eye was undimmed and her strength unabated. She was a cheerful, hearty soul, and it was no more trouble for her to laugh than it is for a bird to sing. [...] I said: "Aunt Rachel, how is it that you've lived sixty years and never had any trouble?" She stopped quaking; she paused, and there was a moment of silence. She turned her face

a)  
**Plot**

**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. An ideal traditional plot line encompasses the following four sequential levels:

exposition—complication—climax or turning point—  
 resolution

The **exposition** or presentation of the initial situation is disturbed by a **complication** or **conflict** which produces suspense and eventually leads to a climax, crisis, or turning point. The **climax** is followed by a resolution of the complication (French **denouement**), with which the text usually ends. Most traditional fiction, drama, and film employ this basic plot structure, which is also called linear plot since its different elements follow a chronological order.

In many cases—even in linear plots—**flashback** and foreshadowing introduce information concerning the past or future into the narrative. The opening scene in Billy Wilder's (1906–2002) *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) is a famous example of the **foreshadowing** effect in film; the first-person narrator posthumously relates the events that lead to his death while drifting dead in a swimming pool. The only break with a linear plot or chronological narrative is the anticipation of the film's ending—the death of its protagonist—thus eliminating suspense as an important element of plot. This technique directs the audience's attention to aspects of the film other than the outcome of the action (see also [Chapter 2, §4: Film](#)).

The *drama of the absurd* and the *experimental novel* deliberately break with linear narrative structures while at the same time maintaining traditional elements of plot in modified ways. Many contemporary novels alter linear narrative structures by introducing elements of plot in an unorthodox sequence. Kurt Vonnegut's (1922–) postmodern novel *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969) is a striking example of experimental plot structure which mixes various levels of action and time, such as the experiences of a young soldier in World War II, his life in America after the war, and a science-fiction-like dream-world in

narratological changes when Marian says: “Now that I was thinking of myself in the first person singular again I found my own situation much more interesting” (ibid.: 290). Atwood’s novel is an obvious example of how thematic aspects of a text, in this case the protagonist’s loss of identity, can be emphasized on a structural level by means of narratological techniques such as point of view.

#### d) Setting

**Setting** is another aspect traditionally included in analyses of prose fiction, and it is relevant to discussions of other genres, too. The term ‘g’ “setting” denotes the location, historical period, and social surroundings in which the action of a text develops. In James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922), for example, the setting is clearly defined as Dublin, 16 June 1904. In other cases, for example William Shakespeare’s (1564–1616) *Hamlet* (c. 1601), all we know is that the action takes place in medieval Denmark. Authors hardly ever choose a setting for its own sake, but rather embed a story in a particular context of time and place in order to support action, characters, and narrative perspective on an additional level.

In the gothic novel and certain other forms of prose fiction, setting is one of the crucial elements of the genre as such. In the opening section of “The Fall of the House of Usher” (1840), Edgar Allan Poe (1809–49) gives a detailed description of the building in which the uncanny short story will evolve. Interestingly, Poe’s setting, the House of Usher, indirectly resembles Roderick Usher, the main character of the narrative and lord of the house.

I know not how it was—but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. [...] I looked upon the scene before me—upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain—upon the bleak walls—upon the vacant eye-like windows—upon a few rank sedges—and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation [...]. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinising observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending



from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until its way down became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.<sup>10</sup>

The description of the facade of the house uses words such as “features,” “eye-like,” and “depression” which are reminiscent of the characterization of a human face. “White trunks of decayed trees” refers to the end of Roderick Usher’s family tree—he will die without heirs, the last of his line. The crack in the front of the building mirrors the divided psyche of the lord of the house. At the end of the story, Poe juxtaposes the death of Usher with the collapse of the building, thereby creating an interdependence between **setting**, characters, and plot.

The modernist novel *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) by Virginia Woolf also relies heavily on setting to unite the fragmentary narrative perspectives into a single framework. As mentioned above, Woolf employs the mental reflections of a number of figures in her novel ultimately to characterize her protagonist, Mrs Dalloway. Only through her carefully chosen use of setting can Virginia Woolf create the impression that the different perspectives or thoughts of the characters occur simultaneously. A variety of indicators in the text specifically grounds all events at a particular time and in a certain location. The action is situated in the city of London, which provides the grid in which the various reflections of the characters are intricately interwoven with street names and well-known sights. Temporal references such as the tolling of Big Ben, a sky-writing plane, and the Prime Minister’s car appear in a number of episodes and thereby characterize them as simultaneous events that occur within different sections in the general setting of the city of London. At the outset of the novel, Woolf introduces temporal and spatial elements into the setting (see the italicized phrases in the following passage) which will later re-surface in the perspectival narratives of the respective mental reflections of the characters.

Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself. [...] For having lived in Westminster—how many years now? over twenty—one feels even in the midst of the traffic, or walking at night, Clarissa was positive, a particular hush, or solemnity;

Studying **the Media**

# Studying Film



NATHAN ABRAMS, IAN BELL  
AND JAN UDRIS





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### *Image Not Available*

*Mise en scène and shot composition in Some Like it Hot (BFI Stills, Posters and Designs)* Figure 6.2

to look through. When Norman is placed up against the left side of the shot we have no idea if something is placed directly in front of him or not. It creates uncertainty because we are visually uninformed. All in all this shot shows highly effective *mise en scène*.

The still from *Some Like it Hot* (Figure 6.2) contains a wealth of information that we identify through a reading of the shot's *mise en scène*. Marilyn Monroe, as Sugar, is talking to Tony Curtis (Joe) on the beach. Joe is wearing a ship's captain's uniform and sits formally in a sheltered chair, separating himself somewhat from the informally dressed occupants of the beach. He has an appearance of authority and status, albeit not a very convincing one. Sugar is sitting in close proximity to Joe and gazes up at him with a look of admiration and interest; Joe avoids her gaze and seems to be trying hard not to show any interest in her. The brightly lit beach carries connotations of leisure, pleasure and playfulness, as epitomized by Sugar, while Joe's appearance and his position above Sugar emphasize his comical attempt at cool detachment and composure.

#### **Exercise 6.1**

Describe the ways in which the *mise en scène* contributes to the meaning of one sequence in a horror film of your choice.

## **CINEMATOGRAPHY**

If *mise en scène* refers to what is placed in front of the camera, then cinematography is concerned with recording the elements within the shot. While photography is the recording of a

static image, cinematography is the recording of a moving image. In order to obtain the desired images, the cinematographer must attend to two areas: control of lighting and operation of the camera. The images consist of reflected light and the camera records light. Indeed, in Britain a cinematographer (the person responsible for lighting and camerawork) is sometimes known as the lighting cameraperson or as the director of photography.

### Framing

A key ingredient of cinematography is *framing*. This refers to the edges of a shot, in that framing determines both what is included and what is excluded. There is indeed a close link between framing, composition and *mise en scène*. *Mise en scène* refers to what is to be filmed and how it is arranged and therefore in effect defines what the framing will be; however, strictly speaking, the framing is only realized when the shot is filmed through the camera lens.

To refer back to the Norman and Marion conversation scene from *Psycho*, Hitchcock could have chosen to widen the framing so that we could see both Marion and Norman. However, this would have entailed including more height in the shot, which would perhaps have meant meaningless space and detail. The tighter framing chosen by Hitchcock means we get a mid-shot of Norman's reactions as he speaks to Marion. Hitchcock nevertheless briefly gives us a long shot of both Marion and Norman at the beginning and end of the scene to provide us with a sense of the spatial relationship between them.

### Shot Size

Shot size in turn is determined by the framing. There are many possible choices of shot but we can think in terms of five basic shot sizes with intermediate shots in between (see Figure 6.3). Shot sizes can be closely tied to narrative development, notably to the progression of scenes. Typically a film, and often a scene, will begin with an extreme long shot (ELS). Just as narratives tend to begin slowly in order to acquaint us with characters and locations, so films visually use an ELS (sometimes called an *establishing shot*) to place things in context. An ELS allows us to see a subject in relation to her/his surroundings. *Blade Runner* begins with several ELSs which gradually introduce us to Los Angeles in the twenty-first century, followed by the introduction of themes and characters.

A film can begin with an extreme close up (ECU); this could be used to make us inquisitive, or it may simply be an impressive shot because of its content, but more often than not it won't make much sense. *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1967) famously begins with an ELS which is immediately transformed into an ECU as a character walks into shot and looks straight to camera. The shot is interesting and intriguing while also being disconcerting; however, it makes no obvious sense in the context of the film. It does not enable us to get to know the character in greater depth, which would arguably be a pointless exercise anyway as he dies a couple of minutes later. The choice of shot seems to be more to do with style and experimentation than with illustrating the narrative. Furthermore, having a character look straight to camera is usually identified as a technique of alternative cinema (see p. 146 below).

this backdrop of uninterrupted space with a minimum of interference, whereas within the more enclosed confines of most film locations, there is a need to switch to different camera angles and shot sizes, if only to cover all the action.

Hitchcock took the long take one stage further in *Rope* (1948). A reel of film normally lasts no longer than 10 minutes and Hitchcock filmed so that each reel was one complete take. What is more, he began and ended each reel with someone or something passing close to the camera lens so that the screen went dark. At these points the reels were edited together so that the whole film appears to be one long continuous take lasting 80 minutes. The camera continually tracks around the apartment in which the film takes place, following characters and actions to give a variety of perspectives.

### Camera Movement

As has already been mentioned in the above example, long takes usually involve camera movement of some sort, as it would be difficult to justify a long take in which the camera was static unless the action within the frame was sufficiently interesting to be able to hold our attention (one of the characteristics of early films was long takes with static cameras; see Chapter 7 on Early Cinema and Film Form). There are four main types of camera movement: in a *pan* shot the camera rotates horizontally around a fixed position (often used to follow movement); a *tilt* shot moves the camera vertically around a fixed position (typically used to indicate height); a *tracking* shot involves a horizontal movement of the camera in which it changes location, usually fitted to a device called a *dolly* that runs on rails; a *crane* shot enables the camera to be raised and lowered and moved horizontally. In addition to the above, it is also possible to use a hand-held camera or to utilize the zoom facility, which strictly speaking is not a camera movement but movement within the camera – repositioning the lens in relation to the aperture.

The problem with hand-held camerawork is that the shots can be unsteady, but the use of steadicam equipment can overcome this problem and provide smooth moving shots (see Chapter 5 on Film Technology). However, films like *The Blair Witch Project* and those of *Dogme 95* achieve their impact partly through unsteady hand-held camerawork. The viewer is linked more directly to the person filming, first because we usually see exactly what s/he sees via the camera but also because we are reminded of their presence through the shaky camerawork.

#### *Crane shot*

In Martin Scorsese's opinion, one of the greatest shots of all time is a crane shot lasting more than a minute, used by Hitchcock in *Young and Innocent* (1937). In this film a murder has been committed and those investigating believe the culprit is in a ballroom; the only clue they have is that the murderer has a facial twitch. Hitchcock gives the viewer information the investigators don't have with a crane shot that begins with an ELS of the ballroom, then moves over the heads of the dancers towards the band on the stage, ending with an ECU of the drummer's face, which begins to twitch.

### *Tracking shot*

The penultimate shot from *Psycho* (see Figure 6.4) contains a good example of a tracking shot, combined with unusual framing. Norman Bates has been caught and is being held in a cell. We see a long shot of Norman, but the framing produces an awkward composition in which he is placed to the left of the shot and his lower legs are out of the frame. It is an uncomfortable shot visually. The long shot emphasizes Norman's isolation in a bare, white room. The camera gradually tracks in to a close up of Norman's face in the centre of the screen, at which point he slowly looks up from under his eyebrows with an evil grin. At the beginning of the shot we feel safely distanced from Norman, but by the end of the tracking shot we are close to him and feel threatened.

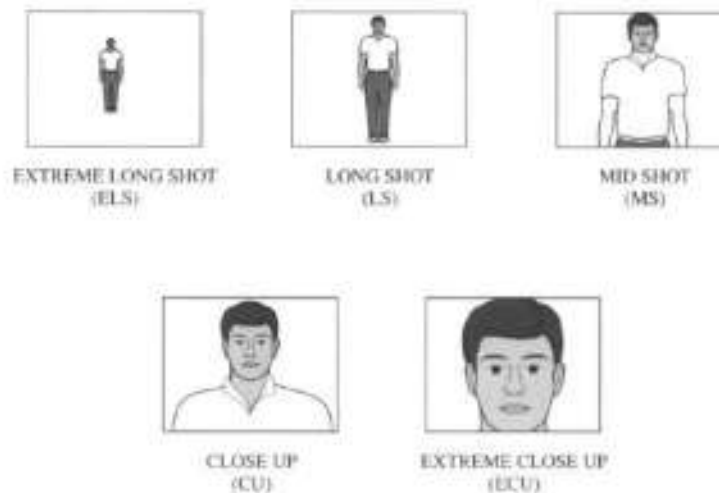
### *Zoom and tracking shots*

It will immediately be realized that a tracking shot is one way of bringing a subject closer by physically moving the camera nearer. However, another technique which produces a similar effect is that of a zoom, the main difference being that the camera does not physically move closer but the lens alters its focal length. But while both techniques bring the subject closer, they differ in how they deal with perspective concerning the relationship between what is in the middle of the shot and what is at the edges of the frame.

Hitchcock experimented creatively with this difference in *Vertigo* (1958). When Scottie, who suffers from vertigo, is running up the tower in the final scene, he twice looks down the centre of the stairwell. The film cuts to his point of view and brilliantly imitates the experience of light-headedness and nausea through fear of heights by distorting the perspective between the edge of the frame and the centre of the shot. Hitchcock achieved this through a reverse-track zoom. As the camera zooms back from the bottom of the stairwell, it also tracks in to ensure that the edges of the frame stay exactly the same. The effect is to have the centre of the shot stretching away from the edges of the shot. Similar techniques have since been used by Scorsese himself and by Mathieu Kassovitz (*La Haine*, 1995) among others.

## ***Image Not Available***

Figure 6.4 *Psycho: the unbalanced Norman Bates* (Paramount, courtesy Kobal)

The five main shot sizes Figure 6.3

A first **close up** is usually found some minutes into a film when we are already accustomed to characters and locations. Typically a CU will concentrate our attention on an important detail to ensure that the desired meaning is communicated, or else a CU will be used as a reaction shot to show someone's response to an incident. It is common to find a CU of someone's face when their expression tells us something or a CU on an object that is to have a crucial function in the film. *Scream* in fact begins with a potentially confusing shot, a CU of a telephone; however, we do hear a phone ringing and we don't have to wait long for it to take on relevance. The camera tracks back to show Casey picking up the phone. These introductory shots are also soon followed by an exterior ELS (albeit a threatening one) of Casey's home to provide us with context.

### Length of Take

If shot sizes tend to be large at the beginnings of films and scenes, an equivalent characteristic can be noted for shot duration or the length of a take. The average duration of a shot is approximately 6 seconds, but introductory shots are often at least twice this length. Again, the pace tends to be slower in order to allow the viewer more time to become acquainted with characters and locations. If we look at 2 minutes from near the beginning of *Cinema Paradiso* (1989) we find only five shots. Within this time we are introduced to the main character Salvatore and his wife, who informs him that an old friend, Alfredo, has died. This leads into a flashback to his youth which goes on to provide his childhood memories, which constitute the bulk of the film. If we then look at a 2-minute period from the climactic section of the film, when Salvatore saves Alfredo from a fire in the village cinema, we find 52 shots. The narrative allows short takes because we know the location and characters well, and the narrative also requires short takes because the



RICHARD BARSAM

DAVE MONAHAN



# LOOKING AT MOVIES

AN INTRODUCTION TO FILM

FIFTH EDITION



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1



2

### Round and flat characters in *Precious*

Different types of stories, and even different roles within the same story, call for different approaches to character traits, behavior, and development. *Precious: Based on the Novel "Push" by Sapphire* (2009; director Lee Daniels, screenwriter Geoffrey Fletcher) features two remarkable characters: the illiterate teenager Precious (Gabourey Sidibe) and her abusive mother Mary (Mo'Nique). Each character is captivating in her own way, and the actresses who played them were both rightfully praised for their powerful performances. But the narrative requires that Mary be a flat character clearly defined by malicious anger and an inability to change (1). In contrast, Precious must be a round character to drive a narrative built around revelation and transformation. At first glance, Precious appears to be slowwitted and apathetic, but as the story peels away at the layers of her complex personality, we (and Precious herself) learn that she's capable of imagination, ambition, bravery, intelligence, and insight (2).

a large rambunctious wizard family, had been the boy who lived, instead of the instinctive and strong-willed neglected orphan Harry Potter? Better still, what if the earnest, intelligent, overachieving child-of-muggles Hermione was the *girl* who lived? Even if the goal remained the same in each of these hypothetical narratives, the character's traits would inspire choices and behavior that would lead them to a different path, and thus tell a different story.

The profound effect characters have on narrative comes in handy. After all, there are only so many stories in the world—consider how many movies sound interchangeable when reduced to a short description—but character traits may be assembled in infinite combinations. Each new character makes possible a different take on the same old story. Think of all the love stories or murder mysteries you've watched. The individual personalities falling in love and/or solving (and committing) crimes play a large part in keeping those archetypal narrative approaches fresh. The directors, actors, cinematographers, and designers responsible for putting the characters and their story on-screen build upon the characterizations in the screenplay to develop how exactly each character looks, speaks, and behaves in the movie.

Of course, some characters are more complicated than others. In literature, complex characters are known as **round characters**. They may possess numerous subtle, repressed, or even contradictory traits that can change significantly over the course of the story—sometimes surprisingly so. Because they display the complexity we associate with our own personalities, we tend to see round characters as more lifelike. In contrast, relatively uncomplicated **flat characters** exhibit few distinct traits and do not change significantly as the story progresses.<sup>1</sup> This doesn't mean that one character classification is any more legitimate than the other. Different types of stories call for different approaches to character traits, behavior, and development.

For example, the flamboyant Jack Sparrow (Johnny Depp) is entertaining enough to drive the spectacular success of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise; no one could call his character boring. But with Jack, what we see is what we get. His character is clearly and simply defined, and at the end of every installment he remains the same lovable scoundrel he was in the opening scene. The *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies benefit from Jack's flat character.

The coming-of-age drama *An Education* (2009; director Lone Scherfig, screenwriter Nick Hornby) calls

<sup>1</sup> E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1927), pp. 103–108.

The tone of her angry retort about Mark's Long Island roots lets us imagine a relatively humble upbringing that might be fueling his need for prestige. The story includes everything in the diegesis, every event and action we've seen on-screen, as well as everything we can infer from watching those events.

The **plot** consists of the specific actions and events that the filmmakers select and the order in which they arrange those events to effectively convey the narrative to the viewer. In this scene, what the characters do on-screen is part of the *plot*, including when Erica breaks up with Mark and stalks off, but the other information we infer from their exchange belongs exclusively to the *story*.

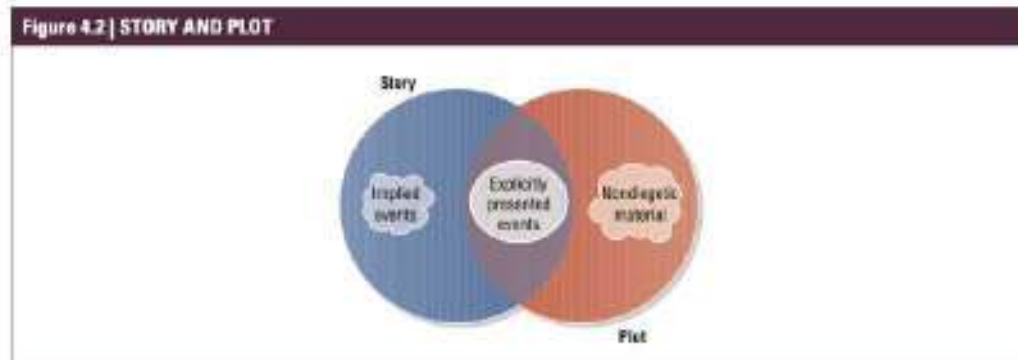
The distinction between plot and story is complicated because in every movie, the two concepts overlap and intersect with one another. Let's continue exploring the subject by following the jilted Mark as he slinks out of the bar and makes his way back to his dorm. In this sequence, we hear the diegetic sounds of evening traffic, the tread of Mark's sneakers, and the muted chatter of his fellow pedestrians. We watch Mark trudge past the pub, trot across a busy street and down a crowded sidewalk, and jog across campus. As we can see in Figure 4.2, these *explicitly presented events*, and every image and sound they produce, are included in the intersection of story and plot.

But remember that story also incorporates those events *implied* by what we see (and hear) on-screen. In this particular sequence, implied events might involve the portions of Mark's journey that were not captured in any of the shots used to portray his journey. In addition, everything we infer from these images and sounds,

from the supremacy of the great university to the sophistication of the young scholars strolling its campus, is strictly story. The plot concerns only those portions of his journey necessary to effectively convey the Ivy League setting and the narrative idea of Mark's hurrying faster and faster the closer he gets to the sanctuary of his dorm room.

But the plot supplies more than simply this particular arrangement of these specific events. Plot also includes **nondiegetic elements**: those things we see and hear on the screen that come from outside the world of the story, such as score music (music not originating from the world of the story), titles and credits (words superimposed on the images on-screen), and voice-over comments from a third-person voice-over narrator.

For example, back in the bar, moments after Erica storms out, music begins to play over the shot of Mark alone at the table. This music is not the White Stripes song we heard in the background earlier in the scene. Whereas that *diegetic* music came from a jukebox from within the world of the story, this new music is *nondiegetic*: score music that the filmmakers have imposed onto the movie to add narrative meaning to the sequence. The music begins as lilting piano notes that help convey the sadness Mark feels after getting unexpectedly dumped. Deeper, darker notes join the score as the music continues over Mark's journey home, allowing us to sense the thoughts of vengeance intruding on Mark's hurt feelings. As he trots up the steps to his dorm, a title announces the time and place of our story: Harvard University Fall 2003. These nondiegetic elements—score music and titles—are not part of the story. But they are an important piece of the plot: the deliberate selection





before the shooting starts. In addition to creating a compelling story, engaging plot, and fascinating characters, screenwriters must have a solid understanding of what is marketable. Finally, if they are presenting a finished screenplay, it must conform to industry expectations regarding format and style.

## Elements of Narrative

Narrative theory (sometimes called *narratology*) has a long history, starting with Aristotle and continuing with great vigor today. Aristotle said that a good story should have three sequential parts: a beginning, a middle, and an end—a concept that has influenced the history of playwriting and screenwriting. French New Wave director Jean-Luc Godard, who helped revolutionize cinematic style in the 1960s, agreed that a story should have a beginning, a middle, and an end—but, he added, “not necessarily in that order.” Given the cinema’s extraordinary freedom and flexibility in handling time (especially compared to the limited ways the theater can handle time), the directors of some of the most challenging movies ever made—including many contemporary examples—would seem to agree with Godard.

The complexities of narratology are beyond the scope of this book,<sup>4</sup> but we can begin our study by distinguishing between two fundamental elements: story and plot.

### Story and Plot

Although in everyday conversation we might use the words *story* and *plot* interchangeably, they mean different things when we write and speak about movies. A movie’s **story** consists of (1) all the narrative events that are explicitly presented on-screen plus (2) all the events that are implicit or that we infer to have happened but are not explicitly presented. The total world of the story—the events, characters, objects, settings, and sounds that form the world in which the story occurs—is called its **diegesis**, and the elements that make up the diegesis are called **diegetic elements**.

In the first scene of *The Social Network* (2010; director David Fincher; screenwriter Aaron Sorkin), we see



Mark Zuckerberg (Jesse Eisenberg) and Erica Albright (Rooney Mara) sitting together in a crowded bar. They are having a heated conversation—at least it’s heated on one side. Mark is chattering a rapid-fire monologue involving SAT scores in China and rowing crew. Erica is struggling to clarify what exactly he’s talking about. Everything we experience in this scene is part of the movie’s diegesis, including the other bar patrons and the muffled dissonance of the crowd’s chatter mixed with the White Stripes’ “Ball and Biscuit” playing on an unseen jukebox. Of course, we pay special attention to what the featured characters say and how they look saying it. From this explicitly presented information, we are able to infer still more story information that we have not witnessed on-screen. They’ve been here a while—their beers are half empty, and they’re in the middle of an ongoing conversation—and they’re a couple. Watching their interaction, we can even guess the nature and duration of Mark and Erica’s relationship. As the conversation intensifies, we can pick up on still more implicit information. Mark is obsessed with getting into a prestigious student club—his intensity implies that he is not exactly popular with the elite crowd. We learn Mark is going to Harvard and that he looks down on Erica for merely attending lowly (in his eyes) Boston University.

4. This discussion of narrative theory adapts material from, and is indebted to, Seymour Chaskin, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978) and *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990). Other works of contemporary narrative theory are recommended in the bibliography at the end of this book.



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### Narrative form and the biopic

A biographical movie, or biopic, provides particularly rich opportunities to ask why the filmmakers chose to tell the story the way they did. After all, the facts of the main character's life are objectively verifiable and follow a particular order. But as two recent biopics about the best poet Allen Ginsberg demonstrate, cinematic storytellers can select and shape that material in many different ways to convey a variety of narrative experiences and interpretations. *Howl* (2010; director Rob Epstein, screenwriters Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman) presents key ideas, sounds, and images from Ginsberg's life and work in a way that rejects the chronological order and cause-and-effect progress on which most narrative films. Stylized flashbacks from the poet's earlier life, Ginsberg (Liamas Franco) performing his epic poem "Howl" (1), an animation evoking the poem's imagery, and testimony in the obscenity trial incited by the ground-breaking poem are all juxtaposed in a fragmented montage that is just as interested in capturing the spirit of Ginsberg's poetry as it is with presenting a slice of his life. *XX Your Darlings* (2013; director John Krokidas, screenwriters Krokidas and Austin Bunn) is a more conventional coming-of-age narrative that chronicles the young Ginsberg's first year at Columbia University in New York. Young Ginsberg (Daniel Radcliffe) (2) breaks free of his dysfunctional family, is drawn into the orbit of proudly decadent literary rebels, has a sexual awakening, gets his heart broken, and witnesses a crime of passion. Like many biopics, this narrative provides not just a compelling story; it offers viewers a revealing (and often fictionalized) peek at the events and associations that helped form a famous person.

and-effect chain of events that enables the audience to experience and understand the narrative. Our engagement with the story on-screen is enhanced by the nondiegetic elements the plot layers onto this particular sequence of selected events, including a pulsating musical score and occasional titles announcing the time as the phenomenon spreads.

And, of course, the story and the plot overlap. Every event explicitly presented on-screen, and every diegetic sound generated by those events, qualifies as both story and plot.

The relationship between plot and story is important to filmmakers and to the audience. From the filmmaker's perspective, the story exists as a precondition for the plot, and the filmmaker must understand what story is being told before going through the difficult job of selecting events to show on-screen and determining in what order to present them. For us as viewers, the story is an abstraction—a construct—that we piece together as the elements of the plot unfold before us on-screen. Our impressions about the story often shift and adjust throughout the movie as more of the plot is revealed. The plots of some movies—classic murder mysteries, for example—lead us to an unambiguous sense of the story

by the time they are done. Other movies' plots reveal very little about the causal relationships among narrative events, thus leaving us to puzzle over those connections, to construct the story ourselves.

As you view movies more critically and analytically, pay attention not only to the story as you have inferred it but also to how it was conveyed through its plot. Understanding this basic distinction will help you to better appreciate and analyze the overall form of the movie.

To picture the relationship between plot and story slightly differently, and to become more aware of the deliberate ways in which filmmakers construct plots from stories, you might watch several different movies that tell a story you are familiar with—for example, Walt Disney's *Cinderella* (1950; screenwriters Ken Anderson et al.), Frank Tashlin's *Cinderella* (1960, starring Jerry Lewis; screenwriter Tashlin), Garry Marshall's *Pretty Woman* (1990, starring Julia Roberts; screenwriter J. F. Lawton), Andy Tennant's *Ever After* (1998, starring Drew Barrymore; screenwriters Susannah Grant, Tennant, and Rick Parks), John Pasquin's *Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous* (2005, starring Sandra Bullock; screenwriters Marc Lawrence, Katie Ford, and Caryn Lucas), and Kenneth Branagh's *Cinderella* (2015, starring





**Mise-en-scène creates a sense of being lost in space in *Gravity***

This image from *Gravity* records the moment before a devastating gale of debris changes the film's story. Kowalski (George Clooney, right) is trying to assist Dr. Stone (Sandra Bullock, center) get back safely into the "Explorer" before the storm hits. However, an ornament (left background) shows us what they face: Sharif Dason, the flight engineer, floats lifelessly, almost decapitated by a drunk of debris. The richly deployed elements of mise-en-scène create—along with the camera circling the action and the increasing complexity of sound—a terrifying reminder of the dangers of space exploration.

action or scene" and thus is sometimes called *staging*. Everything you see on the screen was *put* there for a reason: to help tell the story. In the critical analysis of movies, the term refers to the overall look and feel of a movie—the sum of everything the audience sees, hears,<sup>2</sup> and experiences while viewing it. A movie's mise-en-scène subtly influences our mood as we watch, much as the decor, lighting, smells, and sounds can influence our emotional response to a real-life place.

The two major visual components of mise-en-scène are design and composition. **Design** is the process by which the look of the settings, props, lighting, and actors is determined. Set design, décor, prop selection, lighting setup, costuming, makeup, and hairstyle design all play a role in shaping the overall design. **Composition** is the organization, distribution, balance, and general relationship of actors and objects within the space of each shot.

The visual elements of mise-en-scène are all crucial to shaping our sympathy for, and understanding of, the

characters shaped by them. As you consider how a movie's mise-en-scène influences your thoughts about it, ask yourself if what you see in a scene is simply appealing decor, a well-dressed actor, and a striking bit of lighting, or if these elements improve your understanding of the narrative, characters, and action of the movie. Keep in mind that the director has a reason—related to the overall vision for the movie—for each thing put into a shot or scene (figures, objects, decor, landscaping, etc.), but each of these things does not necessarily have a meaning in and by itself. The combination of elements within the frame gives the shot or scene its overall meaning.

Every movie has a mise-en-scène. But in some movies the various elements of the mise-en-scène are so powerful that they enable the viewer to experience the aura of a place and time. A list of such films, chosen at random, might include historical spectacles such as Sergei Eisenstein and Dmitri Vasilyev's *Alexander Nevsky* (1938) or Stanley Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon* (1975).

2. As a scholarly matter, some critics and instructors, including us, consider sound to be an element of mise-en-scène. Other scholars consider mise-en-scène to be only the sum of visual elements in a film. Because of its complexity, we will discuss sound separately in Chapter 8. In this chapter, we will focus on the wholly visual aspects of mise-en-scène: on those filmmaking techniques and decisions that determine the placement, movement, and appearance of objects and people on-screen.



fatalé (French for “deadly woman”) role cast women as seductive, autonomous, and deceptive predators who use men for their own means. As a rule, the *femme fatale* is a far smarter—and thus formidable—opponent for the protagonist than other adversarial characters, most of whom are corrupt and violent though not necessarily a match for the hero’s cynical intelligence.

More than virtually any other genre, film noir is distinguished by its visual style. The name *black film* references not just the genre’s attitude, but its look as well. Noir movies employ lighting schemes that emphasize contrast and create deep shadows that can obscure as much information as the illumination reveals. Light sources are often placed low to the ground, resulting in illumination that distorts facial features and casts dramatic shadows. Exterior scenes usually take place at night; those interior scenes set during the day often play out behind drawn shades that cast patterns of light and shadow, splintering the frame. These patterns, in turn, combine with other diagonal visual elements to create a compositional tension that gives the frame—and the world it depicts—a restless, unstable quality.

Film noir plot structure reinforces this feeling of disorientation. The complex (sometimes incomprehensible) narratives are often presented in nonchronological or otherwise convoluted arrangements. Plot twists deprive the viewer of the comfort of a predictable plot. Goals shift, and expectations are reversed; allies are revealed to be enemies (and vice versa); narration, even that delivered by the protagonist, is sometimes unreliable. Moral reference points are skewed: victims are often as corrupt as their persecutors; criminals are working stiffs just doing their job. Paradoxically, this unsettling narrative complexity is often framed by a sort of enforced predictability. Fatalistic voice-over narration telegraphs future events and outcomes, creating a sense of predetermination and hopelessness for the protagonist’s already lost cause.

Other notable film noir movies include *The Maltese Falcon* (1941; director John Huston); *Laura* (1944; director Otto Preminger); *Scarlet Street* (1945; director Fritz Lang); *Detour* (1945; director Edgar G. Ulmer); *The Big Sleep* (1946; director Howard Hawks); *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1946; director Tay Garnett); *The Killers* (1946; director Robert Siodmak); *Out of the Past* (1947; director Jacques Tourneur); *The Naked City* (1948; director Jules Dassin); *Crisis Cross* (1949; director

Robert Siodmak); *Asphalt Jungle* (1950; director John Huston); *D.O.A.* (1950; director Rudolph Maté); *Panic in the Streets* (1950; director Elia Kazan); *Ace in the Hole* (1951; director Billy Wilder); *Pickup on South Street* (1953; director Samuel Fuller); *The Hitch-Hiker* (1953; director Ida Lupino); *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955; director Robert Aldrich); *Sweet Smell of Success* (1957; director Alexander Mackendrick); *Touch of Evil* (1958; director Orson Welles); *Chinatown* (1974; director Roman Polanski); *After Dark, My Sweet* (1990; director James Foley); *The Last Seduction* (1994; director John Dahl); *The Usual Suspects* (1995; director Bryan Singer); *Lost Highway* (1997; director David Lynch); *Memento* (2000; director Christopher Nolan); *The Man Who Wasn’t There* (2001; director Joel Coen); *Sin City* (2005; director Frank Miller and Robert Rodriguez); *The Square* (2008; director Nash Edgerton); *Broken Embraces* (2009; director Pedro Almodóvar); *Drive* (2011; director Nicolas Winding Refn); *Game Girl* (2014; director David Fincher); and *Inherent Vice* (2014; director Paul Thomas Anderson).

## Science Fiction

It seems logical to think of science fiction as being speculative fantasy about the potential wonders of technological advances. But most science-fiction films are not really about science. If we tried to prove the “science” that most sci-fi films present, much of it would be quickly exposed as ridiculous. Instead, the genre’s focus is on humanity’s relationship with science and the technology it generates.

Science fiction existed as a literary genre long before movies were invented. The genre began in the early nineteenth century as a reaction to the radical societal and economic changes spurred by the industrial revolution. At that time, the introduction of new technologies such as the steam engine dramatically changed the way Americans and Europeans worked and lived. What were once rural agrarian cultures were quickly transformed into mechanized urban societies. Stories are one way that our cultures process radical change, so it didn’t take long for the anxiety unleashed by this explosion of technology to manifest itself in the form of Mary Shelley’s 1818 novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. The subtitle makes evident the novel’s theme: in Greek mythology, Prometheus is the Titan who stole fire from Zeus and bestowed this forbidden and dangerous knowl-



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### The other in science fiction

Science-fiction films often emphasize a malevolent alien's "inhumanity" by modeling its appearance on machines or insects. The benevolent visitors in Steven Spielberg's popular science-fiction film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977) [1] look much more reassuringly humanoid than the hostile invaders his collaborators created for *War of the Worlds* (2005) [2].

edge on mortals not yet ready to deal with its power. Shelley's "monster" represents the consequences of men using science and technology to play God.

Those of you familiar with twentieth-century movie versions may think of *Frankenstein* as a horror story.

The genres are indeed closely related through their mutual exploitation of audience fears, but the source of the anxiety is different. Horror films speak to our fears of the supernatural and the unknown, whereas science-fiction movies explore our dread of technology and change. Both genres have their roots in folklore that articulates the ongoing battle between human beings and everything that is other than human. In ancient folklore, this "other" was anthropomorphized into monsters (trolls, ogres, etc.) that inhabited (and represented) the wilderness that humans could not control.

Ironically, the same advances in science and technology that allowed cultures to explain away—and thus destroy—all of these old monsters have given voice to the modern folklore of science fiction. For most of us, science is beyond our control. Its rapid advance is a phenomenon that we didn't create, that we don't entirely comprehend, and that moves too fast for us to keep up with. So when it comes to science fiction, the other represents—directly or indirectly—this technological juggernaut that can help us but also has the power to destroy us or at least make us obsolete.

We are not saying that science is an inherently negative force or even that anxiety dominates our relationship with technology. We all love our computers, appreciate modern medicine, and marvel at the wonders of space exploration. But conflict is an essential element of narrative. If everything is perfect, then there's no story. And unspoken, even unconscious, concerns are at the root of a great deal of artistic expression.

Science-inspired anxiety is behind the defining thematic conflict that unites most science-fiction movies. This conflict can be expressed in many ways, but for our purposes let's think of it as technology versus humanity or science versus soul.<sup>2</sup> This theme is expressed in stories that envision technology enslaving humanity, invading our minds and bodies, or bringing about the end of civilization as we know it. The antagonist in these conflicts takes the form of computers like the infamous HAL in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968); robots or machines in films like Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982), the Wachowskis's *The Matrix* series (1999–2003), and James Cameron's *Terminator* movies (1984–2003); and mechanized, dehumanized societies in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), Jean-Luc Godard's *Alphaville* (1965), and George Lucas's *THX 1138* (1971).

Alien invaders, another common science-fiction antagonistic other, are also an outgrowth of our innate fear of the machine. As soon as humankind was advanced

1. For Scheide, *Androids, Holograms, and Other Science-Fiction Monsters: Science and Soul in Science-Fiction Films* (New York: New York University Press, 2003).





#### Science fiction and special effects

James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009) put a new spin on the science-fiction genre by presenting humans as the cold-blooded alien invaders using superior technology to threaten an unspoiled world and its star-passionate natives. The planet's synthetic creatures and spectacular landscapes were created using the most sophisticated digital technology in the history of cinema. Ironically, the movie genre founded on audiences' dread of technology also happens to depend heavily on viewers' attraction to high-tech special effects. The speculative spectacle that audiences expect of science fiction means that most films in the genre feature elaborate sets, costumes, makeup, computer animation, and digital effects.

enough to contemplate travel outside the earth's orbit, we began to speculate about the possibility of life on other planets. Our fear of the unknown, combined with our tendency to see Earth as the center of the universe, empowered this imagined other as a threatening force, endowed with superior destructive technology, bent on displacing or enslaving us. The otherness of the most malevolent aliens is emphasized by designing their appearance to resemble machines or insects. In contrast, the science-fiction movies that reverse expectations and portray alien encounters in a positive light typically shape their extraterrestrials more like human—or at least mammal. You need look no further than *Star Wars'* comfortably fuzzy Chewbacca (as opposed to Imperial storm troopers and Jabba the Hutt) for evidence of this tradition.

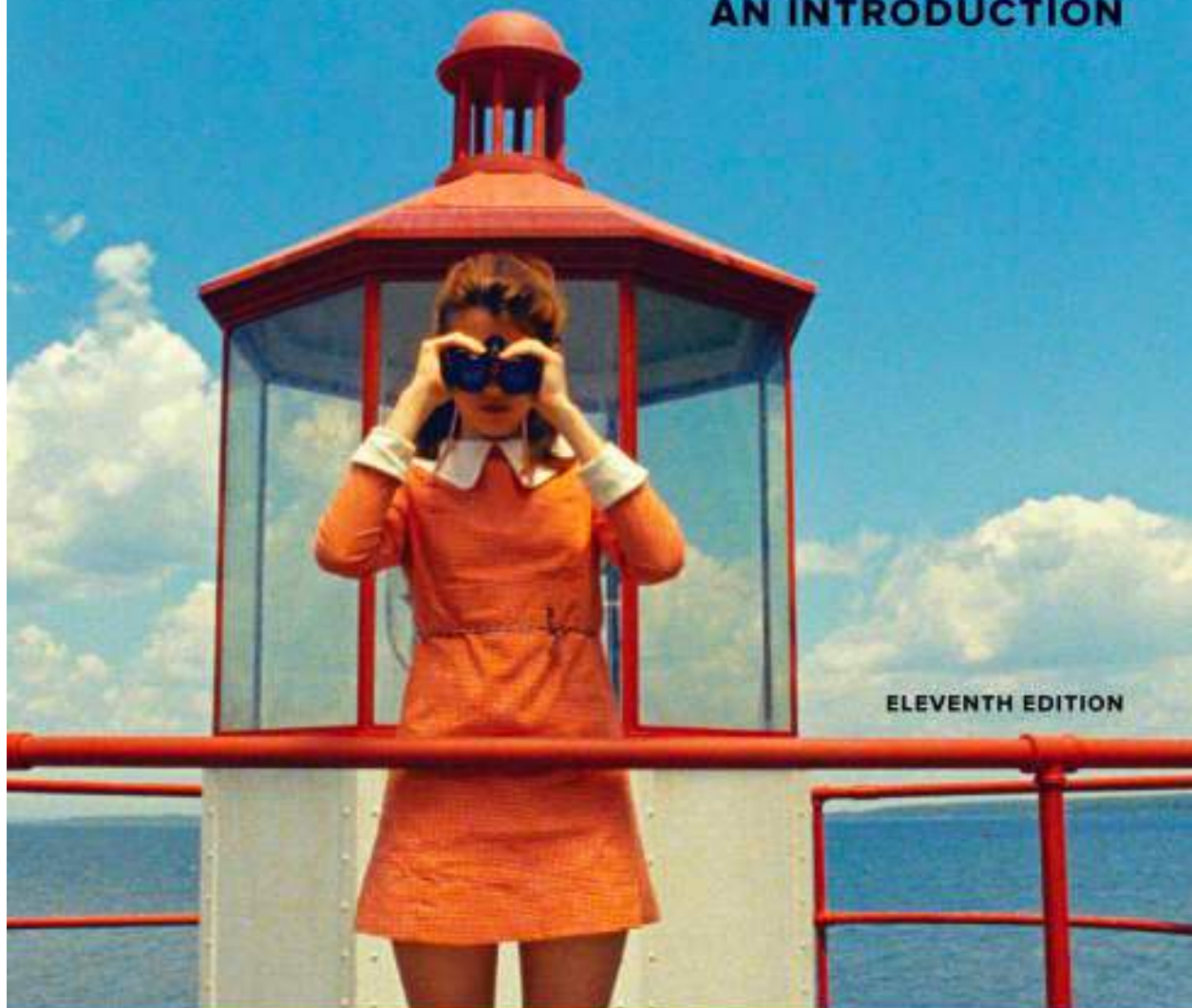
While most science-fiction movies stress the otherness of the antagonist, the opposite is true for the sci-fi protagonist. Science-fiction heroes are often literally

and figuratively down-to-earth. They tend to be so compassionate and soulful that their essential humanity seems a liability—until their indomitable human spirit proves the key to defeating the malevolent other.

Because science-fiction narratives often deal with what-ifs, the setting is frequently speculative. If those sci-fi movies are set in the present day, they often heighten the dramatic impact of invasive aliens or time travelers. Most commonly, the genre places its stories in a future profoundly shaped by advances in technology. This setting allows filmmakers to hypothesize future effects of contemporary cultural, political, or scientific trends. These speculative settings may be high-tech megacities or postapocalyptic ruins. In movies like Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982), the setting suggests a combination of both. Of course, outer space is also a popular science-fiction setting for obvious reasons. In many of these examples, the technology-versus-humanity theme is presented in part by dramatizing

# Film Art

AN INTRODUCTION



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DAVID BORDWELL | KRISTIN THOMPSON | JEFF SMITH



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PART

Film is a young medium. Painting, literature, dance, and theater have existed for thousands of years, but cinema was invented only a little more than a century ago. Yet in its comparatively short span, the newcomer has established itself as an energetic and powerful art.

It's this art that we explore in this book. The chapters that follow show how creative people have used moving pictures to give us experiences that we value. We examine the principles and techniques that give film its power to tell stories, express emotions, and convey ideas.

But this art has some unusual features we should note from the start. More than most arts, film depends on complex technology. Without machines, movies wouldn't move. In addition, film art usually requires collaboration among many participants, people who follow well-proven work routines. Films are not only created but produced. Just as important, they are firmly tied to their social and economic context. Films are distributed and exhibited for audiences, and money matters at every step.

Chapter 1 surveys all these aspects of the filmmaking process. We examine the technology, the work practices, and the business side of cinema. All these components shape and sustain film as an art.

## Film Art and Filmmaking



## Film as Art: Creativity, Technology, and Business

**M**otion pictures are so much a part of our lives that it's hard to imagine a world without them. We enjoy them in theaters, at home, in offices, in cars and buses, and on airplanes. We carry films with us in our laptops, tablets, and cellphones. Press a button, and a machine conjures up movies for your pleasure.

Films communicate information and ideas, and they show us places and ways of life we might not otherwise know. Important as these benefits are, though, something more is at stake. Films offer us ways of seeing and feeling that we find deeply gratifying. They take us through experiences. The experiences are often driven by stories centering on characters we come to care about, but a film might also develop an idea or explore visual qualities or sound textures.

Such things don't happen by accident. Films are *designed* to create experiences for viewers. To gain an understanding of film as an art, we should ask why a film is designed the way it is. When a scene frightens or excites us, when an ending makes us laugh or cry, we can ask how the filmmakers have achieved those effects.

It helps to imagine that we're filmmakers, too. Throughout this book, we'll be asking you to put yourself in the filmmaker's shoes.

This shouldn't be a great stretch. You've taken still photos with a camera or a mobile phone. Very likely you've made some videos, perhaps just to record a moment in your life—a party, a wedding, your cat creeping into a paper bag. And central to filmmaking is the act of choice. You may not have realized it at the moment, but every time you framed a shot, shifted your position, told people not to blink, or tried to keep up with a dog chasing a Frisbee, you were making choices.

You might take the next step and make a more ambitious, more controlled film. You might compile clips into a YouTube video, or document your friend's musical performance. Again, at every stage you make design decisions, based on how you think this image or that sound will affect your viewers' experience. What if you start your music video with a black screen that gradually brightens as the music fades in? That will have a different effect than starting it with a sudden cut to a bright screen and a blast of music.

At each instant, the filmmaker can't avoid making creative decisions about how viewers will respond. Every moviemaker is also a movie viewer, and the choices are considered from the standpoint of the end user. Filmmakers constantly ask themselves: *If I do this, as opposed to that, how will viewers react?*

The menu of filmmaking choices has developed over time. Late in the 19th century, moving pictures emerged as a public amusement. They succeeded because they spoke to the imaginative needs of a broad-based audience. All the traditions

## 4

## The Shot: Mise-en-Scene

Of all film techniques, **mise-en-scene** is the one that viewers notice most. After seeing a film, we may not recall the cutting or the camera movements, the dissolves or the offscreen sound. But we do remember the costumes in *Gone with the Wind* and the bleak, chilly lighting in Charles Foster Kane's *Xanadu*. We retain vivid impressions of the misty streets in *The Big Sleep* and the labyrinthine, fluorescent-lit lair of Buffalo Bill in *The Silence of the Lambs*. We recall Harpo Marx clambering over Edgar Kennedy's lemonade stand (*Duck Soup*) and Michael J. Fox escaping high-school bullies on an improvised skateboard (*Back to the Future*). Many of our most vivid memories of movies stem from mise-en-scene.

### What Is Mise-en-Scene?

Consider this image from Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* (4.1). Aldo Raine, a U.S. soldier on a mission to assassinate Hitler, has been captured by SS Colonel Hans Landa. The shot seems a simple one, but if you're starting to think like a filmmaker, you'll notice how Tarantino has shaped the image to accentuate the action and engage our attention.

The shot presents the two men facing each other behind a movie theater. The alley is rendered minimally, in dark colors and subdued lighting. By playing down the setting, Tarantino obliges us to concentrate on the confrontation.

Although both men are positioned in profile, the image doesn't give equal weight to each one. The cowl masks Aldo's face. This costume choice encourages us to concentrate on the face that we can see. The lighting is important as well. A

#### 4.1 What attracts your eye?

Elements of mise-en-scene accentuate action and engage attention in this scene from *Inglourious Basterds*, in which Aldo Raine is captured by Colonel Landa.



thread of illumination picks out the edge of Raine's cow: without it, it would merge into the background. Again, however, it is Landa's face that gets greater emphasis. Strong lighting from above and left sharply outlines his profile, and a less powerful light (what filmmakers call *fill*) reveals his features.

Landa is emphasized in another way, through the actor's dialogue and facial expression. As Landa speaks, he shows delight in the capture of his quarry. His satisfaction bursts out when he chortles: "Alas, you're now in the hands of the SS—my hands, to be exact!" Letting the actor's hands fly up into the center of the frame and emphasizing them by the dialogue, Tarantino reminds us of the officer's florid self-assurance. This hand gesture will be developed when Landa playfully taps Raine's head with a forefinger: "I've been waiting a long time to touch you."

Although Tarantino has made many creative choices in this shot (notably the decision to film in a relatively close framing), certain techniques stand out. Setting, costume, lighting, and performance have all been coordinated to highlight Landa's gloating and remind us that he enjoys his cat-and-mouse interrogation tactics. Tarantino has shaped our experience of this story action by his decisions about mise-en-scene.

In the original French, *mise en scène* (pronounced mee-zahn-sen) means "putting into the scene," and it was first applied to the practice of directing plays. Film scholars, extending the term to film direction, use the term to signify the director's control over what appears in the film frame. As you would expect, mise-en-scene includes those aspects of film that overlap with the art of the theater: setting, lighting, costume and makeup, and staging and performance.

As the *Inglourious Basterds* shot suggests, mise-en-scene usually involves planning in advance. But the filmmaker may seize on unplanned events as well. An actor may add a line on the set, or an unexpected change in lighting may enhance a dramatic effect. While filming a cavalry procession through Monument Valley for *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, John Ford took advantage of an approaching lightning storm to create a dramatic backdrop for the action (4.2). The storm remains part of the film's mise-en-scene even though Ford neither planned it nor controlled it; it was a lucky accident that helped create one of the film's most affecting passages. Jean Renoir, Robert Altman, and other directors have allowed their actors to improvise their performances, making the films' mise-en-scene more spontaneous and unpredictable.



4.2 Unplanned events and mise-en-scene. While filming *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, John Ford took advantage of a thunderstorm in Monument Valley.

## The Power of Mise-en-Scene

Filmmakers can use mise-en-scene to achieve realism, giving settings an authentic look or letting actors perform as naturally as possible. Throughout film history, however, audiences have also been attracted to fantasy, and mise-en-scene has often been used for this purpose. This attraction is evident in the work of cinema's first master of the technique, Georges Méliès. Méliès used highly original mise-en-scene to create an imaginary world on film.

A caricaturist and stage magician, Méliès became fascinated by the Lumière brothers' demonstration of their short films in 1895. (For more on the Lumières, see p. 177.) After building a camera based on an English projector, Méliès began filming unstaged street scenes and moments of passing daily life. One day, the story goes, he was filming at the Place de l'Opéra, but his camera jammed as a bus was passing. By the time he could resume filming, the bus had gone and a hearse was in front of his lens. When Méliès screened the film, he discovered something



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For more on Méliès and his last years, visit our entry "Hugo: Scorsese's birthday present to Georges Méliès."

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## *Introduction: What is Literature?*

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If there is such a thing as literary theory, then it would seem obvious that there is something called literature which it is the theory of. We can begin, then, by raising the question: what is literature?

There have been various attempts to define literature. You can define it, for example, as 'imaginative' writing in the sense of fiction - writing which is not literally true. But even the briefest reflection on what people commonly include under the heading of literature suggests that this will not do. Seventeenth-century English literature includes Shakespeare, Webster, Marvell and Milton; but it also stretches to the essays of Francis Bacon, the sermons of John Donne, Bunyan's spiritual autobiography and whatever it was that Sir Thomas Browne wrote. It might even at a pinch be taken to encompass Hobbes's *Leviathan* or Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*. French seventeenth-century literature contains, along with Corneille and Racine, La Rochefoucauld's maxims, Bossuet's funeral speeches, Boileau's treatise on poetry, Madame de Sevigne's letters to her daughter and the philosophy of Descartes and Pascal. Nineteenth-century English literature usually includes Lamb (though not Bentham), Macaulay (but not Marx), Mill (but not Darwin or Herbert Spencer).

A distinction between 'fact' and 'fiction', then, seems unlikely to get us very far, not least because the distinction itself is often a questionable one. It has been argued, for instance, that our own opposition between 'historical' and 'artistic' truth does not apply at all to the early Icelandic sagas.<sup>1</sup> In the English late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the word 'novel' seems to have been used about both true and fictional events, and even news reports were hardly to be considered factual. Novels and news reports were



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# 1

## *The Rise of English*

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In eighteenth-century England, the concept of literature was not confined as it sometimes is today to 'creative' or 'imaginative' writing. It meant the whole body of valued writing in society: philosophy, history, essays and letters as well as poems. What made a text 'literary' was not whether it was fictional – the eighteenth century was in grave doubt about whether the new upstart form of the novel was literature at all – but whether it conformed to certain standards of 'polite letters'. The criteria of what counted as literature, in other words, were frankly ideological: writing which embodied the values and 'tastes' of a particular social class qualified as literature, whereas a street ballad, a popular romance and perhaps even the drama did not. At this historical point, then, the 'value-ladenness' of the concept of literature was reasonably self-evident.

In the eighteenth century, however, literature did more than 'embody' certain social values: it was a vital instrument for their deeper entrenchment and wider dissemination. Eighteenth-century England had emerged, battered but intact, from a bloody civil war in the previous century which had set the social classes at each other's throats; and in the drive to reconsolidate a shaken social order, the neo-classical notions of Reason, Nature, order and propriety, epitomized in art, were key concepts. With the need to incorporate the increasingly powerful but spiritually rather raw middle classes into unity with the ruling aristocracy, to diffuse polite social manners, habits of 'correct' taste and common cultural standards, literature gained a new importance. It included a whole set of ideological institutions: periodicals, coffee houses, social and aesthetic treatises, sermons, classical translations, guidebooks to manners and morals. Literature was not a matter of 'felt

and was thus unable to recognize fully that local, 'subjective' differences of evaluation work within a particular, socially structured way of perceiving the world.

If it will not do to see literature as an 'objective', descriptive category, neither will it do to say that literature is just what people whimsically choose to call literature. For there is nothing at all whimsical about such kinds of value-judgement: they have their roots in deeper structures of belief which are as apparently unshakable as the Empire State building. What we have uncovered so far, then, is not only that literature does not exist in the sense that insects do, and that the value-judgements by which it is constituted are historically variable, but that these value-judgements themselves have a close relation to social ideologies. They refer in the end not simply to private taste, but to the assumptions by which certain social groups exercise and maintain power over others. If this seems a far-fetched assertion, a matter of private prejudice, we may test it out by an account of the rise of 'literature' in England.



# MISE-EN-SCÈNE

FILM STYLE AND INTERPRETATION

JOHN GIBBS

SHORT CUTS

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## 1 THE ELEMENTS OF MISE-EN-SCÈNE

### *A Workable Definition*

'Mise-en-scène' is used in film studies in the discussion of visual style. The word is from the French, although it has been employed in English since at least 1833, and has its origins in the theatre. Literally translated it means 'to put on stage', but figurative uses of the term have a long history. For the student of film, a useful definition might be: 'the contents of the frame and the way that they are organised'. Both halves of this formulation are significant — the contents and their organisation.

What are the contents of the frame? They include lighting, costume, décor, properties, and the actors themselves. The organisation of the contents of the frame encompasses the relationship of the actors to one other and to the décor, but also their relationship to the camera, and thus the audience's view. So in talking about mise-en-scène one is also talking about framing, camera movement, the particular lens employed and other photographic decisions. Mise-en-scène therefore encompasses both what the audience can see, and the way in which we are invited to see it. It refers to many of the major elements of communication in the cinema, and the combinations through which they operate expressively.

The main body of this chapter looks at some of the different elements of mise-en-scène, in order to illustrate the range of creative options

## INTRODUCTION

In writing about film, 'mise-en-scène' is sometimes used as a straightforward descriptive term but it is really a concept, complicated but central to a developed understanding of film. This book begins with a workable definition of the term, but the chapters that follow are designed to explore the more complex aspects of the concept. By the end of the book, I hope that the different nuances of mise-en-scène will have been made clear, but along the way — such is the importance of mise-en-scène — we will have encountered a whole range of ideas concerned with the way films work and the methods which critics have developed to understand them.

Thinking and writing of mise-en-scène — which is concerned with visual style in the cinema — helped the study of film achieve maturity. Yet many textbooks of today, including those which aim to give an introduction to the subject area, underestimate the importance of mise-en-scène. Some writers offer inadequate or even incorrect definitions of the term, while others seem unaware of the full implications of visual style.

There is, however, some superb writing which is alive to the importance of mise-en-scène and sensitive to the complexities of film style. The introductions to film studies may not point you in its direction, and some of the articles may only be found in discontinued journals or copyright libraries, but a fine tradition of material nevertheless exists.



## Anthropocentrism: A Misunderstood Problem

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**ABSTRACT:** Anthropocentrism can intelligibly be criticised as an ontological error, but attempts to conceive of it as an ethical error are liable to conceptual and practical confusion. After noting the paradox that the clearest instances of overcoming anthropocentrism involve precisely the sort of objectivating knowledge which many ecological critics see as itself archetypically anthropocentric, the article presents the following arguments: there are some ways in which anthropocentrism is not objectionable; the defects associated with anthropocentrism in ethics are better understood as instances of speciesism and human chauvinism; it is unhelpful to call these defects anthropocentrism because there is an ineliminable element of anthropocentrism in any ethic at all; moreover, because the defects do not typically involve a concern with human interests as such, the rhetoric of anti-anthropocentrism is counterproductive in practice.

**KEYWORDS:** Anthropocentrism, human chauvinism, speciesism, environmental ethics.

### INTRODUCTION

Anthropocentrism, widely used as a term of criticism in environmental ethics and politics, is something of a misnomer: for while anthropocentrism can intelligibly be criticised as an ontological error, attempts to conceive of it as an ethical error often involve conceptual confusion. I point out that there is no need for this confusion because a more appropriate vocabulary to refer to the defects the ethical 'anti-anthropocentrists' have in mind already exists. My argument is not just about semantics, though, but engages directly with the politics of environmental concern: blanket condemnations of 'anthropocentrism' not only condemn some legitimate human concerns, they also allow ideological retorts to the effect that criticisms of anthropocentrism amount to misanthropy. My argument, therefore, is that a more nuanced understanding of the problem of anthropocentrism allows not only a more coherent conceptualisation of en-

## ANTHROPOCENTRISM: A MISUNDERSTOOD PROBLEM

the mistake of giving exclusive or arbitrarily preferential consideration to human interests as opposed to the interests of other beings. Now while the ontological assumption is consistent with, and may even seem to support, the ethical view that only humans are of ethical value, it does not strictly entail it; conversely, one could hold that ethical view without subscribing to an anthropocentric ontology. Therefore, the reasons there may be for refusing an anthropocentric ontology do not necessarily have any direct bearing on anthropocentrism in ethics. Criticism of the latter, therefore, cannot borrow force or credibility from criticisms of the former. An independent account is required of why anthropocentrism in ethics is wrong, and, indeed, what it *means* to overcome anthropocentrism in ethics. As I shall show, anthropocentrism in ethics is a problem not generally sufficiently clearly formulated, whose 'overcoming' is poorly understood, at best, and at worst misconceived.

This does not mean, however, that the problems identified under the heading of anthropocentrism in ethics cannot be explained and diagnosed in more appropriate terms.

## II. WHAT IS NOT WRONG WITH ANTHROPOCENTRISM

The idea of anthropocentrism in ethics generally derives its negative normative force on analogy with egocentrism (Goodpaster, 1979): just as it is morally wrong to be self-centred in the individual case, it is wrong to be human-centred in the collective case. Nevertheless, anthropocentrism cannot simply be equated with human-centredness if it is to perform the critical function envisaged for it, since there are also respects in which human-centredness is unavoidable, unobjectionable or even desirable. It is important to recognize these if one is to attain a precise idea of what is wrong with anthropocentrism.

To begin with, there are some ways in which humans cannot help being human-centred. Anyone's view of the world is shaped and limited by their position and way of being within it: from the perspective of any particular being or species there are real respects in which they *are* at the centre of it. Thus, as Ferré for instance points out, to the extent that humans 'have no choice but to think as humans' what he calls 'perspectival anthropocentrism' would appear to be inescapable (Ferré, 1994, p.72). It would also appear to be unavoidable that we should be interested in ourselves and our own kind. There may indeed be respects in which human-centredness is unobjectionable – for humans, like any other beings, have legitimate interests which there is no reason for them not to pursue. As Mary Midgley (1994, p.111) observes, 'people do right, not wrong, to have a particular regard for their own kin and their own species'. She points out, moreover, that human-centredness may in some respects be positively desirable: for just as the term 'self-centred' has been used figuratively in the past

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## Ecocriticism

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## Ecocriticism

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### Abstract

In the last 20 years, ecocriticism has developed from its early incarnation as the relatively under-theorised preserve of nature writing enthusiasts to its current vibrant state as a sophisticated array of 'earth-centred' approaches to cultural criticism that mobilise and reframe theories drawn from a range of disciplines including ecology, philosophy, sociology and biology. Ecocriticism's diversity also extends to engaging with a variety of literary forms as well as, increasingly, film, TV, digital environments and music, and to an interest in representations of the urban. At its heart is the conviction both that we are living in a time of ecological crisis that requires us to reassess with some urgency our modes of being in the world and that our cultural perceptions of 'nature' and the 'human', and the relationship between the two, have to a large degree been responsible for these damaging modes of being. Its role is to interrogate and critique these perceptions, even within environmentalism itself, with some ecocritics also committed to exploring alternative ways of conceptualising our relationship with the non-human world. This paper briefly traces the history of ecocriticism, discussing its initial development in the USA and Britain, outlining the two strands of social ecology and deep ecology that underpin its ongoing formulation, and tracing the 'waves' of its development. It then focuses on contemporary and emergent theorisations, in particular the global inflection of current post-colonial ecocriticism and the environmental justice movement, which introduces the new paradigm of eco-cosmopolitics, and the recent formulation of ecocritical post-humanism. This emphasises the imbrication of the human in earth's matrix, drawing on the insights of ecofeminism, phenomenology and biosemiotics, and has its most recent incarnation in the currently emerging field of material ecocriticism, which, in its engagement with the complex entanglement of the human and the non-human, the social and the scientific, hints at a more dissonant paradigm.

### Introduction

Ecocriticism is an umbrella term for a range of critical approaches that explore the representation in literature (and other cultural forms) of the relationship between the human and the non-human, largely from the perspective of anxieties around humanity's destructive impact on the biosphere. Other terms for the field include 'environmental criticism' and 'green cultural studies', the latter term reflecting the increasing diversity of the field's remit – its recent focus on film, TV, virtual worlds and popular music, for example, as well as its growing interest in representations of urban environments. How critics involved in this area choose to define themselves depends largely on their own position in relation to environmental issues and to their understanding of the implications of the individual terms. The prefix 'eco' is preferred by some for its ecological connotations – its emphasis on what Lawrence Buell calls "human and non-human webs of *interrelation*" (*The Future of Environmental Criticism*, glossary, 138, emphasis mine) – but for others it implies an overly close identification with one particular strand of scholarship that advocates a commitment to political activism (Bergthaller, *EASLCE website*).<sup>1</sup>

The multiplicity of perspectives and objects of study outlined above has perhaps contributed to an enduring perception in certain quarters of the academy that ecocriticism lacks legitimacy or coherence as an area of critical theory. Peter Barry, in his influential primer *Beginning Theory*, sees it as a field that "is still distinctly on the academic margins [...] and the movement still does not have a widely-known set of assumptions, doctrines or procedures" (239). In part this

3. *Human accountability to the environment is part of the text's ethical orientation. [...]*
4. *Some sense of the environment as a process rather than as a constant or a given is at least implicit in the text. [...]* (7–8, italics in original)

Buell's questioning of the text's 'ethical orientation' in particular points up an important, though contested, element of ecocriticism, which is what Buell calls "a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis" (*Environmental*, 430). As a theoretical field based around concerns spreading out from the cultural to the political, there is a desire in some ecocritics to have a practical, 'real-world' impact – to educate our broader interactions with the non-human world and to form a 'counter-canon' of texts "which are seen to model a more ecologically sustainable mode of being and dwelling in the world than that which has predominated in the lived reality of the modern era" (Rigby, 159). For others, the focus is more on interrogation than activism, though political intervention may be a (positive) outcome of that interrogation.<sup>9</sup>

Cheryll Glotfelty also provided a comprehensive checklist in her introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader* – this time of questions reflecting the way in which an (American) ecocritic reads. As well as incorporating aspects of Buell's 'ingredients', she also prefigured many of the concerns of subsequent waves of ecocriticism. For this reason, I include her full list in Appendix 1 as a still useful orientation for anyone wishing to carry out practical ecocriticism.

In the USA, despite the breadth of Glotfelty's questioning, the first wave of ecocriticism was predominantly associated with the championing of non-fiction nature writing. Writers such as Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Mary Austin, Edward Abbey, Wendell Berry and Annie Dillard were lauded for the quality of their environmental imagination. The landscapes they engaged with were often wilderness or semi-wilderness, and their writings reflect the legacy of American Transcendentalism, with its emphasis on the educative value of wild nature and on intense individual connection with the landscape. This approach has been described as "celebratory" (Head, 'Ecocriticism and the Novel', 236; Barry, 242), suggesting a relatively uncritical understanding of 'nature'.<sup>10</sup>

First-wave British ecocriticism also concerned itself with the recuperation of forms of writing that foregrounded the non-human world and that might foster environmental sensibility, though here the emphasis was on poetry. It was spearheaded by Jonathan Bate, who in two influential works, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (1991) and *The Song of the Earth* (2000), undertook the rehabilitation of the Romantic Poets, especially William Wordsworth, as poets of nature. For Bate, Romantic poetry enables us to "think fragility" (*Song*, 112) – to apprehend our ecological embeddedness and shared vulnerability with the non-human world.

Bate diverges from Buell, however, when it comes to environmental praxis. Basing his argument on Heidegger's ideas of *dwelling* – a manner of being in the world that is receptive to the self-disclosure of nature and is revealed through poetry – Bate characterises *ecopoetry* as a *phenomenological* and pre-political form, which draws us into communion with the earth through its emphasis on 'presencing' rather than representation, bodying forth that presencing in part through its rhythms and sounds. He suggests that, while it might be appropriate for Marxist or feminist critics to believe that they are contributing towards social change, green critics should not approach poetry with a "set of assumptions or proposals about particular environmental issues, but as a way of reflecting upon what it might mean to dwell with the earth" (*Song*, 266). For Bate, "Ecopoetics must concern itself with consciousness. When it comes to practice, we have to speak in other discourses" (266).

Nevertheless, there is a sense in which the British landscape and its literary evocations are inextricably intertwined with the social and the political. Bate's own discussion of the 'peasant poet' John Clare identifies the way in which he viewed "the 'rights of man' and the 'rights of



In her introduction to the early collection of ecocritical essays *The Ecocriticism Reader*, published in 1996, Cheryl Glotfelty points up the death of environmental criticism existing at that time:

If your knowledge of the outside world were limited to what you could infer from the major publications of the literary profession, you would quickly discern that race, class, and gender were the hot topics of the late twentieth century, but you would never suspect that the earth's life support systems were under stress. Indeed you would never know that there was an earth at all. (xvi)

One of the factors influencing this slow progress was perhaps the uncertainty within the humanities of involving themselves with what was generally perceived to be a 'scientific' problem, the domain of the environmental sciences.<sup>5</sup> Another issue was the difficulty of speaking for the earth itself. Other areas of theory that were gathering momentum in the 1970s such as feminism and post-colonialism – both of which critiqued the political and social effects of 'othering' – had more identifiable means of locating and giving the space for articulation to those voices silenced by dominant ideologies.

But, in particular, there was a feeling in these early ecocritics that critical theory itself was thwarting their attempt to establish any kind of advocacy for the earth. John Parham rightly notes a 'belligerent' attitude to theory in first-wave ecocriticism ('The Poverty of Ecocritical Theory', 25). Rather than necessarily representing a rejection of theory per se,<sup>6</sup> this was more the result of a frustration with the particular 'linguistic' turn present in the structuralism and post-structuralism of the 1970s and 1980s that viewed language as a closed system, suggesting, at least in what Wendy Wheeler and Hugh Dunkerley call "the less subtle Anglophone interpretations of 'continental theory'" ('Introduction', *New Formations*, 7), that it is not possible to discuss the 'real' world because reality is constructed in language and 'there is nothing outside the text'.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, in the context of the New Historicism, Alan Liu made the much-contested assertion: "there is no nature except as it is constituted by acts of political definition made possible by particular forms of government" (104). Terry Gifford, responding to this statement, argued that "While Liu is right to identify the word 'nature' as 'a mediation', he is wrong to deny the general physical presence that is one side of that mediation" (*Green Voices*, 15).

The role of early ecocriticism, then, while not necessarily denying the linguistic construction of 'nature', was largely to create the theoretical space in which to discuss that 'general physical presence' on the other side of the mediation, which the proliferation and habits of consumption of the human race (albeit with an uneven global distribution of that consumption, as discussed below) were putting in jeopardy. Kate Rigby calls this endeavour the "ecocritical reinstatement of the referent" (154) and, in an oft-quoted rebuff to extreme applications of the linguistic turn, Kate Soper reminds us: "it is not language that has a hole in its ozone layer; and the 'real' thing continues to be polluted and degraded even as we refine our deconstructive insights at the level of the signifier" (151).<sup>8</sup>

#### *The First Wave – Reinstating the 'Real'*

Accordingly, the first wave of ecocriticism, especially in the USA, focused on the representation in literature of the world beyond the text, devoting much of its energy to the search for the forms of literary expression which could best convey an environmental message. In *The Environmental Imagination*, Lawrence Buell formulated a checklist of four 'ingredients' of an environmentally orientated work:

1. *The nonhuman environment is present not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history. [...]*
2. *The human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest. [...]*

### The *Second Wave* – Debating ‘Nature’

Although he was the instigator of the notion of ecocritical ‘waves’, Lawrence Buell himself qualifies this imagery, suggesting that the waves are indistinct and offering ‘palimpsest’ as a better metaphor:

No definitive map of environmental criticism in literary studies can [...] be drawn. Still, one can identify several trend-lines marking an evolution from a “first wave” of ecocriticism to a “second” or newer revisionist wave or waves increasingly evident today. This first–second wave distinction should not, however, be taken as implying a tidy, distinct succession. Most currents set in motion by early ecocriticism continue to run strong, and most forms of second-wave revisionism involve building on as well as quarreling with precursors. (*Future*, 17)

Perhaps because of this sense of indistinct succession and concurrence of perspectives, there is a lack of consensus about what actually constitutes each wave. Greta Gaard, for example, argues that the accounts of the second wave underestimate the importance of feminist thinking: “the retelling of ecocritical roots and perspectives marginalizes both feminist and ecofeminist literary perspectives” (643). In the broad account of the second wave that follows, I include discussion of some of the developments in ecofeminism that demonstrate its significance in the ecocritical trajectory.

As Buell suggests, though the second wave revised ecocriticism, it carried through elements of the first wave, maintaining its awareness of the ‘general physical presence’ of nature and developing and refining its engagement with form and the search for the environmental imagination. Where it diverged was in its re-engagement with the critical theory it had initially pulled against. In the UK, the philosopher Kate Soper suggested in *What is Nature?* that the ‘nature-endorsing’ approach typical of early ecocriticism should be balanced with a more ‘nature-sceptical’ sensibility, able to reflect on the way in which ‘nature’ has been constructed and deployed to reinforce dominant ideologies, but that neither perspective should be allowed to dominate. In fact, they should be informed by reflection on each other. Laurence Coupe gave this dual awareness a specifically ecocritical spin in a memorable phrase in his introduction to *The Green Studies Reader* (2000): “green studies debates ‘Nature’ in order to defend nature” (5).

In the US, Dana Phillips launched a more polemical challenge to ecocriticism to re-engage with critical theory, stating that:

The first generation of ecocritics has embraced a curatorial model of literary scholarship and has spurned literary theory, apparently without having reaped the benefits of its close acquaintance. This has made ecocriticism seem overly devotional, and hostile to the intellect at times. (ix)<sup>16</sup>

Phillips also suggested a rethinking of the search for an environmental literature, questioning what the function of a ‘literary’ criticism that focused on largely *mimetic* – or directly representational – writing might be: “Realistic depiction of the world, of the sort that we can credit as reasonable and uncontroversial, is one of literature’s more pedestrian, least artful aspects” (8).<sup>17</sup> In the UK, Dominic Head also broached the question of form, specifically calling for an engagement with the novel: “If ecocriticism is to realise its full potential, it will need to find a way of appropriating novelistic form” (*Ecocriticism and the Novel*, 236).

Ecocriticism’s second wave ushered in a more reflexive approach that provided the scope to address the complex intertwining of nature, ‘Nature’, and social and sexual politics, and that, as well as critiquing and reframing the forms that had already come under its scrutiny to reflect a more complex understanding of these interweavings (e.g. ‘post-pastoral’, ‘new nature writing’ and ‘ecopoetry’),<sup>18</sup> did indeed turn to the novel – and to new novelistic

Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee, for example, in *Postcolonial Environments*, finds in Indra Sinha's novel *Animal's People*, which is based on the Bhopal disaster, a magic realism "fit to express the horrors of a reality that threatens to escape the ordinary boundaries of stylistics" (153).

The diffusive temporal and spatial nature of the results of slow violence and the fact that we are now living in a geological epoch informally termed 'the *anthropocene*' (Crutzen and Stoermer) to denote the magnitude of human impact on environmental change, suggest the need for an ecocritical paradigm that is not only more globally nuanced but also more globally embracing – in other words, one which, while sensitive to environmental justice issues at a local level, is also able to register the temporal and planetary implications of anthropogenic environmental destruction in a world where no act or result of damage can be seen as purely local.

A recent issue of *Green Letters* (Spring 2012) devoted to 'Global and Postcolonial Ecologies' employs broadly social ecological, Marxist constructs for discussing the global, in particular Jason Moore's term *world-ecology*, which denotes "the epochal reorganization of world ecology that marked the rise of the capitalist world-economy" (Niblett, 16). For the editor Sharae Deckard, this has enabled a tentative 'worlding' of post-colonial literary criticism which seeks:

not only to generate an understanding of the political, cultural, and aesthetic *differences* between literary and critical approaches to the environment across multiple national traditions, but *also* to detect structural *homologies* and similarities of concern, particularly in those ways in which literatures respond to the uneven development projects of global capital and their impact on local environments and subjects. (Deckard, 10–11, *emphases in original*)

Michael Niblett, for example, identifies the literary device of 'irrealism' (of which the magic realism discussed by Mukherjee, above, is a form) as an identifiable homology across literatures globally, used for expressing aspects of the catastrophic upheavals in ecologies brought about by the expansion of global capital that would otherwise defy representation.

#### *Eco-Cosmopolitanism and the **Third** Wave*

In another response to this global imperative, Scott Slovic and Joni Adamson hailed the arrival of ecocriticism's third wave in 2009 – a development which "recognises ethnic and national particularities and yet transcends ethnic and national boundaries," exploring "all facets of human experience from an environmental viewpoint" (6–7). Broadly speaking, this describes the paradigm of *eco-cosmopolitanism*. In *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global* (2008), Ursula Heise describes the genesis of this construct in the recuperation of the term 'cosmopolitanism' in a range of fields in the late 1990s, with theorists striving to "model forms of cultural imagination and understanding that reach beyond the nation and around the globe" (6). She discusses this in terms of 'deterritorialisation', stating that "the increasing connectedness of societies around the globe entails the emergence of new forms of culture that are no longer anchored in place" (10).

For her, the challenge that this deterritorialisation poses for the environmental imagination is:

to envision how ecologically-based advocacy on behalf of the non-human world as well as on behalf of greater socioenvironmental justice might be formulated in terms that are premised no longer as primarily on ties to local places but on ties to territories and systems that are understood to encompass the planet as a whole. (10)

What she proposes is an ecologically inflected "world citizenship" (10). It is in the spirit of this world citizenship that the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth was



adopted at the World Peoples' Conference on Climate Change in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in 2010. The declaration stresses that we are "all part of Mother Earth, an indivisible, living community of interrelated and interdependent beings with a common destiny" (<<http://pwccc.wordpress.com/programa/>>). It seeks to recognise the environmental damage wrought by global capitalism and promotes social and environmental justice but within the framework of a biospherical egalitarianism similar to that advocated by deep ecologist Arne Naess.

This advocacy for the non-human extends the notion of *environmental justice* (usually applied to human concerns relating to the environment) to the environment itself, and brings together parties whose interests might previously have been deemed separate. Joni Adamson recounts a protest in Peru in 2006 attended by a "coalition of indigenous peoples, environmentalists and academics" (148) that opposed a mining concession sited at the foot of the mountain Ausangate. The protesters argued that the mountain "should have the right to exist in a proper relationship with its surrounding mountains" (148). For Adamson (citing de la Cadena), the notable aspect of this protest was the way in which those involved, some of whom would not personally subscribe to the notion of a sentient mountain, were able to join together in a commitment to "a politics of nature that included 'disagreement on the definition of nature itself'" (149).

Another reason for these new alliances is a realisation of the ways in which the diffusive effects of 'slow violence' register indiscriminately on the bodies of the human and the non-human, disrupting both the nature/culture binary and human social distinctions. Referencing the work of Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman in *Material Feminisms*, Adamson explains:

An oil spill, for example, studied from a cultural–natural perspective that does not separate the two realms, reveals how a toxin may affect the workers who produce it, the community in which it is produced, and the humans and animals (domesticated and wild) that ingest it. (Adamson, 148)

This notion of movement of matter across bodies in a multiple entanglement leads me to discussion of the fourth wave of ecocriticism.

#### *The Fourth Wave – Material Ecocriticism: Post-Human and Post-Nature*

The fourth wave should be regarded as co-existent with rather than superseding the third (or indeed the other strands of ecocriticism) and has only very recently been identified. It is the emergent field of *material ecocriticism*. For Scott Slovic, it is Stacy Alaimo's discussion of 'trans-corporeality' in *Material Feminisms* that "has helped to launch an entire new direction in contemporary ecocriticism" (443). This concept has developed out of early ecofeminist apprehensions of the impacts of environmental justice on the human body and the more recent 'material turn', which has found a powerful voice in the work of feminist thinkers in a range of disciplines, including Karen Barad and Claire Colebrook, as well as Alaimo and Susan Hekman. Alaimo defines trans-corporeality as a construct that deals with "the material interchanges across human bodies, animal bodies, and the wider material world" ('States', 476) and that has engendered "a new materialist and *post-humanist* sense of the human as substantially and perpetually interconnected with the flows of substances and the agencies of environments" ('States', 476).

For Alaimo, this interconnection calls for "rich, complex modes of analysis that travel through the entangled territories of material and discursive, natural and cultural, biological and textual" ('Trans-corporeal', 238). In this, she echoes Bruno Latour's sense in *We Have*



## Ecocritical study on relationships between humans, nature, and god in the novel *the Alchemist*

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## CULTURE, MEDIA & FILM | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Ecocritical study on relationships between humans, nature, and god in the novel *the Alchemist*

Nahdhiyah<sup>1</sup>, Fathu Rahman<sup>2\*</sup>, Herowaty Abas<sup>2</sup> and M. Amir Pattu<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** This research was inspired by an ecocritical study of the interaction between humans and nature in literary works. Man and nature were created by God so that man, nature, and God become three inseparable things. This paper aims to reveal the harmonious relationship between humans, nature and God in the novel *The Alchemist*. Paulo Coelho's enchanting novel *The Alchemist* has inspired a devoted following around the world. This story, dazzling in its powerful simplicity and soul-stirring wisdom, tells the story of an Andalusian shepherd boy named Santiago who travels from his homeland in Spain to the Egyptian desert in search of a treasure buried near the Pyramids. Data analysis applied the Miles and Huberman analysis technique starting with data reduction, then data presentation, and finally drawing conclusions. The results show that literary works such as *The Alchemist* can contribute to eliciting a new awareness in readers regarding the relationship between humans and nature and their relationship with God as the creator. The harmonious relationship between humans, nature and God is depicted in the novel as a positive state of inner peace, calmness, and balance, as well as the feeling of being in tune with nature. Nature and natural phenomena are signs sent by God to humans as a guide in navigating life. The implications of this study are that literary works such as *The Alchemist* can contain many simple life lessons combined with a very strong moral message.

**Subjects:** Philosophy; Religion; Cultural Studies; Language & Linguistics; Language Teaching & Learning; Literature

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The adoption of an ecocriticism approach in literary studies can be expressed in the form of the following questions: first, how is nature represented in the literary work?; second, in the genre of literary works, what role can the physical environment play?; third, is ecological wisdom in accordance with the values expressed in literary works?; fourth, how do environmental metaphors influence the way people treat certain components of the environment?; fifth, how to characterize writing about nature as a kind of literary genre?; sixth, how does environmental criticism influence the categorization of contemporary literature and popular literature?; and seventh, what is the relationship between nature and literature. These seven questions form the basis of the study of literary ecocriticism, which emphasizes the relationship between the environment (nature) and literature (literary works), so that ecocriticism is a link between the two (Bate, 2000).

## 2. Ecocriticism and literature studies

The theory of ecocriticism can be classified as a multidisciplinary theory, because ecocriticism combines ecological and literary fields of study. From the perspective of literary studies, ecocriticism can be classified as a mimetic theory, based on the assumption that literature, with reference to paradigms, is a reflection of the reality of life as it lived at the time the literary work is written.

Nature has become an inseparable part of the birth of a number of literary works. This can be seen in several literary works, both novels and poems written by famous authors, for example, novels (Stephen Green, Hemingway, Robert Frost, Nathalia Hawthorne, Orgin O'neil, Mark Twain), and Poet (Wal With Man, T.S. Eliot, Pablo Neruda, Kohlii Gian, Rabindranath Tagore and, Edgar Allan Poe). Works in the form of diction and descriptions about forests, seas, trees, mountains, animals, and so on. The two elements of literature and nature are inextricably linked. Past literature is a mirror of the past, while contemporary literature is a mirror of the present. While nature is often a source of inspiration, literary works can contribute to the will and actions to preserve nature. As ecocriticism tries to apply the concept of ecology to literary studies, making the earth (nature) the focus of its studies, ecocriticism can be defined as a study of the connection between literature and environment (Glotfelt & Fromm, 1996, 1).

According to Endraswara (2016a), ecocriticism does not arise from an empty perspective, but rather from one where the concepts of ontology, axiology, and epistemology can be understood and applied within an ecocritical philosophy of literature. From an ontological perspective, ecocriticism can be understood as combining aesthetic facts with the environment and literary studies. From the perspective of axiology, eco-criticism can be understood relative to the urgency or usefulness of finding the relationship between facts in the environment and their actualization in literature. Meanwhile, from an epistemological perspective, it can be understood that literature is a representation of the environment in which it arose (Endraswara, 2016b).

Ecocriticism is a field of literary study which combines the physical (natural) environment (including inter alia population growth, the rapid disappearance of species, soil contamination, water and air contamination, and loss of wild forests) with literary works and the relationships between the two (Glen, 2003). Eco-critics pay particular attention to the relationship between environment and literature, including ecological concerns due to unstable or consistent relationships within and between social and physical realities. The limits of environmental criticism allow us to conclude that the study of literature through the environmental criticism approach describes how a literary work is inseparable from nature, the environment and various associated problems. From this perspective, the aesthetics of literary works are built through the contribution of natural phenomena and the environment, which is understood not only as providing a setting (place and atmosphere), but as being full of complex problems.

The degradation of nature and the damage done to the natural environment as phenomena have elicited responses not only from writers and the public, but also from academics who play a role in building an intellectual climate and environmental awareness. Natural objects that are

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# **METODE PENELITIAN KUALITATIF**

**dalam Penelitian Pendidikan Bahasa**





dialami subjek dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Dalam penelitian kualitatif, peneliti terlibat dalam konteks, dengan situasi dan setting fenomena alami sesuai yang sedang diteliti. Setiap fenomena merupakan sesuatu yang unik, yang berbeda dengan lainnya karena berbeda konteksnya.

Tujuan dari penelitian kualitatif ini adalah untuk memahami kondisi suatu konteks dengan mengarahkan pada pendeskripsian secara rinci dan mendalam mengenai potret kondisi dalam suatu konteks yang alami (*natural setting*), tentang apa yang sebenarnya terjadi menurut apa adanya di lapangan studi.

Dalam beberapa bidang, sesungguhnya sifat masalah yang diteliti lebih tepat apabila dikaji dengan pendekatan atau metode kualitatif. Seperti misalnya ketika ingin mengungkapkan bagaimana pengalaman orang yang merasakan sakit, ketergantungan obat, depresi, peningkatan semangat belajar, tumbuhnya minat, sikap positif, dan motivasi terhadap suatu objek, dan sebagainya. Dalam kasus semacam itu, metode kualitatif dapat mengungkap dan memahami sesuatu di balik fenomena yang tidak diketahui sebelumnya. Metode kualitatif ini juga dapat memberikan rincian yang kompleks tentang fenomena yang sulit ditangkap dan diungkapkan melalui metode kuantitatif.

Penelitian kualitatif atau *qualitative research* merupakan jenis penelitian yang menghasilkan penemuan-penemuan yang tidak dapat dicapai dengan menggunakan prosedur-prosedur statistik atau dengan cara kuantitatif lainnya. Menurut Strauss dan Corbin (2007:1), penelitian kualitatif ini merupakan penelitian yang dapat digunakan untuk meneliti kehidupan masyarakat, sejarah, tingkah laku, fungsionalisasi organisasi, gerakan sosial, atau hubungan kekerabatan. Sementara itu, menurut Bogdan dan Taylor (1992:21), bahwa penelitian kualitatif merupakan prosedur penelitian yang mampu menghasilkan data deskriptif berupa ucapan, tulisan, dan perilaku dari orang-orang yang diamati. Melalui penelitian kualitatif ini dimungkinkan

Bogdan dan Taylor (1975:5), mendefinisikan metode penelitian kualitatif sebagai prosedur penelitian yang menghasilkan data deskriptif berupa kata-kata tertulis atau lisan dari orang-orang dan perilaku yang diamati. Pendekatan ini diarahkan pada latar dan individu secara holistik (utuh), tidak mengisolasi individu ke dalam variabel atau hipotesis, tetapi memandangnya sebagai bagian dari keutuhan. Sejalan dengan pendapat itu, Kirk dan Miller (dalam Moeleong, 1990:3), mendefinisikan bahwa penelitian kualitatif adalah tradisi dalam ilmu pengetahuan sosial yang secara fundamental bergantung pada pengamatan manusia dalam kawasan sendiri dan berhubungan dengan orang-orang tersebut dalam bahasa dan peristilahannya.

Istilah kualitatif menurut Kirk dan Miller (dalam Moeleong, 1990:2) pada mulanya bersumber pada pengamatan kualitatif yang bertentangan dengan pengamatan kuantitatif. Kuantitatif menunjuk pada jumlah, atau angka dan penghitungan, sedangkan kualitatif menunjuk pada segi alamiah, kualitas, dan tidak mengadakan penghitungan. Menurut Denzin dan Lincoln (2009:16) kata kualitatif mengisyaratkan penekanan pada proses dan makna yang tidak dikaji secara ketat atau belum diukur dari sisi kuantitas, jumlah, intensitas, atau frekuensinya.

Para peneliti kualitatif menekankan sifat realita yang terbangun secara sosial, serta hubungan erat antara peneliti dan subjek yang diteliti dan tekanan situasi yang membentuk penelitian. Peneliti kualitatif mementingkan sifat penelitian yang syarat dengan nilai-nilai. Peneliti kualitatif mencari jawaban atas pertanyaan yang menyoroti tentang cara munculnya pengalaman sosial sekaligus perolehan maknanya. Sebaliknya, penelitian kuantitatif menitikberatkan pada pengukuran dan analisis hubungan sebab akibat antara bermacam-macam variabel, bukan mementingkan prosesnya. Penelitian dipandang berada dalam kerangka yang bebas nilai.



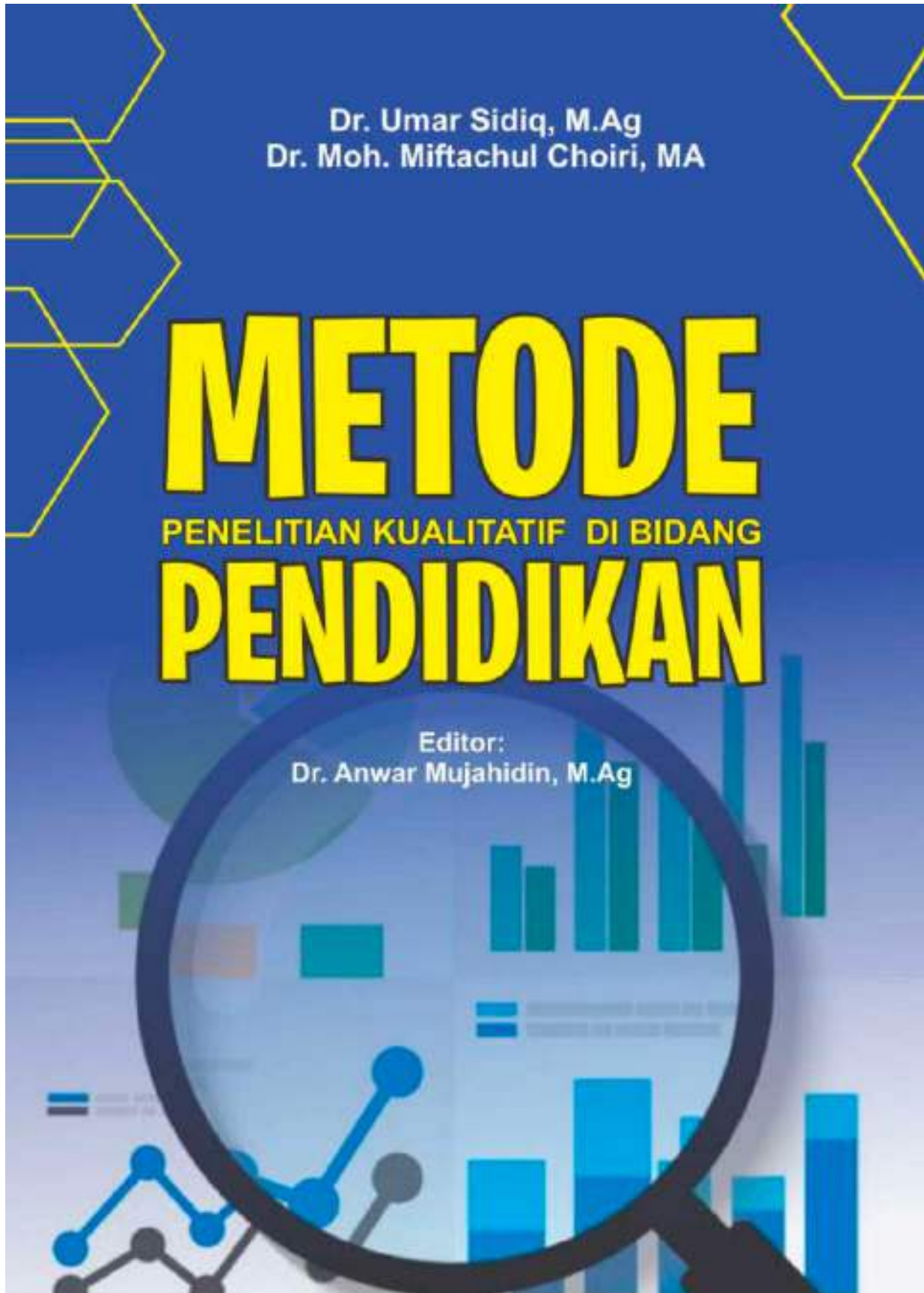
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# METODE

PENELITIAN KUALITATIF DI BIDANG

# PENDIDIKAN

Editor:  
Dr. Anwar Mujahidin, M.Ag



**METODE PENELITIAN KUALITATIF DI BIDANG  
PENDIDIKAN**

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Dilarang keras mengutip, menjiplak, memfotocopi, atau memperbanyak dalam bentuk apa pun, baik sebagian maupun keseluruhan isi buku ini, serta memperjualbelikannya tanpa izin tertulis dari penerbit .

## 2. Pembahasan

### a. Tahapan Penelitian Kualitatif

Menurut Lexy J. Moleong, tahapan ini terdiri tahap pra-lapangan, tahap pekerjaan lapangan dan tahap analisis data.

#### 1) Tahapan Pra-Lapangan

Pada tahap pra-lapangan ini ada enam kegiatan yang harus dilakukan oleh peneliti kualitatif yang mana dalam tahap ini ditambah dengan satu pertimbangan yang perlu dipahami, yaitu etika penelitian lapangan. Sedangkan kegiatan dan pertimbangan tersebut dapat dipaparkan sebagai berikut:

##### (a) Menyusun rancangan penelitian

Memasuki langkah ini peneliti harus memahami berbagai metode dan teknik penelitian. Metode dan teknik penelitian disusun menjadi rancangan penelitian. Mutu keluaran penelitian ditentukan oleh ketepatan rancangan penelitian serta pemahaman dalam penyusunan teori.

##### (b) Memilih lokasi penelitian

Pemilihan lokasi penelitian diarahkan oleh teori substansif yang dirumuskan dalam bentuk hipotesis kerja walaupun masih tentatif sifatnya. Hipotesis kerja itu baru akan dirumuskan secara tetap setelah dikonfirmasi dengan data yang muncul ketika peneliti sudah memasuki kancah latar penelitian. Cara terbaik yang perlu ditempuh

f) Menyiapkan perlengkapan penelitian

Peneliti hendaknya menyiapkan tidak hanya perlengkapan fisik, tetapi segala macam perlengkapan penelitian yang diperlukan. Sebelum penelitian memerlukan izin mengadakan penelitian, kontak dengan daerah yang menjadi latar penelitian melalui surat atau melalui orang yang dikenal sebagai penghubung ataupun secara resmi dengan surat melalui jalur instansi pemerintahan. Hal ini yang perlu dipersiapkan ialah pengaturan perjalanan, terutama apabila lapangan penelitian itu jauh letaknya. Perlu pula kontak kesehatan. Alat tulis seperti pensil atau *ball point*, kertas, buku catatan, map, klip, kartu, karet dan lain-lain. Sebaiknya tersedia juga alat perekam seperti *tape-recorder*, *video-cassete recorder*, dan kamera foto. Persiapan lainnya ialah jadwal yang mencakup waktu, kegiatan yang dijabarkan secara rinci. Yang lebih penting lagi ialah rancangan biaya karena tanpa biaya penelitian tidak dapat terlaksana. Pada tahap analisa data diperlukan perlengkapan berupa alat-alat seperti komputer atau *laptop* (kalau ada), kartu untuk kategorisasi, kertas manila, map folder, kertas folio ganda, dan kertas bergaris.

Yang penting ialah agar peneliti sejauh mungkin sudah menyiapkan segala alat dan

kadang mengganggu peneliti dalam mengadakan pengamatan.<sup>44</sup>

Dalam pengamatan tidak sembarangan mengamati, melainkan membutuhkan sebuah keseriusan agar hasil dari mengamati tersebut dapat menghasilkan hasil yang baik dan bermanfaat. Hasil dari mengamati tersebut bagaimana caranya agar menjadi data yang valid dan dapat dipertanggung jawabkan apabila dijadikan sebuah penelitian. Adapun Metode pengumpulan data dalam penelitian kualitatif yaitu wawancara, observasi dan dokumentasi.

#### a. Definisi Wawancara

Wawancara memiliki banyak definisi tergantung konteksnya. Menurut Moleong, wawancara adalah percakapan dengan maksud tertentu. Percakapan itu dilakukan oleh dua pihak, yaitu pewawancara (*interviewer*) yang mengajukan pertanyaan dan terwawancara (*interviewee*) yang memberikan jawaban atas pertanyaan itu. Gorden mendefinisikan wawancara sebagai berikut:

*"Interviewing is conversation between two people in which one person tries to direct the conversation to obtain information for some specific purpose."*

Dari definisi menurut Gorden tersebut berarti bahwa wawancara merupakan percakapan antara dua

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<sup>44</sup> Suharsimi Arikunto, *Prosedur Penelitian Suatu Pendekatan Praktek* (Jakarta: Renika Cipta, 2002), 197.



langsung pada peserta didik. Dengan adanya penelitian itu maka akan muncul ide-ide baru dan memunculkan teori-teori baru.

Setiap pekerjaan pasti membutuhkan proses penelitian, akan tetapi dalam penelitian tersebut terdapat sebuah metode yang harus dikuasai agar penelitian itu tidak sia-sia, salah satu metode tersebut yaitu teknik pengumpulan data. Teknik pengumpulan data adalah sebuah cara untuk mendapatkan data-data di lapangan agar hasil penelitian dapat bermanfaat dan menjadi teori baru atau penemuan baru. Dengan tanpa adanya cara untuk mengumpulkan data-data yang ingin diteliti maka apa yang menjadi tujuan penelitian akan sia-sia. Adapun teknik pengumpulan data yang dimaksud seperti observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Dengan cara tersebut sebuah penelitian akan mendapatkan sebuah data yang valid dan dapat diuji.

Maka dari itu dalam tulisan ini akan dijelaskan mengenai metode pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, observasi dan dokumentasi.

## **2. Pembahasan**

Setiap orang mempunyai kekurangan dan kelebihan masing-masing. Untuk melihat apa yang ingin dilihat, mendengar apa yang ingin didengar dan melakukan apa yang menjadi keinginannya. Dengan anggapan ini maka



## FILM PHILOLOGY: THE VALUE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF ADAPTATION/FILM STUDIES IN LITERATURE

Film Filolojisi: Edebiyatta Uyarlama/Film Çalışmalarının Değer ve Önemi

Cenk TAN\*

### ABSTRACT

Adaptation/film studies receive a growing interest in literature as more scholars take up articles to produce authentic research. Due to its interdisciplinary and inter-textual nature, adaptation/film studies provide scholars of humanities the means to create preliminary works never published before. This article articulates the importance of adaptation/film studies in literature and calls upon philologists to become actively engaged in the field of adaptation/film studies. Initially, the study defends the view that film is a form of art, no different from works of literature. The article also examines adaptation/film studies with the intermediary function of building bridges between literature and cinema by looking into forerunners and analysing the mutual relationship between these two spheres. The study then scrutinises adaptation/film studies in western academia by exploring the most influential names and tendencies. Finally, the article draws a brief outline of adaptation/film studies in Turkish scholarship and delivers a concise overview of the most productive scholars and their works in this area of research. The research concludes by highlighting the importance of adaptation/film in philology and urging scholars of the humanities to become involved in generating film analyses particularly through the critical lens of literary theory. All in all, the article advocates the necessity and widespread application of film philology in literature.

**Keywords:** adaptation studies, film studies, film philology, literary theory, Turkish scholarship.

### ÖZ

Edebiyat alanında uyarlama/film çalışmalarına, daha çok araştırmacının özgün makaleler üretmesiyle birlikte artan bir ilgi gösterilmektedir. Disiplinlerarası ve metinlerarası doğasından ötürü uyarlama/film çalışmaları, beşeri bilimlerdeki araştırmacılara daha önce yayımlanmamış öncü araştırmalar ortaya çıkarma imkânı sunmaktadır. Bu makale, edebiyat alanında uyarlama/film çalışmalarının değer ve önemini vurgulamakta ve filologlara uyarlama/film çalışmalarına aktif olarak dâhil

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olma hususunda çağında bulunmaktadır. Makalenin ilk bölümünde filmin, edebiyat eserlerinden farklı olmayan bir sanat türü olduğu görüşü savunulmaktadır. Çalışma, aynı zamanda edebiyat ve sinema arasında köprüler kurmaya yönelik aracı bir işleve sahip olan uyarılama/film çalışmalarına ait öncülerini irdelemekte ve bu iki alan arasındaki karşılıklı ilişkiyi analiz etmektedir. Çalışma daha sonra Batı akademiyasındaki uyarılama/film çalışmalarının en etkili isimlerini ve eğilimlerini mercek altına almaktadır. Son olarak makale, Türk akademiyasındaki uyarılama/film çalışmalarının bir çerçevesini çizmekte ve bu alandaki en üretken araştırmacılara ve onların çalışmalarına kısa ve öz bir bakış sunmaktadır. Araştırmanın sonucunda filoloji alanında uyarılama/film çalışmalarının önemi vurgulanmakta ve beşeri bilimlerde çalışma yapan araştırmacıların film analizleri yaratma konusunda aktif olmaları, özellikle edebiyat kuramları aracılığıyla film analizleri üretmeleri teşvik edilmektedir. Sonuç olarak makale, edebiyat alanında film filolojisinin gerekliliğini ve buna ilişkin araştırmaların yaygınlaşmasını savunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** uyarılama çalışmaları, film çalışmaları, film filolojisi, edebi eleştiri, Türk akademiyası.

### **Introduction**

Film has been a popular medium since the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The invention of the internet and streaming media have revolutionised films and television in general and have provided widespread access to films and TV productions around the globe. In today's world, film has proven to be the most influential story-teller and conveyor of narratives. Rather than becoming competitors, film and literature have constructed a reciprocal relationship, reinforcing one another in the society. Thus, as it is the case with the novel, short story and play, film has become another major form of narrative. As a result, film and adaptation studies were taken up by scholars of philology as well. Although film and adaptation studies are not fully identical, both of them rely on film at large and for this reason are worthy of analysis in the same context.

This study's main purpose is to defend and promote the importance of adaptation/film studies in literature and argue the necessity of film and adaptation from the perspective of humanities. The article disputes that film and adaptation provide benefits to the sphere of films as well as to literary scholarship. The first section of the study explores the artistic value of films and discusses that film is a form of art. The second section takes a closer look into film and adaptation studies and reveals the dynamic interconnections between film and literature with references to various texts and scholars. The article then scrutinises exemplary sources related to film





[Home](#)

## Facts about the nature crisis



We are experiencing a dangerous decline in nature and humans are causing it:

- We are using the equivalent of 1.6 Earths to maintain our current

## What you need to know about the nature crisis

We are experiencing a dangerous decline in nature and humans are causing it:

- We are using the equivalent of 1.6 Earths to maintain our current way of life and ecosystems cannot keep up with our demands. (Becoming Generation Restoration, UNEP)
- One million of the world's estimated 8 million species of plants and animals are threatened with extinction. (IPBES)
- **75 percent of the Earth's land surface has been significantly altered by human actions, including 85 percent of wetland areas.** (IPBES)
- **56 percent of ocean area is impacted by human activities, including from fisheries and pollution.** (IPBES)
- Close to 90% of the world's marine fish stocks are fully exploited, overexploited or depleted. (UNCTAD)
- Our global food system is the primary driver of biodiversity loss with agriculture alone being the identified threat 24,000 of the 28,000 species at risk of extinction. (Chatham House and UNEP)
- Agricultural expansion is said to account for 70% of the projected loss of terrestrial biodiversity. (CBD)



## What are the impacts of nature loss and degradation

Nature loss has far-reaching consequences. Damaged ecosystems exacerbate climate change, undermine food security and put people and communities at risk.

- Around 3.2 billion people, or 40 percent of the global population, are adversely affected by land degradation.
- Up to \$577 billion in annual global crop production is at risk from pollinator loss.
- 25 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions are generated by land clearing, crop production and fertilization.
- Development is putting animals and humans in closer contact increasing the risk of diseases like COVID-19 to spread. About 60 percent of human infections are estimated to have an animal origin.
- 100-300 million people are at increased risk of floods and hurricanes because of coastal habitat loss.





# Natural Resources and Conflict

A Guide for Mediation  
Practitioners



United Nations Department of Political Affairs  
and United Nations Environment Programme

# 3

## Guidance for mediation in specific natural resource sectors

This section focuses on mediating conflicts in three natural resource sectors: extractive resources, land, and water. It builds on the four mediation phases, described in the previous section, that apply to any natural resource dispute. Following a brief introduction to each type of resource, each discussion then highlights key conflict factors in the sector and presents a series of effective mediation strategies and agreement models. A list of questions that may be useful during the assessment phase of a mediation process is also included.

### 3.1 Extractive resources

The term 'extractive resources' covers non-renewable resources such as oil, gas, and minerals, as well as renewable resources such as commercial timber. As mentioned in the introduction, these resources are grouped together because they are often managed or governed in a similar manner, and are typically extracted by companies with the award of a concession contract or license. They also share similar challenges, such as the potential to cause severe social and environmental impacts, and the capacity to spark conflicts over benefit-sharing with local communities.

Extractive industries are developed through a series of stages typically known as an 'extractive industry value chain' (EIVC).<sup>11</sup> These steps can include: deciding to develop an extractives sector with appropriate institutions, laws and inclusive decision-making processes; awarding contracts and licenses; monitoring operations; enforcing environmental protection and social mitigation requirements; collecting taxes; distributing revenue in a sound manner; and, implementing sustainable development policies and projects. Although the stages may have a chronological character, they are generally considered at the time when the concession or license is granted. It is equally important to understand that most extractives are embedded in global supply chains that introduce a high level of economic uncertainty and price volatility which local stakeholders in a resource dispute cannot often control.

Extractive resources typically hold the promise of jobs, government revenues, and economic growth. Under the right conditions, the extractive sector can be an important contributor to a nation's economy. On the other hand, extractives are often associated with conflict, either in the form of stand-alone disputes or as an element of a broader political struggle. In circumstances where governing institutions are weak or underdeveloped, countries with

abundant extractive resources may suffer magnified effects of the so-called 'resource curse'.<sup>12</sup>

#### 3.1.1 Conflict factors

Extractive resources can be linked to conflict in many ways, and there is a potential for conflict at each stage in the extractive industry value chain.<sup>13</sup> This potential is dramatically increased in situations where the state lacks the institutional capacity to manage the resource in an effective, transparent and accountable manner. At a macro-economic level, an overdependence on a narrow range of resource commodities has historically led to a series of problems related to poor planning, currency appreciation, and economic instability. In weak and failing states, poor control over the extraction of high-value resources is frequently associated with the capture of valuable resources by armed groups and criminal organizations. Finally, large-scale extractive activities such as mining or forestry can have social and environmental impacts that may trigger or fuel disputes and violent conflict. Against this background, key drivers of conflict in this sector are outlined below.

**Inadequate institutional, legal, and policy frameworks:** This is a fundamental aspect of conflict regarding the extractive sector in resource-rich states. The institutional, legal, and policy frameworks may be weak, inadequate, contradictory, or even nonexistent, undermining effective resource development and management. These problems may be causal or exacerbating factors.

**Disputes over borders and boundaries:** Oil, gas, and minerals often straddle national boundaries as well as areas of overlapping territorial claims of states or different ethnic groups. Boundary delimitation processes that influence control over natural resources have always generated tensions and controversy due to the critically important economic and political implications. In particular, the delimitation of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) and maritime boundaries has increasingly important implications for the ownership of offshore oil and gas reserves. The desire of ethnic groups to obtain exclusive rights of *exploitation* over specific territories within a state also constitutes one of the most potent and divisive drivers of conflict at a national level. Conflict in the extractive industries can also be caused when the boundary of a license or concession overlaps with another approved land use, a designated area such as a park, or communal lands.



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose, structure, and context

Mediation is an underexploited and useful tool that is often well suited to prevent and manage conflicts linked to natural resources.

This document offers guidance to mediation professionals and supporting institutions on good practice concerning the mediation of natural resource disputes in the context of conflict, violence, and peacebuilding. It can also be used by diverse stakeholders and natural resource management experts considering a mediated solution to a resource dispute, ranging from governments and companies to communities and nongovernmental organizations.<sup>1</sup>

Specifically, the guide helps to address (1) stand-alone natural resource disputes or disputes that form part of a larger political struggle; and, (2) natural resource disputes set within the context of peace negotiations. It consolidates lessons from decades of hands-on experience at both the local and international levels mediating conflicts over extractive resources, land and water.<sup>2</sup>

This guide is divided into two main parts. Part A includes the core guidance of the report. It begins with an introductory section that presents concepts and definitions related to natural resource conflicts, mediation, and the challenges specific to mediating natural resource disputes. Section 2 establishes a four-phase methodology for mediating natural resource conflicts: assessment, pre-negotiation preparedness, negotiation, and implementation. Section 3 then examines sector-specific challenges that may arise when mediating conflicts over extractive resources, land, or water. Section 4 looks at natural resources in the broader context of peace negotiations and provides guidance on intervention strategies. The final section offers some concluding messages and strategies to improve the practice of mediating disputes over natural resources. Practical examples are included throughout the text to illustrate selected strategies and good practices.<sup>3</sup>

Part B of the guide includes eight case studies that demonstrate how different strategies and good practices

have been combined in mediation processes. Each case study presents the key conflict context, the highlights of the mediation process, an overview of the final agreement, and the key implementation challenges. Part B also contains a list of resources for additional reading. Together, these case studies and reference materials provide examples of successful approaches that mediators and stakeholders can draw upon to inform new or ongoing mediation processes.

This guide builds on a growing recognition of the important linkages between natural resources, conflict, and peacebuilding by the United Nations (UN) and other international actors. Reviewing a decade of academic research and UN experience, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) has found that 40–60 percent of civil wars over the past sixty years have been associated with natural resources, and that at least 18 violent conflicts since 1990 have been fuelled or financed by their exploitation.<sup>4</sup>

The Secretary-General's 2010 report, 'Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict,' identified the need to increase national capacity in natural resource management, calling upon Member States and the UN "to make questions of natural resource allocation, ownership and access an integral part of peacebuilding strategies."<sup>5</sup> The Secretary-General also requested the international community to do "more to prevent conflicts over natural resources and maximize their benefits for maintaining and building peace," and insisted that "the resource curse must no longer be allowed to undermine the security of fragile and conflict-affected states and the foundations of sustainable development."<sup>6</sup>

In the field of mediation, the Secretary-General has noted several key aspects of dealing with today's complex conflicts:

Mediators have to grapple with a wider range of substantive issues. In contrast to the mostly ideologically based conflicts of the 1970s and 1980s, conflicts over the control of government, as well as natural and economic resources, dominate the present agenda. These disputes are overlaid with ethnic polarization, socioeconomic tensions and poor governance, and are exacerbated by climate change.<sup>7</sup>

DUNE

Screenplay by  
JON SPAHTS and DENIS VILLENEUVE  
and ERIC ROTH

Based on the novel 'Dune' by FRANK HERBERT

June 19, 2020 Salmon  
Revisions

Final Shooting Draft



TITLE: CALADA, APPEARING ONE AFTER THE OTHER  
Foolgas about SPICE 288

PAGE 191

ORAN FIGURINE; EXT. ARRAYS - END OF DAY

The planet remains, so even from space.  
Track across the endless windswept terrain.  
We glide into a low-hanging dark cloud that's generated by a  
shallow misty nebula, a DISTANTLY, sitting up giving  
flashes of SPICE. We FLY through the SPICE, creating a  
dramatic swirl of orange flames.

Through the swirl of SPICE, a GOVING HANDBOOK airborne,  
being led by a powerful ORANFALL.

ON THE ORAN - SHARDON POLICE flanking the barometer,  
leading the industrial structure through the darkness. One of  
them holds a glowing flag coating the SHARDON ENGINE.

Now these soldiers are shown through the P.O.V. of a  
strange ANGLE LAUNCHER, one of multiple cloth-encased  
weapons being wielded by a small band of blue-eyed FRONTS  
FIGURES looking over behind a sprawling black rock. A young  
female FIGURE, ORAN, is among them, along with a man who we  
will meet later as ORAN. A closer look at ORAN.

Flashing from PLASMA SWORDS leads up at the second  
Oranier, BEGGING it and the Carpal that carries it.

Muscles are launched from the Asteroid to stabilize,  
insinuating several of the Oranier in a brutal strike.

The few surviving Oranier run for cover through a CRACKS in  
their rocky asteroid. Last through this opening is ORAN.  
Before she disappears into this underground opening, ORAN  
turns to look back with soul-provoking eyes, straight at us.

Oran...

EXT. CALADA CASTLE, PAUL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In the wee hours of the night, PAUL AWAKENS, 16 years old,  
wakes up, startled by the dream.

As sits in his bed... troubled.

TITLE: CALADA  
SOUNDSCAPE OF HOUSE OF ARRAYS  
ORAN 2114 AD

INT. CALADA CASTLE - ROOM OVERLOOKING VALLEY - MORNING

LATE MORNING, PAUL, sits at table laden with food. Crystal  
glassware. PAUL's looking out at the beautiful valley, grateful  
for the paradise she must soon leave behind.

PAUL (O.S.)

Mother.

She turns to see Paul crossing the room to join her. As he  
takes his seat at the other end of the table and begins  
piling food on his plate...

JESSICA

It's good you're up early. Your  
father wants you in full dress  
before the Emperor's herald  
arrives.

PAUL

Full dress. Military?

JESSICA

Ceremonial.

He always a bit at that. Much rather he is military...

PAUL

Why do we have to go through all  
this, when it's already been  
decided?

JESSICA

Ceremony.

Paul can't help but smile at ORAN. His mother has a way of  
thinking two steps beyond him at all times...

ORAN pours a glass of water for him. As reached across the  
table, expecting her to hand it to him, but she doesn't.  
Instead, she puts it down right in front of her.

Paul knows what she's doing, and he's in no mood.

PAUL

I just woke up. Can I please--?

ORAN  
[whispers back]  
I am smiling.

which makes the baby actually smile, which makes Oranier  
actually smile just a little too.

LETO

How much will they spend traveling  
here for this funeral?

The question 'oli's Newt's mind into mental horticulture. His  
eyes roll back as he calculates.

ORAN

[eyes flickering]  
Three Skills Navigators, fifty-two  
parsons... figure a hundred and  
fifty dozens of spire... a total  
of one-point-four-six million  
spires, round-trip.

Leto and Gurney sigh.

At the end of the Asteroid lounge... PAUL, in ceremonial  
dress, stands at this distant table in front of him.

Among them are royal courtiers of some kind, as well as a  
woman in what appears to be religious garb. She keeps her  
eyes cast to the ground.

The procession steps a respectful distance from the table, and  
the man with the scroll says, in a loud, officious voice:

HERALD OF THE CHARGE

By the grace of Shadon IV of House  
Cassia, Ambassador to the Midean  
Lion Throne and Radiant Emperor of  
the Kholm Universe, I stand before  
you as Herald of the Charge.

As gestures to those who have accompanied him.

HERALD OF THE CHARGE (CONT'D)

We are witnessed by members of the  
Imperial court, representatives of  
the Spring Court, and a sister of  
the Sun Goddess.

The SHARDON WOMAN finally lifts her eyes to see JESSICA  
staring right back at her. They share a similar kind of  
admiration in their clothing. As if part of the same order.

The Sun Goddess woman does not look down anymore. And you  
would be forgiven to think she did not come here to witness  
the signing of a document... but for something else.

HERALD OF THE CHARGE (CONT'D)

House Arrides is one of oldest and  
most respected members of the  
Imperial. In the wake of the  
falling of House Arrides, the  
Kholm Court would have turned to  
you in hope. Shadon IV agrees.

With a flourish of his hand, the Herald refers to the scroll.

HERALD OF THE CHARGE (CONT'D)

House Arrides will immediately  
take control of Arride and serve  
as its steward. Do you accept?

Leto steps forward, and the Herald turns to face him.

LETO

For centuries, House Arrides has  
stood for honor. Not only for  
itself, but for the benefit of all.  
Now the Emperor gives us his  
unconditional trust. We would be to  
bring peace on Arride!

That was no mere formality. That was passion. And we can see  
it in the eyes of the Arrided man... They love their job.  
That feels it too. His father is a great man. As  
unimpeachably great man.

LETO (CONT'D)

We are House Arrides. There is no  
will we do not answer. There is no  
faith that we betray. The Emperor  
asks us to lead.

(beat)

House Arrides... ACCEPTS.

With one voice, the officious about us:

OFFICERS

ARRIDES! ARRIDES! ARRIDES!

The Herald is pleased. He gestures for Leto to approach.  
Leto takes the ceremonial scroll and signs the scroll.

That the Sun Goddess sister steps forward and lights a  
small stick of wax, muttering a prayer to herself as the wax  
drains into a pool on the scroll.

SEVENTH EDITION

WIERSMA



# RESEARCH METHODS IN EDUCATION

AN INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH METHODS  
IN EDUCATION  
AN INTRODUCTION



SEVENTH  
EDITION



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The data record of a qualitative research study can become quite massive with all the interview and observation protocols, document information, and so on. As recommended by some authors (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998), researchers should keep written accounts of their own thoughts about the data being collected. These accounts might include any possible personal bias, changes in the working design, and new hypotheses that are suggested by the data. As Smith and Glass (1987, p. 270) point out, a data record of 1000 pages or more is not unusual. Multiple copies may be useful as the researcher uses one for a chronological record and another for analysis, for example.

Methods of data collection are interactive or noninteractive depending on whether or not the researcher interacts with the subjects being studied. Observation, interview, and document collection and review are commonly used methods, and taking specimen records and oral histories are possible methods of data collection in qualitative research.

A comment about specimen records and oral histories is in order because these are not as familiar as observation, interview, and document collection. Schoggen (1978) defines a specimen record as:

*A narrative description of one person, usually a child, in a natural, noncontrived situation as seen by skilled observers over a substantial time period (p. 43).*

The first task is to record the stream of behavior, then the stream is divided into units and the units analyzed. Wright (1967) describes this as a three-stage process. To some extent, taking a specimen record is a special case of observation because the behavior is recorded through observation. Specimen records are most commonly used in ecological psychology, although they also apply to other qualitative research such as ethnographic studies.

Oral histories typically are interviews taken through the use of a tape recorder. This method eliminates the need for interviewer note taking, and it records the entire conversation. To the extent that any inflections in the comments and subject characteristics come through on a tape recording, these also are captured. Oral histories emphasize open-ended questions allowing the subject wide latitude in providing information. The most effective method of analyzing the interview, and certainly the most efficient, is to listen to the tape rather than to transcribe it.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Data analysis in qualitative research begins soon after data collection begins, because the researcher checks on working hypotheses, unanticipated results, and the like. In fact, data collection and data analysis usually run together; less data are collected and more analysis is produced as the research progresses. There is considerable overlap of these steps in practice.

Qualitative data analysis requires organization of information and data reduction. The data may suggest categories for characterizing information. Comparisons can be made with initial theories or working hypotheses. Early data collection might suggest a hypothe-

review of the literature and background information on the problem, a good estimate should be made.

The *working design* is a preliminary plan for getting the research under way.

### Working Hypotheses

Qualitative research uses inductive inquiry, which for data collection means that it commences without any preconceived theories or hypotheses. However, all researchers are influenced by their own backgrounds, and some information is likely to be available about the research problems. Earlier the concept of foreshadowed problems was introduced. Although technically these are not hypotheses statements, foreshadowed problems come in at this point. Questions about the research problem may be introduced. There may be numerous questions, hypotheses, and foreshadowed problems, which may be reviewed, deleted, or extended as the data collection and analysis proceed.

Example working hypotheses from the dropout example might be:

As counseling sessions begin earlier and are more direct, the dropout rate decreases. What is the role of the faculty in attempting to reduce the dropout? (question form) Interaction of school administration and students. (foreshadowed problem)

### Data Collection

When preparing for data collection and during actual data collection the qualitative researcher deals with a host of issues, especially if data collection is done in a present situation such as with ethnographic research. The researcher must gain access to the situation, which may require special arrangements. If a researcher is conducting a study in her or his own institution, access may be automatic and data collection can be quite unobtrusive. However, for most situations the researcher needs to gain access more formally and decide on a particular role: Will the researcher be a participant-observer or simply an observer?

Data collection may be interactive or noninteractive, and these terms are what their names imply; interactive techniques involve the researcher interacting with subjects who are being studied, noninteractive techniques lack such interaction. Among the numerous methods of data collection, those most commonly used include observation, interview, collection and review of related documents, taking specimen records, and taking oral histories. Conducting an interview is an example of an interactive data collection technique. Reviewing historical documents is a noninteractive technique.

In the dropout example, the researchers might engage in the following data collection activities, although data collection certainly would not be limited to these.

1. Interview students and faculty, including guidance counselors.
2. Observe the interaction taking place between students and between students and faculty.
3. Review school records relative to factors such as grading patterns.
4. If in any way available, interview recent dropouts.



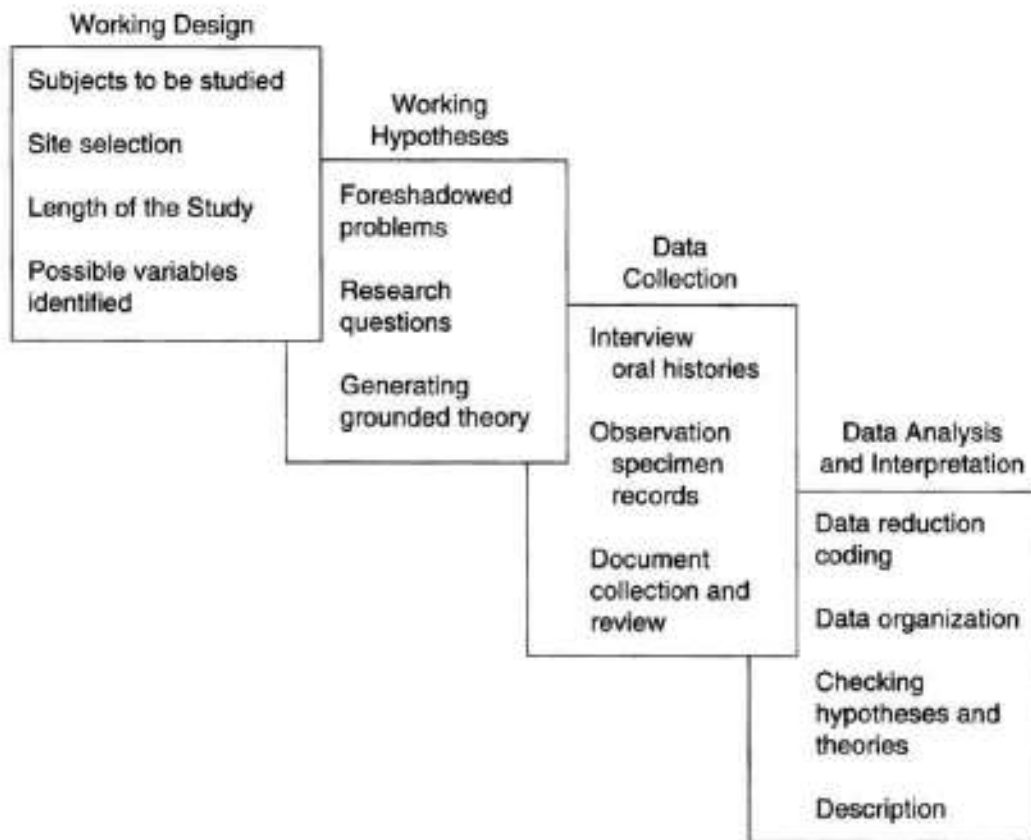


FIGURE 8.1 Components of Research Design in Qualitative Research

Confront the other  
 Involvement of third parties  
 Avoiding the other person  
 Treat the other with kindness

These categories or themes make up a code which might be called "courses of action" code.

Van Den Berg and Slegers (1996) conducted a qualitative study of the innovative capacity of secondary schools. The innovation was the implementation of a core curriculum for Dutch secondary education. Nine schools were involved in the research, and these schools were recruited from a "high innovation group" and a "low innovation group." An average of five teachers were interviewed in each school. The interviews were quite open-ended, and the interviews were conducted in order to identify major differences in the innovative capacities of the low and high groups.

Numerous issues were addressed in the interviews, one of which was team involvement, the intensity of collaboration among teachers. The teacher responses about team involvement were organized into four categories, described as follows:

sis or theory, and then more data might be collected to support, disconfirm, or extend the hypothesis or theory. Initial descriptions of causes and consequences may be developed. Possible internal and external checks are made. All in all, analysis in qualitative research is a process of successive approximations toward an accurate description and interpretation of the phenomenon. The report of the research is descriptive in nature and contains little technical language. The emphasis is on describing the phenomenon in its context and, on that basis, interpreting the data.

Qualitative research often produces large quantities of descriptive information from field notes or interviews, for example. The information needs to be organized, and through this organization there should be data reduction. This process is called coding. The organizational part of coding can be likened to the preparation for a large rummage sale. Suppose a charity is having a large, community rummage sale of used clothing. Donations come in to a large room, for example a gym. Now the clothes need to be sorted and organized, in part to determine what is there; clothes are organized according to categories, but several categories could be used and may be used in conjunction with each other. A clothing category might include children's clothes, adolescents' clothes, and adults' clothes. These are then subdivided into boys' and girls' clothes and men's and women's clothes. Other subcategories might be dresses, slacks, blouses, etc., for women's clothes. Clothes also could be further categorized on quality or condition. So, there are any number of categories that could be used for organizing the clothes for the rummage sale. In like manner, there usually are multiple ways qualitative research data can be organized, that is, categorized. This process, deciding on one or more category systems and then organizing the data accordingly, is called coding.

*Coding* is a process of organizing data and obtaining data reduction. In essence, it is the process by which qualitative researchers "see what they have in the data."

It may be possible in some studies to construct coding categories prior to data review, but more commonly the specific categories emerge from the data. The researcher searches for patterns of thinking or behavior, words or phrases, and events that appear with regularity or for some reason appear noteworthy. The words describing such phenomena become the coding categories. The data analysis of the dropout example would undoubtedly include categorizing the information from several faculty interviews, for example. Faculty likely would have varying perceptions of characteristics of potential dropouts, and faculty may have noted certain behavior patterns, social or academic. If, for example, three or four behavior patterns were evident these could become the categories for coding on behavior of potential dropouts.

**Possible Codes.** Any number of possible codes may be used, and the coding categories become specific to the research study. The research problem and the purpose of the research influence the particular coding systems. For example, in the dropout study, teachers' perceptions of potential dropout characteristics suggest a basis for coding. Another basis would be potential dropouts' perceptions of school. A third basis would be patterns of potential dropouts' academic performance (behavior) patterns. The coding systems need

not be mutually exclusive; in fact, they most likely would not be so. When perception of the subjects about how they perceive the situation is an important factor, as it is in a good bit of qualitative research, coding systems should capture these perceptions. In fact, the perceptions of the subjects about the phenomenon under study is a general code.

Setting or context codes are other general, often useful, codes. As the name implies these codes reflect the context or setting in which the phenomenon under study is observed. In the dropout example, the school environment would fit a setting code and categories might include a vocational school setting, a comprehensive high school setting, etc. Categories might also include information about factors such as the size of the school.

Another general code, which might be part of subjects' perception codes, is the subjects' perceptions of people or things. In the dropout example, potential dropouts may have different views of their teachers, and these views may differ from those of other students.

Process codes, which focus on the sequence of events and how changes occur, also can be useful. Again in the dropout example, there probably are different ways in which students go about dropping out of school. It would seem reasonable that different sequences of events would precede a learning disabled student dropping out than other students. If these processes exist, they should be captured by the data and their presence can be coded.

The above discussion by no means exhausts the possible general coding systems. The important characteristics of a coding system are: (1) the system accurately captures the information in the data relative to what is being coded, and (2) this information is useful in describing and understanding the phenomenon being studied.

Data analysis in qualitative research is a process of categorization, description, and synthesis. Data reduction is necessary for the description and interpretation of the phenomenon under study.

The components of research design in qualitative research, which coincide closely with conducting the research, can be summarized as in Figure 8.1. It should be emphasized that the steps are highly integrated and interdependent. Qualitative research is very "researcher-dependent." For example, it has been said that for data collection the researcher is the instrument. This means that as data collection is ongoing, and during the entire research process for that matter, the researcher makes decisions about what data to collect, whom to interview, and so on. Interviews and observation inventories are less structured and standardized than with quantitative research, so the researcher's perspectives are highly influential in qualitative research.

**Coding Examples.** It may be useful to consider a couple of coding examples from the literature. In a study by Hale, et al. (1996), dealing with the perspectives of children about interpersonal conflict, focus groups of students were convened to discuss responses to interpersonal conflicts. The focus groups at the elementary school level were divided by grade, while grade levels were combined for the middle school and high school levels. The researchers identified four general categories (which they called themes) for responding to interpersonal conflicts, that emerged from the focus group discussions. These four were:



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Water Scarcity

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## OVERVIEW

Water covers 70% of our planet, and it is easy to think that it will always be plentiful. However, freshwater—the stuff we drink, bathe in, irrigate our farm fields with—is incredibly rare. Only 3% of the world's water is fresh water, and two-thirds of that is tucked away in frozen glaciers or otherwise unavailable for our use.

As a result, some 1.1 billion people worldwide lack access to water, and a total of 2.7 billion find water scarce for at least one month of the year. Inadequate sanitation is also a problem for 2.4 billion people—they are exposed to diseases, such as cholera and typhoid fever, and other water-borne illnesses. Two million people, mostly children, die each year from diarrheal diseases alone.

Many of the water systems that keep ecosystems thriving and feed a growing human population have become stressed. Rivers, lakes and aquifers are drying up or becoming too polluted to use. More than half the world's wetlands have disappeared. Agriculture consumes more water than any other source and wastes much of that through inefficiencies. Climate change is altering patterns of weather and water around the world, causing shortages and droughts in some areas and floods in others.

At the current consumption rate, this situation will only get worse. By 2025, two-thirds of the world's population may face water shortages. And ecosystems around the world will suffer even more.



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