ECOHIVEUU

ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES WORKSHOP

Humanities Honours Research Seminar

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Research Project

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Collective Project

Introduction

Why is it, that to travel from one country to another, we must apply for internationally recognized documents, keep them on our persons, and in some cases, register and pay fees in order to gain entry to a foreign nation? All of this, while deer and foul cross borders as they please, without so much as having to state their intentions? Let alone seeds and spores, which enjoy free borders and free air travel.

The line we draw in the sand and call a border is imagined— developed over time by struggles for power and the culmination of national identities. While the concept of a border is imagined, it does not mean that it is without consequence. Ideas of national identity are only one of the many perceptions that separate us, or the Self, from Others.

Human culture functions on a sort of hegemony, a uniform base of discourse and ideas that dominates how we live and leave a mark on the world. This hegemony is often constructed through hierarchical divisions, like differences in race, gender, wealth, mobility, and location. When we consider the real consequences of perceived differences within the construct of race, we can see how it becomes easier for humanity to dominate and take advantage of subjects they perceive as 'lesser.' This degree of subjugation is unavoidable and damaging and is perhaps most visible today in the domination of nature, where nature has become the "Other" or "lesser." The question of the relationship between man and nature is therefore a complex question that must be resolved dialectically, without unilaterally privileging one of the two dimensions (natural or social).

The present perceived dichotomy between human and nature has a real effect on the way companies, nations, and individuals approach the land. The ongoing war in Ukraine has been called a 'fossil fuel war,' exposing how humanity relies on nonrenewable energy and has failed to meet carbon emission reduction goals agreed upon at international conferences decades ago. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has released their 2022 report on the status of climate justice progress, a report which UN Secretary General António Guterres has called an "atlas of human suffering and a damaging indictment of failed climate leadership." Moreover, the relationship between resources scarcity and conflicts has now been confirmed and established in several studies. The recent COP26 conference in Glasgow received major criticism as source of unfulfilled promises and climate inaction, shrouded in the fog of emissions from leaders' private jets to and from the conference. All of these examples point to an extreme urgency in the issue of climate change, and a renewed need for examining the source of humanity's attitude towards its natural counterpart.

Our project aims to understand this dichotomy as it would any other— considering how humanity's need to have control over nature was born, how it developed over time and with the onset of new institutions, and how this difference between humanity is perceived when it is filtered through mediums like art, literature, film, newspapers, and social media. We want to examine our own preconceptions—

how our backgrounds, beliefs, and knowledge change our experience of nature, and how we can try to personally dissolve our perceived differences in the dichotomy between nature and human, to experience it— unfiltered. For this reason, we are going camping in the Dutch national park De Hoge Veluwe. We are not expecting a sublime and cathartic sort of rebirth— to come out of the forest never to chew a stick of gum or buy something wrapped in plastic again—but rather to have a better understanding of ourselves. We want to perceive nature fully, and carry this experience into our lives and into our future interactions with nature, so we remember where we come from and that we, too, are animals.

- What - Understand how we are trained to perceive the world and nature in a binary way
- How – How do we deconstruct it, our own way through our own perspectives? We are very biased! How can I approach it in a different way?
- Create a new narrative based on our direct experience: the challenging of dualism
- Why – Why is it relevant? Climate change, the IPCC report, uncertainty of resources, ecocide, pandemic, nuclear plants

Main Activity Description

The camping trip will take place at the Hoge Veluwe National Park during the warmer season, from Friday 20 May to Sunday 22 May.

An important aspect of the experience will be learning how we can work with a niche environment, taking from and giving back to, will help dissolve some of the conceived differences between man and nature: participants will learn which plants are native and invasive to the area, which plants can be foraged and consumed, and how plant systems communicate. Some activities included in the camping trip are nature excursions, guided walking and biking tours, a park museum visit, and various mental activities organised by the students themselves.

Student from different disciplines will be able to frame this theme in their preferred way: our research will be connected by a red line running through it that examines the philosophical separation of man and nature.

Intended Final Product

The final product of this project foresees a series of contents of different forms: from the diary in written form, to video interviews, academic essays, social media content, photographs, all collected within a website which will be built for the occasion. Within the digital platform, there will be various sections, each containing the individual testimony of the experience. The website will be user-friendly, granting accessibility to a wider audience, and allowing direct interaction with the public. As an interdisciplinary project, our final product will be addressed to all those students who have developed a curiosity towards our topic and are interested in learning all the different perspectives under which this project will be developed.

Individual Research

Seeking Roots in Branches: Linguistic relativity, dendrology-inspired 'arboreal articulation' and mycorrhizal narratives

By Daan van den Broek

"*A chorus of living wood sings to the woman:* If your mind were only a slightly greener thing, we'd drown you in meaning."

- Powers (2018). *The Overstory* (p. 4). New York: W.W. Norton

One of history's most prominent and influential concepts within literary theory is 'ostranenie', or 'defamiliarization' (Shklovsky, 2007; Crawford, 1984). It was introduced in 1917 by Russian pioneer of formalist literary theory Viktor Shklovsky in his essay *Art as Technique*. Shklovksy states that the literary quality of a text does not so much correlate with the message it is trying to convey, but more so with the innovative formal ways in which the text is structured to surprise or *defamiliarize* the reader. Shklovsky's ideas have inspired many literary scholars throughout the years. One example is Walter Benjamin, a Marxist scholar, who in 1972 wrote an article called *De auteur als producent* [The author as a producer], in which he formulated the idea that for a literary text to have a 'right' (read 'Marxist') message or *tendency* it is vital that the structure and formal aspects of the text know a certain innovation. The formal attributes of a literary text and its pursued message are inherently linked and cannot be

separated. For a text to truly achieve a form of literary engagement it ought to be breaking new ground within the existing genre conventions.

Central to both theories is the vitality of language. Since ideas, ideologies, norms and values constantly change, the language which carries them is likewise constantly subject to a process of evolution. In order to convey new ideas, the language itself must be adapted to fit its new cultural context.

A shining contemporary example of this process of literary evolution can be found in so-called 'arborealist novels', which endeavor to assimilate their structure in such a way that they can mirror tree ontology (version of reality) or describe the world through the eyes of a tree (Cooke, 2022). Another more general term for literary texts with a focus on plant emancipation is 'phytography', stemming from the Ancient Greek word for plant: 'phytos' (Ryan, 2020).

This essay will further explore the relationship between these arborealist novels and theories concerning the relationship between culture and language. Embroidering on several 'phytocritical' literary scholars I will propose one new way of analyzing arborealist novels, for which I use insights from both linguistic philosophy and dendrologist theory (a subdiscipline of botany, focused on the studying of trees). To give an example of how such a method may be applied, I will provide the reader with a brief analysis of Richard Powers' novel *The Overstory* (2018), which in 2019 remarkably won the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for being 'an ingeniously structured narrative that branches and canopies like the trees at the core of the story whose wonder and connectivity echo those of the humans living amongst them' (The Pulitzer Prizes, 2019).

Defamiliarization **as familiarization**

Arborealist novels explicitly pursue a less hierarchical relationship between humans and the ecosystem they are part of and seek to question human exceptionalism (Gagliano e.a., 2017). By presenting plants as organisms who possess a sense of agency, these novels go against traditional western, Aristotelian thought on a hierarchical divide between humans, animals and plants. It is due to our assumption that plants lack a sense of agency that most representations of nature in western literature are limited to depictions of animals. More than is the case with plants, for western readers and authors it is more believable or even self-evident to recognize animals as living, feeling characters and to empathize with them. In short, this 'zoocentrism' and our tendency to place plants last within an imaginary hierarchy is mostly due to our perception of plants as organisms who know a greater distance from the human definition of a meaningful, rational life. Where animals can be recognized as similar to humans, plants are perceived as the radical Other. The idea of granting meaning to nature from the limitations of a human paradigm can be referred to as 'anthropocentrism'.

These arborealist novels resemble a 'Whorfian' way of thinking. Benjamin Lee Whorf was one of the main advocates of so-called linguistic relativity: the idea that there is a reactionary relationship between a society, its culture and the spoken language(s) (Reines & Prinz, 2009; Asscher, 2015). One

of the examples Asscher gives to illustrate linguistic relativity is the use of second-person pronouns in French and Thai:

> If in a language like French there is a strict difference between 'tutoyer' [asking for permission to use an informal 'you'] and 'vousvoyer' [adressing someone with a formal 'you'], that difference corresponds to a clearly stratified society, in which manners are more formal than in a country where everyone can be addressed as 'you'. In fact, in Thai […] there are no fewer than nine different forms of addressing someone, depending on whether someone is older than the speaker or younger, male or female, of higher or lower social status, family or no family. Language – as these simple examples suggest - reflects socio-cultural reality - and socio-cultural reality in turn maintains itself in language. (Asscher, 2015)

Culture and language are intrinsically linked in such a way that certain thoughts or changes are thought to be almost inconceivable within the semantic confinements that a language poses. It can be argued that our deep-seated anthropocentrism is partly rooted in the language we use day to day. Therefore, one of the dangers of arborealist literature is the 'anthropomorphizing' of plants, meaning representing plants in such a way that they are 'humanized' (Schoene, 2021). It maintains the anthropocentric idea that only human rationality can truly be of value. However, the accusation of anthropomorphism is also often used as a cheap way to dismiss any form of literature that tries to look beyond the human paradigm. Arborealist literature endeavors to depict plant ontologies in a truthful, respectful manner. One way of achieving this is by allowing plants to gain value within a story without this value being determined by its relationship to a human (James, 2017).

Arborealist narratives will always exist within a human discourse, which – corresponding to Whorfian theory – means that these narratives will always exist within the confinements of human language and understanding. However, it is not only these confinements that define human language, but also the language's capability of evolving and changing the socio-cultural status quo. These novels may use defamiliarizing techniques to familiarize the reader with new ontologies which until then had been *terra incognita*. Using Benjamin's reasoning it can even be said that to explore these ontologies it is an absolute necessity to construct new forms of human language which to some degree mirror arboreality.

Plant semiotics: reconsidering 'language'

Most interestingly, many attempts at mirroring this arboreality take cues from developments within botany, and more specifically dendrology, the study of trees. 'Arboreal articulation' in novels can in fact partly be seen as a reaction to recent discoveries concerning underground 'tree communication'. In 1997 Suzanne Simard and several fellow dendrologists observed 'mycorrhizal networks': connections between tree species which are made possible through the exchange of fungi and bacteria:

> There is a further possibility that carbon is distributed belowground among plants across resource gradients, other than light, that affect relative photosynthetic potential within a

> mycorrhizally linked plant community. Such a mechanism would offer one explanation for the ability of species-rich communities to maintain productivity during drought or where nutrients are limiting. If our results reflect the magnitude of carbon transfer in natural systems, then the net competitive effect of one species on another cannot be predicted without a better understanding of interplant carbon transfer through shared mycorrhizal fungi and soil pathways. A more even distribution of carbon among plants as a result of belowground transfer may have implications for local interspecific interactions, maintenance of biodiversity, and therefore for ecosystem productivity, stability and sustainability. (Simard e.a., 1997)

Through these networks the trees send each other messages and are able to warn each other about invasive species or forest fires. This communication allows these trees to exchange carbon and nutrients when necessary and function within an ecosystem as if it were a socially aware community (Lagomarsino & Zucker, 2019) (figure 1).

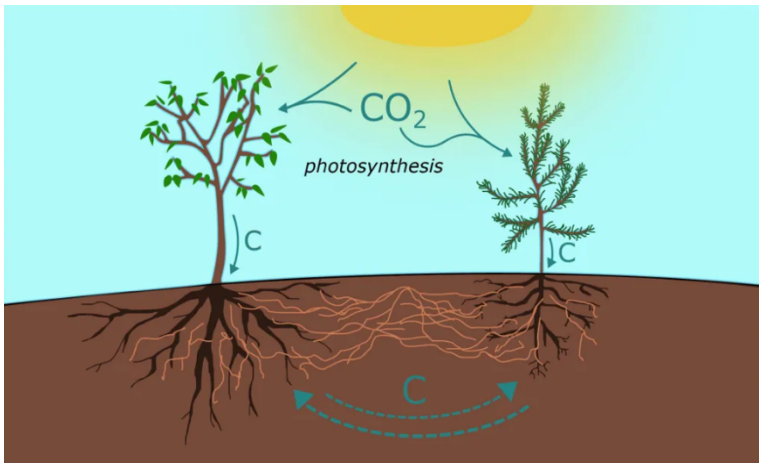

Figure 1. Mycorrhizal Networks. "Trees communicate with other trees through their mycorrhizal network. Trees who share a mycorrhizal network, like the Birch (left) and Fir (right), are able to send nutrients to each other or signal to each other in times of stress." (Lagomarsino & Zucker, 2019)

Simard has continued her research throughout the years and has become one of the leading voices within the discourse on plant agency. Simard (2017) has for example stated that the tree's mycorrhizal networks are remarkably similar to human neurology.

> Plants, including trees, are increasingly understood to have cognitive capacity for perceiving, processing, and communicating with other plants, organisms, and the environment and to remember and use this information to learn, adjust their behaviors, and adapt accordingly. In other words, plants are increasingly recognized as having agency that leads to decisions and actions, characteristics of intelligence usually only ascribed to humans or perhaps animals. (Simard, 2017)

Lagomarsino & Zucker (2019) have made a similar comparison. They state that the white threads of fungus called 'mycelium' which interconnect the trees, in some way resemble human nerve cells. Mycelium is an umbrella term for all the fungi functioning in the network under trees, from which

mycorrhizae are only one species. The mycorrhizae specifically are believed to be responsible for the communication between trees and the equal distribution of nutrients. These exchanges of information and nutrients are within a botanical discourse usually referred to as 'funtions'. These funtions have most probably given trees an evolutionary advantage. After all, from a darwinist perspective, a forest with a means of exchanging information may be more fit than a forest without such a system.

Simultaneously all these scholars have stressed the importance of not granting value to this form of cognition from a limited, anthropocentric perspective. Comparisons between human and plant cognition can be made as long as they are not the sole source of hierarchical judgment. In fact, these comparisons have even led to a contemporary, phytocritical debate on the true nature of 'language' and 'narrative'.

Austin (2020), for example, suggests that human language itself should be recognized as only one form of what is called 'semiosis', which describes any process that involves the production of signs into meaning. The funtions which are realized within mycorrhizal networks can therefore be seen as a process of semiosis, very similar to language. The field which explores how forms of plant semiosis relate themselves to human language is referred to as 'ecocritical biosemiotics' (Gagliano e.a., 2017):

> Peirce famously claimed that the world is “perfused with signs, if it is not com-posed exclusively of signs.”56 Following in Peirce’s footsteps, the biosemioticians of today have likewise argued that language is “pervasive in all life.” As semiosis [...] language is more than the audible communication carried out by humans; it encompasses the complexities of intersubjective and interspecies dialogue, involving nature (including plants) and humanity. (Gagliano e.a. 2017)

Gagliano e.a. even state that it might be possible that every living organism on our planet is in possession of some sort of semiosis, but that not all of them (fully or directly) lie within our human perception. We are inherently limited by our human paradigm. From this plant-blindness arises a responsibility to do research on the multiplicity of semiosis which nature has to offer:

> It implies our attunement to a speaking without words, a listening without hearing, that humankind must learn to cultivate for the sake of the future we wish to share with each other and with other beings. (Gagliano e.a., 2017)

This exhortation has many similarities with the field which Ioviono & Oppermann (2012) define as 'material ecocriticism'. They urge their fellow ecocritics to look beyond the human ecological narrative and seek for innovative, interdisciplinary ways to find 'sites of narrativity' within natural environments as to broaden our anthropocentric horizon. For example, the rings that one may find inside a tree can – as many know – be read as a source of temporality by simply counting these rings. However, many are blind to the several nuances which one may encounter if they knew where to look (Von Arx, z.d.). Figure 2 provides us with an overview of some of the history stored within these rings. Von Arx refers to the study of this history as 'dendrochronology'.

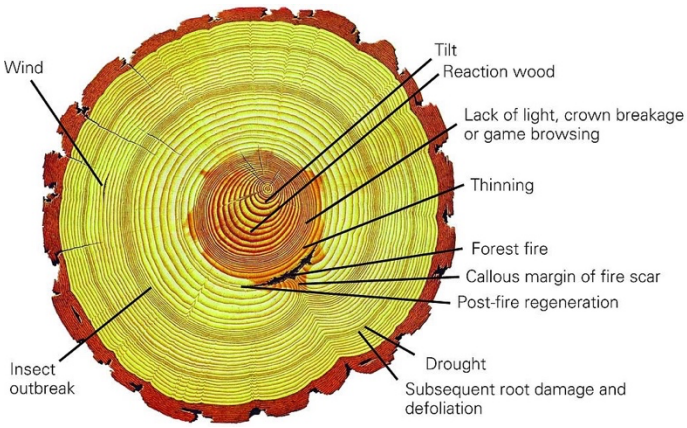

Figure 2. Dendrochronological narrative. "Dendrochronology (a word derived from Greek *dendron*, "tree limb"; *khronos*, "time"; and *-logia*, the study of) consists in analyzing tree-ring patterns in order to identify and date past disturbances such as rockfall events, wildfires or snow avalanches as well as past climate conditions. This implies far more than just counting tree rings." (Von Arx, z.d.)

It is very well possible to read these rings as a site of narrativity – or simply said as a 'story' - which – just like a human narrative – knows a certain complexity. Nonetheless, it is undeniable and inescapable that due to the nature of this story, it can only exist within the restraints which it is imposed by material discourse. This is where the Whorfian perspective re-enters this essay's reasoning.

So far, I have clarified how trees can be perceived as sites of both language (semiosis) and narrativity – nevertheless including the important nuance that for this reasoning to be clear the definitions of these two concepts must be pulled from the anthropocentric paradigm. Perhaps it could even be said that the described mycorrhizal networks are – like human language – subject to a similar process of linguistic relativity. After all, the survival of the tree is inherently linked to its use of semiosis, while the use of semiosis is likewise linked to the material, changing environment in which the tree is located.

The arborealist paradox and mycorrhizal dialogism in *The Overstory*

In the continuation of this essay, I would like to propose one new way of analyzing arborealist novels, using both the discussed knowledge on linguistic relativity, and tree semiosis/narrativity. I will illustrate this form of analysis by first briefly discussing the narrative structure of Richard Powers' novel *The Overstory* from a phytocritical perspective.

In these short stories, or 'fables' a total of nine human main characters come into contact with plant life. The largest part of the story is narrated by an all-knowing extradiegetic narrator, who remarkably mostly refrains from placing human characters higher or lower on a hierarchical scale. Within this fictional discourse, humans and plants seem to enjoy a great deal of equality.

One of the most interesting components of the novel is its attempt at mirroring tree ontology in a language that – by definition – is unsuitable for its task, since it was constructed for human ontology. This results in a certain tension which is never truly resolved. However, I would argue that it is exactly this lack of resolvement and the creative, *defamiliarizing* ways in which the author still tries to converge

human and plant ontologies, which define the genre of arborealism and its potential for greatness and public epiphany.

This seems to be not only inherent to the novel's structure, but also to the meta reflections in the novel itself. For example, near the beginning of the novel a woman is sung to by trees:

> *Trees even farther away join in:* All the ways you imagine us-bewitched mangroves up on stilts, a nutmeg's inverted spade, gnarled baja elephant trunks, the straight-up missile of a sal – are always amputations. Your kind never sees us whole. You miss the half of it, and more. […] *A chorus of living wood sings to the woman:* If your mind were only a slightly greener thing, we'd drown you in meaning. (Powers, p. 3-4)

The human inability to grasp plant semiosis and/or narratives is recognized in the paradoxical act of plants using language from a human discourse. Then again, the words spoken by the trees have been written in non-italic, whereas the extradiegetic narrator's voice is in italic. It suggests a certain change of norms, since it is usually the plant which is perceived as the Other. This formal aspect of the text can be viewed as a way of defamiliarizing the reader. What I, however, find interesting is how this form of expression still upholds a certain dichotomy between humans and nature. It is in my opinion a striking example of the inescapable tension or paradoxicality which results from plant articulation in a human discourse.

I also find the lexical choice 'fable' as a description for the several short stories within the novel quite interesting, since a fable is usually characterized by an anthropomorphic representation of an animal and a reflection on a certain morality. This is why, in conjunction with my earlier example, I interpret the use of the word 'fable' as a meta reflection on the arborealist paradox.

The continuation of the novel is, when it comes to its grander narrative structure, mostly defined by its multiplicity of separate stories and voices, spanning over longer periods of time and several generations. From this structure arises a large source of dialogism and meaning which not only includes human voices, but arboreal voices as well. The multiplicity of characters is first introduced, then interwoven into a larger story. What defines all the human characters within the story is their road to epiphany, their road to a more equal relationship with their environment.

The new method of analyzing arborealist novels I propose revolves around this idea of multiplicity. I interpret the inner structure of the novel as a mirror to the mycorrhizal processes which occur within the tree ecosystem. From this perspective *The Overstory* can be read as a plea to recognize tree semiosis not only as a source of narrativity, but also as an inspiration for new, innovative narratives.

Therefore, I would like to propose the new term 'mycorrhizal narratives', which may be used to describe a story which not only reflects on the place of plants within a narrative but also in its own structure seeks for innovative, defamiliarizing techniques as to mirror the kind of semiotic network which evolves within a tree ecosystem. Needless to say, I do not propose that all arborealist novels should and can be read as a mirror of mycorrhizal processes. However, it is my belief that such a way

of analyzing novels may lead to new insights into the way of how meanings are produced through the multiplicity of voices and the role of plant representations within this polyphony.

In this sense, my method in some way mirrors the 'postmodern ecocriticism' which Serpil Oppermann proposed in 2006. She has stated that she finds it to be problematic when ecocritical scholars relate literary representations of nature to an unambiguous, empirically identifiable natural environment:

> These [epistemological] ecocritics tend to perceive environmental literature as a potential resource for examining the importance of environmental values. They formulate their interpretations on a naive understanding of the relationship between literature and the material reality.

This does not mean, however, that Oppermann's envisioned postmodern ecocritical theory lapses into radical relativism. On the contrary, Oppermann recognizes the natural environment as a convergence of complex ecosystems, which are indeed disturbed by human violence. Due to the complexity of these ecosystems, but also due to the diversity of human relationships with these ecosystems, Oppermann sees it as the most valuable literary approach to analyze the ambiguity and polyphony of representations of nature.

More than Oppermann's vision, my proposed analysis of 'mycorrhizal narratives' limits itself more to the inner workings of a tree, the semantic transactions within a network of meaning (who takes and who gives?), and the paradoxicality of plant language within a human discourse.

Conclusion

With this essay I have tried to propose an innovative, interdisciplinary way of analyzing arborealist novels: novels which attempt to construct a less anthropocentric narrative in both structure and plant representation. This task requires the author to search for defamiliarizing techniques. However, it is my belief that if we want to do these phyto-aware narratives justice, we – as ecocritics – must also search for defamiliarizing ways to bring forward the conglomerate of disciplines that is called the environmental humanities. This is not a new idea, but I do hope that with this essay I will have contributed to this cause.

In my collection of literature I have tried to lay connections between linguistic theory and dendrologist knowledge. I have chosen for a particular focus on these aspects because I felt that within the discourse on arborealist literature these had been explored the least thoroughly.

Furthermore, due to its limited size this essay has refrained from exploring the way in which temporality is represented within arborealist literature. I would like to propose this as a subject for further research, specifically on the ways in which temporality itself might relate itself to a 'mycorrhizal' network narrative. After all, as the tree-rings in figure 2 have suggested, a tree's experience of time differs greatly from a human one. Moreover, trees know a far larger lifespan than a human ever could.

In a time in which the narratives we take in are more than ever focused on voicing inclusivity, it gives me hope that novels like *The Overstory* explore the boundaries of literary evolution and *defamiliarization*. Narratives like this prove once again the impact which the language we use day to day has on our thinking and culture. The reason I greatly appreciate arborealist literature is that they not only open the door to viewing new ontologies through language, but also open the door to a greatly richer, more inclusive discourse on the true nature of language itself.

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Media's Depiction of the Dutch National Park De Hoge Veluwe

By Ani Encheva

Introduction

Images are not abstractions. Instead, they are constructed in certain contexts and their formation inevitably affects the perception of the observer. As William Gartner asserts, the notion of the image generally refers to a subconscious mental construct based on a compilation of cognitive and affective elements, such as beliefs, attitudes, motives, and impressions (Gartner 1994, 193, 196). While the formation of this image considerably depends on the observer's personal background, it is also influenced by certain agents which have the power to form a desired image and, in turn, intentionally or unintentionally affect the observer's perception. These agents are the force that establishes the so-called tourist destination's image (Gartner 1994, 197). As Kelly MacKay and Daniel Fesenmaier state, a tourist destination's image refers to "a composite of various products (attractions) and attributes woven into a total impression" (MacKay and Fesenmaier 1997, 538). In other words, a destination's image is a subjective perception rather than an objective reality that represents the knowledge about and impressions of a certain place that the observer holds.

Studying the factors that influence the development of a destination's image in the minds of potential visitors is central to understanding the process of tourist destination selection decision. The essence of image formation and how this image influences the decision-making process has been a field of inquiry for more than 50 years. On the one hand, tourism scholars, such as Gartner, have conducted research on the significance of a projected image and what agents play a pivotal role in the construction of this image, either to promote or objectively depict a destination in a certain way. MacKay and Fesenmaier have integrated Gartner's exploration to investigate the part that visual representation, such as the incorporation of

photographs portraying a certain place, plays in influencing the formation of a destination's image. On the other hand, Seyhmus Baloglu and Ken McCleary have focused their research on identifying personal and stimulus factors, such as values, personality, age, and education, in addition to types of information sources, to explore the effect that these factors have on the perceived image that is constructed in the observer's mind (Baloglu and McCleary 1999, 870, 871). While these studies investigate the process of image formation and the factors that influence the view that the observer holds of a certain destination, they have been predominantly focused on providing a basis for understanding the construction of a destination's image rather than studying how this construction develops in practice in a particular context.

For that reason, in order to examine the process of image formation and how this formation evolves in a specific context, in the following paper I will explore media's depiction of the Dutch national park De Hoge Veluwe. Located in the province of Gelderland near the cities of Wageningen and Arnhem, De Hoge Veluwe is one of the most significant nature areas of the Netherlands, known for its ecological quality as well as opportunities for recreation (Turnhout, Hisschemoller and Eijsakers 2004, 192). Founded in 1935, the park is approximately 5500 hectares in size and consists of forests, heathlands, sand drifts, and agricultural fields. De Hoge Veluwe was founded by and the property of the wealthy Dutch family of Helene and Anton Kröller whose main intention was to provide a private hunting ground and a space for exhibiting Mrs. Kröller's art collection (Turnhout, Hisschemoller and Eijsakers 2004, 192). Nowadays, the national park's primary task is the management and protection of both the natural and the cultural history of the Hoge Veluwe area, with its diverse landscapes, flora and fauna, and art artifacts. On the one hand, the park is home to a variety of large mammals, bird species, plants, and trees, such as red deer, wild boars, mouflons, nightjars, black woodpeckers, marsh gentians, toadstools, and oaks. On the other hand, the park is also well-known for the Kröller-Müller Museum that displays modern and contemporary art in addition to Mrs. Kröller's art collection that includes paintings by Vincent van Gogh, Claude Monet, and Pablo Picasso.

To investigate what is the destination's image of De Hoge Veluwe and what factors contribute to the formation of this image, I will explore the official website of the park as well as independently produced news reports covering information about De Hoge Veluwe. Therefore, my research paper will demonstrate the apparent differences and similarities between the way these media channels depict the park, in addition to how this portrayal might affect the perception of the potential visitor. The following essay is part of a group project that

attempts to challenge the apparent human-nature dualism and study where this dualism originates from. Therefore, in this paper, I will not only investigate the image of De Hoge Veluwe that the analyzed media channels establish, but also reflect on how these channels present the relationship between humans and nature. This essay will, in turn, serve as a basis for the comparison between media's image of De Hoge Veluwe and how our group perceives the park after gaining first-hand experience from the camping trip.

Theoretical Framework

Understanding the factors that influence the formation of a destination's image is crucial in examining the perception that is created in the observer's mind. For that reason, Gartner's article "Image Formation Process" will serve as the basis for the following paper. In this text, Gartner distinguishes between three fundamental types of image formation agents – induced, autonomous, and organic. Induced agents consist of traditional means of promoting a destination, such as the use of brochures and print media advertising, in addition to information received from tour operators and organizations which aim at developing a specific image that can directly influence the decision-making process of the potential visitor (Gartner 1994, 197, 199). According to Gartner, depending on the chosen form of advertising, induced image formation agents can have a medium to high market penetration but often low credibility as a result of their interest in promoting a destination rather than presenting a realistic portrayal (Gartner 1994, 199). Gartner's investigation of the essence of induced image formation agents will assist me in analysing De Hoge Veluwe's image that the official website of the park establishes. The second type, namely autonomous image formation agents, includes popular cultural artefacts, such as documentaries and movies, as well as independently produced news articles (Gartner 1994, 201). In addition to having high market penetration, Gartner asserts that autonomous agents also have great credibility due to their "supposedly unbiased presentation" of a destination (Gartner 1994, 201). As a result of these characteristics, autonomous image formation agents not only have the capacity to overwhelm the perception that induced agents have established, but also significantly influence and even construct an entirely new destination's image. To analyse the image of De Hoge Veluwe that independently produced news articles develop, I will utilize Gartner's exploration of autonomous image formation agents. The final agent that has the capacity to affect the formation of a destination's image, the organic agent, consists of the perception developed about a destination based on the so-called "word-of-mouth" advertising, namely information acquired from people who have visited the place or from one's personal experiences of the area (Gartner 1994, 204, 205). Even

though organic agents have less market penetration since they are based on individual communication rather than the effect of mass media, they are highly credible due to the fact that they originate from one's direct experience of a certain destination (Gartner 1994, 203). While this image formation agent will not be considered in the following paper, I will subsequently use it as a basis for the comparison between the image of De Hoge Veluwe produced by induced and autonomous agents and the group's personal experience of the park.

Methodology

To analyse media's depiction of De Hoge Veluwe and the image of the park that media channels establish, I will first explore the official website of the park. On the one hand, the website features details that might be useful for potential visitors, such as admission prices, places to camp and eat, park rules, and opportunities for recreation. On the other hand, the website also provides information about the history and organisation of the park, as well as ways to financially support and contribute to the preservation of the area. In addition to investigating the image that De Hoge Veluwe's website develops, I will also examine several independently produced news articles from the year 2021 that further contribute to the formation of the park's image. The content of these articles varies from featuring information about incidents that have occurred in De Hoge Veluwe to presenting an opinion-based pieces introducing personal impressions of the park.

To investigate the meaning behind the image that these agents establish, I will employ the method of critical discourse analysis as discussed by Marianne Jorgensen and Louise Phillips. According to Jorgensen and Phillips, the primary goal of critical discourse analysis is to investigate "discursive practices which construct representation of the world" in order to "explore the links between language use and social practice" (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 63, 69). Not only that, the utilization of this method can also reveal "the role that these discursive practices play in furthering the interests of particular social groups" (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 63). In the context of this essay, the method of critical discourse analysis will, on the one hand, assist me in investigating how the outside world, or De Hoge Veluwe park, is translated into discourse and represented through the analysed media channels. On the other hand, this method will also allow me to examine the conceivable image that this representation develops in the minds of potential visitors and how this image is constructed to favour certain perspectives and power structures.

Analysis

De Hoge Veluwe's Induced Image Promoted by The Park's Official Website

To attract tourists and provide information about the area of De Hoge Veluwe, a website dedicated to the park has been established. Since this channel has the task of developing a particular image in the minds of potential visitors in order to promote the area, it can be stated that the website establishes the induced image of De Hoge Veluwe. The content of the website can be divided into two main sections. The first one focuses on promoting the park to potential visitors by providing information about ticket prices and purchase, places to camp and eat, activities and upcoming events, as well as park rules. The other section, however, concentrates on educating the website's visitor by featuring stories about the history of the park, including tales about the park's establishment, and information about nature and landscape, as well as art and architecture that can be witnessed in the park.

On the one hand, the first section dedicated to advertising the park leaves the reader with the assumption that nature is a product that cannot be experienced fully if it cannot be afforded. While acquiring information about the route to the park, the admission prices, and the opening hours is essential for potential visitors, the emphasis placed on providing it further enhances the apparent separation between humans and nature. If potential visitors cannot adhere to the imposed rules or pay the entrance fee, they are not only prohibited from entering the park and attending the activities, but also, and primarily, are being excluded from the chance to enjoy the landscapes, flora, and fauna that the park has to offer. Thus, nature and humans are depicted as unequal entities. The one in control of the park and its visitors frames nature as a commodity, as something that humans must be able to afford in order to appreciate. On the other hand, however, since De Hoge Veluwe is operated without much government subsidy, by stressing the importance of the park's admission fees and rules, the website also attempts to educate the prospective visitor on the need to constantly manage the park which has made entry tickets a requirement. In this case, potential visitors are portrayed as the ones in position of power, the actors who are responsible for the preservation and maintenance of the area. As a result, the first section of the website establishes an induced image of De Hoge Veluwe, one that not only reinforces the existing human-nature dichotomy in order to favour the perspective of certain dominant structures, but also attempts to educate and, perhaps, entice potential visitors by portraying the nature of the area as significantly dependent on their actions and contributions. While the former is my interpretation and, therefore, presents a perceived destination's image, the latter is the image that I assume the website attempted to project in order to promote De Hoge Veluwe as a place that values and protects the landscape and wildlife it has.

The second section of the website establishes an image of the park as a place that values and preserves its past, present, and future. Featuring information about the three pillars of the park, namely nature and landscape, historic tales, and art and architecture, the website, on the one hand, attempts to educate the reader and emphasize the historical, as well as cultural significance of the park. On the other hand, this section also promotes the park by providing potential visitors with detailed descriptions and professional photographs of the variety of plants and animals that De Hoge Veluwe has to offer. By framing the park's nature and landscape as "diverse, vast, rare, and accessible," the website not only stresses the uniqueness of the area but also, and primarily, attempts to depict it as the home of a multiplicity of sceneries and species that could readily be observed by potential visitors (De Hoge Veluwe, n.d.). This website's section also features information about the nature management of De Hoge Veluwe, highlighting that without people's intervention, "the landscape would become increasingly uniform" which is "exactly what the park hopes to prevent" (De Hoge Veluwe, n.d.). By emphasizing the role of people in the preservation and maintenance of De Hoge Veluwe, the website further enhances the human-nature dichotomy and frames humans as those who have the necessary means, as well responsibility to ensure the future of the park and its diverse nature. Finally, the focus placed on providing description of the art and architecture of De Hoge Veluwe that, according to the website, is "of the highest level," establishes the park as a destination that appraises and preserves not only the area's nature, but also the exceptional historical and cultural history of the region (De Hoge Veluwe, n.d.). As a result, by combining information about the park's landscape and wildlife with descriptions of the nature management and culture, the website of De Hoge Veluwe develops an image of the park as an area that significantly depends on humans' efforts and as a site of natural beauty and art that offers something for every taste.

De Hoge Veluwe's Autonomous Image Generated from Independently Produced News Articles

Mass media, due to its high market penetration and credibility, as well as ostensibly objective portrayal, is the image formation agent that has the capacity to dramatically affect previously established images and perceptions by exposing people to a massive amount of information in a relatively brief period of time (Gartner 1994, 203). As one of the most important nature areas of the Netherlands, De Hoge Veluwe also receives a lot of attention from the mass media, particularly from independently produced news articles. For instance, one article from August 2021 reports that despite the fence of De Hoge Veluwe park, a wolf has managed to enter the area and kill several mouflon sheep (Dutch News 2021). Another article from May 2021 states

that one of De Hoge Veluwe's boars not only attacked a family while they were on a walk in the park but also injured the game warden that was trying to help them (Ede Stad 2021). These two articles, due to the focus they place on depicting a dramatic event that has happened in De Hoge Veluwe, depict the park as an unsafe and unprotected destination, a perception that considerably differs from the image of natural, cultural, and historical diversity that the official website of the park attempts to project. On the other hand, an opinion-based article published in May 2021, frames De Hoge Veluwe as a space filled with valuable cultural monuments, unique biodiversity, and breathtaking landscape variety. The author also describes the park as a nature reserve that "brings you peace of mind" and is "ideal for anyone who wants to get away for a day or a few, relax and recharge" (Francois1952 2021). As a result, this article not only develops an image of De Hoge Veluwe as a destination worth visiting due to its combination of nature and culture, but also touches upon the human-nature dualism by representing nature as this idyllic space of natural beauty and spirituality that provides humans with a form of escapism. To conclude, by being media channels that focus on individual interpretation and experience rather than the promotion of a destination, the examined news articles form a diverse autonomous image of De Hoge Veluwe, one that not only presents incidents that the official website does not mention but also emphasizes the important role of nature in providing humans with a sense of serenity and fulfilment.

Conclusion

In my research paper, I attempted to demonstrate the apparent differences and similarities between the way the examined media channels depict the Dutch national park De Hoge Veluwe, as well as how this portrayal might influence the perception of the potential visitor. The image of the De Hoge Veluwe has formed through the effects of both induced image formation agents, such as the official website of the park, and autonomous image formation agents, namely independently produced news articles. On the one hand, the section of the website that focuses on promoting De Hoge Veluwe has established nature both as a commodity and as substantially dependent on humans' actions and contributions. While the former image is, in my opinion, constructed to favour the perspective of specific dominant structures, the latter appears to be the image that the website attempts to project in order to portray De Hoge Veluwe as a place that preserves the sceneries and wildlife it has. The second section of the website, the one that concentrates on combining information about the park's landscapes with explanation of the nature management and culture, portrays the park as a site of natural beauty and art that will disappear without humans' efforts. As a result, this section

develops an image of De Hoge Veluwe as a destination that values not only the park's nature, but also its unique historical and cultural past. Finally, the analysed news articles form a rather manifold image of De Hoge Veluwe, one that not only depicts dramatic events that have occurred in the park and have not been covered by the website, but also highlights the significant role of nature in offering humans an idyllic space of beauty and serenity. While the analysis of these media channels has allowed me to distinguish a particular image of De Hoge Veluwe, it must be pointed out that this image and the research conducted here are only a fraction of the dynamic process of image formation. Therefore, in order to explore the role of image formation agents in the construction of images and the process of decision-making in the context of De Hoge Veluwe, I suggest further research to be conducted into different media channels, as well as the reception of potential visitors and what is the perceived image they have of De Hoge Veluwe.

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Grounded Normativity on Different Grounds: Extending Location-Specific Learning to the Western University

By Flora Lehmann

MAINSTREAM DECOLONISATION

Around the world and throughout history, empires have risen and fallen, societies have been built and crashed, evolved and transformed, and institutions have become more complex in response to growing populations. With the onset of globalisation and the evolution of social Darwinist ideas about economics, systems like capitalism and imperialism seem to be built up to impassable fortresses. But just as cultures and societies have fallen to communism and colonialism, our modern systems of institutional racism and imperial attitudes are more fragile than we realise. If we commit to processes of regeneration, reconnection, and reconceptualization at the root of our knowledge production institutions, we can put in the work and transform the world to recreate cycles of sustainability and community. As Taiaiake Alfred of the Kahnawake Mohawk Territory puts it in his essay "Warrior Scholarship," "we must do what we can to change the places we live and work from sites of imperialism into spaces of resistance, of regeneration, and of human freedom" (99).

There is no question that there has been a resurgence in interest surrounding knowledge institutions and the imperial roots of Western secondary schooling. There has been serious debate surrounding education, and a call to de-colonise education—a call that has been heard. Movements like *Rhodes Must Fall*, *Why Is My Curriculum White?*, etc. show a need to decolonise education, highlighting the imperialist forces that affect curricula and supply the finance-driven side of universities. Simukai Chigudu, a scholar involved in the Rhodes Must Fall movement in Oxford, describes its mission statement, writing that it is "a movement determined to decolonize the institutional structures and physical space in Oxford and beyond. We seek to challenge the structures of knowledge production that continue to mould a colonial mindset that dominates our present" (309). The Rhodes Must Fall movement has gained global fame, but it is worth noting that its efforts in Oxford failed. While it worked to challenge structures of knowledge, it stagnated in the gap between challenging and reconstructing knowledge institutions.

INDIGENIZING ALTERNATIVES

In the presentation of this challenge, there is a need and urgency for indigenization and the resurgence of indigenous communities in the context of knowledge production institutions.

Although there has been a lot of scholarship calling for the need to decolonise our institutions, there has yet to enter into mainstream debate new alternatives to our colonial institutions. Everyone agrees that there needs to be a change, but few are willing to offer a proposed alternative, and even fewer root this alternative in a connection to the natural world.

While it is important to recognize the problems embedded in our knowledge production institutions, the problem remains that we are not provided with alternative practices. We cannot merely name the problem and play a game of politics—granting Indigenous peoples with sovereignty and issuing reparations. As Taiaiake Alfred says, "we have mistaken the mere renaming of our situation for an actual reconnection to our land and culture in practice" (98). He goes on to describe the essence of the problem as a separation of the individual from their environment, writing that "the root of the problem is that we are living a spiritual crisis, a darkness that descended on our people at the time we became disconnected from our lands and from our cultures" (94). Here, Alfred writes from the liminal position of the Indigenous scholar. He proposes a shift from imperial knowledge production institutions that is not global, but is rather nature-based and location specific. This marks a shift in perspectives regarding knowledge recognition. The sentiment of 'de-colonising the university' suggests to many that Western institutions must allow for more holistic and less finance-oriented organisations. Alfred and his contemporaries, however, approach the restructuring of knowledge as something that must be built from the ground up from a connection to nature.

Sharon Stein notes the importance of a restructuring in the system of the university, writing that "many contemporary higher education challenges are a product of our dominant systems and frames of reference, and thus, solutions to these challenges that are formulated from within these systems and frames will only address the *symptoms* of today's crises, while the *root causes* remain unaddressed and continue to cause harm" (144). This kind of attitude towards university systems allows for a more creative conceptualisation of knowledge production. To position myself in this debate, I must disclose my own biases and perceptions of information production. I am a bachelor's student at a highly esteemed European university, and I have been raised in the context of German and American higher-level education. I identify as a cisgender heterosexual, and I have a history in critical race and feminist activism. Although I was not taught with the sort of practices that Indigenous scholars discuss, I believe that I (and my colleagues) can gain new perspectives on our relationship to nature and knowledge production through the consideration of these alternative methods. This literature review is part of my individual research in a group project that aims to understand the perceived separation between human and nature, and which aims to synthesise new practices for connecting to nature

within the realm of knowledge production. This paper is a theoretical exploration of knowledge production institutional alternatives and the knowledge production idea of and relating to grounded normativity, described by Glen Coulthard in *Red Skin White Masks*. This text will explore three self-defined Indigenous scholars' views on grounded normativity and location-specific, nature-based knowledge production practices. Finally, this paper will discuss aspects of these pedagogies that can be put into practice in the group project and within the context of the Western university.

GROUNDED NORMATIVITY IN RED SKIN WHITE MASKS

It is clear that the Western university is built within an imperialist framework and perpetuates colonial hierarchies at every level. This points to a need to radically alter our perception of the Western university—structurally breaking down and rebuilding our institutions, rather than just issuing apologies and researching historical oppression. For a more ecologically attentive critique of knowledge production systems, we can turn to the ideas of Indigenous scholars. In *Red Skin White Masks*, Glen Coulthard considers traditional critiques of capitalism and suggests an ideology that can extend to the sector of education. Coulthard, a member of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, describes the same problems as Alfred—how the recognition of sovereignty and issuing of reparations for Indigenous peoples (in his context of Canada) remains an act of colonial politics, and how Indigenous resistance and resurgence movements must be re-evaluated with a grounding in nature. Coulthard defines this methodology, stating

> "I call this place-based foundation of Indigenous decolonial thought and practice *grounded normativity*, by which I mean the modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure our ethical engagements with the world and our relationships with human and nonhuman others over time" (13).

This framework for thought was forged in adversity. Coulthard places this definition in a context of political history, specifically about how the historical relationship between Indigenous peoples and (in his context) the Canadian state is informed primarily by dispossession of land. Through the paradigm of grounded normativity, there is more in consideration—it is not only a struggle *for* the land as property, but also *from* the land as a grounding for belief systems and institutions.

It is important that Coulthard invites us to consider this as more than a singular response to political dispossession and games—it allows us and other scholars to prescribe this methodology to other faculties. In Indigenous scholars' circles, grounded normativity is used

loosely as the name for an overarching idea of process-oriented knowledge production. Many scholars create their own variance on this base idea, retaining the elements of process- and practice-oriented methodologies, but adjusting the definition for their own location-specific institutions. In any case, the framework of grounded normativity—a profound relation to land-produces very different ideas about nationhood and government than imperial and colonial ideologies.

Coulthard specifically invites the reader to consider this framework outside of the realm of politics, as a general way of life. He writes about actions grounded in a profound connection to the land, saying

> "What tends to get ignored by many self-styled pundits is that these actions are also an affirmative gesture of Indigenous resurgence insofar as they embody an enactment of Indigenous law and the obligations such laws place on Indigenous peoples to uphold the relations of reciprocity that shape our engagements with the human and nonhuman world— the land. The question I want to explore here, … [is this:] how might we move beyond a resurgent Indigenous politics that seeks to inhibit the destructive effects of capital to one that strives to create Indigenous alternatives to it?" (170).

Differently put, Coulthard asks the reader if we can change our relation to Western institutions completely by changing our intentions. Rather than reacting to land grabs, what if we build our ideological institutions up proactively from a respect for the land, rebuilding society in a way that is based in sustainability.

NISHNAABEWIN IN AS WE HAVE ALWAYS DONE

Glen Coulthard's concept of grounded normativity has travelled far among academic circles, and is extensively analysed by Mississauga Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson in her monolith: *As We Have Always Done*. An Indigenous creator from the Great Lakes Region of Canada, Simpson describes how this political musing can leach into other institutions: "In academic circles, particularly theoretical ones, this is an important intervention because grounded normativity is the base of our political systems, economy, and nationhood, and it creates process--centered modes of living that generate profoundly different conceptualizations of nationhood and governmentality— ones - that aren't based on enclosure, authoritarian power, and hierarchy" (22).

To understand how grounded normativity works as a transformative framework, we must first understand what process-centred modes of living are. Although this varies from one

location to the next, within Simpson's context of Nishnaabeg scholarship, it refers to a sense of knowledge being a fluid entity, that "comes from the spiritual world and flows to humans through intimate relationships with human and nonhuman entities" (28). Here, knowledge is process-oriented because it is always connected to the land, and not created only in the mind. The stress is placed on the idea that knowledge is shared, and comes from a uniform base, because it comes from the land. She writes about one of her older publications, saying

> "I discussed how knowledge is created through the combination of heart knowledge or emotion, and thought or intellect. I explained how the transformative power of knowledge is unleashed through movement, kinetics or action, our embedded practices and processes of life; that is, one has to be fully present and engaged in Nishnaabeg ways of living in order to generate knowledge, in order to generate theory. In this way theory is generated from the ground up, and it necessarily then has to be accessible to all Nishnaabeg so we each have the opportunity to develop our own intimate meaning" (28).

Here, we see an attitude towards knowledge production that is radically different from the Western university's. Within this framework of knowledge production, which Simpson calls "Nishnaabeg brilliance," knowledge becomes something that is shared by a community and can be discovered together. This eliminates processes of gatekeeping and organisation, creating a holistic form of knowledge production.

The idea of mobility and kinetic learning is especially important in Simpson's rendering of Nishnaabeg brilliance. She stresses that the reflective aspect of learning can only come out when it is attached to movement, writing that "mistakes produce knowledge. Failure produces knowledge because engagement in the process changes the actors embedded in process and aligns bodies with the implicate order. The only thing that doesn't produce knowledge is thinking in and of itself, because it is data created in dislocation and isolation and without movement" (20). Simply put, learning takes place physically because it is challenged by the environment. Knowledge that is only theorized and never practiced is not grounded in anything, and so it stretches farther from the truth. This is not to say that Simpson does not believe in theory as an entity. She writes that theory "" is generated and regenerated continually through embodied practice and within each family, community, and generation of people. Theory isn't just an intellectual pursuit. It is woven within kinetics, spiritual presence, and emotion. It is contextual and relational. It is intimate and personal with individuals themselves holding the responsibilities for finding and generating meaning within their own lives" (151). In a way, theory becomes a personal expression of individuality within a framework of shared

knowledge, and works as a way to give meaning to ones' own life. Theory lives outside of the rigid template taught in the scientific method.

While radical, these methods are not completely incompatible with the systems of traditional, Western knowledge production institutions. We do not have to tear down the bricks of the university building to walk through the land that surrounds it; nor do we have to banish every professor teaching an imperial subject in order to start learning about our ancestors by practicing how they lived. Simpson leaves us with a message of hope in the mission to radically decolonise our modes of living, writing that

> "being engaged— -deeply and consensually— in the physical, real--world work of resurgence, movement building, and nation building is the only way to generate new knowledge on how to resurge from within Nishnaabeg intellectual systems. We cannot just think, write, or imagine our way to a decolonized future. Answers to how to rebuild and how to resurge are therefore derived from a web of consensual relationships that is infused with movement (kinetic) through lived experience and embodiment. Intellectual knowledge is not enough on its own. Neither is spiritual knowledge or emotional knowledge. All kinds of knowledge are important and necessary in a communal and emergent balance" (162).

GIVING THANKS IN BRAIDING SWEETGRASS

One scholar who brings this process-oriented approach to the world of academia is Indigenous scholar Robin Wall Kimmerer, who is a citizen of the Potawatomi Nation in upstate New York. Her book *Braiding Sweetgrass* is a self-proclaimed intersection of "Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge, and the teachings of plants." Kimmerer does not denounce the validity of Western knowledge production institutions. Rather, she shares with the reader methods of combining traditions from universities and Indigenous groups in order to approach knowledge production more holistically and sustainably—emphasising, like her contemporaries, that a split from the spiritual is not necessarily desirable in the process of knowledge-construction.

Kimmerer discusses several institutional practices of varying Indigenous nations—practices that imperial institutions could benefit from. She places a large focus on the Thanksgiving Address, a widely used practice where "greeting in turn each element of Creation, the declaration offers vision and support for returning the lake to health and with it a mutual healing of lake and people. It is an exemplar of a new holistic approach, called biocultural or reciprocal restoration" (338). More commonly known as "the words that come

before all else," the Thanksgiving Address is recited daily at most reservation schools in the United States and Canada, and offers a greeting to many facets of natural life. The Address is important across cultures, as "the core of Mohawk relationship to land" (259) and the mantra of the Onondaga lake peoples, where "this ancient order of protocol sets gratitude as the highest priority. The gratitude is directed straight to the ones who share their gifts with the world." (107). The Thanksgiving Address is a pledge that helps the speaker set their intentions for land-based practices:

> *Today we have gathered and when we look upon the faces around us we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. So now let us bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as People. Now our minds are one.*[*]

The declaration goes on to express gratitude to all the providers in nature, thanking the waters, the fish, the plants, and many others. This practice changes the relationship between human and nature. As Kimmerer writes, "What would it be like to be raised on gratitude, to speak to the natural world as a member of the democracy of species, to raise a pledge of interdependence? No declarations of political loyalty are required, just a response to a repeated question: 'Can we agree to be grateful for all that is given?' In the Thanksgiving Address, I hear respect toward all our nonhuman relatives, not one political entity, but to all of life. What happens to nationalism, to political boundaries, when allegiance lies with winds and waters that know no boundaries, that cannot be bought or sold?" (112). Here, we are offered an alternative to what we know. Rather than pledging allegiance to a nation or to a university, we can produce knowledge at a starting point that comes from and honours the land to which we are connected.

GROUNDING/RESTORATION/BRILLIANCE IN PRACTICE

We can remember the ideas of these scholars in moving forward with new practices of knowledge production. Being a group of interdisciplinary scholars with different backgrounds in life does pose a challenge to the question of unity of knowledge. However, some of these practices can easily be carried over into our personal studies and group project in order to strengthen our ties to the ecosystem within which we live and study.

[*] The actual wording of the Thanksgiving Address varies with the speaker. This text is the widely publicised version of John Stokes and Kanawahientun, 1993.

During our research project we can consider how Simpson describes Nishnaabeg brilliance while we build knowledge. If we shift the framework of knowledge production to something collaborative that must be shared from the ground up and through the community, then we can approach our project more holistically. Rather than competing with knowledge, we can share with one another what we know about our environment and walk the natural grounds together.

If we start the day by stating our intentions and reciting the Thanksgiving Address, we will know everything we have to be grateful for before we try to uncover it. We can try other practices explained by Robin Kimmerer in *Braiding Sweetgrass*, like naming plants actively, referring to their purpose rather than their Latin taxonomy. She writes that "once some folks attach a scientific label to a being, they stop exploring who it is. But with newly created names I keep looking even closer, to see if I've gotten it right. And so today it is not *Picea sitchensis* but *strong arms covered in moss. Branch like a wing* instead of *Thuja plicata*" (208).

If we can step away from the scientific for a moment and completely ground our knowledge in the space around us that provides for our wellbeing, we may be able to form a new relationship to sustainability, and begin conceptualising institutions that are not only decolonial, but are also radically regenerative and brilliant—so long as we remain curious.

> *We have now arrived at the place where we end our words. Of all the things we have named, it was not our intention to leave anything out. If something was forgotten, we leave it to each individual to send such greetings and thanks in their own way. Now our minds are one.*

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A Garden to Tend, A Humanity to Mend: A Literature Review Concerning the Importance of Children's Literature with regards to *The Secret Garden*

By Lauren van der Spuy

The human-nature divide/split is a paradoxical relationship. The reason why it is paradoxical is based on how humans feel they are both a part of nature and separate from it. As a human-being we are aware that we are animals and therefore, we are part of the natural world. We have created our own kind of friendships or familiar bonds with certain animals and at times feel like we are one with nature and not at all separate from it. However, on the flip side of this relationship is the belief that human-beings are somehow superior to the surrounding nature and therefore, we allow ourselves to exploit the natural environment, as we feel that the destruction of the natural world is justified when it is used for our own technological advancements. By reviewing academic works such as articles written by Joanne Vining and Booyeun Lim, as well as drawing upon chapters from academic books written by Alun Morgan. This Literature Review will seek to uncover the beginning of this paradoxical relationship as well as discovering whether or not children's literature, such as *The Secret Garden*, plays a role in the way children view the natural world around them. In addition to the exploration of the human-nature divide/split and the role of children's literature, this paper will look at aesthetic/holistic education, such as the *Steiner Philosophy* and the impact that this education has on the minds of children and whether or not this style of education could be the cure for the human-nature divide. This Literature Review's research question is thus as follows: In what ways can children's literature be used in accordance with the human-nature divide and how can aesthetic/holistic education be used to heal this rift for future generations?

The first piece of literature to be reviewed is a chapter titled, "The Human-Nature Split" in the article, "The Connection to Other Animals and Caring for Nature" written by Joanne Vining in 2003. Vining takes the time to explain to the reader what the Human-Nature Split is and how it came to be as well as the impact it has had on human history. She begins her article by explaining the paradoxical relationship that human-beings experience with their natural surroundings that ultimately lead to the creation of, "moral distinctions between the animals that are permissible to eat or kill and those whom we bring into our lives on a more intimate and social basis" (Vining pp. 88). The reference she makes to the modern day 'pet' (the animals which we consider more intimate and social) is one of the topics that Vining explores within her article. She continues on to explain how some authors have claimed that animals, kept as

pets, were the reason for the survival of the primitive/early human-being, as these pets were able to protect their human counterparts from predators. However, modern day humans no longer need protection from harmful animals, thus causing the reader to wonder why humans still keep certain animals as pets. Vining, answers this question by expanding on the theory of 'separateness'. She presents the reader with a possible explanation by drawing upon the views of Phillip Erikson who says that, "pet-keeping itself may be an effort to resolve guilt about hunting and consuming wild animals" (pp. 89), and therefor by keeping certain animals as pets, humans feel that they are not awful creatures. Vining explores the history of the human-nature split and discovers that it became most prominent around the time of Plato and Aristotle who used, "human rationality and intellect as a basis to provide a privileged and separate status for humans" (pp. 89). Aristotle proposed the 'Scale of Nature', this hierarchical scale depicted how humans were superior and therefore, occupied the top rung of the scale whereas plants and animals were considered inferior and therefore settled below on the lower rungs of the scale. This hierarchy was further increased with the rise of the Early Christian faith which turned the natural world into a place of repent for the creators of Original Sin (Adam and Eve) and therefore, focused the limelight on the heavens to provide humanity with the perfect environment, one devoid of evil. Hence, Earth became a representation of a battleground that depicted a war between the forces of good and evil, thus making it an inhospitable place, inferior to the perfect conditions of heaven. This conditioning, combined with the understanding that humans were considered superior to other animals in the eyes of God contributed enormously to the human-nature split, so much so that according to empirical research taken out by, "Schultz, Zelezny, and Dalrynple … Christian fundamentalists possess less positive environmental attitudes than the general population" (pp. 89). In Medieval times the cruelty against animals increased, however, at the same time, humans and animals experienced the same kind of cruelty, as both humans and animals were brought under trial for their crimes. Vining states that according to many authors, it was in fact the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution that terminated any form of human-nature alliance. Vining refers to a theory proposed by Adrian Franklin who says that humans have become separated from nature due to three factors, "science, industrialization, and urbanization" (pp. 89). Due to industrialisation and urbanisation humans moved away from animals, causing both a mental and physical separation leading once again to the human-nature split. Vining concludes this chapter of her article by stating that humans resist their connection to the natural world and prefer to see and experience nature in environments that are separate from their urbanised life, such as at zoos or wildlife parks as they are easily controlled. Even though the human

population may be reluctant to expose themselves completely to the natural world, Vining says that these small moments with nature may be the beginning of a cure for the human-nature split.

Now that an explanation of the human-nature split has been explained by Joanne Vining, it is time to move onto the importance of children's literature. Hence, the second section of this Literature Review will focus on *The Secret Garden* (TSG) written by Frances Hodgson Burnett in 1911. The next piece of literature under review is a chapter titled, "Places of Transformation in *The Secret Garden*" which was written by Alun Morgan in 2011. Morgan begins his chapter by stating that Burnett's novel is a powerful literary text because of its, "self-conscious awareness of the 'outer-realm' of the biophysical environment, most notably the secret garden" (Morgan pp. 81). The main character, a ten-year-old girl named Mary Lennox, experiences the benefits of this natural environment when she becomes attached to the secret garden at Misselthwaite Manor. Due to her ever-growing devotion to the secret garden she is able to create a meaningful relationship with the natural world, as well as creating deeper relationships with the people around her, whom she once loathed. Morgan states that, "Burnett thus provides in story form a description of, and a plea for, the importance of contact with nature and interpersonal interaction with natural setting for healthy human functioning or 'flourishing'" (pp. 81-82). Morgan adds onto this quote by mentioning how TSG emphasises how crucial the middle childhood is in a human's life i.e. the age of all the children in Burnett's novel. This will be discussed later when reviewing theories by John Dewey, Rudolf Steiner and Lev Vygotsky. Morgan continues on and mentions what Gill Valentine calls the "retreat from the street" (pp. 82) i.e. the separation of children from natural environments due to contemporary ways of raising children (screen entertainment, the increase in family cars and public play spaces), all leading to a generation that has been robbed from healthy and meaningful relationships with nature and therefore, the new generation remains ignorant about concerns regarding the environment. Due to this ignorance, children grow-up to become unaware adults and perpetuate the cycle of the human-nature divide therefore, creating "generational amnesia" (pp. 82). This is what Burnett feared during her time in the late Victorian and the Edwardian Eras (the time when she wrote TSG). What emerged during this time was the "child saving movement". The movement focused on encouraging children's development in natural settings compared to the harsh conditions that children faced in the urban areas during the same era. Morgan mentions how TSG has autobiographical elements, as similarly to Mary Lennox who moves from the urban areas of India to rural England, Burnett herself, moved from the industrial metropolis of Manchester to east Tennessee in the United

States. Here she discovered her love for gardening. Burnett's adoration for nature influenced her charity and philanthropic work and vice versa. Morgan states that TSG, "might serve as a blueprint for such a contemporary movement, demonstrating as it does how children change and grow through their contact with the natural world" (pp. 84). Thus showcasing the importance of children's literature in the modern/contemporary world. Morgan wishes his essay to showcase an ecocritical exploration of TSG, as he wants to highlight and explain to a contemporary audience the benefits of the natural environment. He wishes to do this by using Burnett's novel to explain "places of transformation" and its connection to other themes of the story. The "places of transformation" applies to how natural environments have a positive impact on children, as well as children having a positive impact on natural environments, which can be seen in how Mary Lennox benefits from spending time in the garden whilst at the same time, the once forgotten garden, enjoys the benefits of love and attention from Mary Lennox. Morgan refers to research conducted by Edith Cobb who believes that, "middle childhood is so developmentally significant. She identifies this period as *the* particular life phase during which imagination and creativity are best developed, and suggests that this interaction with nature is crucial to such development" (pp. 87). This imagination and creativity can be seen in the character of Mary Lennox whose mind is constantly stimulated through her activities in the secret garden, as can be seen in the quote, "She kept lifting her face and looking up into it, trying to imagine what it would be like to lie down on one of the snow white clouds and float about" (pp. 87). Mary's imagination as well as the act of her naming the garden, "The Secret Garden" causes her to take ownership of her surrounding environment, this can only be present when the adult world is not controlling the situation. It is easier for children who are Mary's age to navigate a natural environment as social interactions are more complicated and thus, will need to be developed later during the adolescent years of a child's growth. Mary can therefore, be viewed as an embodiment of this stage of childhood development. This is the stage that seeks out a connection to the outside, natural world as well as a connection to other children, for instance in the novel, Mary befriend two boys, Dickon and Colin, who are roughly the same age as her. In the secret garden they are able to create meaningful relationships outside of their ego-self. Morgan continues on to expand on his theory surrounding the importance of nature and the impact it has on the years of middle-childhood development. He close reads Burnett's novel and analyses more of the characters such as Mrs. Medlock and Martha who are both influenced by their surrounding natural environments i.e. the environments upon which the novel is set: the moors and the secret garden. Morgan concludes his chapter by stating how TSG is an influential novel that should be considered an important literary work for both

children and adults in contemporary society. He says that the novel's central theme surrounding the healing properties of the natural world are supported by researchers in the field of environmental psychology and therefore it should be carefully noted. Morgan promotes the idea of viewing Mary as a role model for children in the contemporary world as she showcases how frequent interactions with nature lead to a stronger sense of self, an appreciation for the natural world and overall human development. Therefore, reading children's literature could be the key to healing the human-nature split in the future.

The last article under review delves into the theory surrounding holistic/aesthetic education. The article is titled, "Aesthetic discourses in early childhood settings: Dewey, Steiner, and Vygotsky" and was written by Booyeun Lim in 2007. Lim begins by introducing the philosophy of "aesthetics" and the word's etymology that is derived from the Greek words meaning 'sensation' or 'perception'. Aesthetics analyse the nature of beauty (natural or artistic) as well as the nature of arts (beautiful or not). Lim mentions that even though there is a growing awareness and concern surrounding the introduction of art into the lives of children, there has not yet been an indication or solid foundation that supports aesthetic education. Lim wishes to draw upon the work and theories proposed by John Dewey, Rudolf Steiner and Lev Vygotsky who are celebrated for their influence in general education as well as their theories surrounding aesthetic/holistic education. Lim presents the reader with the background of each philosopher and explains how even though they were all born in different countries, they all experienced the same historical period of the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, the same time period in which Frances Hodgson Burnett wrote TSG. According to Lim, the time that these philosophers lived was a time of, "rapid, unanticipated changes in the turmoil of modern world, which was deeply bounded by the flame of mechanical interpretation of knowledge" (pp. 474). Lim states that this background allowed all three scholars to agree on the creation of a new necessary form of education based on arts and aesthetics. Lim then continues on to delve into an in-depth analysis of each individual scholar. Dewey believes that each individual child has a mind that is grounded in the foundation of aesthetics. Dewey states that children are active beings who, in order to learn, need to take action before they can absorb knowledge. He says that this action takes the form of, "four basic impulses residing in children's minds; 'communicative, 'constructive', 'expressive', and 'inquiry' impulses" (pp. 476). According to Dewey these four impulses, when combined into a single term, create the 'world of art' which shows, "children's capacity of doing and enjoying art in natural ways" (pp. 476). Dewey did not mean that children should enjoy 'fine art' in the literal sense, instead he meant that art and aesthetics in multiple forms, should be a constant theme in every child's life on a daily basis.

Because of this theory, Dewey created a curriculum that he believed would allow children to express their impulsive nature completely. He proposed that education would achieve this through the practices of, "free moving, discussion, making, producing, constructing through huge block play, crafts making, printing, cooking, wood working, knitting" (pp. 477). These several practices combined with art/aesthetics, according to Dewey, was the perfect combination for a well-balanced mind of a child.

Continuing on to the work of Rudolf Steiner who believed that the goal of aesthetic education should be primarily based on constructing a positive connection between the aesthetic capacity of human beings and the aesthetic beauty of the world as a whole. For this reason Steiner believed that, "aesthetic education relates humans' rich bodily senses to the beauty and order of nature, the world and cosmos that were originally harmonious, rhythmic and dynamic" (pp. 478). Because of this theory Steiner created a curriculum founded upon the idea that children would learn about this artistic/aesthetic world through the teachings of classical legends and folklore whilst simultaneously integrating creative and dramatic arts into all forms of education. Steiner did not want aesthetic education to be a separate form of instruction. Instead he proposed that children would benefit the most if both academic and aesthetic learning was combined, in other words, art should be incorporated into science, mathematics, history etc. and should not be kept as a separate subject, as he believed that beauty and vibrant colours were not confined to the walls of an art classroom but instead make-up a large amount of one's childhood as well as one's adult life. Steiner believed that this was the best way to create a holistic education best suited to children's nature.

Finally, the work of Lev Vygotsky is considered a little different to the works of Dewey and Steiner as Vygotsky believed more in the powerful aesthetic qualities of language instead of art. He believed that even though, "children's aesthetic potential is inherent and very natural, it must be cultivated through adequate social and verbal interactions" (pp. 480). For this specific reason Vygotsky saw a child's aesthetic development as a social/cultural process compared to Dewey and Steiner who viewed aesthetic development as a natural inner-growth. Lim argues that the Vygotskian perspective on language, presents itself as a powerful tool to help, "recover the holistic function of language, which is very aesthetic itself, and to emphasize the role of language as a tool for facilitating the human intellectual mode including the aesthetic mode of thinking" (pp. 482). Therefore, Vygotsky proposes that the verbal cues that are given to children should be incorporated with artistic/aesthetic influence as this will allow them the chance to use their imagination, thus connecting both language and aesthetics which is best suited for a child's consciousness. Lim throughout her article expands on the three scholar's

theories and considers how one would apply them to contemporary education. Lim concludes her paper by stating that all three scholars provide information and curriculums that are beneficial to a children's learning and their overall psyche. John Dewey, Rudolf Steiner and Lev Vygotsky believed that through this new form of aesthetic education, they would be able to create a new humanity, one that was more beneficial to the mind and soul of society. Similarly to how the secret garden stimulates Mary Lennox's active imagination and contributes to her aesthetic learning, which in the end results in her discovering her identity as well as creating healthy relationships with herself, nature and those around her, the three scholars advocate that their forms of aesthetic education provide the same kind of aesthetic experiences. Lim concludes by arguing that in today's technological environment, aesthetic education could be the key to creating a new world by, "replacing the calculative, exploitative and mechanically disembodied work of technology with the aesthetic, poetic, somatic, spirit of humanity" (pp. 485). Thus the human-nature split may possibly be healed.

The human-nature paradoxical relationship/split seems to be a constant throughout human history, but became more prominent when influenced by the theories of Aristotle and Plato. The split become even larger during Medieval times, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution. However, in her article, Vining ends on a positive note when she states that any form of human-nature interaction, whether it be controlled or not, is one step closer to healing the rift between humans and nature. This human-nature split can also be remedied through spending time in the natural world as can be seen in the chapter written by Alun Morgan about the character of Mary Lennox in Frances Hodgson Burnett's novel *The Secret Garden*, who grows emotionally attached to her garden, which results in both the garden and Mary Lennox benefiting from the love and attention. These restorative characteristics can also be seen in the other characters in the novel. In order for humans and nature to have the chance to cure their division, an emphasis on aesthetic/holistic education needs to be introduced into the lives of children in contemporary society. As Booyeun Lim notes in her article, the three scholars: John Dewey, Rudolf Steiner and Lev Vygotsky believed that aesthetic/holistic education was the only way to create a new and improved humanity. Therefore, children's literature is a helpful tool to portray what the human-nature split means in contemporary society. Children's literature such as *The Secret Garden* may create a blueprint/foundation for further research on childhood development and learning, as well as stimulating new research based on environmental psychology and the therapeutic benefits that nature has on people and vice versa. Children's literature combined with aesthetic/holistic education could be the cure

for the human-nature split that has existed for centuries and therefore should be made a priority for both the present and future generations of the world.

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The Relationship between Ecocide and Genocide in the Current Russia-Ukraine War

By Allegra Salvadori

I.

It was only a few months ago, precisely in June 2021, that a global legal definition of ecocide was drawn.[1] According to an international team of lawyers, co-chaired by University College London Professor of Law Philippe Sands QC and jurist and legal scholar Dior Fall Sow, ecocide refers to "unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts".[2] The objective of drafting an international legal definition for large-scale environmental destructions was to achieve the vision of Scottish barrister and environmentalist activist Polly Higgins, by which ecocide had to be recognised by the International Criminal Court (ICC)[3] as a crime against humanity.[4] Higgins dedicated her life to make ecocide seen as a genocide, therefore adding the offences against the environment to the list of other major crimes recognised by the ICC, alongside war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and the crime of aggression.[5]

It is important to observe that, unlike other crimes investigated by the Hague judiciary institution, the legal definition of ecocide introduces a new non-anthropocentric approach, where the environment is at the heart of international law. Such a new approach, however, represents a challenge for the definition to be effective at a legal level. The dichotomy between making ecocide an eco-centric or an anthropocentric crime, establishes different consequences for the perpetrators: an eco-centric approach would punish harm to the environment per se, while with an anthropocentric approach, human harm would have to be proven in court.[6]

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[1] Lauren J. Eichler, "Ecocide Is Genocide: Decolonizing the Definition of Genocide," *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal:* Vol. 14: Iss. 2 (2020): 104-121.

[2] Haroon Siddique, "Legal experts worldwide draw up 'historic' definition of ecocide", The Guardian, June, 22, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jun/22/legal-experts-worldwide-draw-up-historic-definition-of-ecocide

[3] Governed by an international treaty called the Rome Statute, the ICC is the world's first permanent international criminal court, William Schabas, *An Introduction to the International Criminal Court* (version Sixth edition.) Sixth ed. (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2020), https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108616157

[4] Eichler, "Ecocide Is Genocide: Decolonizing the Definition of Genocide," 107.

[5] Eichler, "Ecocide Is Genocide: Decolonizing the Definition of Genocide," 107.

[6] Jamie Dunkerley, Drafting Ecocide key considerations, Human Right Pulse, accessed April 30th, 2022, https://www.humanrightspulse.com/mastercontentblog/drafting-ecocide-key-considerations

Moreover, in addition to the legal aspect of responsibility, there is also that of the victim: the consequences of ecocides are not only limited to the realm of the environment (thus eco-centric) but affect the future of all life on Earth in different manners (thus including anthropocentric elements). Veritably, direct consequences will impact our means of sustenance, threatened by extractive activities like fracking, mining and deforestation or by actions such as land grabbing, recently defined as a new form of colonialism.[7] Such actions, in turn, will also have social repercussions. As Polly Higgins explained "ecocide leads to resource depletion, and where there is escalation of resource depletion, war comes chasing close behind".[8] And too often in the past war meant crimes against humanity, such as genocide.[9]

In countries under conflict, ecocides may be caused by different factors such as large-scale vehicles destroying fertile land, or by nuclear power plants causing environmental degradation and possibly, a genocide. In short, when the environment is damaged, humans are affected too. Such correlation is known as the genocide-ecocide nexus.[10]

This essay attempts to trace the relation between ecocides and genocides and showcase that the genocide-ecocide nexus is indeed an existing and urgent issue that needs to be solved. The paper argues that environmental crime is a catalyst for collective violence, increasing the likelihood of genocide. To achieve that, I will start by unfolding the concept of ecocide. Furthermore, I will explore the theories of slow violence and structural violence. I will then briefly turn the focus to genocide as a form of slow and structural violence and will connect it to ecocides. To sketch the relationship between these two concepts, I will analyse a case of ecocide that could lead to a genocide. Such case, being contemporary to my writings, cannot yet be considered as a case study, but contains all the elements to carry out a theory of ecocide in Ukraine, leading to a genocide. Therefore, in support of my theory, I have made use of various sources, including the Chernobyl disaster accounts analysed by Distinguished Professor in History of Science, Technology and Society at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Kate Brown, and recent newspaper articles that treat the subject of war

[7] Matthew Himley, Elizabeth Havice, and Gabriela Valdivia, *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Resource Geography*, (Routledge International Handbooks, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge), 79.
[8] Polly Higgins, *Eradicating Ecocide: Laws and Governance to Prevent the Destruction of Our Planet* (London: Shepheard Walwyn LTD, 2010), 68-70.
[9] Donald Bloxham, and A. Dirk Moses, *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2010), 55.
[10] Damien Short, *Redefining Genocide: Settler Colonialism, Social Death and Ecocide* (London, UK: Zed Books, Limited, 2016), 40 and 9.

waste and its connection to ecocides extensively.[11] Lastly, in my conclusions, I will argue that Ukraine is experiencing an ecocide by the hand of the Russians. Moreover, I contend that such environmental destruction will lead to a genocide by intentionally exposing Ukrainians to contaminating and life-threatening war waste.

II.

The word ecocide is composed of the prefix "eco", the Greek *oikos*, which means home and family, and the suffix "cidio", which is instead taken from the Latin *cidium*, deriving from the verb *occidere*, to kill. Literally the meaning of ecocide is "tearing apart the house", where by house we mean Earth.[12]

The term ecocide was most probably coined in 1970 by plant biologist and chair of the Department of Botany at Yale University, Arthur Galston during the Conference "War Crimes and the American Conscience" in Washington, D.C.. Galston denounced particular American actions in Vietnam as specific crimes of war, namely the use of chemical weapons like Agent Orange in the herbicidal warfare program Operation Ranch Hand.[13] With ecocide, Galston referred to the intentional destruction of a specific natural environment. He wrote: "[..] it seems to me that wilful and permanent destruction of environment in which a people can live in a manner of their own choosing, ought similarly to be considered a crime against humanity, to be designated by the term ecocide."[14] Similarly, in 1973 Professor Richard Falk proposed an international convention on the crime of ecocide. Like Galston, Falk's initiative was in response to the use of Agent Orange and environmental destruction during the Vietnam war.[15] Drawing inspiration from the genocide convention, Professor Falk's proposed definition consisted of a number of enumerated acts, which included "the use of weapons of mass destruction and the forcible displacement of people and animals in pursuit of military or

[11] Brown, Kate. 2019. Manual for Survival : A Chernobyl Guide to the Future. London, UK: Allen Lane, an imprint of Penguin Books.

[12] Marie Toussaint, "Ecocide: Towards International Recognition", in *Green European Journal*, December 21, 2020, https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/ecocide-towards-international-recognition/

[13] David Zierler, *The Invention of Ecocide: Agent Orange, Vietnam, and the Scientists Who Changed the Way We Think About the Environment* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 15.

[14] Damien Short, *Redefining Genocide: Settler Colonialism, Social Death and Ecocide* (London, UK: Zed Books, Limited, 2016), 40.

[15] Kate Mackintosh, "Stop Ecocide" Official side event of the 19th Session of the Assembly of States Parties (ASP) to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), December 2020 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VT50At89zT8&ab_channel=StopEcocideInternational

industrial objectives committed in time of war or peace, with intent to disrupt or destroy, in whole or in part a human ecosystem."[16]

Activist and professor Barry Weisberg also examined the neologism coined by Galston and Professor Falk, in his book *Ecocide in Indochina*, again with reference to the destruction of the Vietnamese environment caused by the American intervention from 1964 to 1975.[17] The context in which the term was initially used by Galston, Falk and Weisberg, was a military one. However, other scholars used it also in the context of mass destruction of the environment and excessive exploitation of ecosystems. It is the case of Scottish barrister and environmental activist Polly Higgings, who, in 2010, defined ecocide as "the extensive damage, destruction to or loss of ecosystems of a given territory, whether by human agency or by other causes, to such an extent that peaceful enjoyment by the inhabitants of that territory has been severely diminished".[18] Higgings has campaigned for ecocide to be the fifth International Crime offence against Peace, alongside war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and the crime of aggression.[19] The environmental imperative to recognise ecocide as a crime has been debated at the United Nations various times between 1973 and 2010, however each effort failed.[20]

Up until today, only ten countries have approved the bill that makes ecocide a crime.[21] However, in June 2021, an international legal definition has finally been drawn, with the objective that ecocide will be recognised by the International Criminal Court as a crime against humanity.[22]

But why did Higgins and legal experts from across the globe work towards ecocide to be recognised as a crime by the ICC?

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[16] Richard A. Falk, *Environmental Warfare and Ecocide—Facts, Appraisal and Proposals*, 9(1) Revue Belge de Droit International [RBDI/Belg. Rev. Int'l L.] 1 annex at 21–24 (1973) (Belg.) (A Proposed International Convention on the Crime of Ecocide)

[17] Barry Weisberg, *Ecocide in Indochina the ecology of war* (San Francisco: Canfield Press,1970).

[18] Polly Higgins*, Eradicating Ecocide: Laws and Governance to Prevent the Destruction of Our Planet* (London: Shepheard Walwyn LTD, 2010), 63.

[19] Lauren J. Eichler, "Ecocide Is Genocide: Decolonizing the Definition of Genocide," *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal:* Vol. 14: Iss. 2 (2020): 104-121.

[20] Lauren J. Eichler, "Ecocide Is Genocide: Decolonizing the Definition of Genocide," *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal:* Vol. 14: Iss. 2 (2020): 104-121.

[21] These include the Republic of Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, Ukraine, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

[22] Haroon Siddique, "Legal experts worldwide draw up 'historic' definition of ecocide", The Guardian, June, 22, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jun/22/legal-experts-worldwide-draw-up-historic-definition-of-ecocide

Criminalising ecocide would protect the environment against harm caused by human activity. In addition, it would have a ripple effect on all direct and indirect consequences brought by ecocide, thus environmental but also social ones: unsatisfied need for resources correspond in systemic injustice, global inequalities, violence, conflicts, war.[23] Excessive exploitation of ecosystems puts access to health, housing, water, food at risk and it is precisely from these circumstances that violence may emerge.[24] Yet, while damage to the environment is an eco-centric subject, the ICC and international criminal law regards humankind as the most significant entity.[25] The legal challenge, therefore, is to have an eco-centric issue treated by an anthropocentric institution.

Another complex aspect to consider when it comes to criminalizing ecocide through an anthropocentric approach, and therefore to consider the hand of man guilty, is that human harm takes time to manifest from environmental destruction. Inaugural Executive Director of the Promise Institute for Human Rights at UCLA School of Law and Member of the ecocide drafting panel Kate Mackintosh points to the "slow yet accelerating impact of climate change."[26] Violence occurs "out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all."[27] Environmentalist and literary scholar Rob Nixon of Princeton University, named this phenomenon "slow violence." Similarly to Norwegian peace researcher Johan Galtung, Nixon described this type of violence as structural, referring to social circumstances, frequently aspects of social structures or institutions that "keep individuals from meeting basic needs from a healthy existence."[28] According to Galtung, structural violence is indirect, distinct from "personal or direct" violence, "at the hands of an actor who intends this to be the consequence."[29] However, to Galtung's concept Nixon added a temporal dimension: slow

[23] Jürgen Zimmerer, "Climate Change, Environmental Violence and Genocide", in *The International Journal of Human Rights* 18 (3) (2014): 265–80.
[24] Jürgen Zimmerer, "Climate Change, Environmental Violence and Genocide", in *The International Journal of Human Rights* 18 (3) (2014): 265–80.
[25] Bruce Zagaris, "International Environmental Crimes" in *International White Collar Crime* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 262.

[26]

[27] Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011).

[28] Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011).
[29] Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research", in *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969):167–91, http://www.jstor.org/stable/422690

violence is inflicted throughout the years, often decades. Such an innovative concept of "slow violence" is in contrast with the sensational, more immediate, or fast violence.

III.

Genocide too can feature an extended time dimension, with the slow death of a people and their culture over time.[30] The term "genocide" was coined by Raphael Lemkin in 1944.[31] Lemkin referred to genocide as to "a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves".[32] Shortly afterwards the term was coined, the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted a modified version of Lemkin's definition.[33] Ecocide and genocide share a common denominator: mass destruction. However, their interconnectedness lays in another aspect: wherever there is an environmental damage that alter the life of non-human beings, human beings will be affected too and will respond to such unbalance with violence. Land grabbing by colonisers introduced new patterns of land exploitation, causing a competition for space between indigenous populations and new settlers, resulting in expelling, and destroying entire populations.[34]

In an article published in The International Journal of Human Rights on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Oxaca, Mexico, Researcher Alexander Dunlap argues that wind energy development in the Istmo is continuing a slow industrial genocide: indigenous people called for action against the ecocide caused by wind turbines destroying the land and therefore the entire population.[35] Dunlap argues that it is important to recognize the "relationship and inseparability of Indigenous people and their land".[36]

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[30] Sheri Rosenberg, "Genocide is a process, not an event", in *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 7(1) (2012): 18-19.

[31] Donald Bloxham, and A. Dirk Moses, *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2010), 55.

[32] Donald Bloxham, and A. Dirk Moses, *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2010), 56.

[33] Donald Bloxham, and A. Dirk Moses, *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2010), 58.

[34] Jürgen Zimmerer, "Climate Change, Environmental Violence and Genocide", in *The International Journal of Human Rights* 18 (3) (2014): 265–80.

[35] Alexander Dunlap, "The 'solution' is now the 'problem': Wind energy, colonisation and the 'genocide–ecocide nexus' in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Oaxaca", in *International Journal of Human Rights* 22(4) (2018): 550–573.

[36] Alexander Dunlap, "The 'solution' is now the 'problem': Wind energy, colonisation and the 'genocide–ecocide nexus' in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Oaxaca", in *International Journal of Human Rights* 22(4) (2018): 550–573.

IV.

During the Fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5), one hundred and eight NGOs expressed their concern over the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which started in February 2022. [37] In a joint statement, they denounced the release of nuclear and toxic waste into the environment, causing "severe environmental health risks" that affect "Ukraine's biodiversity, ecosystems and natural resources that they depend on."[38] Although so far I have analysed war, often genocide, as one of the possible consequences of an ecocide, the linearity of this process can also be reversed: it can also be said that war itself, and above all a genocide, can cause an ecocide through military actions and war waste. I argue that Ukraine is experiencing an ecocide by the hand of the Russians. Moreover, I contend that such environmental destruction will lead to a genocide by intentionally exposing Ukrainians to contaminating and life-threatening war waste.

Ukraine is one of the ten states that have criminalised ecocide. [39] Ecocide has been defined by the domestic law as "mass destruction of flora and fauna, poisoning of air or water resources, and also any other actions that may cause an environmental disaster."[40] The deliberate destruction of the environment by the hand of the Russians is a result of the military actions: sustaining a conflict requires energy and resources. At the same time, military vehicles produce CO2 emissions and destroy land, causing food shortage and creating disruption to animal habitats.[41] Explosive weapons destroy the human and non-human life and damages the environment, be it urban or natural. Moreover, weapons impacts health not only for their killing potential, but also for their lifecycle, contributing to war waste.[42] Bombs and aircraft noise is also considered pollution.[43] In times of conflicts, a loss of energy supplies may occur, causing consequences that could damage the environment, for instance preventing treatment plants or pumping systems from working.[44] Deliberate explosions that threaten food security, kill entire populations, or may lead to deforestation, thus impacting protected areas, flora, and fauna. Explosive remnants can pollute soils with its toxic materials, and so can many conventional

[37] Unea 5.2, https://eeb.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/JointStatementUkraineUNEA.pdf
[38] Unea 5.2, https://eeb.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/JointStatementUkraineUNEA.pdf
[39] Ecocide Laws, https://ecocidelaw.com/existing-ecocide-laws/
[40] Ecocide Laws, https://ecocidelaw.com/existing-ecocide-laws/
[41] Doug Weir, How does war damage the environment?in Conflicts and Environment Observatory, accessed on May 3rd, 2022, https://ceobs.org/how-does-war-damage-the-environment/
[42] Doug Weir, How does war damage the environment?in Conflicts and Environment Observatory, accessed on May 3rd, 2022, https://ceobs.org/how-does-war-damage-the-environment/
[43] Doug Weir, How does war damage the environment?in Conflicts and Environment Observatory, accessed on May 3rd, 2022, https://ceobs.org/how-does-war-damage-the-environment/
[44] Doug Weir, How does war damage the environment?in Conflicts and Environment Observatory, accessed on May 3rd, 2022, https://ceobs.org/how-does-war-damage-the-environment/

weapons, built with toxic elements that can be radioactive.[45] However, the most dangerous ecocide for the Ukraine environment would be Russia's attacks on its nuclear power plants. The consequences of such actions would lead to a genocide, causing an intentional destruction in whole or in part of "a national, ethnical, racial or religious group."[46] Distinguished Professor in History of Science, Technology and Society at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Kate Brown has extensively analysed the effects of 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power plant catastrophe, the largest civilian nuclear accident in history.[47] While the United Nation sources confirms that 33 to 54 people died and a few thousand will die in the future from Chernobyl radiation, Greenpeace projects that at least 90,000 fatalities will result.[48]Although an official study on the consequences of the nuclear explosion never occurred, using Chernobyl as a benchmark could avoid a second disaster. In February, few days after the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, Russian troops took over the power plant in Chernobyl "exclusion zone" in what seemed a will to control the nuclear reactor.[49] In a recent interview, Ukrainian presidential advisor Mykhailo Podolyak stated that "it is impossible to say the Chernobyl nuclear power plant is safe after a totally pointless attack by the Russians [...] This is one of the most serious threats in Europe today."[50] An article published on the Washington Post by Professor Brown a month after the war broke out called "One thing nuclear power plants weren't built to survive: War", reports how in wars a target is often the enemy's electrical grid, and that in Ukraine this represents a further problem for the nuclearized status of the country.[51] The problem with the Ukrainian nuclear plants is that they have never been tested against military attacks, such as bombings and similar offenses. Another danger mentioned by

[45] Manal Al-Traboulsi, and Mohamed A Alaib, "Phytotoxic Effects of Soil Contaminated with Explosive Residues of Landmines on Germination and Growth of Vicia Faba L", in *Geology, Ecology, and Landscapes* 1-11 (2021): 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1080/24749508.2021.1952765.
[46] Donald Bloxham, and A. Dirk Moses, *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2010), 56.
[47] Brown, Kate. 2019. Manual for Survival : A Chernobyl Guide to the Future. London, UK: Allen Lane, an imprint of Penguin Books.
[48] Kate Brown, "Blinkered Science: Why We Know so Little About Chernobyl's Health Effects", *Culture, Theory and Critique* 58 (4) (2017), 413–34.

[49] Maria Tsvetkova and Natalia Zinets, "Chernobyl power plant captured by Russian forces -Ukrainian official", accessed on May 1st, 2022, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/chernobyl-power-plant-captured-by-russian-forces-ukrainian-official-2022-02-24/
[50] Maria Tsvetkova and Natalia Zinets, "Chernobyl power plant captured by Russian forces -Ukrainian official", accessed on May 1st, 2022, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/chernobyl-power-plant-captured-by-russian-forces-ukrainian-official-2022-02-24/
[51] Kate Brown and Susan Solomon, One thing nuclear power plants weren't built to survive: War, Washington Post, accessed May 2nd, 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/03/18/chernobyl-zaporizhzhia-nuclear-plant-ukraine/

Professor Brown is Chernobyl's spent fuel, as it can ignite if it reaches high temperatures.[52] At present, there are fifteen active nuclear power reactors, all filled in with hot nuclear fuel.[53]

In her article she also describes how Ukrainian media confirmed the existence of land mines around the plant's perimeter by the hand of the Russian army.[54] According to a study, in 2018 landmines were responsible for the death of 3059 people. Another 3837 were injured. Of these figures, 71% of the harmed people were civilians. The study concludes that the countries where this occurred, were all undergoing armed conflicts.[55] Landmines contamination deeply affects mobility but is also a heavy contributor to long-lasting destructive effects on soil, therefore products from the land. Ukraine supply nearly a quarter of the world's wheat and with the heavy metal's toxicity, wheat production and commercialisation may be at risk.[56]

Article 35.3, Protocol 1 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions prohibits "to employ methods or means of warfare which are intended, or may be expected, to cause widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment".[57] Even if the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is resolved in the short-term, the consequences of the ecocide will have long-lasting and life-threatening implications for the lives of the non-human and human beings. It is imperative therefore that the International Criminal Court adopts ecocide as the fifth International Crime offence against Peace, alongside war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and the crime of aggression. This will help preventing damages to the environment in the first place. It will also avoid resources such as water and food being at risk, which can cause poverty, starvation, systemic injustice, and global inequalities, leading to violence and wars. Because human harm takes time to manifest from environmental destruction, we need to act now.

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[52] Kate Brown and Susan Solomon, One thing nuclear power plants weren't built to survive: War, Washington Post, accessed May 2nd, 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/03/18/chernobyl-zaporizhzhia-nuclear-plant-ukraine/

[53] Kate Brown and Susan Solomon, One thing nuclear power plants weren't built to survive: War, Washington Post, accessed May 2nd, 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/03/18/chernobyl-zaporizhzhia-nuclear-plant-ukraine/

[54] Kate Brown and Susan Solomon, One thing nuclear power plants weren't built to survive: War, Washington Post, accessed May 2nd, 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/03/18/chernobyl-zaporizhzhia-nuclear-plant-ukraine/

[55] Manal Al-Traboulsi, and Mohamed A Alaib, "Phytotoxic Effects of Soil Contaminated with Explosive Residues of Landmines on Germination and Growth of Vicia Faba L", in *Geology, Ecology, and Landscapes* 1-11 (2021): 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1080/24749508.2021.1952765.

[56] Manal Al-Traboulsi, and Mohamed A Alaib, "Phytotoxic Effects of Soil Contaminated with Explosive Residues of Landmines on Germination and Growth of Vicia Faba L", in *Geology, Ecology, and Landscapes* 1-11 (2021): 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1080/24749508.2021.1952765.

[57] Gregory Reichberg, and Henrik Syse, "Protecting the Natural Environment in Wartime: Ethical Considerations from the Just War Tradition." Journal of Peace Research 37 (4) (2000): 449–68. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343300037004003.

V.

In this paper, I have attempted to trace the relation between ecocides and genocides and showcase that the genocide-ecocide nexus is an existing and urgent issue that needs to be solved. I have argued that environmental crime is a catalyst for collective violence, increasing the likelihood of genocide. By looking into the concepts of ecocide and genocide, as forms of slow and structural violence, I have tried to connect environmental destruction to human-being annihilation. To support my theory, I have used the contemporary Russian-Ukrainian conflict, which might not yet be considered a case study, but contains all the elements to carry out a theory of ecocide in Ukraine. Thus, I have argued that Ukraine is experiencing an ecocide by the hand of the Russians and have contended that such environmental destruction will lead to a genocide by intentionally exposing Ukrainians to contaminating and life-threatening war waste. Various sources have proved to be useful to support my argument, including the Chernobyl disaster accounts analysed by Distinguished Professor in History of Science, Technology and Society at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Kate Brown and recent newspaper articles that treat the subject of war waste and its connection to ecocides, extensively. I have approached the double effect of ecocides from two different perspectives: an eco-centred one and an anthropocentric one. The first considers and focuses solely on the devastation of nature. The latter focuses on the consequences that such devastation bring to human-beings. When the damages to the environment cause an intentional destruction in whole or in part of "a national, ethnical, racial or religious group", there is a case for genocide.[58] The interconnectedness of these two concepts is what the literature has called the genocide-ecocide nexus.

[58] Donald Bloxham, and A. Dirk Moses, *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2010), 56.

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Budget Request

Extended

TRAVEL

Transport to and from the park will take place in two separate phases:

1. Allegra and Roberta will drive (ca. 2 hours) with a private car, to transport heavier supplies.
2. Flora, Daan, Ani, and Lauren will journey with public transport.
    a. Flora receives a 40% discount for train travel on the proposed dates.
    b. Daan receives a 100% discount for train travel on the proposed dates.
    c. Lauren and Ani do not receive any discount.

This plan is an alternative to the rental of a van for the entire group, which, for three days, averages between €700 and €900.

28/04/2022, 09:49 Travel planner | Plan your journey | NS

Utrecht Centraal to **De Hoge Veluwe, Bezoekerscentrum**
Departure May 20, 2022 around 9:45 AM

Selected travel advice
€ 17.22 — Single way, 2nd class, full fare, no subscription — 1:29 — 2× transfers

11:43	Utrecht Centraal	Track 19
	NS Intercity to Nijmegen	
12:15	Arnhem Centraal	Track 8
	Exit side left	
	Walk 5 minutes (300 meters)	
12:20 / 12:27	Bushalte Centraal Station (Sonsbeek), Arnhem	
	Keolis RRReis 105 to Barneveld via Otterlo	
12:54 / 12:58	Bushalte Rotonde, Otterlo — 4 minutes transfer time	
	Keolis RRReis 106 to Nat. Park. De Hoge Veluwe	
13:10 / 13:11	Bushalte Bezoekerscentrum, Otterlo	
	Walk 1 minute (60 meters)	
13:12	De Hoge Veluwe, Bezoekerscentrum	

Next travel advice
€ 17.22 — Single way, 2nd class, full fare, no subscription — 1:29 — 2× transfers

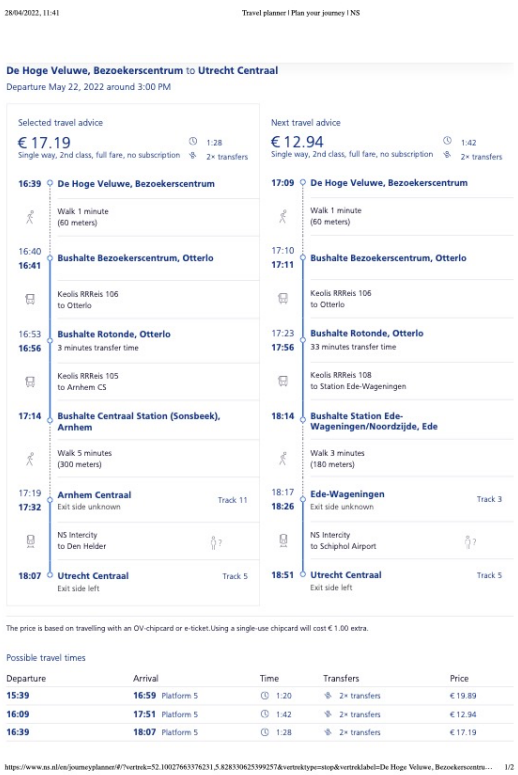
12:13	Utrecht Centraal	Track 19
	NS Intercity to Nijmegen	
12:45	Arnhem Centraal	Track 8
	Exit side left	
	Walk 5 minutes (300 meters)	
12:50 / 12:57	Bushalte Centraal Station (Sonsbeek), Arnhem	
	Keolis RRReis 105 to Barneveld via Otterlo	
13:24 / 13:28	Bushalte Rotonde, Otterlo — 4 minutes transfer time	
	Keolis RRReis 106 to Nat. Park. De Hoge Veluwe	
13:40 / 13:41	Bushalte Bezoekerscentrum, Otterlo	
	Walk 1 minute (60 meters)	
13:42	De Hoge Veluwe, Bezoekerscentrum	

The price is based on travelling with an OV-chipcard or e-ticket.Using a single-use chipcard will cost € 1.00 extra.

Possible travel times

Departure	Arrival	Time	Transfers	Price
10:43 Platform 19	12:12	1:29	2× transfers	€ 17.22
11:15 Platform 19	12:42	1:27	2× transfers	€ 17.22
11:43 Platform 19	13:12	1:29	2× transfers	€ 17.22
12:13 Platform 19	13:42	1:29	2× transfers	€ 17.22

https://www.ns.nl/en/journeyplanner/#/?vertrek=Utrecht Centraal&vertrektype=treinstation&aankomst=52.10027663376231,5.828330625399257&aankomsttyp… 1/2



28/04/2022, 11:41 Travel planner | Plan your journey | NS

De Hoge Veluwe, Bezoekerscentrum to **Utrecht Centraal**
Departure May 22, 2022 around 3:00 PM

Selected travel advice
€ 17.19 — Single way, 2nd class, full fare, no subscription — 1:28 — 2× transfers

16:39	De Hoge Veluwe, Bezoekerscentrum	
	Walk 1 minute (60 meters)	
16:40 / 16:41	Bushalte Bezoekerscentrum, Otterlo	
	Keolis RRReis 106 to Otterlo	
16:53 / 16:56	Bushalte Rotonde, Otterlo — 3 minutes transfer time	
	Keolis RRReis 105 to Arnhem CS	
17:14	Bushalte Centraal Station (Sonsbeek), Arnhem	
	Walk 5 minutes (300 meters)	
17:19 / 17:32	Arnhem Centraal — Exit side unknown	Track 11
	NS Intercity to Den Helder	
18:07	Utrecht Centraal — Exit side left	Track 5

Next travel advice
€ 12.94 — Single way, 2nd class, full fare, no subscription — 1:42 — 2× transfers

17:09	De Hoge Veluwe, Bezoekerscentrum	
	Walk 1 minute (60 meters)	
17:10 / 17:11	Bushalte Bezoekerscentrum, Otterlo	
	Keolis RRReis 106 to Otterlo	
17:23 / 17:56	Bushalte Rotonde, Otterlo — 33 minutes transfer time	
	Keolis RRReis 108 to Station Ede-Wageningen	
18:14	Bushalte Station Ede-Wageningen/Noordzijde, Ede	
	Walk 3 minutes (180 meters)	
18:17 / 18:26	Ede-Wageningen — Exit side unknown	Track 3
	NS Intercity to Schiphol Airport	
18:51	Utrecht Centraal — Exit side left	Track 5

The price is based on travelling with an OV-chipcard or e-ticket.Using a single-use chipcard will cost € 1.00 extra.

Possible travel times

Departure	Arrival	Time	Transfers	Price
15:39	16:59 Platform 5	1:20	2× transfers	€ 19.89
16:09	17:51 Platform 5	1:42	2× transfers	€ 12.94
16:39	18:07 Platform 5	1:28	2× transfers	€ 17.19

https://www.ns.nl/en/journeyplanner/#/?vertrek=52.10027663376231,5.828330625399257&vertrektype=stop&vertreklabel=De Hoge Veluwe, Bezoekerscentru… 1/2

The average (one-way) trip cost from Utrecht Central to the Hoge Veluwe visitors' centre is €17,22. The average price for the return journey is the same.

Gas expenses for the car will be provided privately.

2 participants x 2 trips public transport = 4 x €17,22 = €68,88.

1 participant with 40% discount x 2 trips public transport = 2 x €10,33 = €20,66.

1 participant travels for free.

The Hoge Veluwe car park is €4/day

3 days car park x €4 = €12.

Within the park, the group has to be able to transport several large supplies (ex. 12L water carriers) over a long distance. For this, we plan to reserve and ride cargo bikes, available at the entrance of the park.

The cargo bikes are available for €10 a day. We plan to use 3 upon our arrival, and 3 upon departure.

6 cargo bike rentals x €10 = €60.

Within the park, we need one map to highlight the walking and biking routes open to visitors.

1 map x €2,50 = €2,50.

ENTRY/STAY

Entry tickets have to be bought daily for each participant.

Adult tickets run at €11,30 per day and must be bought for 3 days for 6 adults each.

6 participants x 3 days x €11,30 day ticket = €203,40.

Nature camping at the Hoge Veluwe must be bought separately from the park entry ticket. Each stay (with tent) per adult is €8 per night. This includes a tourist tax of € 1.19 per person per night. The project covers the span of 3 days, 2 nights, meaning that we need access to the camping for two nights.

6 participants x 2 nights x €8 per night = €96.

ACTIVITIES

One of our planned activities is a tour of the Kröller-Müller museum centrally located within the Hoge Veluwe park. Two of our group members hold a ‘Museumkaart’ and will have free entry. The remaining 4 group members require entry, and will receive a University ID discount. The price for this entry is €6 per student.

4 museum tickets x €6 ticket (discounted student price) = €24

PictureThis application

To learn about the different plant life and collect visual content during our trip, we all need a subscription to the PictureThis mobile app. Because access to nature guides is limited, we have to organise a lot of our own foraging activities. Several of our walking excursions will be planned around use of this app, which can be used to identify plant species and provide us with information about its nutrients, origins, and uses. This app also allows us to save pictures and content of these plants, allowing us to make portfolios of visual content that use AI to group plant types together- giving us a more comprehensive body of information to use when organising the visual content for our final product, the website. The app is only available with an annual subscription of €29,99, which we need for each member.

1 member subscriptions for plant identifier x €29,99 = €29,99.

PRODUCT DESIGN

Our final product, to be presented at the symposium, will be an interactive website with many different forms of entries. This website will contain a lot of visual content as well as journal entries about our personal experiences and our academic research.

The provisional website has already been created so that we can develop it while we prepare for the camping trip and engage with social media. It is available to be previewed at ecohiveuu.com.

A subscription for **three months** for both the domain name and the website space, costs €30 per month to be paid in one amount (€90).

3 months website domain name and space x €30 per month = €90.

NECESSITIES

In case of emergency, we require an emergency medical kit.

1 emergency kit x €29,99 = €29,99.

Total budget = €637,42.

Condensed

TRAVEL

2 participants x 2 trips public transport = 4 x €17,22 = €68,88.

1 participant with 40% discount x 2 trips public transport = 2 x €10,33 = €20,66.

1 participant travels for free.

3 days car park x €4 = €12.

6 cargo bike rentals x €10 = €60.

1 map x €2,50 = €2,50.

ENTRY/STAY

6 participants x 3 days x €11,30 day ticket = €203,40.

6 participants x 2 nights x €8 per night = €96.

ACTIVITIES

4 museum tickets x €6 ticket (discounted student price) = €24

1 member subscription for plant identifier x €29,99 = €29,99.

PRODUCT DESIGN

3 months website domain name and space x €30 per month = €90.

NECESSITIES

1 emergency kit x €29,99 = €29,99.

Total budget = €637,42.

Camping Description

Itinerary

Saturday 21 May

Time	Activity	Notes
7:37	Train from Utrecht Centraal to Ingang Hoenderloo	
8:48	Arrive at park, unload into Allegra's car	
9:15	Thanksgiving address acitivity	Flora
10:00	Walking (map guide) and lunch	
14:00	Checkin in campsite, set up tents etc	
11:00	Bike ride	
15:30	Kröller-Müller museum entry	
18:00	Dinner prep+ eating	
20:00	Writing prompt activity	Daan
21:00	Norse mythology activity	Lauren
23:00	Sleep	

Sunday 22 May

Time	Activity	Notes
7:00	Wakeup, shower	
7:30	Breakfast	
8:00	Guided Meditation activity	Allegra
11:00	Checkout	
	Reflection	
	Walking	
	Ani's Interview Questions	

Activities

Thanksgiving Address

Led by Flora

- This activity is a reading of the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address to be performed in the mornings—it acts as a marker for our daily intentions and a grounding to nature.
- What:
    - "Here the school week begins and ends not with the Pledge of Allegiance, but with the Thanksgiving Address, a river of words as old as the people themselves, known more accurately in the Onondaga language as the Words That Come Before All Else. This ancient order of protocol sets gratitude as the highest priority. The gratitude is directed straight to the ones who share their gifts with the world" (Kimmerer, 107).
- Why:

- “What would it be like to be raised on gratitude, to speak to the natural world as a member of the democracy of species, to raise a pledge of inter dependence? No declarations of political loyalty are required, just a response to a repeated question: “Can we agree to be grateful for all that is given?” In the Thanksgiving Address, I hear respect toward all our nonhuman relatives, not one political entity, but to all of life. What happens to nationalism, to political boundaries, when allegiance lies with winds and waters that know no boundaries, that cannot be bought or sold?” (113).

Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address/Greetings to the Natural World

The People

Today we have gathered and we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as people. Now our minds are one.

The Earth Mother

We are all thankful to our Mother, the Earth, for she gives us all that we need for life. She supports our feet as we walk about upon her. It gives us joy that she continues to care for us as she has from the beginning of time. To our mother, we send greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.

The Waters

We give thanks to all the waters of the world for quenching our thirst and providing us with strength. Water is life. We know its power in many forms- waterfalls and rain, mists and streams, rivers and oceans. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to the spirit of Water. Now our minds are one.

The Fish

We turn our minds to the all the Fish life in the water. They were instructed to cleanse and purify the water. They also give themselves to us as food. We are grateful that we can still find pure water. So, we turn now to the Fish and send our greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.

The Plants

Now we turn toward the vast fields of Plant life. As far as the eye can see, the Plants grow, working many wonders. They sustain many life forms. With our minds gathered together, we give thanks and look forward to seeing Plant life for many generations to come. Now our minds are one.

The Food Plants

With one mind, we turn to honor and thank all the Food Plants we harvest from the garden. Since the beginning of time, the grains, vegetables, beans and berries have helped the people survive. Many other living things draw strength from them too. We gather all the Plant Foods together as one and send them a greeting of thanks. Now our minds are one.

The Medicine Herbs

Now we turn to all the Medicine herbs of the world. From the beginning they were instructed to take away sickness. They are always waiting and ready to heal us. We are happy there are still among us those special few who remember how to use these plants for healing. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to the Medicines and to the keepers of the Medicines. Now our minds are one.

The Animals

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to all the Animal life in the world. They have many things to teach us as people. We are honored by them when they give up their lives so we may use their bodies as food for our people. We see them near our homes and in

the deep forests. We are glad they are still here and we hope that it will always be so. Now our minds are one

The Trees

We now turn our thoughts to the Trees. The Earth has many families of Trees who have their own instructions and uses. Some provide us with shelter and shade, others with fruit, beauty and other useful things. Many people of the world use a Tree as a symbol of peace and strength. With one mind, we greet and thank the Tree life. Now our minds are one.

The Birds

We put our minds together as one and thank all the Birds who move and fly about over our heads. The Creator gave them beautiful songs. Each day they remind us to enjoy and appreciate life. The Eagle was chosen to be their leader. To all the Birds-from the smallest to the largest-we send our joyful greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.

The Four Winds

We are all thankful to the powers we know as the Four Winds. We hear their voices in the moving air as they refresh us and purify the air we breathe. They help us to bring the change of seasons. From the four directions they come, bringing us messages and giving us strength. With one mind, we send our greetings and thanks to the Four Winds. Now our minds are one.

The Thunderers

Now we turn to the west where our grandfathers, the Thunder Beings, live. With lightning and thundering voices, they bring with them the water that renews life. We are thankful that they keep those evil things made by Okwiseres underground. We bring our minds together as one to send greetings and thanks to our Grandfathers, the Thunderers. Now our minds are one.

The Sun

We now send greetings and thanks to our eldest Brother, the Sun. Each day without fail he travels the sky from east to west, bringing the light of a new day. He is the source of all the fires of life. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to our Brother, the Sun. Now our minds are one.

Grandmother Moon

We put our minds together to give thanks to our oldest Grandmother, the Moon, who lights the night-time sky. She is the leader of woman all over the world, and she governs the movement of the ocean tides. By her changing face we measure time, and it is the Moon who watches over the arrival of children here on Earth. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to our Grandmother, the Moon. Now our minds are one.

The Stars

We give thanks to the Stars who are spread across the sky like jewelry. We see them in the night, helping the Moon to light the darkness and bringing dew to the gardens and growing things. When we travel at night, they guide us home. With our minds gathered together as one, we send greetings and thanks to the Stars. Now our minds are one.

The Enlightened Teachers

We gather our minds to greet and thank the enlightened Teachers who have come to help throughout the ages. When we forget how to live in harmony, they remind us of the way we were instructed to live as people. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to these caring teachers. Now our minds are one.

The Creator

Now we turn our thoughts to the Creator, or Great Spirit, and send greetings and thanks for all the gifts of Creation. Everything we need to live a good life is here on this Mother Earth. For all the love that is still around us, we gather our minds together as one and send our choicest words of greetings and thanks to the Creator. Now our minds are one.

Closing Words

We have now arrived at the place where we end our words. Of all the things we have named, it was not our intention to leave anything out. If something was forgotten, we leave it to each individual to send such greetings and thanks in their own way. Now our minds are one.

This translation of the Mohawk version of the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address was developed, published in 1993, and provided, courtesy of: Six Nations Indian Museum and the Tracking Project All rights reserved.
Thanksgiving Address: Greetings to the Natural World English version: John Stokes and Kanawahienton (David Benedict, Turtle Clan/Mohawk) Mohawk version: Rokwaho (Dan Thompson, Wolf Clan/Mohawk) Original inspiration: Tekaronianekon (Jake Swamp, Wolf Clan/Mohawk)

Arborealist Creative Writing

Led by Daan

Steps of the workshop:

1. **Introduction by Daan**
2. **Identifying the trees around us with Flora's app**
3. **Reading Ursula Le Guins *Direction of the road* and discussing it together**
    a. **https://xpressenglish.com/our-stories/direction-of-the-road/**
4. **Writing our story/monologue**

Introduction

In 1972 Christopher D. Stone published the now well-known essay 'Should trees have standing?'. He argues that we should broaden human rights to include non-human rights. A counterargument that is often raised is that trees cannot defend themselves in a courtroom. Why should they have rights then? But that reasoning does not hold, because companies, for example, cannot defend themselves, but are still defended by people.

In recent decades, more and more research has been done on trees, showing that the underground networks of bacteria and fungi called mycelium are very similar in their structure to our nervous system. Trees show a sense of cognition, can communicate, are social, and are perhaps even able to feel. Did you know, for example, that trees warn each other through their underground networks in the event of a forest fire or invasive species? Based on those messages, they even share nutrients with each other.

Perhaps trees can even tell stories. Think of the rings in the trunk of a tree. A non-human history, a narrative which differs radically in its temporality and materiality from human narratives, is hidden in these rings.

It creates the question if our historically constructed consensus on trees as non-rational, stagnant organisms should undergo radical changes and if this current consensus could even be

viewed as inherently damaging to our environment - perhaps even as one of the main reasons that the human species is currently in the midst of an ecological crisis.

This question is indeed explored more and more within popular western discourse, for example through the medium of literature, which throughout history has always had the ability to both mirror the multiplicity of voices within public discourse and add to it. It is for example the contemporary genre of *arborealist novels* which actively aims to raise a more critical view on the way in which we relate ourselves to plant life and accommodate our actions to it. Some of these novels even bestow plant life a sense of dignity by allowing them to speak.

However, there is always an inherent irony to this plant language, since it cannot escape the human language. It is impossible to express plant communication in a human medium, resulting in an inescapable anthropomorphizing of the plant language. Some attempts at constructing such a language try to do justice to the plants by adapting the language in such a way that it seems unique to plant life. Yet this kind of narrativity upholds the idea of plants as the ultimate Other.

In this workshop we will all try to write a monologue from a tree's point of view, consisting of about 300 words. I would like to urge you to think critically about the way in which both humans and non-humans are represented within your text. Think carefully about the semantics of every single word you use since those words originated within a solely human discourse. They may contain certain anthropocentric values. Perhaps you could try to represent non-human narratives in your text by mirroring them with human language, for example by describing the rings of a tree. Think of ways to define both language and narrative in a broader more inclusive way.

Daan brought some books on plant communication with him which you may use as reading material to try and understand certain aspects of the plant life you are describing.

With this assignment, we place ourselves within the field of phytocriticism (critical plant studies) and material ecocriticism which aims to study nature as a site of narrativity.

Questions you can think of while writing your story:

- **(How) can I translate plant language into human language in a formally innovative way?**
- **What tree species will I choose?**
- **What would a tree say about humanity? Or are they not talking about humanity at all?**
- **How can I grant the tree in my text agency?**
- **What would a tree find important to say?**
- **To what extent am I as an author anthropomorphizing this tree? Is that a bad thing?**

Itinerary:

Brought by everyone themselves:

- Notebook

Brought by Daan:

- Pencils
- Pens
- Erasers
- Reading material

Ursula Le Guin's *The Direction of the Road*

The tree stands just south of the McMinnville bypass on Oregon State Highway 18. It lost a major limb last year, but still looks grand. We drive past it several times a year, and it has never failed to uphold Relativity with dignity and the skill of long practice.

* * * * *

They did not use to be so demanding. They never hurried us into anything more than a gallop, and that was rare; most of the time it was just a jigjog foot-pace. And when one of them was on his own feet, it was a real pleasure to approach him. There was time to accomplish the entire act with style. There he'd be, working his legs and arms the way they do, usually looking at the road, but often aside at the fields, or straight at me: and I'd approach him steadily but quite slowly, growing larger all the time, synchronizing the rate of approach and the rate of growth perfectly, so that at the very moment that I'd finished enlarging from a tiny speck to my full size — sixty feet in those days — I was abreast of him and hung above him, loomed, towered, overshadowed him. Yet he would show no fear. Not even the children were afraid of me, though often they kept their eyes on me as I passed by and started to diminish. Sometimes on a hot afternoon one of the adults would stop me right there at our meeting-place, and lie down with his back against mine for an hour or more.

I didn't mind in the least I have an excellent hill, good sun, good wind, good view; why should I mind standing still for an hour or an afternoon? It's only a relative stillness, after all. One need only look at the sun to realize how fast one is going; and then, one grows continually — especially in summer. In any case I was touched by the way they would entrust themselves to me, letting me lean against their little warm backs, and falling sound asleep there between my feet. I liked them. They have seldom lent us Grace as do the birds; but I really preferred them to squirrels.

In those days the horses used to work for them, and that too was enjoyable from my point of view. I particularly liked the canter, and got quite proficient at it. The surging and rhythmical motion accompanied shrinking and growing with a swaying and swooping, almost an illusion of flight. The gallop was less pleasant. It was jerky, pounding: one felt tossed about like a sapling in a gale. And then, the slow approach and growth, the moment of looming-over, and the slow retreat and diminishing, all that was lost during the gallop. One had to hurl oneself into it, cloppety-cloppety-cloppety! and the man usually too busy riding, and the horse too busy

running, even to look up. But then, it didn't happen often. A horse is mortal, after all, and like all the loose creatures grows tired easily; so they didn't tire their horses unless there was urgent need. And they seemed not to have so many urgent needs, in those days.

It's been a long time since I had a gallop, and to tell the truth I shouldn't mind having one. There was something invigorating about it, after all.

I remember the first motorcar I saw. Like most of us, I took it for a mortal, some kind of loose creature new to me. I was a bit startled, for after a hundred and thirty-two years I thought I knew all the local fauna. But a new thing is always interesting, in its trivial fashion, so I observed this one with attention. I approached it at a fair speed, about the rate of a canter, but in a new gait, suitable to the ungainly looks of the thing: an uncomfortable, bouncing, rolling, choking, jerking gait. Within two minutes, before I'd grown a foot tall, I knew it was no mortal creature, bound or loose or free. It was a making, like the carts the horses got hitched to. I thought it so very ill-made that I didn't expect it to return, once it gasped over the West Hill, and I heartily hoped it never would, for I disliked that jerking bounce.

But the thing took to a regular schedule, and so, perforce, did I. Daily at four I had to approach it, twitching and stuttering out of the West, and enlarge, loom-over, and diminish. Then at five back I had to come, poppeting along like a young jackrabbit for all my sixty feet, jigging and jouncing out of the East, until at last I got clear out of sight of the wretched little monster and could relax and loosen my limbs to the evening wind. There were always two of them inside the machine: a young male holding the wheel, and behind him an old female wrapped in rugs, glowering. If they ever said anything to each other I never heard it. In those days I overheard a good many conversations on the road, but not from that machine. The top of it was open, but it made so much noise that it overrode all voices, even the voice of the song-sparrow I had with me that year. The noise was almost as vile as the jouncing.

I am of a family of rigid principle and considerable self-respect. The Quercian motto is "Break but bend not," and I have always tried to uphold it. It was not only personal vanity, but family pride, you see, that was offended when I was forced to jounce and bounce in this fashion by a mere making.

The apple trees in the orchard at the foot of the hill did not seem to mind; but then, apples are tame. Their genes have been tampered with for centuries. Besides, they are herd creatures; no orchard tree can really form an opinion of its own.

I kept my own opinion to myself.

But I was very pleased when the motorcar ceased to plague us. All month went by without it, and all month I walked at men and trotted at horses most willingly, and even bobbed for a baby on its mother's arm, trying hard though unsuccessfully to keep in focus.

Next month, however — September it was, for the swallows had left a few days earlier — another of the machines appeared, a new one, suddenly dragging me and the road and our hill, the orchard, the fields, the farmhouse roof, all jigging and jouncing and racketing along from East to West; I went faster than a gallop, faster than I had ever gone before. I had scarcely time to loom, before I had to shrink right down again.

And the next day there came a different one.

Yearly then, weekly, daily, they became commoner. They became a major feature of the local Order of Things. The road was dug up and re-metalled, widened, finished off very smooth and nasty, like a slug's trail, with no rats, pools, rocks, flowers, or shadows on it. There

used to be a lot of little loose creatures on the road, grasshoppers, ants, toads, mice, foxes, and so on, most of them too small to move for, since they couldn't really see one. Now the wise creatures took to avoiding the road, and the unwise ones got squashed. I have seen all too many rabbits die in that fashion, right at my feet. I am thankful that I am an oak, and that though I may be wind-broken or uprooted, hewn or sawn, at least I cannot, under any circumstances, be squashed.

With the presence of many motorcars on the road at once, a new level of skill was required of me. As a mere seedling, as soon as I got my head above the weeds, I had learned the basic trick of going two directions at once. I learned it without thinking about it, under the simple pressure of circumstances on the first occasion that I saw a walker in the East and a horseman facing him In the West I had to go two directions at once, and I did so. It's something we trees master without real effort, I suppose. I was nervous, but I succeeded in passing the rider and then shrinking away from him while at the same time I was still jigjogging towards the walker, and indeed passed him (no looming, back in those days!) only when I had got quite out of sight of the rider. I was proud of myself, being very young, that first time I did it; but it sounds more difficult than it really is. Since those days of course I had done it innumerable times, and thought nothing about it; I could do it in my sleep. But have you ever considered the feat accomplished, the skill involved, when a tree enlarges, simultaneously yet at slightly different rates and in slightly different manners, for each one of forty motorcar drivers facing two opposite directions, while at the same time diminishing for forty more who have got their backs to it, meanwhile remembering to loom over each single one at the right moment: and to do this minute after minute, hour after hour, from daybreak till nightfall or long after?

For my road had become a busy one; it worked all day long under almost continual traffic. It worked, and I worked. I did not jounce and bounce so much anymore, but I had to run faster and faster: to grow enormously, to loom in a split second, to shrink to nothing, all in a hurry, without time to enjoy the action, and without rest: over and over and over.

Very few of the drivers bothered to look at me, not even a seeing glance. They seemed, indeed, not to see me anymore. They merely stared ahead. They seemed to believe that they were "going somewhere." Little mirrors were affixed to the front of their cars, at which they glanced to see where they had been; then they stared ahead again. I had thought that only beetles had this delusion of Progress. Beetles are always rushing about, and never looking up. I had always had a pretty low opinion of beetles. But at least they let me be.

I confess that sometimes, in the blessed nights of darkness with no moon to silver my crown and no stars occluding with my branches, when I could rest, I would think seriously of escaping my obligation to the general Order of Things: of failing to move. No, not seriously. Half-seriously. It was mere weariness. If even a silly, three-year-old, female pussy willow at the foot of the hill accepted her responsibility, and jounced and rolled and accelerated and grew and shrank for each motorcar on the road, was I, an oak, to shirk? Noblesse oblige, and I trust I have never dropped an acorn that did not know its duty.

For fifty or sixty years, then, I have upheld the Order of Things, and have done my share in supporting the human creatures' illusion that they are "going somewhere." And I am not unwilling to do so. But a truly terrible thing has occurred, which I wish to protest.

I do not mind going two directions at once; I do not mind growing and shrinking simultaneously; I do not mind moving, even at the disagreeable rate of sixty or seventy miles

an hour. I am ready to go on doing all these things until I am felled or bulldozed. They're my job. But I do object, passionately, to being made eternal.

Eternity is none of my business. I am an oak, no more, no less. I have my duty, and I do it; I have my pleasures, and enjoy them, though they are fewer, since the birds are fewer, and the wind's foul. But, long-lived though I may be, impermanence is my right. Mortality is my privilege. And it has been taken from me.

It was taken from me on a rainy evening in March last year.

Fits and bursts of cars, as usual, filled the rapidly moving road in both directions. I was so busy hurtling along, enlarging, looming, diminishing, and the light was failing so fast, that I scarcely noticed what was happening until it happened. One of the drivers of one of the cars evidently felt that his need to "go somewhere" was exceptionally urgent, and so attempted to place his car in front of the car in front of it. This maneuver involves a temporary slanting of the Direction of the Road and a displacement onto the far side, the side which normally runs the other direction (and may I say that I admire the road very highly for its skill in executing such maneuvers, which must be difficult for an unliving creature, a mere making). Another car, however, happened to be quite near the urgent one, and facing it, as it changed sides; and the road could not do anything about it, being already overcrowded. To avoid impact with the facing car, the urgent car totally violated the Direction of the Road, swinging it round to North-South in its own terms, and so forcing me to leap directly at it. I had no choice. I had to move, and move fast — eightyfive miles an hour. I leapt: I loomed enormous, larger than I have ever loomed before. And then I hit the car.

I lost a considerable piece of bark, and, what's more serious, a fair bit of cambium layer; but as I was seventy-two feet tall and about nine feet in girth at the point of impact, no real harm was done. My branches trembled with the shock enough that a last-year's robin's nest was dislodged and fell; and I was so shaken that I groaned. It is the only time in my life that I have ever said anything out loud.

The motorcar screamed horribly. It was smashed by my blow, squashed, in fact. Its hinder parts were not much affected, but the forequarters knotted up and knurled together like an old root, and little bright bits of it flew all about and lay like brittle rain.

The driver had no time to say anything: I killed him instantly.

It is not this that I protest. I had to kill him. I had no choice, and therefore have no regret. What I protest, what I cannot endure, is this: as I leapt at him, he saw me. He looked up at last. He saw me as I have never been seen before, not even by a child, not even in the days when people looked at things. He saw me whole, and saw nothing else — then, or ever.

He saw me under the aspect of eternity. He confused me with eternity. And because he died in that moment of false vision, because it can never change, I am caught in it, eternally.

This is unendurable. I cannot uphold such an illusion. If the human creatures will not understand Relativity, very well; but they must understand Relatedness.

If it is necessary to the Order of Things, I will kill drivers of cars, though killing is not a duty usually required of oaks. But it is unjust to require me to play the part, not of the killer only, but of death. For I am not death. I am life: I am mortal.

If they wish to see death visibly in the world, that is their business, not mine. I will not act Eternity for them. Let them not turn to the trees for death. If that is what they want to see, let them look into one another's eyes and see it there.

Norse Mythology Reading

Led by Lauren

- Why:
  - Mythology forms part of the Steiner Education/Philosophy. Therefore, I would like to have an evening where I tell the group about the North stories. This activity consists of a reading of Norse creation stories.

All information retrieved from: https://norse-mythology.org/tales/norse-creation-myth/

THE CREATION OF THE COSMOS

The Norse creation myth or *cosmogony* (an account of the origins of the cosmos) is perhaps one of the richest in all of world literature. First, let's look at this exceptionally colorful story itself, then consider how the Vikings may have interpreted it and found meaning in it.

The Origin of the Cosmos

Before there was soil, or sky, or any green thing, there was only the gaping abyss of Ginnungagap. This chaos of perfect silence and darkness lay between the homeland of elemental fire, Muspelheim, and the homeland of elemental ice, Niflheim.

Frost from Niflheim and billowing flames from Muspelheim crept toward each other until they met in Ginnungagap. Amid the hissing and sputtering, the fire melted the ice, and the drops formed themselves into Ymir ("Screamer"[1]), the first of the godlike but destructive giants. Ymir was a hermaphrodite and could reproduce asexually; when he slept, more giants leapt forth from his legs and from the sweat of his armpits.

As the frost continued to melt, a cow, Audhumla ("Abundance of Humming"[2]), emerged from it. She nourished Ymir with her milk, and she, in turn, was nourished by salt-licks in the ice. Her licks slowly uncovered Buri ("Progenitor"[3]), the first of the Aesir tribe of gods. Buri had a son named Bor ("Son"[4]), who married Bestla (perhaps "Wife"[5]), the daughter of the giant Bolthorn ("Baleful Thorn"[6]). The half-god, half-giant children of Bor and Bestla were Odin, who became the chief of the Aesir gods, and his two brothers, Vili and Ve.

Odin and his brothers slew Ymir and set about constructing the world from his corpse. They fashioned the oceans from his blood, the soil from his skin and muscles, vegetation from his hair, clouds from his brains, and the sky from his skull. Four dwarves, corresponding to the four cardinal points, held Ymir's skull aloft above the earth.

The gods eventually formed the first man and woman, Ask and Embla, from two tree trunks, and built a fence around their dwelling-place, Midgard, to protect them from the giants.[7][8][9][10]

Order from Chaos

Thematically, Ymir is the personification of the chaos before creation, which is also depicted as the impersonal void of Ginnungagap. Both Ymir and Ginnungagap are ways of talking about limitless potential that isn't actualized, that hasn't yet become the particular *things* that we find in the world around us. This is why the Vikings described it as a void (as have countless other peoples; consider the "darkness upon the face of the deep" of the first chapter of Genesis, for example). It is no-thing-ness. But it nevertheless contains the basic stuff out of which the gods can make true things – in this case, the primal matter is Ymir's body, which the gods tear apart to craft the elements.

It's extremely fitting for Ymir to be the progenitor of the giants, for this is the general role the giants occupy in Norse myth. They are the forces of formless chaos, who are always threatening to corrupt and ultimately overturn the gods' created order (and at Ragnarok, they succeed). But the giants are more than *just* forces of destruction. In the words of medievalist Margaret Clunies Ross:

Characteristically […] the gods covet important natural resources which the giants own, then steal them and turn them to their own advantage by utilising them to create culture, that is, they put the giants' raw materials to work for themselves. These raw materials are of diverse kinds and include intellectual capital such as the ability to brew ale as well as the cauldron in which it is made, and abstractions made concrete like the mead of poetry and the runes of wisdom.[11]

Not only does Ymir fit this pattern; mythologically speaking, his death and dismemberment is the paradigmatic model for this pattern.

This also explains why Ymir is depicted as a hermaphrodite who can reproduce on his own asexually. Differentiation, including sexual differentiation, didn't exist yet. The gods had to create that as part of their task of giving differentiated forms to what had previously been formless and undifferentiated. Various other creation myths from other peoples have used a hermaphroditic being to illustrate this same concept,[12] so we can be confident that this is also what the Norse meant here – despite the superficial counterexample of Audhumla and her udder. (After all, Norse mythology was never an airtight system.)

Ymir's name provides an additional – and rather poetic – instantiation of this role as the personification of primordial chaos. Recall that Ymir's name means "Screamer" (from the Old Norse verb *ymja*, "to scream"[13]). The scream, the wordless voice, is the raw material from which words are made. By taking formless matter – represented by Ymir's body – and giving it form, the gods were, metaphorically speaking, making words out of a scream.

The metaphor is completed by the description of the act of creation in the Old Norse poem *Völuspá*. There, the verb used for the action by which the gods create the world is *yppa*, which has a range of meanings: "lift, raise, bring up, come into being, proclaim, reveal."[14] The primary sense in which *yppa* should be understood here is "to come into being," but note the additional shade of "to proclaim." Given the poetic symmetry with Ymir's name, this is surely not coincidental. The gods *proclaim* the world into being as they sculpt it out of the Screamer's corpse.[15]

The Centrality of Conflict

The Vikings, like the other ancient Germanic peoples, were and are notorious for their eagerness for battle. It should come as little surprise, therefore, that conflict is such a central theme in their creation myth – and that conflict is itself a generative force.

Ymir is born from the strife between fire and ice – and we can surmise that that particular opposition would have had a special poignancy for people living what was more or less a subsistence lifestyle in the cold lands of Scandinavia and the North Atlantic.

In order for the gods to fashion the world, they must first slay Ymir. This is the first intentional taking of a life in the universe, and it's performed by the gods themselves. It isn't presented as a crime or a sin, as in the Biblical myth of Cain and Abel. Rather, it's a good and even sacred task. This isn't to say that the Norse valorized killing as such; clearly, they distinguished between lawful and appropriate killing and unlawful and inappropriate killing. But they embraced what they saw as the necessity of having a warlike approach to life, for the sake of accomplishing great deeds that brought honor and renown to one's name.

Of course, gods forming the world from the corpse of a being of chaos is a fairly common element in myth. But the precise set of *meanings* contained in such an act varies from culture to culture. Surely this glorification of *honorable* aggression, and its status as the defining act that makes the world what it is, were central components of the meaning the Vikings found in their particular myth.

Both Giants and Gods Define the World

The Norse saw their gods as the "pillars" and "vital forces" that held the cosmos together. When the gods created the world, they imparted both order and sanctity to it. And since the Norse gods are frequently portrayed intervening in the world's affairs, their gifts to the world weren't thought to end with creation. Their defining role in the cosmos was thought to continue as long as the cosmos itself continued – that is, until Ragnarok.

And yet, since the world was formed from the corpse of a giant, it would seem that the world is what it is largely due to the influence of the giants as well. Aspects of Ymir – his might, his uncouthness, his tendency toward entropy, the ambivalence of his character – remained present in the world, even after the gods had shaped it in accordance with a different set of traits and aims. The giants, too, were thought to intervene in the world; the slaying of their ancestor by no means vanquished them.

In the Norse view, the world is a battleground between the gods and the giants, whose power is more or less evenly matched. Mankind is in the middle, torn between the opposing claims of holiness, order, and goodness on the one hand, and profaneness, chaos, and wickedness on the other. This tension is ceaseless because it's been a feature of the world itself since its very beginning. The strife will only be alleviated by Ragnarok, when the world will be destroyed altogether, and nothing will remain but the stillness and darkness of a new Ginnungagap.

Meditation Activity

Led by Allegra

- This activity consists of a mindfulness meditation session led by Allegra. This activity uses Buddhist practices in order to engage in self-reflection, physical awareness, and enhanced connection to nature and land.

Researchers in San Francisco found that Buddhist practice positively affects the amygdala, the part of the brain that helps release emotions such as anger and fear. This results, consequently, in positive thoughts, which ultimately make the sense of happiness and peace.

For their part, researchers from the University of Wisconsin, using new monitoring techniques to examine brain activity, carried out a series of tests on a group of Buddhists. The research revealed an activity of the left prefrontal lobe (area of positive emotions, self-control and good mood) above the normal average, and which is maintained even after religious practice.

The director of the Buddhist Society of England Paul Seto, consulted on the matter, said that, for those who practice Buddhism, the results of these investigations were nothing new. "We've always known that. Buddhism didn't expect scientific proof, because we know it works," Seto said. For his part, the founder of the London Buddhist Center, Steve James, added: "The research is important, because it scientifically demonstrates that Buddhism can increase happiness."

The New Scientist article goes on to explain that researchers attribute this peculiarity to the fact that the practice of Buddhism involves an attitude of reflection and meditation, together with the pursuit of self-knowledge and the detection of one's own imperfections. "The areas of the brain that we call 'happiness centers' are always active in Buddhists, not just during meditation," explains Professor Owen Flanagan of Duke University in the United States.

Reflections

Led by Ani

This activity will serve as a way to reflect on my individual research by investigating the differences and similarities between the way media channels depict De Hoge Veluwe, in addition to the nature-human dualism, and how we experienced them. Since we have plenty of planned activities and a shortage of time, this activity will potentially have the form of a recorded group interview where I ask a question and everyone has the chance to provide a relatively short answer one by one. Please, read these questions carefully and keep them in mind during the trip!

- In three words, what is nature for you?
- What was your experience of the Dutch national park De Hoge Veluwe?
- How did your perception of and relationship to nature change as a result of our group project, camping trip, and research?

Responses

Flora

In three words, what is nature for you?

It's very difficult to narrow down an experience into three words, but I might describe it as 1.) lucid—as in a place where nothing is blurry, everything becomes very clear and detailed for me; 2.) pure—as in a place where I feel like I can have no false/ulterior motives, or where I do not have to perform; and 3.) difficult—where it feels a bit unruly to me, or where I don't know how to substitute my typical resources.

What was your experience of the Dutch national park De Hoge Veluwe?

In some aspects the experience still felt very tailored and commercialised. Of course the ecosystem is in charge of itself, especially when you consider the park in smaller sections (forest, arid land, etc.) but it was ultimately manufactured and layed out as a matter of convenience. The only factor that was truly 'natural' or 'out of human control' was the weather.

How did your perception of and relationship to nature change as a result of our group project, camping trip, and research?

I feel like I have a better understanding, but not necessarily a better relationship. I've never been camping before, and so this was the farthest I've come in stripping myself of luxury, but it was still luxurious. Still, I felt uneasy without immediate access to clean water and comfort. This whole experience inspires me to cultivate a relationship with nature that I can still imagine in an urban setting—ideas like creating space for nature in empty plots in a city—but keeping my immediate spaces clean and industrial.

Roberta

In three words, what is nature for you?

Colours, energy, refuge [if you would like me to elaborate more, let me know]

What was your experience of the Dutch national park De Hoge Veluwe?

At the park I felt both inside and outside of the countryside. It was a nature easy to experience and access (bikes, forest paths, insects) but also easy to escape (the bakery at the entrance, the possibility to drive a car up until our camping spot,the cafè and museum inside the park). The most remarkable aspect of my experience were the time I spent doing activities that involved physical movement and primarily my body (walking, cycling, observing) and I felt my working routing very far away.

How did your perception of and relationship to nature change as a result of our group project, camping trip, and research?

My camping experience amplified my sensorial relationship with the exernal world. Noise, different sights, sounds, surfaces were very different from the ones I am generally exposed and thanks to this sense of discovery all these perceptions seemed stronger.

Lauren

In three words, what is nature for you?

- Beauty
- Freedom
- Hope

What was your experience of the Dutch national park De Hoge Veluwe?

I had a wonderful time. It is a beautiful place which I would happily go back to. Being able to cycle through nature and engage with it on such a personal level was an experience that I will never forget. My childhood was filled with nature and this experience somehow felt a little like coming home and regaining some of that childlike wonder which was very therapeutic. I thoroughly enjoyed all the nature based/centred activities that we did. I had the perfect teammates around me which also made the whole trip very enjoyable.

How did your perception of and relationship to nature change as a result of our group project, camping trip, and research?

I believe that I have always had quite a strong and healthy relationship with nature, so this trip may not have changed it, but it did indeed strengthen it. The group project and the research gave me so much insight into the human mind and the natural world and how the two are connected. I believe that without this project I would not have had the chance to engage with this knowledge and learn from it. This trip solidified the fact that nature is powerful and humans are mere beings amongst the vastness of the natural world and that next time I should be more prepared for the cold temperature of the Netherlands' countryside.

Ani

In three words, what is nature for you?

Idyllic, Rejuvenating, Unknown

What was your experience of the Dutch national park De Hoge Veluwe?

Visiting the Dutch national park De Hoge Veluwe provided me with the opportunity to experience nature in its commodified, as well as pure and unsullied form. While having immediate access to all amenities was convenient, it also made me feel disconnected from the environment around me and often prevented me from experiencing nature's full power and potential. However, the walking and cycling tours we had and the time spent doing nature

connection activities with my group members allowed me to immerse myself in the atmosphere around me, without thinking about university, meetings, obligations, and other activities part of my daily routine.

How did your perception of and relationship to nature change as a result of our group project, camping trip, and research?
To be part of this Honours project provided me with the opportunity to go out of my comfort zone and explore topics and experience moments that are, otherwise, not part of my daily life and academic field. One of the biggest lessons I have learned is that nature is a revitalizing, powerful and unpredictable force. Just when you think that, as a human, you are stronger than it, nature finds a way to defeat you. We don't always have control over nature (although we like to think that way).

Allegra

In three words, what is nature for you?

Nature is a safe place a go to when I need to rest, or heal. Nature is wise, as I learn how to be calm, accepting, and how to let go and follow an inner wisdom I have access to, but that I rarely utilise. Nature is wild, and it asks me to be so: a sense of freedom pervades me and all societal clichés, must-do's, categories are gone. Nature is a healer: I stop for a moment, immerse myself in it and all emotions will start flowing naturally.

What was your experience of the Dutch national park De Hoge Veluwe?

To answer this question, I first asked myself what parks are for. The relationship between parks and humans has always been dynamic and controversial, especially because today's interpretation of parks is rather utilitarian: they are built for humans and protected from human's harmful actions. In this sense, De Hoge Veluwe park was no exception. The park is constructed as is the relationship that the park superintendents or its "experts" try to impose on its visitors. But the experience of nature or with nature cannot be constructed or even suggested. It is completely personal. This is how I tried to live my days at the Hoge Veluwe.

How did your perception of and relationship to nature change as a result of our group project, camping trip, and research?

My "epiphany" with nature took place during the journey to Santiago a few years ago, an unforgettable experience of a 300 km walk in ten days immersed in the wildest nature. Every time I "come back" to nature, I expect the same feelings that I have learned to accept along that journey. It is a process, a personal path of healing from the chaos of the city, from the stimuli of the modern world, from my busy mind. During our camping trip at the Hoge veluwe, I tried to stay present with my emotions, and observe them, while letting go of my thoughts, my worries, my frustrations, my anger. I created an inner balance again. Suddenly,

life priorities change. Therefore my perception of nature has not changed: it is I who change every time I come into contact with nature.

Daan

In three words, what is nature to you?

- Omnipresent
- Intelligent
- Linked

Throughout human history, nature has often been viewed as a site of mysticism. There is a certain affective timelessness to a forest, which provides the humans in that forest with a radical sense of tranquility and Otherness. However, this deep dive into the 'Sublimity' of nature can blind a person from the true rational aspects of complex ecosystems and the fact that humans themselves participate in that larger ecosystem. I actively try to perceive nature not as a radical Other, but as an intelligent network, which is dynamic and inherently interrelated - by definition also with humanity, and therefore also with me as an individual.

What was your experience of the Dutch national park De Hoge Veluwe?

I was especially interested in trying to understand better which plant species inhabited the park and how they functioned within their own network. By feeling both a rational, and an affective relationship with the limited natural area of the park, I came closer to upholding such relationships with the overwhelming, sometimes ungraspable concept of the damaged, world-wide network we call nature. In academic terms - specifically Timothy Clark's - it is called upholding your 'scalar literacy'. According to Clark the only way to redevelop a sustainable relationship with our global environment is by better understanding our place and role within our local environment. Then, simultaneously, the park is not the environment which I usually inhabit, since I don't live there. In that sense, visiting the park still somewhat fits into the mold of viewing nature as an external and controlled object of aesthetic value. This has also made me more attentive to the parts of nature which we might regularly perceive as non-aesthetic and therefore of lesser value than a beautiful national park. For example, what biodiversity may I find in the weeds sprouting in the car park outside of my home?

How did your perception of and relationship to nature change as a result of our group project, camping trip, and research?

This project has made me more aware of the importance of using my own language to represent nature in a respectful, non-harmful way. After all, the language we use day to day originated within a solely human discourse with the goal of both mirroring and influencing human culture(s). It can therefore be argued that our language is inherently anthropocentric [human-focused]. This linguistic anthropocentrism can lead to expressions such as 'vegetable' to describe a person in a coma, which echoes the assumption that plant life is static and non-expressive. This project has encouraged me to learn more about the functioning of

ecosystems and ways to stretch the limits of my own use of language to form representations of the complexity, dynamism and rationality of the natural world.

Final Product

Photo Gallery