



Rewilding Across Disciplines

an interdisciplinary symposium
special guests - film screening - performances

19 March 2016



SOUND ▸ VISION ▸ PLACE
a festival for your senses ▸ 2015/16

University of
HUDDERSFIELD

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"The environmental movement up till now has necessarily been reactive. We have been clear about what we don't like. But we also need to say what we would like. We need to show where hope lies. Ecological restoration is a work of hope."

- George Monbiot, *Feral*

SYMPOSIUM CREDITS

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Cover Images

Geoffrey Cox, *Tree People*
Pau Ros, *STORM*
Molly Charnley, *Feral* (reverse)

SYMPOSIUM PROGRAMME

Creative Arts Building

Phipps Hall, First Floor

- 14:00 Simon Ayres: "What is Rewilding?"
- 15:00 Geoffrey Cox presents *Tree People*
- 16:00 Todd Andrew Borlik: "Abjuring Dominion: Shakespeare's *Tempest* and the Draining and Restoration of the English Fens"
- 16:30 Melanie Flynn: "Rewilding Britain: A (green) criminologist's view."
- 17:00 Panel discussion with the Colne Valley Tree Society

Milton Building Theatres

- 19:15 *Feral redux* (Studio 2)
- 20:00 Moon Fool presents *STORM* (Studio 1)

14:00 Simon Ayres
“What is Rewilding?”
Phipps Hall, Creative Arts Building

This talk will address the following questions: What is rewilding? What is the state of play in the UK? What does it mean for people? As well as discussing the benefits to us of having wild land, the last topic will be an exploration around rewilding *ourselves*, what that might entail and its relationship to culture and economy.

Simon Ayres is a professional forester specialising in woodland creation and the transformation of conifer plantations to native woodland. He has been associated with the rewilding movement for many years. In 2004 he became a founding member of the Wildland Network, which published articles and organised conferences and was the main forum for discussing wildland and rewilding in the UK. In 2007 he established Wales Wild Land Foundation, dedicated to buying land for rewilding in Wales, which has since been promoting Cambrian Wildwood, a visionary project to rewild 7,000 acres in the Cambrian Mountains.

15:00 Screening of *Tree People*
dir. Geoffrey Cox
Creative Arts Building, Phipps Hall

Tree People is a 45-minute film documenting the origins, development, activities and achievements of the Colne Valley Tree Society (CVTS). Once a relatively barren and scarred, post-industrial area, the Colne Valley is, in its lower reaches, now quite heavily wooded, a 'green lung' for what is an increasingly densely populated area. This transformation is in no small measure due to the 300,000 trees planted by the Society since its foundation in 1964; documenting this work is therefore of considerable local historical importance.

Though there is a strong ecological and environmental message in *Tree People* that may well provide possible encouragement for other groups anywhere in the world, it is not explicitly about this. Rather, it shows what can be done by a group of dedicated local volunteers over many decades who wanted, and continue to want, to make a difference to the environment in which they live – to soften it, to 'green it up' and mitigate the ravages of the industrial revolution by planting trees, and doing so in a place where the commonly accepted notion was that 'trees won't grow here'. The film concentrates on the

detail of the landscape of the valley as well as being a kind of audio-visual poem to the beauty of trees.

Geoffrey Cox is a senior lecturer in music and composer of both acoustic and electronic music. Since the mid-2000s his interest in filmmaking and especially working with visual images in a musical context has come to the fore. This has resulted in a number of solo and collaborative documentary film projects: Cider Makers (Marley and Cox 2007), No Escape (Cox 2009), A Film About Nice (Marley and Cox 2010) and Tree People (Cox, 2014). The soundtrack to A Film About Nice won Best Sound Design / Editing in the Shorts category at The Maverick Movie Awards 2012. He has published articles in The Soundtrack, The New Soundtrack and Contemporary Music Review on the contextual underpinning of his work. Cox believes, like John Grierson himself, that documentary film should aim at a 'transfigured reality' in a 'recreated world' by going beyond pure naturalism into poetry and that it is the evocative nature of location sound and music that has the greatest power to do this and thus show how things really are.

16:00 Todd Andrew Borlik
“Abjuring Dominion: Shakespeare's
***Tempest* and the Draining and**
Restoration of the English Fens”
Creative Arts Building, Phipps Hall

For the past half-century, Shakespeare's *Tempest* has been framed as a play about the European encounter with the “New World.” This talk reveals ways in which Shakespeare's play is also deeply mired in contemporary debates over the draining of the English fens. Borlik contends that the plot of *The Tempest* derives from legends of a medieval hermit battling fen-demons in Lincolnshire. In Prospero's disavowal of his magic, Borlik hears a premonition of current efforts to renounce dominion over nature and restore the fens.

Todd Andrew Borlik was Assistant Professor at Bloomsburg University in Pennsylvania before joining the English staff at Huddersfield in 2014 as a Senior Lecturer. Todd's research aims to unfurl the vexed place of the natural world in the writings of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. He is the author of Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature and over a dozen scholarly articles and is currently at work on the first ever anthology of Renaissance environmental writing.

16:30 Melanie Flynn
**“Rewilding Britain: A (green)
criminologist’s view.”**
Creative Arts Building, Phipps Hall

This talk will address some of the legal and criminological issues that could result from a rewilding programme for Britain. Considering both ecological and esoteric aims of such programmes, Melanie will discuss some of the potential consequences – positive and negative, intended and unintended – for regulatory regimes, crime opportunities and social and environmental harms.

Melanie Flynn is a senior lecturer at Huddersfield University and course leader for the BSc (Hons) in Criminology. She has previously worked as a research fellow (UCL), a crime analyst (Sussex Police) and a Special Constable (Derbyshire). Melanie’s research interests lie in crime prevention, crime placement and green criminology, with a particular focus on harms involving animals. She has published on crime trends in burglary and vehicle crime, crime concentrations in facilities, situational crime prevention and wildlife crime.

**17:00 Panel discussion with
the Colne Valley Tree Society
Creative Arts Building, Phipps Hall**

The Colne Valley Tree Society (CVTS) was founded in 1964 to establish the presence of native trees of British provenance in and around the upper Colne Valley. The aims of the society are to advance the education of the public in the appreciation of the ecological indispensability of trees and their amenity value and to encourage planting and protection of trees in the Colne Valley area. The initial plantings concentrated on 'waste land' such as old quarries and tip sites and the Society has continued this non-judgmental policy of working with industry, agriculture and community groups. Planting sites nearer to housing, which include public access, constitute the Society's commitment to urban forestry, and to easy accessibility to woodland. At the less populated end of the valley the society is concerned with the establishment, restoration and management of native oak/birch woodland.

Philip Baxter (CVTS Chairman) was born in Huddersfield and attended Colne Valley High School, whilst living in Linthwaite. He went away to Polytechnic but returned to Linthwaite after graduating and joined CVTS in 1991 partly for something to do and partly because his uncle was involved. He became Chairman of CVTS around the year 2000. He currently lives in Slaithwaite and works as a manager in a local textile mill.

Simon Lyes (CVTS Secretary) moved to the Colne Valley 12 years ago, and was looking for a way to meet people and make a contribution to the community. He saw a poster in the local newsagent's window, saying that the Colne Valley Tree Society was looking for volunteers. At first he just went along and planted trees every Saturday morning, but after a couple of years became secretary of the Society, still a volunteer, but responsible for most of the day-to-day administration. This involves liaison with suppliers, landowners, the local authority and national organisations such as the National Trust, Natural England and the Woodland Trust. This has been an exciting learning experience, given that his professional background is in College and University libraries.

19:15 *Feral redux*
Milton Building, Studio 2

Last autumn, a group of undergraduate students set out to devise a theatrical adaptation of George Monbiot's polemic nonfiction book, *Feral: Rewilding the Land, Sea and Human Life* (Penguin Books, 2014). After numerous rehearsals and a sunrise expedition into the Peak District, they created a performance that combined a biographical sketch of Monbiot with a mad clown show and a movement installation. This short presentation will offer a glimpse into our process.

Directed by Ben Spatz.

Devised and performed by Faim Aslam, Joe Biltcliffe, Emma Busby, Molly Charnley, Rebecca Ellis, Alienor Hewson, Francesca Leon, Christopher Lomax, Gareth Orr, Kyle Sinclair, Harry Stafford, Patricia Tothova, and Hannah Welsby.

Ben Spatz is Senior Lecturer in Drama, Theatre and Performance at the University of Huddersfield. He is the author of What a Body Can Do: Technique as Knowledge, Practice as Research (Routledge 2015) as well as several articles that investigate embodied research in physical culture, performing arts, and everyday life. Ben moved to Huddersfield in 2013 from New York City, where he performed and presented work at Abrons Arts Center, New York Live Arts, Movement Research Festival, and the Lincoln Center Rubenstein Atrium.



20:00 *STORM*

Milton Building, Studio 1

STORM is a new theatre and music production by London-based company Moon Fool, based on Shakespeare's *Tempest*. At Huddersfield, a condensed "essay" version of *STORM* will be presented by director Anna-Helena McLean, performer Ezra Faroque Khan, and video artist Matt Smith (VIDEOfeet).

About the full version:

"Charged with lightning and magic, a cast of international performers weave together original live music, singing, theatre, acrobatics and movement to capture the wild battle between humanity and nature. Audiences are immersed in a world of fantasy, spectacle and haunting beauty, balancing the ageless work of Shakespeare with the climatic dilemmas that face our global family today."

"Gripping and relentless" - *Chicago Tribune*.

The performance will be followed by an interactive Q&A session with the artists.

Anna-Helena McLean was a principal performer of Gardzienice in Poland from 2000-2007 in works including Metamorphoses and Electra. Leader of international music & theatre exchange work worldwide since 2004. As composer & ensemble coach, productions include Yerma, with Kathryn Hunter; Arquiem, Periplum (RNT); Nothing Left To Lose, Company Collisions (LIMF); Glasgow Girls (NTS); It's a Wonderful Life, Theatre Ad Infinitum (Bush); Bangarang (Dundee Rep). Founding principal of Awake Projects, Awake Love Orchestra and Awake Youth. Guest director at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland since 2004 as well as NSD, Delhi; DePaul Uni, Chicago; Volda College, Norway. Lecturer in extended voice and performance, University of Winchester. As a director, productions include The Lear; Richard III, Aegis Productions; Romeo and Juliet; and Mme Butterfly (IJ Productions). As actor-producer/musician-composer, productions include Ill Met by Moonlight, Trestle; Titania - A Solo Cabaret; How To Be Immortal, Penny Dreadful Productions. Musician and singer for Award winning new play, King Charles III directed by Rupert Goold (Almeida, West End, Broadway). More about Moon Fool at <www.moonfool.com>.

Ezra Faroque Khan is an actor and teaches movement, voice and theatre both nationally and internationally. He is an accomplished martial artist too. Further to acting, he has also worked proficiently as a movement director with several well-established theatre companies and venues.

Performance credits include Untied Colours of FrustAsian for Southbank/Cast, The Kite Runner for Nottingham/Liverpool Playhouse, Macbeth for Song of the Goat/RSC, Lord of the Flies and Unsuitable Girls for Pilot Theatre Company, Twelfth Night for The National Theatre and The Caucasian Chalk Circle for Complicite. Film credits include Marvel, Trespass Against Us, No Place To Go.

VIDEOfeet is an artistic and commercial organisation that proudly creates innovative films, motion graphics, web design and live digital media performance. In film and animation they specialise in bringing their collective creativity together to produce commercial and artistic works in new and unique ways. They make everything you see and hear on the screen and are proud to say that they can service every aspect of a project from script to completion. As artists their work lies at the intersection of moving image, sound art, visual art and live performance. They are funded by Arts Council England and regularly collaborate with a diverse mix of international artists.

and purity of its existence in its natural state. The lamenting of the reed flute and oak tree is significant as it implicitly critiques the destruction of the wild, a destruction legitimized by the so-called anthropocentric reality of man.

Today many critics dismiss literature in which plants and animals speak human language as childish because it does not conform to our modern standards of 'realism'. Critical theorists such as Jean Baudrillard claim that in a modern civilization dominated by images reality is effectively dead. However, the lamenting of the wild in these poems invites us to reflect on how short-sighted and egotistical our current notions of 'reality' are. The fact that both Cavendish's and Rumi's concern for the nature is mutual despite their cultural and historical differences is suggestive of a widespread and ancient tendency to celebrate the wild as the domain of a greater-than-human reality.

The sadness of the songs played on the reed are, Rumi imagines, expressive of the reed's own sadness at being removed from the wild. A non-human plant suffers homesickness for its jungle-bed. A similar lamentation can be heard in Margaret Cavendish's poem entitled *A Dialogue between an Oake, and a Man cutting him downe*:

'Why cut you off my Bowes, both large, and long,
That keepe you from the heat, and scorching sun.
And did refresh your Limbs from sweat?

The lamentation as a theme works to address the suffering and anguish of the natural world which it endures at the hands of men who mistake their anthropocentric perspective as the only reality that signifies. The reed flute and the oak tree both lament their separation from the wild to which they truly belong; the reed's agonising lamentation implies its desire to regress to an earlier state; a state of originality and happiness before it was transformed into a commercial commodity. Likewise, Cavendish's oak tree expresses its contentment with its present state and detests the proposed transformations that it is about to undergo. Rather than have his timber prop up a stately house or give form to a mighty ship he tells the woodcutter he 'had rather live, and simple be'. The simplicity of the oak's language reflects the simplicity

“Back to Nature: Wilderness and Reality” Hamza Rahim Ali

The celebration of nature or the wilderness as the preserve of the ‘real’ is not restricted to just Western pastoral literature, but also exists within the literary heritage of the Middle East. An environmentalist sub-text runs throughout the work of the thirteenth-century Persian poet Rumi. In his *Masnawi* he uses allegory to critique the anthropocentric tendency to devalue and exploit the natural world. Rumi’s *Masnawi* celebrates the purity of unspoilt nature by advocating the need of preserving it in its original state, which is something that Alpers (1997) characterises as a key feature in defining the pastoral.

Rumi does not celebrate nature only for its physical beauty, but expresses its marvels in more mystical terms by using the idea of lamentation. He captures this idea in the opening of the *Masnawi* with the tale of the wooden reed:

From jungle-bed since me they tore,
Men’s, women’s, eyes have wept right sore,
My breast I tear and rend in twain,
To give, through sighs, vent to my pain.
Who’s from his home snatched far away,
Longs to return some future day.

century poem, Cavendish genders the tree male even though she describes it as caring and nurturing. This shows that men and women do not all live up to the norms or fantasies that society attaches to their sex. By providing shelter, shade and protection, the male tree is fulfilling the traditional maternal roles that patriarchal culture has assigned exclusively to women. All too often nature is associated with women simply because of stereotypical views of femininity. However, Cavendish's tree-felling poem exposes the flaw with this simplistic and essentialized way of thinking. By using the male pronoun 'him' to refer to the tree, Cavendish does not conform to ecofeminist narratives that equate the despoiling of nature with the oppression of women.

rhapsodising over a female figure of Nature' (Baumman, 2013, p. 36). Nature is ornamented and described as a beautiful woman who possesses all 'the treasures of the natural world' (Baumman, 2013, p36). She is a goddess-sized figure around whom the universe literally revolves: 'The Zodiacack round her Wast those Gaments tye. / The Polar Circles are Bracelets for each Wrist' (Poems and Fancies, 1653). Nature is not only gendered as female in Cavendish's poem but also appears in a dress and earrings. These items typically symbolize beauty and feminine charm. However, it should be noted that Cavendish's writings from the 1650s also depict Nature as a 'powerful omnipotent figure' with her own creative impulses. Rather than a passive sex object or a nurturing mother, the personified Nature in her poetry is, like the poetess-scientist Cavendish herself, 'also an artistic figure' (Baumman, 2013, p. 36). The fact Cavendish was herself childless may account for her reluctance to portray nature as maternal. Instead Cavendish's personifications of the goddess Nature endow her with the wealth and authority she herself enjoyed as the Duchess of Newcastle.

Similar complexities confront the reader of Cavendish's 'Dialogue Between an Oak and a Man Cutting Him Down' As the title of Cavendish's poem hints, the tree that is felled by the male wood-cutter is also male. Somewhat unexpectedly in a seventeenth-

“Ecofeminism and its Discontents” Zulekha Yousif

Ecofeminism has been criticised and accused for ‘overgeneralising’ (Buell, 2005, p109). Greta Gaard worries that it pushes women to buy into the myth of ‘compulsory motherhood’ (Gaard, 1993, p. 301). She points out what mothers are expected to be like in white Western Culture. They are ‘expected to be selfless, generous and nurturing. Their very existence derives its sole meaning from tending to the needs of their children’ (Gaard, 1993, p. 303). The ‘feminist criticisms of the model of Goddess as Mother focus upon the manner in which the model may serve to further oppress and limit the life options available to women’ (Rein-Bowen, 2013, p. 65). In Emily Culpepper’s ‘sympathetic critique’ of the Mother Goddess’ figure it is shown and emphasised that women have choice. Not all women wish to be mothers or are mothers. She also argues that this model ignores ‘the reality of single women’ and ‘may obscure alternative sexual practices such as lesbianism’. This model is not universal as it is ‘often that of a white mother’ (Reid-Bowen, 2013, p. 57). The above critiques of ecofeminism could be aimed at the poetry of the seventeenth-century writer and scientific thinker Margaret Cavendish. Her poem ‘Nature’s Dress’ has been called a ‘love poem

campaign for an end to this abuse. One of the most effective campaigns launched by Lush features a video that shows product tests being inflicted on a human. In the video a young woman has a nametag wrapped around her wrist that reads 'Specimen No. 3652C'. She is exposed to a barrage of painful tests and at the end of the procedure killed and dumped in the bins. This campaign highlights the harsh reality of animal tests like the ones conducted in Priestly's laboratory. His mice would have been used and disposed of with the same disregard shown to the test subject in the Lush campaign. Just as the Lush ad imagines humans tortured like animals, Barbauld's talking mouse asks humans to picture themselves as helpless victims of an 'unseen destruction', trapped and caught in a 'hidden snare'.

Barbauld's poem here asks humans to perceive kinship across species. The rhetorical strategies in Barbauld's poem can also be found in modern efforts to raise consumer awareness about product testing on animals. While ecofeminism often represents women as more inclined to favor animal rights, many women unwittingly support animal testing through their use of cosmetics. In recent years, however, consumers have become more aware of this disturbing practice. Just as Barbauld used her poem as a platform to protest the mouse's mistreatment, twenty-first century activists have used various forms of multi-media to

poem *The Mouse's Petition*. The captured mouse protests against its imprisonment and insists on its natural right to enjoy "the cheerful light, the vital air" rather than be suffocated in one of Priestly's experiments. Barbauld's mouse even makes a reference to the Greek philosopher Pythagoras and his belief that human souls could transmigrate into animal bodies (and vice versa):

If mind, as ancient sages taught,
A never dying flame,
Still shifts through matter's varying forms,
In every form the same;
Beware lest in the worm you crush,
A brother's soul you find.

**“Of Mice and Women: Leticia Barbauld and Animal
Testing in Eighteenth-Century England”
Lydia Davidson**

Leticia Barbauld’s 1773 poem *The Mouse’s Petition*, a questions the ethics of animal experimentation, a practice that remains worryingly commonplace in today’s society. At least since the time of the philosopher Descartes in the early seventeenth-century, the scientific mindset has tended to divide the ‘active pursuer of knowledge’ from the ‘passive object of investigation’. This mindset has condemned animals to the status of mere objects, vacant of feelings and interests, much less rights. One scientist who apparently shared these views was the celebrated chemist Joseph Priestly, famous for his ground-breaking discovery of oxygen. Few people realize, however, the means by which he made this discovery. In *An Account of Further Discoveries in Air* (1775), Priestly states that by heating mercuric oxide in an inverted glass container, ‘dephlogisticated air’ (now known as oxygen) was released. He first tested this on live mice, of which many died from exposure to harmful gases. It turns out that Leticia Barbauld was a close friend of Priestly and his wife, and one day when she was visiting his house she saw a mouse that had been captured by one of the doctor’s live mousetraps. This was the inspiration for her

whole spectrum of hues to explore. Pushing this even further, one might argue that it would best not to assign nature any colour at all. Forces such as rain and wind are transparent, possessing no colour, yet still hold a strong presence without having to depend on a descriptive colour.

In my opinion, nature is beyond green, beyond colour, and beyond human control. While it has been allocated the colour green as a kind of flag or badge, nature possesses all the different shades of the colour spectrum: blue, brown, and even transparent. The natural world cannot, try as we might, be restrained to one colour, or any colour, and does not need colour to represent it. I believe nature itself represents nature.

Ecocritics need to be more attentive to colours beyond green; we cannot restrict the manifold elements of nature to one particular sliver of the spectrum. A precedent for this broader mindset could perhaps be found in *The Open Boat*. In this short story, Stephen Crane represents the agency and unpredictability of nature through the constantly shifting colour of the sea. The natural environment is always changing, through different times, seasons and weathers, and as a result, we cannot limit and label these parts of nature a specific colour, as nature's colours are ever changing with a

ignore. matter that we are disgusted by and would prefer to animal and general waste. Brown signifies the fecal and secondly, the waste of the natural world, human, without which the green of nature would not be possible; natural world: first, the soil that fertilises the plants, the side. Brown symbolises two different parts of the neglected; however, it seems to be purposely pushed to humans are a part of the sea. Brown, like blue, is also that the sea is part of us, as humans, the same way that the human body is mostly made up of water, suggesting even though two-thirds of the world is blue. Similarly, For example, blue is a colour all too often ignored, presence in the natural world.

green again steals the spotlight. Green is used while other colours are pushed aside, regardless of their

“Beyond the Green” Sehrish Ahmed

From the examples gathered in this paper, it is clear to see that colour forms an essential feature in literary representations of nature. Generally, green is seen as an over-arching and totemic shade for the whole environment, as if equivalent to nature itself. The notion of being eco-friendly has become synonymous with being ‘green’. While writers understandably like to clothe nature in the green of vegetation, they unfortunately tend to ignore other colours that exist in nature and make vital contributions to the earth’s biological diversity.

In James Thomson’s *Spring* green becomes nature’s “universal robe”, covering and blotting out all the other colours in the environment. Likewise, in Andrew Marvell’s descriptive poem about his garden, he highlights the green above all the other shades on the colour spectrum that could appear in this landscape. When he “annihilates all that’s made / To a green thought in a green shade” he inadvertently annihilates all other colours in nature. Shakespeare also immediately associates nature with green, even when other colours would seem more appropriate. With his hands covered in blood, Macbeth imagines washing them clean in a green ocean. Despite blue being the usual colour of the sea,

thrill rather than protection of the natural world. He is still taking from nature and is still treating it as if humans are superior. The reference to 'a presence' could be a metaphor for God and so Wordsworth is again thinking past what he sees in the world around him ...

Despite Wordsworth's seemingly good intentions to resist technological advancements in the industrial world his poetry became more of a retreat to escape urbanisation rather than an appraisal of nature in and of itself. His greed for spiritual fulfillment and pleasure-seeking exploited the natural world and treated it as if it were there for his personal gain. He was able to admire the aesthetics that nature provides but was not able to treat it as an equal. In contrast, the poet John Clare calls loudly for the protection of nature. He was not interested in self-improvement through the use of nature, nor was he interested in exploiting it. His modern thinking dictated that humans should appreciate nature for what it is. They should not seek to improve it, they should not disturb it and they should not judge it. He thought that humans should build a relationship with the non-human world; they should care for nature as nature has cared for them with the underlying ethos being equality. ... Clare's poetry seems motivated by a wish to celebrate and preserve the wild whereas Wordsworth's ambition seemed to be to improve humanity rather than protect wilderness.

nature is extremely selective. The Romantics 'tended to devalue or ignore non-spectacular landscapes like boreal forests and wetlands, the protection of which, as we now know, is vitally important to the Earth's ecological health' (Hutchings, 2007) which is very apparent in Wordsworth who glamorises the landscapes he observes by referencing the 'steep and lofty cliffs', 'the tall rock' and 'the deep and gloomy wood' (Wordsworth, 1798). He only pays attention to the landscapes that could be turned into aesthetically pleasing pieces of art. This prompts readers to think that the only parts of nature worth sustaining are those of grandness and aesthetic beauty. Another problem with the sublime is that, like the sentimental, it encourages self-absorption. The sublime often triggers an inward, inverted passion. In 'Tintern Abbey' Wordsworth exclaims

'I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused'
(Wordsworth, 1798)

Wordsworth 'projects himself on to nature, gaining a sense of nearness to nature by virtue of its location.' (Bate, 2011: 2119) The surrounding of nature causes Wordsworth to explore his own feelings and thoughts and so the sublime becomes about the observer finding a

“The Problems with Romantic Ecology”

James Barnes

Both the beautiful and the sublime have major implications in ecocriticism. Nature being judged purely by its aesthetic quality can hinder the conservation movement due to the fact that only landscapes that are aesthetically pleasing and picturesque become worthy enough to be protected. What originally began with a genuine love towards nature turned picturesque observers into ‘avid consumers of the natural world by turning natural settings – mountain ranges, lakes, rivers, woodlands, and pastoral vales – into aesthetic commodities or art objects.’ (Hutchings, 2007) Nature is taken to Hollywood by Romantic poets like William Wordsworth as it is glamorised and handpicked. This did not help the ecologically pressured areas and instead encouraged the subject/object divide between human and non-human by labeling the sights he saw with the sublime and the beautiful, thereby reaffirming the sense that humans were greater than anything non-human. Nature exists solely as something out of which humans make art. ... In *Tintern Abbey* Wordsworth writes about blending ‘the landscape with the quiet of the sky’, which creates an image of serenity and peacefulness. It creates the feeling of nature and man fusing into one and recognising their mutual equality. But his ‘sublime’

employed by writers to trigger affects within the biological foundation of our emotional network: 'Affect-feeling is pre-linguistic, a qualitative experience of positive and negative along finely graded scales of intensity variance.' ('Toward literature and affect theory', 2012: para.3). This theory is validated by certain neuroscientific studies that reveal the powerful affects that reading has on the human mind; it stimulates the brain and can even change how we act in our lives: 'The brain, it seems, does not make much of a distinction between reading about an experience and encountering it in real life; in each case, the same neurological regions are stimulated.' (Paul, 2012: para.6). One might therefore consider it an obligation for such neurologically sophisticated beings to learn from literature and, much like Elizabeth Costello, to disassociate themselves from the mindless slaughter of animals.

purposes. Costello goes on to claim that there is no excuse for the indifference with which intelligent human beings regard animal lives, because:

... there is no limit to the extent to which we can think ourselves into the being of another. There are no bounds to the sympathetic imagination. If you want proof, consider the following. Some years ago I wrote a book called *The House on Eccles Street*. To write that book I had to think my way into the existence of Marion Bloom... Marion Bloom never existed. Marion Bloom was a figment of James Joyce's imagination. (Coetzee, 1999: pg. 35)

In this section Costello makes reference to the American philosopher Thomas Nagel's essay titled *What Is it Like to be a Bat?* (1974), wherein Nagel claims that, "before we can answer such a question we need to be able to experience bat-life through the sense-modalities of a bat." (Coetzee, 1999: pg. 33). Costello counters this argument by stating that to be a bat is to be full of being, to be an embodied soul and to live, which is not too unlike how it feels to be a human. She also states that if she can think her way into the mind and body of a character that has never existed, she can think her way into the existence of chimpanzee, an oyster, or, indeed, a bat.

One might also consider the theory of affect within this debate, which refers to the emotive language

“The Lives of Animals and Why They Matter”
Sarah Ismail

In *The Lives of Animals* (1999), author J.M. Coetzee describes a fictional novelist named Elizabeth Costello and prompts us to imagine a scenario wherein this writer, whose work is mostly concerned with fictional prose and contemporary feminism, has been invited to deliver two honorary lectures at Appleton College, Massachusetts. To the surprise of her hosts the subject area of these talks is not centred on literary criticism, but rather the systematic abuse that animals suffer at the hands of human beings, particularly those who are bred, reared and, subsequently, slaughtered for food purposes. Through this character, Coetzee claims that humans make an active choice to disengage their sympathies from their fellow earth-dwellers.

At various points throughout Costello’s first lecture, she clearly identifies anthropocentrism to be the root cause of this phenomenon, by which she means that humans, at least those in Western society, tend to believe that they are the supreme species on earth and that the lesser species’ exist solely for their benefit. It is the belief that a horse exists solely for transportation and leisure purposes, a cow to produce milk and meat and dogs, to guard people and property. Animals are, simply put, a commodity, which we utilise for various different

Manchester [...] and London' (Clapp, 1994: 19). Hopkins would have borne witness to this on a personal level as he resided in both cities at various points of his life. Humanity's disturbing impact on the environment is also evident *God's Grandeur*, as Hopkins writes that the world is 'bleared, smeared' and 'wear's man's smudge and shares man's smell'. This suggests that not only has man ruined the appearance of nature but also that he has had such an impact that it now 'shares his smell'. Hopkins clearly perceived developments in the Victorian economy, mainly the globalisation of trade and the increase in heavy industry, as destroying the natural. Anticipating the recent notion of the 'anthropocene', he implies that man has become the main geological force on the planet and has left nothing untouched. The most blatant example of Hopkins' pleas to mankind can be seen in the final stanza of *Inversnaid*, where Hopkins wonders what the world would be like if we continue to exploit it and obliterate the wild:

What would the world be, once bereft
Of wet and of wilderness? Let them be left,
O let them be left, wildness and wet,
Long live the weeds and wilderness yet.
(Hopkins, 1952: 51)

God's grandeur but then worries that it may someday 'flame out'. Hopkins then creates a clear parallel with the imagery of fire as he contrasts nature with industrial civilization, claiming that 'all is seared with trade'. As rich as the entirety of this poem appears to be, it is in the last four lines that Hopkins reveals himself, undeniably, to be an ecocritic. He repeats that 'generations have trod, have trod, have trod' implying that the destruction of the natural world is something that is not solely a Victorian concern.

Other poems by Hopkins voice a similar concern for the relentless tarnishing of the earth. For example, in the poem *Sprung*, Hopkins accuses man of being 'a strain of all the earth's sweet being in the beginning in Eden garden' and almost begs to his reader to 'have, get, before it cloy, before it cloud' (Hopkins, 1953: 20). Hopkins predicts that man's exploitation of the environment will ultimately destroy it, so that we can no longer enjoy an aesthetic or (more importantly to Hopkins) a sacred relationship to nature. Again, an eco-reading would suggest that 'cloud' is not only used as an adjective in the sense of blurring but also potentially as a noun in the form of smoke. Due to the industrial revolution, there was a huge increase in factory work and smog was being created. Clapp writes that 'industrialists were careless [...] resulting in the smoke and fog that hung over early and mid-Victorian

“Gerard Manley Hopkins, a Victorian Eco-Poet”
Michael Hargreaves

Ecology is an underexplored theme in the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. In works such as *God's Grandeur* and *Inversnaid*, Hopkins seems to confront the bleak prospect of a world without wilderness:

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like the shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod,
And all is seared with trade, bleared, smeared with toil
And wear's man's smudge and shares man's smell; the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.
(Hopkins, 1953: 18)

Immediately, the use of 'charged' in the opening line is intriguing. At first it may appear as though Hopkins is implying that the world is indebted to or weighed down by the grandeur of God, but an eco-reading of this would offer an alternative opinion. It is likely that Hopkins carefully uses 'charged' to evoke the sense of electrically powered. This seems a more possible reading when noting the imagery that follows this: 'shook foil' and 'ooze of oil' both strongly of industrialisation. Hopkins goes on to compare the natural world with man. He initially describes the natural world as channeling

Introduction

Todd Andrew Borlik

In an age when wilderness is increasingly scarce, reading books from earlier periods of history can feel like setting foot on a greener, wilder planet. This section of the booklet features excerpts from seven essays by Literature and Creative Writing students at the University Huddersfield enrolled in Dr. Todd Borlik's module 'Before Environmentalism'. The module undertakes a panoramic survey of Western attitudes toward the natural world from pagan antiquity to the Industrial Revolution. Although environmental concern is often thought of as a thoroughly modern sentiment unheard of before the 1962 publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, students in this module were challenged to uncover environmental themes in works of classic literature such as Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*, Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Cooper's *Pioneers*, and Dickens' *Hard Times*. The student essays below showcase some of the surprising insights that can result when we read literature from a biocentric perspective.

BEFORE ENVIRONMENTALISM

(2) Introduction

Todd Andrew Borlik

(3) "Gerard Manley Hopkins, a Victorian Eco-Poet"
Michael Hargreaves

(6) "*The Lives of Animals* and Why They Matter"
Sarah Ismail

(9) "The Problems with Romantic Ecology"
James Barnes

(12) "Beyond the Green"
Sehrish Ahmed

(15) "Of Mice and Women: Letitia Barbauld and
Animal Testing in Eighteenth-Century England"
Lydia Davidson

(18) "Ecofeminism and its Discontents"
Zulekha Youssef (18)

(21) "Back to Nature: Wilderness and Reality"
Hamza Rahim Ali

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Before Environmentalism

critical writings by

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James Barnes

Sehrish Ahmed

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Zulekha Yousef

Hamza Rahim Ali

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