The Future of Nature

Introducing Critical Theory in Danish *Gymnasium*

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Introduction

Since the dawn of Western society, great effort has been taken to separate the mind from the body, men from women, culture from nature. Philosophers like Plato and Aristotle are still being used as an argument for maintaining control over women and nature, which leaves men and their constructed culture as the master over the inferiorised women and bodily anchored nature. Culture is viewed as logic, the masculine, and the self, whereas nature is defined as emotions, the feminine, and the other. These dichotomies imbue Western society and provide what is perceived as culture with the tools to exploit the inferiorised nature. This is the fundamental hypothesis of ecofeminism, a critical philosophy that works with the systematic exploitation of the the inferiosed other in any given cultural setting, based on gender, race, class, and nature.

This thesis argues that this exploitation still takes place in the Western society and through Val Plumwood's ecofeminism and an analysis of the film *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) further examines the possibilities of introducing a critical theoretical aspect into the English course in Danish *gymnasium* (upper secondary school). The thesis aims to answer the following questions:

- Is it possible to adapt Val Plumwood's philosophy on ecofeminism to use as a literary critical theory, and is this applicable to a neoformalist film analysis of *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) in order to add an additional layer to the analysis?

- Would it be feasible to use this material to introduce a literary critical aspect in the English course in the Danish *gymnasium*, and make the students aware of the cultural contexts of texts?

The point of the thesis is to argue that it is possible to introduce such an approach, and that ecofeminism, as it is presented in this paper, is a useful additional layer of analysis in the neoformalist approach to film. The thesis is divided in two parts corresponding to the thesis statement as presented above: one which explores the analytical aspects of the ecofeminist application to the neoformalist analysis; one which examines the approach as an introduction of a critical theoretical element in gymnasium, ending in a discussion of how other scholars have used ecofeminism as a literary critical theory and why it is appropriate.

To provide an answer to the first part of the thesis statement, the paper will give a detailed account of Val Plumwood's philosophy as presented in her two works: *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993), and *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (2005), where key concepts have been selected in order to use her philosophically based theory as an appropriate literary analysis on a multimedia texts. Additionally, there will be a discussion of her key concepts, their validity, and three essays as verification of her continued relevance in the growing field of ecofeminism.

The analysis that has been used as the foundation to this a approach is the neoformalist film analysis as presented by David Bordwell's and Kristin Thompson's book *Film Art* (2008). Their method will lay the ground for the ecofeminist approach which will be used to further analyse the different categories of mise-en-scene, editing, sound, and narrative. The ecofeminist terms will not be implemented into the neoformalist analysis, but added separately to the categories of the film analysis, in order to emphasise its use as an additional layer to the analysis.

Furthermore, this approach supports the purpose of the experiment presented in the second part of the thesis. Based on Knud Illeris' educational theory described in his book *How*

We Learn: Learning and Non-learning in School and Beyond (2007), a two-lesson course has been constructed, built upon the material from the first part of the thesis. There will be a detailed exposition of the course material developed, as well as an assessment of this in connection to Illeris' educational theory and his key terms about learning. This will be followed by an account of how the practical application of the course proceeded at the two schools who agreed to collaborate for this thesis, Hjørring Gymnasium & HF-kursus and Frederikshavn Gymnasium & HF-kursus. Additionally, this will be evaluated through a discussion of the material and if it is beneficial for them to learn, what factors can have influence on their learning process, and if the experiment fulfilled the established criteria and thus would be able to be considered successful.

The course and evaluation will be discussed in connection to its value to the students' further readings of texts and the intersectional possibilities of the ecofeminist theory, and when it would be beneficial to introduce the students to literary critical aspects. Moreover, Greta Gaards article *Children's Environmental Literature: from Ecocriticism to Ecopedagogy* (2009) will lay the foundation of a discussion regarding the creation of an eco-consciousness in children through literature aimed at their age group, as well as an awareness in the parents of what message the children's literature presents on nature. In connection to the educational material developed for this thesis, Gaard's article *Hiking Without a Map: Reflections on Teaching Ecofeminist Literary Criticism* (1996) will further add another perspective on ecofeminism as a literary critical theory, here aimed at university students. Lastly, the elements handled in this thesis will be used for a overall assessment of the results, and a discussion of what could have been improved on.

Method

This paper investigates whether or not it is possible to introduce a critical theoretical approach into the subject of English in the Danish upper secondary school through film analysis. The thesis will be divided into two parts. The first part examines how the dualised society has created and affected the relations between men and women, culture and nature as shown through film. Val Plumwood's two books *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993) and *Environmental Culture: Ecological Crisis of Reason* (2005) will provide the theoretical base for identifying a set of terms that can be used in literary critical analysis. A neoformalist analysis inspired by David Bordwell's and Kristin Thompson's book *Film Art* (2008) of the film *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) will be a basis for a theoretical adaptation of Val Plumwood's philosophy on ecofeminism as an additional layer to the four main categories of mise-en-scene, editing, sound, and narrative. The analysis explores the possibility to generate ecofeminist meaning in the four categories both individually and collectively, as to further expand and evolve the theory to the new media.

In the second part, the film analysis will lay base to a short teaching course in two different classes in the Danish *gymnasium* (upper secondary school), based on Knud Illeris' educational theory as described in his book *How We Learn: Learning and Non-learning in School and Beyond* (2007). This will be conducted in order to see if an assessment of critical theories would be possible at this level and furthermore introduce a literary critical approach in gymnasium. Lastly, the analysis and teaching course will lay the foundation to an evaluation of the course and a discussion of it. Moreover, there will be a discussion of two essays written by Greta Gaard: one where she explores different ways to utilise children's literature for ecofeminist

critique called *Children's Environmental Literature: from Ecocriticism to Ecopedagogy*; and one where she provides a way to create a literary critical approach in ecofeminism, named *Hiking Without a Map: Reflections on Teaching Ecofeminist Literary Criticism*. Following this is a discussion of our choice in focusing on ecofeminism as the introductory theory in gymnasium.

The thesis is divided into two parts because the thesis statement is bisected. It is important to create a solid theoretical and analytical base for our teaching, and to develop our teaching material fully before implementing it into a learning situation. The first part is the premise for the second part, and the structure is reflected in it. The film analysis of *Mad Max* is further separated from the application of the ecofeminist theory in order to avoid confusion in the students, as well as to stress its applicability as an extra layer of analysis and base for discussion.

We chose Val Plumwood as a theoretical foundation on ecofeminism because she does not focus on a specific topic like other ecofeminists, such as Vandana Shivas and Maria Mies and their book *Ecofeminism* (1993) about the woman-nature connection. Plumwood's philosophical perception is more extensive and concentrate on the power relations in the dualised system she presents. The exact identity of the master and other is irrelevant, as these two categories are used to reveal the dualised society Plumwood argues that we live in. Her approach is applicable to multiple instances and societies and can recognise different layers of exploitation. Furthermore, we argue for using Plumwood's philosophy as a literary critical theory, because her philosophy is used to describe and criticise society, and different forms of art, such as literature and film, are reflections of society. Thus, Plumwood's theory is applicable to both society and art. Her theory in particular is straightforward to use because of her clear

terminology, presenting key concepts easily defined and exemplified. This makes it beneficial to use as an introduction to critical theory for gymnasium students.

Moreover, we claim that the theory is highly relevant for the students even though it was written 25 years ago, as it presents a universal language to analyse and discuss oppression and exploitation of both humans and nature. We selected ecofeminism over other critical theories such as ecocriticism, feminism, post-colonialism, and intersectionality because they each handle a specific type of exploitation. Instead, ecofeminism covers all kinds of exploitations, which Plumwood argues all originate from one mechanism. The wide thematic span of the theory also provides the students with the basis for a broad critical awareness of culture and media.

The film analysis in this thesis is based on the neoformalist approach. We have chosen this method because it employs a systematic walk-through of the cinematographic elements. Like the ecofeminist approach in this thesis, it has clear terminology that does not become distorted when simplified to a level that is comprehensible to gymnasium students. Furthermore, the four categories of cinematographic analysis defined in the book, mise-en-scene, editing, sound, and narrative, make the material manageable when applying the ecofeminist theory to film analysis. Still, not all categories have proven easy to use in an ecofeminist setting and especially the sound has been a hurdle. While we have been able to apply it on a superficial level, we do not have the specific skill set to analyse the sound and music on a deeper level. However, we argue that it is useful to consider this in an analysis because it provides intel into the other categories. In general, the four categories tend to overlap when looking at them in the ecofeminist setting, as they work together to produce meaning.

As mentioned earlier in this section, the thesis is divided into two parts. The second part is focused on educational theory and teaching, to which Knud Illeris has been the theoretical foundation. We chose Illeris' approach as presented in *How We Learn*, as it provides a comprehensive approach to how we learn and what learning is. We favoured his theory on education because he bases his views on numerous scholars and researchers both within and outside of his field. Furthermore, he constantly positions himself in relation to these scholars, which heightens his credibility, as he is critical of his own work. His book is based on over 40 years of research, which has resulted in an extensive and exhaustive theory that can be used to assess all learning on both a macro and micro level. Additionally, the learning model he outlines in his book demonstrates how learning takes place and this further makes it appropriate as a guideline for teaching.

In choosing film as the medium for teaching, we argue that it is the best solution when taking into account our limited time frame. The course is based on three clips from the film, chosen for their analytical value, both to cinematography and ecofeminism, which allows for us to complete the course without the students having to watch the entire film. Furthermore, using film clips as an example of our approach to ecofeminism makes it easier for the students to process and recognise Plumwood's key terms, as a visualisation exemplifies the concepts clearly. *Mad Max* was chosen because although it has a seemingly ecofeminist message, it is a product of Hollywood filmmaking. This means that it is a device of the master identity described by Plumwood. It is paramount to work with the film with this in mind, as it will reflect the societal context of the master model. This is further an aspect that we wish for the students to be aware of.

PART ONE

Ecofeminism

Within the field of ecofeminist philosophy, Australian scholar Val Plumwood is one of the most renowned theorists. In 1993, her main work *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* was published, laying the ground for her later publishings. One of these is her book *Environmental Culture: the Ecological Crisis of Reason* (2005), where she applies the core terms defined in *Mastery of Nature* to a structural analysis of the Western understanding of reason. In her books, she works with a dualised culture/nature relationship and how it permeates the Western society. Culture, in this understanding, is perceived as everything connected to masculinity, reason, logic, and rationality, but vigorously excluding traits associated with nature, such as femininity, emotionality, irrationality, and the bodily. This notion leads to a dualisation of the masculine/feminine, of mind/body, where those identified with culture are seen as superior to the inferiorised nature. Plumwood describes how nature is seen "as passive, as non-agent and non-subject, as the 'environment' or invisible background conditions against which the 'foreground' achievements of reason or culture [...] take place" (*Mastery of Nature* 4). This passivity and non-agency becomes the justification behind the inferiorisation of nature and the feminine.

This further creates the foundation for the main concept of Plumwood's philosophy; the dualised master/other relationship. She argues that the understanding of culture and nature in Western society is the basis of the underlying structure of the master/other dualism, where culture is identified as the master and nature as the other. The master is the superior part of the dualised structure and exploits the inferiorised other. This supposed superiority of culture leads back to the Greek philosophers Aristotle and Plato, whose ideas have been instrumental in the

construction of Western society. Plumwood describes how Plato argues for a "marriage of reason and domination" (*Mastery of Nature* 71), which justifies the domination of an other deemed without reason. This is the logic behind the exploitation situated in ethnicity, class, and gender throughout history. The structure is dichotomised and is not always constrained by biological differences, but is largely based on stereotyping, which, for example, makes it possible for a masculine woman to be considered a part of the master identity, and a feminine man to be deprived of his mastery.

The example mentioned above furthermore proves that this structure is built on a false, artificial dichotomy. Plumwood offers a different categorisation, called a dualism: "[It] is an emphatic and distancing form of separation (hyper-separation or dissociation) which creates a sharp, ontological break or radical discontinuity between the group identified as the privileged 'centre' and those subordinated" (*Environmental Culture* 101). The discontinuity between the two groups is defined by the superior master centre, as he uses his position of power to generate his own reality, in which his power is founded. This creates a circular logic where the master is superior because his superiority makes him a master. The subordinated other is then everything that does not meet the constructed criteria of mastery, formulated by the master. The dualistic structure is established in such a way to ensure that the categories of Master and Other cannot overlap, as they are both defined through how they are not like each other. Dichotomising these groups serves to justify the master's power over and exploitation of the other. In her book *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, Plumwood identifies a number of mechanisms used to support the continuation of the dualistic system.

The Mechanisms of Dualism

The main mechanism to create moral distance between the master and its other is called radical exclusion or *hyperseparation*. It serves to polarise the spheres of the two groups and to make sure that they have no traits in common, to further solidify the notion that they are nothing like each other. This also proves to support the idea that one is superior to the other, and creates the unequal power relations and justifies the exploitation of the other (*Mastery of Nature* 49). Hyperseparation is visible in many social contexts such as the masculine and feminine categories, and how anyone who falls in between, or carries traits associated with the othered group, is shunned and ridiculed. Moreover, racial supremacists are a prime example of how this mechanism works, as they often believe in "theories of racial purity and supremacy" (*Environmental Culture* 102) and uses the master/other relation to justify their supremacy over other races, who are normally made comparable to the already inferiorised nature. What is appropriate for the master, both in terms of behavior and appearance, is not appropriate for the other, but also vice versa in the sense that one originally belonging to the master sphere showing traits associated with the other sphere, is then deprived of their mastery and assimilated into the other.

These traits of behaviour and appearance that define both the spheres of master and other are then defined only by the master, in relation to the master, on the basis of their superiority. The other is defined by the master through what the other is lacking, in what ways it is not like the master. The master treats the other not like an independent group, but as a faulty reflection of the master. This mechanism is what Plumwood calls *incorporation* (*Mastery of Nature* 52). The other is denied their own identity and incorporated into the master identity as the other side of

the coin to the complete master identity. The other is seen as devoid of reason and a negative space for the master to impose his ideals and own identity. In the context of colonisation,

> [t]he colonised and their 'disorderly' space is available for use, without limit, and the assimilating project of the coloniser is to remake the colonised and their space in the image of the coloniser's own self-space, own culture or land, which is represented as the paradigm of reason, beauty and order. (*Environmental Culture* 105)

The master reshapes what he believes are inferior cultures to match his own ideals, yet maintains the differences between the master and the new addition to the other, in order to incorporate them.

The master model needs for all others to be assimilated into one homogenous Other, as the dualistic model itself can only be sustained if there are only the master and the incorporated other; a separate other would destroy the dualistic ideal of complete mastery. To assimilate the different others, Plumwood identifies *homogenisation* as another mechanism of the dualistic master model. In denying the differences between individuals and cultures within the created group of the other, they are stereotyped into one single entity that is possible to incorporate into the master identity. "Their differences denied, they were all dismissed as 'aliens', 'wogs', or 'reffos' (refugees); the multiplicity and dignity of their cultures and languages ignored, they were seen as 'just jabbering away', much like animals" (*Mastery of Nature* 53), explains Plumwood in the context of racism in Australia. In this, there are drawn connections between the other and both the inferiorised nature and how their languages have no patterns or reason, further excluding them from the master sphere, as well as dismissing their individual differences.

Stereotyping is the most recognisable application of this mechanism in contemporary society, often on the basis of ethnicity and gender: "Men are stereotyped as active, intellectual, inexpressive, strong, dominant and so on, while women are represented in terms of the complementary polarity as passive, intuitive, emotional, weak, and submissive" (*Environmental Culture* 103). Men and women are denied their differences within the stereotyped spheres of both the master and the other, and is instead forced "to drown in an anonymous collectivity" (Memmi 1965, as cited in *Mastery of Nature*, 55). Homogenisation affects both the master and the other, yet most of the mechanisms are directed at the other in order to be able to justify the systematic exploitation of the other by the master.

While the master model needs an other to be able to uphold itself and its domination, it also contains a mechanism to deny the importance of the other. This is the concept of *backgrounding*, in which the other and its contributions are seen as a background for the 'real' accomplishments attributed to the master. Plumwood uses the example of what has historically been womens' tasks, such as raising children, as being perceived as a background for the 'real' learning of the academic world of reason (*Mastery of Nature* 22). Through the mechanisms of dualism, their efforts are inferiorised and perceived as inessential, as it does not belong to the master sphere. It creates a contradiction. The others' efforts are both treated as inessential, but also as a necessary foundation for the master itself. Likewise, the colonised are denied any ecological agency by the coloniser, who simply assimilates their mark on the lands as a part of nature, as the colonised is assimilated into nature and the other. Plumwood uses the Australian Aboriginal people as an example, and how their ownership of the land was simply ignored and the land deemed 'terra nullius' for the coloniser to claim (*Environmental Culture* 104).

Another aspect to backgrounding is the denial of dependency tied to this mechanism. As mentioned before, the master denies that it is dependent on the efforts of the other, and exploits them as a resource without regard for its sustainability. The master dismisses the importance of the other because it implies that the other does have some kind of power over the master, disrupting the idea of complete mastery. Plumwood explains that

> the master more than the slave requires the other in order to define his boundaries and identity, since these are defined against the inferiorised other [...]; it is the slave who makes the master a master, the colonised who make the coloniser, the periphery which makes the centre (*Mastery of Nature* 48-49)

The master needs the other more than the other needs the master, but for this to be recognised would mean for the master to accept that they share qualities, eradicating the hyperseparation, and the model of mastery would collapse. Likewise, if the master succeeds in exploiting the other to the point of destruction, the dualism will be destroyed without its inferior half.

To be able to exploit the other like a resource, Plumwood identifies another mechanism of the dualism. It relies on an objectification and dehumanisation of the other, to establish the them as a means to the masters end. This is called *instrumentalisation* (*Mastery of Nature* 52-53). Through incorporation, the other is robbed of its self and own identity and becomes an object for the master to use and exploit. Along with hyperseparation and homogenisation, the instrumentalisation makes it possible for the master to remove himself from the other on a moral level, avoiding the complications in feeling sympathy and recognition of a "moral kin" in the other (53). Furthermore, in removing the other's identity and incorporating it into the master identity, it also erases the agency of the other, and ethical restrictions are eliminated (145). This

furthermore supports the instrumentalisation and denies the other their own drive towards their end, thus, in the master's logic, reducing them to an object to help reach the master's end.

Reason and Rationalism

In her book, *Environmental Culture: Ecological Crisis of Reason,* Plumwood elaborates on some of the terms which are used to uphold the five main mechanisms mentioned above. Reason and rationality, she writes, are best defined from what it is not, just like the master defines himself by what he defines as the other. Plumwood writes that:

> Rationalism and human/nature dualism have helped create ideals of culture and humans identity that promote human distance from control of and ruthlessness towards the sphere of nature as the Other, while minimising non-human claims on earth and to elements of mind, reason and ethical consideration. (*Environmental Culture* 4)

This is still what the Western notion of reason is based on today, and reason and rationalism becomes achievements, apotheosised in spite of being chained to a weak and feeble body. It becomes "impartial, disengaged [...] is not only superior to but basically independent of the bodily, emotional and personal elements of human lives [...]" (20). As mentioned before, Plumwood stresses that there is a marriage of reason and domination, which becomes the single most important dogma in the Western capitalistic society, as it justifies oppression, exploitation, and domination of things and people void of this supposed superior reason. Plumwood argues that this structure of reason is further held in place by the dualised split between the master centre and the periphery other. The dualism and rationalism become a doctrine about reason. However, she additionally argues that the Western conceptualisation of reason becomes

irrational in its execution. It denies the human dependence on nature, both for the logic of

domination to continue, but also as a place of resources and healing. The other is simultaneously

considered a vital part of the dualised construct and ignored, seen as inessential, and "[...] we are

entitled to conclude that rationalist rationality is irrational" (18).

This is the same logic behind the assumption made by the master that they possess

reason, and therefore are superior to the other. The master would argue that the other exists for

the master to control and colonise, what Plumwood defines as the logic of colonisation. Through

this logic the 'rational' man can 'rightfully' control the world by assuming that he alone

possesses reason. He can argue that if another thing or person possess characteristics considered,

in his assumption, closer to nature, it will be assimilated into the sphere of the other. He is the

only one who can benefit from the more advanced matters of reason (*Environmental Culture* 21).

The system allows the master to continuously use the resources of nature and the beings

associated with it, without regarding their sustainability, as they are presumed to be inexhaustible

because they are based in sphere of pure materiality. Plumwood further writes how "in economic

rationalism, the ecological support base of our societies is systematically relied on but

systematically denied in the same way as the sphere of materiality and the body is denied in

rationalist philosophy" (29). This notion further upholds a continued assumption of

inexhaustibility and denial of dependency on the sphere of nature.

Thus, nature must be completely assimilated and colonised in order for the master to

maintain full control of the productive properties used to sustain the sphere of culture. Plumwood

describes how this is done through a logic of othering, which incorporates, homogenises, and

instrumentalises everything that is not considered the master into a group which needs to be

dominated, as they have no reason and does not know how to utilise their resources properly. The master juxtapose them into subordinated groups such as women, animals, or children; a reasonless other in need of guidance. "The rationalist ideology of reason as an elite characteristic in opposition to Otherised characteristics such as emotion, animality and the body played a major role too in replicating the logic of Othering through different spheres of oppression" (*Environmental Culture* 106). They become incorporated into the master as the homogenised other, rightfully exploited for the good of culture and rationality.

Conversations with Nature

When communicating with nature, the master makes it clear that his wishes are to be fulfilled. Plumwood describes this as a monological exchange that takes place between the master and the other, one where the master's ends are met by the other who becomes the means. The Western rational focus on verbal discourse, as the only intellectual performance, has generated a misguided disregard for the bodily expression found in nature. Through her studies, Plumwood emphasises the great influence of Descartes and the Cartesian thought (178). It allows the master to negate conscious thought to what is perceived as nature and stress the importance of consciousness. The master refuses any form of eco-consciousness, both in himself and the other. Consciousness is monopolised through the monological dialog. Plumwood argues that this phenomenon further strengthens the mind/body dichotomy, as it manipulates the incorporated other into sanctioning colonisation, as the other too perceives itself to be mindless and in need of guidance. The false dichotomy is thereby enhanced through an idea of a false monological 'conversation' with the other. However, Plumwood argues in *Environmental Culture* that by

breaking this monological conversation and engagening in a dialogical conversation, where

humans listen to the needs and wants of nature. It becomes possible to break the oppressive

structure of means/ends and extend the survival of both biodiverse nature and humans alike. "We

dissociate ourselves from nature in order to manipulate it, but then cannot empathise with it or

relate to it dialogically" (120). By not letting the language of nature carry the same weight as a

human language, the system becomes one sided and the perceived master finds himself

disembedded and detached from the other he has created; a situation which allows the master,

through remoteness, to more easily abuse the other.

Remoteness

Plumwood describes how this physical and emotional remoteness has great influence on the

master's interaction with nature, as it negates responsibility through its dissociation.

> Remoteness allows a high level of dissociation between costs and benefits, between
>
> elite consumption benefits and ecological damage. For example, those who benefits
>
> from consumer items from the forests can make themselves remote from the soil
>
> erosion, loss of life opportunities and increases in malarial disease and adverse
>
> health impacts of forest burning that afflict local forest dwellers and resource
>
> suppliers, often treated almost as badly as the 'resource' itself. Because it allows
>
> such high levels of dissociation between production and consumption, remoteness
>
> can greatly distort decision chains. (*Environmental Culture* 71)

Remoteness is a specific and effective form for hyperseparation which becomes an excuse and

justification for itself. It allows the master identity to create a maximum distance, both mentally

and physically, between itself and the othered nature. Plumwood writes that this remoteness is

also visible in the political circles, and it generates a spatial remoteness between the political

elite and the areas most affected by ecological degradation and pollution. Furthermore, it creates

a communicative gap, as the people most vulnerable to the effects do not have access to the

knowledge about the damage or how to prevent it.

Plumwood's point is that the people actually causing the ecological damage is not

affected by them in the short term, which means that they might not have any idea of the scale of

the damage, or they do not care.

> "Remoteness principles thus confirm what the ecological behaviour of stratified and
> authoritarian systems also suggests, that an ecologically rational society cannot be
> found where the kinds of political structures and culture necessary for human justice
> and communicativeness are also lacking." (*Environmental Culture* 73)

Plumwood further argues that the same is true for nature itself. It is a concept that is fundamental

to Western capitalism, as all the goods produced have been removed from the consumer in

varying degrees. It creates an illusion, which seems to have consequences for everyone, but the

targeted consumers do not know the ecological destruction and potential fallout from their

endless consumption. Additionally, Plumwood provides an alternative to this situation, as she

writes that this would not be an issue in a world based on an ecological rational system. Such a

system, she argues, will have to include members or counsels who are connected to areas earlier

neglected and misused (74).

Science is one of the cornerstones in the Western society, and Plumwood describes the

master's use of science to exclude and to other things like emotions, the body, and the personal.

These concepts are made a part of the othered nature, as these things are not viewed as

possessing the cold, clearcut rationality needed in science. The master's science requires

disengagement, which is argued to create an objectivity. Instead, Plumwood argues that it only

generates a human centered prejudice subjectivity from a false sense of reason and rationality (*Environmental Culture* 41). She argues that this assumption of 'pure' scientific logical objectivity is founded in earlier platonic and cartesian interpretations.

> In Platonic rationalism, knowledge is gained in spite of the body, which is interpreted as a hindrance to knowledge. In later Cartesian rationalism, the ideal of knowledge as freedom from doubt and as objectivity is also interpreted as freedom from the body and its deceptions, weaknesses and hindrances, its personal and emotional ties. (42)

If the body is a hindrance, the objective is then to hyperseparate knowledge from the human, and deify it into a stage of existence that cannot be questioned, creating an endless circle of scientific endeavours which does not question itself because it is considered unquestionable, not because it is right. Plumwood argues that by categorising science as an abstract entity that is unattached from the corporeal, the privileged viewpoints of the disengaged master become shrouded in an illusion of universalism and impartialism (42). Any other viewpoint becomes dichotomised and assimilated into the other by being attributed to emotional or political bias; a bias that will be viewed as an unacceptable subjectivity in the master's 'pure' science.

The master sees himself as the center of his universe and every interaction he has with the othered nature is from his perspective, by his rules, and on his terms. Plumwood describes how the master takes the other for granted and approaches it in an anthropocentric way, providing the other with attributes that he believes he does not possess, or is above (*Environmental Culture* 147). This is enforced by the radical exclusion of prudence and ethics, which is further denied nature by the master. Moreover, in the Western capitalist society the human-centeredness is reinforced by the monological relationship with nature, putting humans and their immediate

needs above everything else. Anthropocentrism is closely related to a phenomenon Plumwood

discusses in her earlier book, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature,* called rational egoism, which

is fundamental to instrumentalisation of the other by totaling them in terms of means to the

master's ends.

> When means and ends are seen as of radically different kinds, as non-continuous
>
> and noncontiguous, there are no threatening ambiguities or confusions about
>
> which item belongs where, no risk for the master consciousness of finding itself
>
> on the wrong side of the boundary, as the eaten instead of the eater, the used
>
> instead of the user (*Mastery of Nature* 145-46)

This is the complete instrumentalisation and denial of selfhood the master needs to enforce on

the other in order to create his dualism, which leads him to always be the eater. It allows the

master to generate a dichotomised split between altruism and egoism, where altruism becomes

the act of self-denial he condemns. The master uses a moral hyperseparation of the two concepts

of means/ends and altruism/egoism to remove any sympathy there might be for the former and

rationalises his own egoism through it.

Counteractions

Plumwood in her two related books offers two connected solutions to counter the dualised

capitalistic system of the master identity outlined above. She has two strategies, one from each

book, and the first one focuses on rearranging the means/ends dichotomy, as it is aiding in the

systematic destruction of the other by portraying it as an inexhaustible resource for the master's

needs. The way to counter the rational egoistic foundation is to rethink it; Plumwood present the

idea of relational egoism which aligns the needs of the supposed other with the needs of the

supposed master (*Mastery of Nature* 155). In this new realisation of egoism, nature and non-humans are to a degree still used as means to ends, but the master also becomes the means to the other's ends. They are given the autonomy of selfhood and individuality and are not solely means to the ends of the master. Plumwood gives a great example in *Environmental Culture* where she describes how trapeze performers use each other as a means to reach the top, but they do trade places and do not permanently fix each other to the pole (129).

The other counter proposal she gives is from *Environmental Culture* and it is called the liberation model (106). Her approach is strictly speaking not anti-anthropocentric, but rather a re-conceptualisation generating a much broader category of moral beings, including the other. Plumwood argues for a polycentric or acentric perception of culture, moving away from the master identity's eurocentrism. Her aim with this idea is that place and belonging, which are something that is important to both human and non-human identity, should not be focused on one location or place that could make one more valued than another. She therefore states that in order to create a world of equity, the focus needs to be on recognition of all locations and their individual significance, rather than complete abandonment of place as a factor for the relationship between the master identity of Western culture and the other.

Applications of Ecofeminism

This section contains a short introduction of Val Plumwood and the uses of her key terms in this thesis. Moreover, it will validate why all five terms are needed to the analysis and to understand the structure and system which creates the master/other dualism and how they keep it in place. This section further contains a discussion of three other approaches to ecofeminism, both to indicate that it can be used for a variety of different analytical points, but also to show that the ideas Plumwood presented in 1993 are still being used by people who work within the field now.

The main theory behind this section is Val Plumwood's two books *Feminism and The Mastery of Nature* (1993) and *Environmental Culture: the Ecological Crisis of Reason* (2005). Plumwood focuses on reconstructing the conceptions of reason and rationality in the neoliberal Western society, and how these concepts have constructed the relationship between what is perceived as human and cultural and what is part of the non-human and the natural. The two books serve two different purposes in the theorital summary above: *Feminism and The Mastery of Nature* is the groundwork and outlines her main objection to the system, while she outlines how the system is held in place with the key term being dualism, which is upheld by five additional mechanisms used to separate and alienate the Other from the Master. The other book, *Environmental Culture: the Ecological Crisis of Reason* works as a structural analysis of the Western understanding of reason and rationality, and she elaborates on her terms and adds some additional concepts that are sub-categories and extensions to her original theory. Her philosophy has a strong political agenda against a system which she argues is still in place, and her books and their terms are still relevant as they are some of the fundamental ideas in ecofeminism. Additionally, it was chosen to work with her books because they provide key terms to use in an

analysis, while focusing on the structures of oppression, rather than on specific areas of oppression.

The key terms defined by Plumwood work together to explain and demonstrate the structure of exploitation and connection between women and nature in Western patriarchal society. Through the analysis later in the thesis, her philosophical theory has been fashioned into a critical literary theory used on a multimedia text. From *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, a set of key concepts which she uses to explain the presented structure of the dualism between culture and nature, man and woman, have been identified. Furthermore, her book *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* adds some elaborations and understandings of her terms which bring depth and understanding to the structural process that upholds the dichotomy. The approach has been used as an additional layer of analysis and can point out specific new additions to the neoformalist film analysis.

The five main concepts of the dualised structure, presented and explained in the theoretical summary above, have similar qualities and can be argued to create redundancies. However, this is simultaneously true and false, in the sense that all five terms, homogenisation, incorporation, hyperseperation, backgrounding, and instrumentalisation, are used together so the complete power of the master identity is preserved. They all have different purposes in maintaining the oppressive and exploitive structures examined above.

The main function of homogenisation is to generate an other without individual perception of identity, they are boxed in broad and faceless categories such as women, black, or homosexuals. This way they are part of a mass and cannot threaten the identity or preservation of the self of the master. Incorporation then uses the homogenised other to project all the perceived

negative aspects of the master unto the other, while taken the positive from the other, leaving the other as the shadow reflection of the master. The now incorporated, homogenised other is thereafter separated from the master, with maximum distance between the two; hyperseperating them. This creates an illusion of difference between the perceived master and the other, where the homogenisation and incorporation work to dichotomise the two groups to ensure that they share no qualities. Additionally, the attributes of the other will be backgrounded, made insignificant to the real attributes and skills of the master, as the master cannot acknowledge these attributes, creating a complete backgrounding and denial of the others' credits to society and the master. Lastly, the other becomes an instrument for the master, both as an outlet of frustration and as a source of labour deemed to be beneath the master's dignity. Jobs like cleaning, agriculture, and childbearing are all jobs that the master deems inferior to his rationalised and reason felt purpose; work better left to the other.

The five key terms are five different but intersectional ways the dualism is kept in place. Plumwood argues that they are all needed to uphold the power structure. Therefore, even though they seem to overlap, they are extending each other to create the master. This means that although not all five mechanisms are detectable in society or art, they are all present to support each other and the master/other dualism. Furthermore, the order in which the mechanisms are lined up in the example above, is not the sole way of progression into a dualised society. The appearance of any of the five mechanisms may trigger the others, as they all are interwoven.

As an example of this, the following section handles three essays picked from the book *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth* (2014) to show how other Ecofeminists have used Plumwood's theory to analyse and discuss specific themes. This

will give a better idea of how Plumwood and ecofeminism can be used in specific and narrow instances. These three were chosen because they have a broad variety of thematic points which is both relevant to the analysis and discussion later in the paper. The three essays are: *Eros and the Mechanism of Eco-Defence* by patrice jones; *Interdependent Animals: A Feminist Disability Ethic-of-Care* by Sunaura Taylor; and *Towards EcoMasculinities, Ecogenders, and Ecosexualities* by Greta Gaard. Furthermore, the essays will also, through the discussion, be compared and discussed in accordance to Plumwood.

Eros Homogenised

patrice jones' essay about Eros and eco-defence focuses on the different ways capitalism and the structure of the masculine master subject have tried to homogenise, incorporate, and background the function of non-hetero Eros both in humans and non-humans. She discusses how the religious, capitalistic system has undermined the different expressions of Eros and dichotomised them in the dual structure of homosexual and heterosexual behaviour, where the latter expression has been pressed as the norm, because market-based capitalism is in constant need of influx of consumers. She points out that the system has an intense focus on reproduction as the sole purpose of sexuality and Eros, both from an evolutionary standpoint, but also as a social service and social health. The system has tried to control reproduction of both animals and humans. The "[...] patriarchal pastoralism, globalized via colonialism, serving the aims of capitalism, and furthered by slice-and-dice style science, the hegemonic economy of (re)production and consumption is catastrophic antithesis of exuberant Eros" (91). Here, jones illustrates how the systematic assimilation of gender, sexualities, and Eros has greater consequences for humans,

non-humans, and the earth, as the two biggest problems leading to global warming can be solved by less production and reproduction.

jones uses some key points on which she builds her argument: The hubris of human views on sexual behaviour, misrepresentation of natural selection in modern patriarchal society, and the endless circle of production and reproduction created by capitalism. Homosexual and non-heterosexual expressions of Eros have been recorded in as many as 300 species of mammals and birds. Humans have for centuries tried to assimilate nature into being either heterosexual, to fit with the reproductive agenda, or homosexual, to point out humans' own superiority over nature. The easiest way to portray nature as inferior to humans has been to homogenise the other into one category of non-heterosexual Eros, and labelling it unnatural, even though such behaviour has been recorded in most pre-Christian societies worldwide (93). jones argues that after Christianity homogenised the Western world, ideas about same-sex, non-reproductive Eros have been seen as bad for society and against 'the will of God', and further used as an argument for white-male superiority over races, nature and women. She bases some of her observations on Plumwood's descriptions of the philosophical anchor in Western society and later popular assumptions about women, races, and nature. Homosexual behaviour then became a crime, something to be suppressed as it did not fit with the new ideas blooming in the West. "Lesbians still confront an everyday threat of 'corrective rape'" (98). Homophobia has become a system used as maintenance of the man-on-top binary gender roles, not letting other than those who fit into the category of the 'master' be in control.

This leads to the second point; natural selection as reproduction only. jones argues that the Western patriarchy needs full control of reproduction both in animals and humans in order to

stay in power. The relentless preoccupation with and control of reproduction and sexuality has led to a misunderstanding or misguidedness of natural selection. Natural selection is demonstrated as male animals' only function is to reproduce and spread their genes, which has become an argument for wrongful human male behaviour. Sexual selection, as it is called, is only one part of natural selection. Firstly, non-reproductive males and females can either function as babysitters or adoptive parents to offspring. Through this performance, they relay social norms and teach the young how to behave and interact in the environment. Furthermore, research has shown that female animals actively try to avoid pregnancy as labour can be fatal. "Sex became a matter of fitness, and individual attributes could be evaluated based on their apparent adaptiveness to organism's reproductive capacity" (99). However, the intense focus on sexual prowess, rather than the social skills taught by members of a race not reproducing is a form for backgrounding which lets the system control where the focus in sexual Eros should be. jones' argument is quite clear here; she implores everyone to break with this homogenised understand of sexuality, a sexuality that is present in animals and humans alike. Sexual Eros cannot be confined to a 'choice' between hetero or homo but needs to be expressed in a variety of different ways.

By controlling reproduction, the capitalistic system is capable of producing both products and consumers.

> Capitalism demands and indeed requires incessant growth - new markets for new goods, which must come from somewhere - on order to not collapse. Unlike economics in which participants cooperate to trade fairly, capitalism is mathematically unbalanced by removal of profits into private pockets and thus requires constant infusion of resources. Thus, it requires not only incessant

reproduction - whether of factory farmed chickens, assembly line automobiles, or worker-consumers to build those cars and eat those birds - but also diversion of desire. (100)

It is clear here that the capitalist patriarchal system uses reproduction and Eros to fuel their failing system. It has changed Eros from being something which all species share and enjoy, to a hungering need to always consume. jones concludes that the many situations and health issues can be solved through something as bodily fundamental as Eros. "By 'Eros' I mean not only physical love and sexual desire but [...] sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual [...]" (101). Her argument is one of joy and sharing, not materially anchored things, but joy founded in our bodies. By unleashing Eros, the human species can find its way to back to nature; we can find joy in helping others, not for our sake, but for all of us.

Denial of Interdependence

Sunaura Taylor's essay on dependence takes a different angle on the issues in patriarchal society, as she discusses how dependency has been made a taboo and a sign of weakness. She is an ethic-of-care feminist and analyses how the idea of care has been twisted into a disability and shameful endeavour that makes you less than others, based solely on your 'defect'. Her idea and argument is built around interdependency, a tradition with long-standing roots in both ecofeminism and feminism (109). Moreover, her essay discusses the general remoteness between the able-bodied and disabled persons and non-humans, as they have become an other, a shadow reflection of the healthy and 'wild'.

Being cared for has, historically, been seen as a burden; a burden of dependency. Both domesticated animals and humans with mental or physical handicaps have been viewed as

dependant on others for their survival, and Taylor suggests that ethics need to be rethought to construct a narrative based on subjecthood and interdependence, rather than one where they are 'better off dead'. She uses an example in her essay which speaks for itself: "My libertarian grandmother once told me I should be grateful for everything I get as a disabled person, because I'd "die in the woods" if left to my own devices." (112). Her grandmother is referring to a natural state and her disability would show how dependent she is, as her survival would depend on others' kindness. What is interesting about this statement is that it is widely accepted, and people would agree that she probably would perish on her own, however, so would anyone else. Taylor points out that able-bodied people would also die in the woods alone as the absence of human contact, innovation, or tools is an unnatural state for humans who are pack animals. It is worrying that in the narrative of dependency, able-bodied humans tend to underestimate their own dependency on other humans and non-humans alike. Domesticated animals are similarly confronted with this stigma. They are seen as man-made, unnatural, utterly dependent on humans, and unfit for the wild. Taylor points out that "various environmentalist, animal welfarist, and animal advocates have presented domesticated animals this way - as tragically, even grotesquely, dependent" (112). Disabled people and domesticated animals are met with stereotypes about what it is to be unnatural and abnormal in relation to the Western assumption of indignity in dependency.

The one thing often overlooked is that everyone is dependent on each other; all beings are interdependent. However, the illusion of independence has generated an idea that disabled people, as well as domesticated animals, need to feel or show gratitude as their survival is hinged on others' mercy. This idea seems to be strongest in America, the land of independence and

self-sufficiency, and disabled people become automatically tragic (113). This misconception of independence has produced a discourse of dependency as an unnatural and weak characteristic. Even though, as Taylor writes, we are all dependent on social and cultural barriers and institutions that are both created to help and block us out. As dependent humans are on other humans, they are massively dependent on nature and non-humans in ways that are incomprehensive. "Other animals are dependent on their communities, habitats, and ecosystems. None of us are actually independent. The whole planet is interdependent" (113).

However, dependency has been used to justify dominance and destruction of nature, non-humans, and people with disabilities throughout history. Taylor points out that the dependency of domesticated animals has been used both by animal activists and society as an arguments for killing off or using animals for their own ends. Some animal liberation figures have argued, through the discursive tool of dependency, that domesticated animals have been bred in such a manner that they are no longer able to live outside human influence, and thus can only be exploited. However, Taylor argues that these animals instead of being viewed as abominations of nature need to be observed as species with an ability to adapt to situations which help them survive. These species are among the most wide spread on the planet and therefore, according to Western assumptions of natural selection, the most successful. Although, the point made in Grandin's argument has some interesting points, but she misunderstands the relationship between humans and non-humans (115). Instead of eradicating these species, humans undoubtedly have made unfit for wildlife, they should be viewed with interdependence, in the sense that they are as dependent on humans for their survival as humans are on them as a food source and for companionship. It just needs, as Plumwood argues, a relationship where humans

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give as much as they take. So, the animals 'broken' by humans need to be taken care of. Humans need to take responsibility for their actions and treat these animals with respect and provide them with a good life, and in turn humans can slaughter some of them both for the health of the flock and for the sake of food.

Taylor's conclusion is on the same wavelength; she too sees the urgent break with the illusion of independence and opts for a realisation of human interdependence with the earth and all its creatures. She urges society to rethink dependency in order to realise the potential achievements and contributions from the creatures labelled as dependent and 'helpless'. The sooner we shatter this denial of dependency, we can rebuild the relationships with nature and non-humans and see them not as objects in need of our control, but as co-workers in the struggle to survive. We need to help each other to live. Taylor's thesis is about connectedness and reshaping the stigmatised idea of dependency and work with others in a balance instead of viewing ourselves as superior, based on wrong wishful thinking about human independence and denial of dependency.

New Masculinities

The last of the three essays is written by Greta Gaard, who focuses on various expressions of masculinity, sexuality and genders in ways which are connected to the earth and ecosystem. The focal point of her essay arguments for free expressions of these things and how these diverse articulations of self can disrupt the patriarchal capitalist structure in Western society through dissimilation and diversity. Gaard's essay demonstrates different strategies to evade this standardised and tolerated idea of the masculine and feminine, while discussing the

disconnection between the praxis and theory of the field of non-homogenised masculine expressions of self within ecofeminism. Gaard promotes diverse gender and sexual expressions, new ways to deflect the heteronormativity of Eros, sexual expression, and communing with the earth, the other, or the non-human in a way which does not harm or instrumentalise them.

Gaard starts by pointing out the resilience of the homogenised construction of masculinity, and its ability to adapt and incorporate new varieties of the male. She explains that it has this ability because the system has created and ritualised specifics of what it means to be male and masculine, and it can afford to have diverse sub-expressions as long as the general functions of meat-eating, materialistic consumerism, and sexualisation of an other are in place. Gaard further argues that one of the reasons masculinity has been placed opposite ecology is that monotheistic religion focuses on a masculine sky-god who takes spirituality and abstraction away from earth and places hell beneath it. This generates a dualism between the supposed higher plane of masculinity, disconnected by abstraction of the mind, and earth's bound femininity rooted in materiality and the body. Gaard states that studies of eco-masculinities and eco-gender expressions in general have their roots in history and philosophy. These expressions argue for non-binary expressions of gender, as they introduce and provoke new ways of constructing interpretation of one's self through a lens of masculinity or femininity that is boundless and flexible.

However, there are some issues with her essay. Gaard's attempt to introduce new forms of masculinity and sexuality is compelling, provoking, and much needed, but her views do not touch upon all the issues surrounding sexuality and gender expression. The focus of her essay seems to be human-centred and making the relationship between humans and nature all about

human identity; nature becomes a means to an end in the grand scheme. Furthermore, Gaard's model of ecosexuality seems to instrumentalise nature in one aspect, in order to generate a more dynamic human culture, through which nature will again gain favour, and thus nature suffers for the sake of human expression. This will create a new power dynamic which will complicate and, in the long run, dichotomise the situation. This creates a new non-human other as an object for human sexuality and gender expression, instead of focusing on expressive ways in which nature can become equal to culture through diverse gender expressions. However, it is a step in the right direction and some of her points could have a positive effect on society and the human relation to nature.

Gaard points out that masculinity is constructed around the capitalistic economic structures that reward based on colour, class, and sex (232). She suggests a new understanding of masculinity and masculinities that will interact with diverse and unique male expressions and rebel against the homogenisation of the male and the female and encourage other types of masculinities; ones which interact with nature in positive, creative, and sustainable ways. Her theory has the potential to oppose the master narrative and stop the deconstruction of nature through expressive eco-masculinities with focus on bio-diversity and interdependence on others.

Analysis of *Mad Max: Fury Road*

The cinematographic analysis of *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) will be composed of examples of moving sequences and still mise-en-scene shots to underline the peculiarities and specifics of the different elements which produce meaning in a film. Furthermore, the analysis will take into account how *camera movement, camera angle,* and *editing* have influence on the meaning of the entire film. This structure is used to underline both how the elements work in specific sequences and shots, but also to comment on their meaning as a whole. In cinematography four elements are central to the analysis; mise-en-scene, editing, sound, and narrative structure.

Mise-en-scene

The mise-en-scene is the most familiar element of film analysis. The viewer may not recall the cutting or camera movement of the film, but they will most likely recall "[...] the costumes of in *Gone with the Wind* and the bleak, chilly lighting in Charles Foster Kane's Xanadu" (Bordwell 112). The mise-en-scene was first applied to theater and later adopted by filmmakers, and the elements of a mise-en-scene overlap with those also recognised in theater: setting, costume, lighting, and staging (112-168). The first element which becomes apparent when working with mise-en-scene is the setting, and as Bordwell writes: "[...] critics and audience have understood that setting plays a more active role in cinema than it usually does in theater" (113). Cinema setting can play a vital role in the narrative of the film. It is not necessarily restricted to the background, but can be part of the foreground and influence the perception of the characters in it. The filmmaker can control this perception by selecting a setting or creating one in a studio, or through CGI. Setting design can guide the audience to discern characters and they provide a

sense of time and space. In *Mad Max*, the design of the Citadel is used to build up the character Immortan Joe, to illustrate his self-image, and to show how powerful he is in this world (00:06:00 - 00:09:00). The audience is shown the full extent of the Citadel, with an impressive marking carved in the rock, the symbol of Immortan Joe. Additionally, the inner quarters are revealed with masses of water, greens, and rooms for his most beloved things, like his wives.

Like setting, costumes can have specific functions and purposes in a film's total atmosphere. To return to the example mentioned above, the costume in concert with the setting introduces Immortan Joe who is the antagonist of the film. In the sequence he is 'put together', as the audience is treated to all the details of his design, which in combination with the setting and introduction of his Citadel provides a powerful introduction of him. This could not have been achieved as efficiently through a monologue. Here, the costume becomes the narrative and characterisation; it illustrates how he himself is a constructed persona that has become part of the man.

Another important aspect of costume design is makeup. Bordwell writes how makeup originally was used because actors' faces and facial expression would not register properly on early film (122). However, today it is used deliberately as part of characters' persona and feel. In *Mad Max* the makeup of the female protagonist Furiosa displays her identity and transformation in the film. She is portrayed early in the film wearing an oil stain on her forehead, a symbol of her status as Imperator in the V8 cult of Immortan Joe. However, later in the film when she has transformed from being a part of Immortan Joe's gang, into her own self, she is pictured without the oil stain. The makeup becomes part of the symbolism of her character.

Lighting plays an important part of films, as it allows the audience to see the action, costumes, and setting of the film. Moreover, it can create lighter and darker areas within the frame which can manipulate and illustrate specific compositions in the shots and guide the viewer's attention to certain objects, details, or actions. Lighting shapes objects by producing highlights and shadows in the frame. Bordwell explains that a highlight is a patch of relative brightness on a surface and provide cues to the texture of the surface of the object. "There are two types of shadows, each of which is important in film composition; *Attached* shadows or *shading*, and *cast* shadows. An attached shadow occurs when light fails to illuminate part of an object because of the object's shape surface feature" (124). Cast shadows occur when an object is placed in front of the light source and casts a shadow. Highlights and shadows also help create scene space and depth. In *Mad Max* the lighting contributes to creating depth in the image as the light source, which is imitating the sun, is in the offscreen space (00:06:56). Further, a subtle fill light is placed next to the camera revealing details about the state of Immortan Joe's health. The boils and sores, part of the costume design of the character, are cast in both light and shadows to create nuances and draw the viewer's attention to them and the state of his overall health. Again, this element of film production is used to generate meaning in the film, as it used specifically to point out how Immortan Joe is and what his motivation might be.

The last feature of the mise-en-scene is staging in movement and performance. This concerns the movement and apparent tools available for the actor in the scene. These can be used to create scenes that express powerful emotions. As an example, *Mad Max* contains a shot of Nux whose expression is both shock and awe as the man whom he thought to be a god has been killed (01:44:52). The camera focuses on Nux' face and zooms in slightly as the realisation and

ramifications of this sinks in. Nux' realisation that his entire life has been a lie is visible in his

facial expression, and he takes it into his own hands by saving the people who treated him as a

human being, and who he thinks can create a better world. Immortan Joe's mythos has been

broken as he is able to die and Nux is free. The shot also contains two of the breeders who look

tired and spent; The mission is accomplished, Immortan Joe is dead and they have escaped his

grasp and touch.

Editing

The filmmaker controls not only what is filmed, but also how. This is possible through

cinematographic qualities. There are three areas the filmmaker can select to adjust: tonality,

manipulation of the speed of motion, and perspective transformation (Bordwell 162). In

controlling the tonality of the film, he can affect the film directly by manipulating the film stock,

or through camera lenses and editing in post-production. The human eye is quite sensitive to

colours, and by adding contrast to the film, the filmmaker can guide the audience to specific

areas of the shot. Additionally, by tampering with the tone and using filters, he can provide a

distinct feel to the individual shot or the whole film, making it feel more real, or creating

distance between the fictional and the real. The contrast of colours in a film can be viewed as

part the setting and impacts how the film is received. In *Mad Max* the tonality is changed through

the use of lenses. Most of the film is shot through an orange-tinted lens which emphasises the

feel of the desert and contributes to the post-apocalyptic notion of the film. The parts of the film

which do not have orange filter are night scenes, and they have been covered with a strong blue

filter instead. The purpose of these filters is to emphasise the battered and destroyed feel of the

film's universe. Utilising these distinct filters can further have cemented the *Mad Max* universe in the fictional, accentuate that the world is fictional and seperate.

Motion is another way the filmmaker can manipulate shots into performing in explicit ways. By slowing or increasing the speed of shots, the filmmaker has the opportunity to highlight objects, movement, or angles in the shot. However, this is similarly combined with lense focus and contrast in the image to make the audience feel a sense of urgency or change the perspective to make the audience see what the character see. In the shot from 01:35:00 to 01:35:08, Max is pushed down by a boom-stick explosion and falls down. The vision becomes blurred around Max, as he is suffering from the effects of the explosion, and the audience experience what he does: time slows down, the sound becomes muted, and most of the image is foggy and out of focus. The viewer is meant to feel the urgency in the situation, as an adversary is rushing Max from the side, but he evades is the last second.

The third factor in the shot analysis is the framing of the shot. "In any image, the frame is not simply the neutral border; it imposes a certain vantage point onto the material within the image" (Bordwell 182). The frame is defining the image, but not restricting it. There are four areas over which framing of the shot has influence, however, this analysis will only work with the last three, as the first one is the size and shape of the frame. *Mad Max* is a Hollywood produced film and shot in the standardised 35mm ratio, and this will not be considered part of the analysis as it is the standard. The other three areas which will be part of this analysis is: "the way frames define on-and offscreen space; the way the impose distance, angle, and height of vantage point onto the image; and the way framing can move in relation to the mise-en-scene" (182-183).

The frame makes the image finite. When a filmmaker decides to show the audience a frame, he selects a slice of the world to focus on, leaving the rest offscreen. "If the camera leaves the object or person, and moves elsewhere, we assume that the object or person is still there, outside the frame" (187). The offscreen space can be used to build up suspense, or surprise the audience by revealing certain characters or items important to the narrative. In the case of *Mad Max*, offscreen space is used in two very different ways. Firstly, it is used on several occasions as directions, or by creating tension in the shots. In the shot 01:36:38 to 01:36:44, the offscreen space is used as a reminder that the group driving away from Immortan Joe is still in danger, as one of the warboys grabbles down and steals one of the wives. The shot shows the wife, Toast the Knowing, looking up, directing the audience's attention to the offscreen upper left corner, where the warboy immediately after appears and takes her away. This reminds the viewer that danger is still around, and the mission can still fail.

Secondly, the offscreen space is used in an abstract manner. The *Mad Max* universe is supposedly as big as the real world, but the film only takes place in a small area in a desert, which leads to the idea that this situation, Immortan Joe and other men taking control of the resources, is either unique to this area or the norm is this apocalyptic universe. The offscreen space plays with the audience's imagination and the limitlessness of the world. It further comments on the audience's perception of space and place; the offscreen space works as both immediate critique on systems close to the audience and on oppressive systems far away, generating a feeling of false safety.

In film production, the filmmaker has the opportunity to convey certain perspectives by using the camera in different angles and movements. These show how the different shots are

supposed to be perceived. When discussing angles of the camera, two things take precedence in the analysis of *Mad Max*: angle and subject-camera distance, as they are both used in the film to establish connections between the characters and convey emotions. To make the analysis more clear, it will work with six different angles which are the most common ones and the ones which can be observed in the film: high angle, low angle, eye-level, worm-level, bird's eye, and canted angle; and five different shots in relation to camera-subject distance which also are the most common ones and those used in the film: Extreme long-shot, long-shot, medium shot, close-up, and extreme close-up.

It has been said by film theorists that "[i]n general, the closer the camera is to the subject, the more emotional weight the subject gains" (Sikov 10). However, this is not always the case. Sometimes filmmakers disregard conventions and create emotional shots from afar. This is evident in *Mad Max,* near the end of the second act (00:30:00 - 1:00:00), when Furiosa is told that the Green Place is no more. Here an emotional shot is filmed in a medium shot, rather than a close-up. The medium shot has a better effect in this film as the it allows for the setting to be shown, using the desert as a harsh contrast to the idea of the Green Place, and this contributes to Furiosa's sense of despair. Furthermore, a close-up or extreme close-up will draw attention to textures and details, which are not important in this shot, as the emotions produced by her anguished scream and the twirling sand around her is the point of it. As it can be noted from the quotation above, the different uses of angles and distances are seen as conventions and not rules.

This further means that the filmmaker does not need to stick to the conventions but will most likely used them because the audience will expect it. In *Mad Max* there are shots which stick to the conventions. For example, in the beginning of the film, there is a establishing

extreme long-shot which is used to introduce the universe in which the film takes place and provides the audience with a sense of space. Angles can similarly be used to generate meaning as they are used provide expressive content about characters and settings. Right after the audience has been introduced to Immortan Joe and Furiosa, the camera moves around through the crowd and creates a worm-level angle which illustrates the magnitude of the Citadel, showing how important and immensely powerful Immortan Joe is. Another interesting shot comes soon after as the audience look over Immortan Joe's shoulder when he looks down on the masses in front of him, proclaiming to be their redeemer, and their faces vanish in the collective masses, furthermore emphasising the hierarchy with Immortan Joe as head and the masses as his subjects.

The mobility of the frame is unique to the film production and has the ability to change the height, angle, level and distance of the camera to the subject, to create a dynamic interactive experience, as the audience is moving, rotating, or retreating with the frame. Movement can be either motivated, following the movement of the figures in the screen, or unmotivated, working either against or independently of the figures on the screen. It appears that unmotivated movement carries most meaning in a cinematographic analysis, as it is a choice made by the filmmaker to switch the audience's focus away from the figures and towards something else in the frame. The unmotivated movement often reveals "[...] an overlooked clue, a sign that comments on the action, an unnoticed shadow, or a clutching hand" (Bordwell 199). Whether the movement is motivated or not, it provides the audience with a sense of space. The opening sequence of *Mad Max* gives an idea of the vastness of the film's world, as the camera slowly

moves closer to Max, revealing the protagonist. The audience is left to ponder over the size of the fictional world they have entered.

The mobility of the frame overlaps with the function of editing, which is the way different shots are put together, how long the shots are, and how the audience moves from shot to shot. Cutting is the main tool of editing. It is evident that cutting in *Mad Max* can generate meaning. In a sequence from 00:06:09 to 00:10:42, the editing of the shots illustrate how Immortan Joe views himself. The sequence starts with a shot of Furiosa's branded neck, marking her as Joe's property and servant. Next it is shown what she is transporting, establishing her importance and status through both editing and dialogue; she is to transport the produce and is trusted not to steal it. After this, the camera cuts to Immortan Joe, showing how he 'assembled'. The camera cuts between Joe and War Boys assembling the war rig chanting a war cry. The connection between Immortan Joe and the War Boys is here becoming apparent as they serenade his becoming. This sequence also illustrates continuity editing, as it cuts between Immortan Joe being put together and to a similar action happening to the war rig. This is also called matching in action and it creates a balance between the shots because they cut to one thing being 'hooked on', to another. Moreover, the comparison between Immortan Joe and the machine has meaning as well; he is more machine than man and he has more love for the machine than the humans transporting it, and machines are both 'immortal' and perceived as more powerful than humans.

The last part of the sequence showcases Immortan Joe and what makes him the villain. For example, in the shot right after his assembly, the camera focuses not on him walking out of the picture, but the background which shows the water pumps. The next shot displays Immortan Joe standing, looking over the people dependent on his grace, the water. The shot is fairly long

and focuses on the different groups of followers as he mention them. Near the end of the

sequence form 00:08:05 to 00:08:24, the camera shows the people Immortan Joe addresses. This

part of the film is further used to illustrate and form the character Immortan Joe and present the

conflict: the problem the heroes of the film need to resolve.

The last important feature in editing is what Sikov calls the 180 degree system, which is

used to create coherence in a film (67). However, in *Mad Max* this convention seems to be

broken in scenes containing a lot of action. Instead, there is a 360 degree system which allows

for more to happen in an action sequence. Nearing the end of the film in the hectic chase scene to

toward the Citadel, there are numerous shots with more of a 360 than a 180 degree convention.

From 01:34:22 to 01:37:25, we can find examples of both. In the beginning of the sequence, Max

is cutting wires attached to harpoons which are slowing the war rig down. It is clear that the 180

degree convention is used to stabilise the coherence in the scene, as many things are happening

all at once and could cause confusion. The audience is able to follow the action as the camera

moves the same way when viewing the opposing sides in the struggle. The action tends to stay

on one side of the car; Max is viewed from the left and the car which flies over from the right.

By shifting the action back and forth in these reverse shots, the filmmaker creates hectic action

scenes where both points of view are shown to the audience.

Sound

When looking at, or rather listening to films, the analysis is divided into three categories of

sound; dialogue, music, and sound effects. These categories are further split into diegetic sound,

which is available to the characters in the film, and non-diegetic sound, only available to the

audience. This part of the analysis will focus on music and sound effects, as the dialogue has more narrative weight. In the film, there is a tendency to include what would normally be non-diegetic sounds as part of the characters world. *Mad Max* has in its action sequences a 'theme' music following the war band of Immortan Joe. This music adds to the mythos of Immortan Joe, as he has a personal soundtrack within the fictional world. This is unusual and adds to the constructed image of the character, both in his idea of himself and his power in the world. This soundtrack therefore seems to be both diegetic and non-diegetic in the sense that the audience many times would forget that parts of the music actually is present and accessible for the characters, because they are used to music or soundtracks as being outside the scope of the characters. The film breaks this convention by giving the villain music to stress his godlike status within his own universe.

This is not to say that the film does not have soundtracks in the conventional non-diegetic manner. In the sequence from 01:34:22 to 01:37:25, two soundtracks are applied to the action, building up two parts of a whole. In the first part of this sequence, which is a typical high-speed chase scene, the action is accompanied by violins and drums, drums which essentially can be both non-diegetic and diegetic, as the gang is trying to get ahead of the war band chasing them. Around 01:34:54-01:34:56, there is complete silence in the film, building up the suspense and action in the scene in reaction to a car flipping over and causing chaos within Immortan Joe's war band. Throughout the sequence and the film as a whole, the absence of sound is used to make the audience focus on the narrative in the film, as in the example mentioned above after Max cuts the line and the car flips around. Here, other challenging adversaries arrive on screen, ready to make the day harder for the heroes in the war rig. Yet, the film does not have any

special sound effects. The only sound effects seems to enhance the sounds which the audience normally would not be able to hear in the heat of the action, such as punches, gunshots and revving engines.

A film is a series of individual shots that the filmmaker connects in a systematic and expressive manner. Cinematography distinguishes between single shot analysis and editing between shots as different aspects of the same things. For example, analysing a single shot allows for in-depth focus on colours, perspective, and framing of each individual shot, whereas working with the editing provides a deeper understanding of the connection and fluency of different shots to generate character development and creating coherence in the film as a whole.

Narrative

As the film is titled *Mad Max: Fury Road*, one tends to focus on the character Max. He is the first person presented to the audience and appears to be the protagonist. He is an interesting character in the sense that he is not directly tied to the conflict that spurred the story into action, yet still participates in the development. When he is caught by Immortan Joe's minions, the War Boys, he is used as a blood bag for one of the many sick Boys. He only joins the women trying to reach the Green Place and its promised freedom because they incidentally are both trying to escape at the same time. Max uses this opportunity to band together with the fleeting women to ensure at greater chance at success, as well as trying to save these women, in the way that he did not succeed in saving others. He does not speak much and is fiercely haunted by memories of his past, and those he failed to save, hence the name *Mad Max*. While his madness sometimes seems to cripple him, it also proved to be a saving grace during a fight, where a vision of a girl makes

him lift his hand to stop a crossbow bolt before it pierces his skull. Here, his weakness is made into a strength, a theme that is repeated throughout the film.

While Max may seem to be the main character, the story is focused on Furiosa. She is the protagonist of the conflict of the film, and proves to be the driving force behind much of the development of the storyline. Originally, it is her own quest to find the Green Place, the land she had been stolen from by Immortan Joe as a child. She was meant to be another wife and breeder for Immortan Joe, but proved to be barren, and was passed on to be trained for harder work[1]. Her shirt may support this, as it looks to be - although dirty - like the remnants of the white flowy material worn by the wives. Her femininity, or lack thereof, is a symbol of what she has sacrificed to gain the trust needed to plan a successful escape. Her life has been centered on returning to her homeland and family, as well as killing the one responsible for her kidnapping and the death of her mother. In the end, she succeeds in part. She discovers that the Green Place has turned into a sullen and dead swamp, no longer the lush paradise of her memories. Instead, they are all forced to choose between trying to cross the seemingly endless salt marshes or returning to face their enemy. They return and win, though at a great price. In the end, Furiosa reaches her redemption, and she is at peace as the former wives take over the Citadel, maybe wishing to create a new Green Place with the water of the Citadel and the seeds from the Many Mothers, the inhabitants of the former Green Place, also called the Vuvalini.

The former controller of the Citadel, Immortan Joe, is the main antagonist. He is the one responsible for the kidnappings of Max and Furiosa, and most likely a number of other healthy women to serve as his wives. He is obsessed with healthiness and is constantly trying to father a

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[1] http://madmax.wikia.com/wiki/Imperator_Furiosa

perfect son, most likely to serve as heir. Immortan Joe himself is very ill, and needs medical attention almost constantly, which is shown through his character design and presentation. His skin is covered in boils that needs to be covered in a white powder and he carries a breathing mechanism on his shoulder that forms a halo around his head akin to the one often painted around the head of Jesus Christ. This also reflects his self-image as a god to his people: "I am your redeemer. It is by my hand you will rise from the ashes of this world" (00:08:28-37). This is furthermore shown in his 'creation', when he is first presented to the audience (00:06:25-00:07:32). It is shown how he is medicated with the powder and War Pups, the children training to become War Boys, dress him in his armour. He is, piece by piece, put together, much like the god identity he has created, ending with a close-up of him donning his characteristic mask, which is connected to his breathing mechanism. His bare face is never shown.

Moreover, he has ritualised the trade of his water and mother's milk with the People Eater and the Bullet Farmer, the two other moguls with a monopoly on "guzzoline" (gasoline) and bullets. In the beginning of the film, when the war rig is set to leave Citadel to trade, it is made into a gigantic show for the sake of the masses of poor people and War Boys and Pups. Immortan Joe paints a picture of himself as their saviour, the one who provides for them and gives a certain few the chance at a 'better' life as a War Boy. He has successfully created an entire cult centered around the identity he has created for himself, to the point that his created identity has overtaken his life. It is also reflected in his name Joe, which can be interpreted as a combination of John and Doe, the name used for unidentified male corpses in the United States. It reflects that he himself is nobody, someone without an identity, and that the character created

by himself is the important factor. It is what he represents that is important, not him as a person. It is the mindless cult around his persona, the power he has amassed, and his apparent ability to bestow grace on his followers that is important.

The wives of Immortan Joe are perceived as especially graced to his followers. They are young, beautiful, and healthy women who are supposed to bear him healthy sons. None seem to have been able to birth a flawless son yet, and there is nothing mentioned of daughters; One might imagine that they are passed on to be raised as 'cows' to farm mother's milk from. In the film, there are five wives, each representing a stereotype: the leader, the wise, the sensual, the strange or funny, and the fragile. They each play an important role in the escape. The leader is the Splendid Angharad, splendid being a title for Immortan Joe's favourite. She is heavily pregnant at the time of their escape. She is determined to get away from the Citadel and Immortan Joe, but in the end, she only escapes through death. She is accidentally run over by Immortan Joe himself, when she is protecting the other women, and even though she lives, she is cut open and killed for the sake of the child inside her. She would not have been able to bear another child, and is then useless to Immortan Joe, even though she was his favourite. The child was seemingly a healthy son, but dead. The other wives mourn her, and for a short time lose hope in their quest, but in the end press on, if only because they have no other choice.

When the wives encounter the Many Mothers of Furiosas homeland, they are quickly and readily accepted. The Dag in particular, the strange or funny one, forms a short-lived bond with the Keeper of Seeds, as she suspects she is pregnant, in other words carrying the seed of Immortan Joe. The Dag is the one to take the satchel with the seeds when the old Keeper dies, and becomes the new Keeper of Seeds, both of plants and humans. She becomes a

personification of the hope for a better future, carrying the promise of a healthier one. In contrast, Capable, the redheaded wife, becomes a sort of reminder of the past, through her relation to the War Boy turned rebel, Nux. She is the first to accept and care for him, and they become romantically involved, even though they both know it will be a short adventure; Nux, like most other War Boys, is deadly sick, showing multiple tumors and the need for blood supplements. Her compassionate nature allows for her to trust and speak for the War Boy, even though he tries to betray them for the sake of his god, Immortan Joe.

The followers and servants of Immortan Joe, the War Boys, are completely devoted to the cause and his cult of the V8, with Immortan Joe as their prophet and immortal god. They imitate him with the powdered white skin and emphasises a skeletal body with black paint around the eyes, to further accentuate their closeness to death as half-lives. Their ultimate goal is to give their lives for Immortan Joe, to be able to join the ranks of earlier warriors in the eternal halls of Valhalla. They call for people to witness them, to witness their death, so that their awesome sacrifice is noticed, and they are able to "ride eternal, shiny and chrome" (00:57:05). The War Boy Nux also wishes to give his death to Immortan Joe, but is again and again deprived of his arrival in Valhalla. As he joins the women, he realises that an awesome death may not be the sole purpose of his life. He has long accepted that his life will be short, but he had never had something to live for, only something to die for. Immortan Joe's wife Capable takes him in and incidentally teaches him of the good things in life, through human connection and empathy. He learns that he is human, that he is capable of these feelings, and also that he is worthy of them.

In the end, he is cruelly forced to sacrifice himself to save the wives from Rictus Erectus, Immortan Joe's son, and the rest of their war party. After witnessing Furiosa kill his cult leader

and supposedly immortal god, he chooses to join the women and live a life he had never been able to imagine. He is refused this life, and asks the women to witness him, to witness the sacrifice and his death, much like the War Boys scream out in their ritualistic sacrifices for Immortan Joe. Yet this utterance gains an entirely different meaning, as he speaks softly in a breaking voice. A close-up of his face reveals his facial expressions and they show his wish for them to witness his sacrifice as a way of witnessing his life, instead of the remarkable death he did get in the end. Furthermore, it shows the fact that he no longer believes in the idea of rebirth preached by Immortan Joe, and that he wishes his life to be meaningful. This transition from a War Boy into an independent man is, however short, very important to the character and his meaning to the film. He finalises the fall of Immortan Joe, showing that his most devoted followers are able to live a life without him.

A common trait between the three main characters, Max, Furiosa, and Immortan Joe, is the use of some kind of mask during the film, and that they all symbolise their identity. When Max is captured by Immortan Joe, he is fitted with a kind of mouthguard after an escape attempt. This serves to dehumanise Max, and reduce him to a mere blood bag for Nux. He is furthermore displayed on the front of Nux' car as a kind of bowsprit, chained down. Max' first request when he reaches the wives and Furiosa is for them to cut the chain and help him get the mask off. This is a symbol of the identity forced on him by Immortan Joe, and how he rids himself of it again and regains his independence. Similarly, Furiosa bears a mask, the mark of the Imperators. When she is first presented to the audience, the markings are vividly black, matching the other Imperators. As they travel further away from the Citadel, the mask fades and Furiosa is allowed to fall into her own identity again, instead of the Imperator persona she has created to be able to

reach this possibility of escape. Only as she is driving through the pass, she refreshens the oil covering her forehead and scalp, because she is expected as an Imperator. Furthermore, she is shown washing off the black mark when they join the Many Mothers of the Vuvalini, her own family. This too symbolises that she has no need of her Imperator identity anymore, and that she can be herself in the company of the women.

In contrast to Max and Furiosa, Immortan Joe is heavily dependent on his mask. It is his connection to his breathing apparatus, as well as it completes the process of his 'creation' in the beginning of the film. It is the last thing he dons, and only when he is wearing his mask, the audience are given the chance at a look at his face. Here, it is shown how important the mask is to the character, as he is not complete without it. It provides him with a different and ugly, vicious visage, and underlines his differences to the other people and characters. The entire process of 'creation' makes it clear that his identity as Immortan Joe is as made up as Imperator Furiosa. He has made a god-like identity, an immortal persona in complete control of his cult and its followers. In the end, it becomes clear that he cannot survive without his mask, as he dies when Furiosa rips it off. It is very symbolic for the fact that he is no one without the mask; his Immortan Joe persona has completely taken over, and the created identity has erased the original creator. The name Joe, as discussed earlier, also supports this. He is often simply called "Immortan" by the War Boys, again emphasising his god identity over his personal identity. In the end, he had made himself inseparable with his god identity, and when its main symbol, the mask obscuring his natural face, is removed, he cannot survive.

An Ecofeminist Perspective on Film

To give a specialised insight into what kind of message *Mad Max* conveys, using a specific

critical approach can be helpful. As earlier mentioned, this thesis will use ecofeminism on the

basis of Plumwood's philosophy as an addition to the neoformalist model of film analysis. In the

first section of the thesis, the five main mechanisms of dualism were identified, and these will be

a guideline for the ecofeminist critical analysis. While not all mechanisms may appear with the

same frequency or potency, they need not all be apparent for the film to be viewed through

ecofeminist spectacles. The theory will only be used as an overlay to the film analysis, to

highlight specific structures in the film. Furthermore, this section will follow the neoformalist

structure of the film analysis focusing on mise-en-scene and editing, sound, and narrative. The

mise-en-scene and the editing will be considered in tandem, because they intersect and support

one another to produce meaning when working from an ecofeminist perspective, as they both are

bound to the visual aspect of the analysis. Sound will be treated separately due to it being a

category unique to the chosen media, film. Lastly, the narrative is examined because it is a

structural boundary to the film and will further lay the base for an analytical discussion.

Although the cinematographic categories are handled independently, there will be instances of

overlapping, in which, for example, terms from editing will appear in the section about narrative,

as they work together to produce meaning.

 Mad Max does not challenge the standard model of plot development in Hollywood films

and follows a typical three act structure. The first act (00:00:00-00:30:12) consists of a

presentation of characters, setting and the conflict. The audience meet Max, Immortan Joe,

Furiosa, and Nux and the War Boys, with each their own short presentation. The setting is shown

in tandem with the conflict, as the two intertwines around Immortan Joe's Citadel, the poor mob below, and his servants. Immortan Joe's society is easy for the audience to grasp; there are those in the Citadel and those outside, and they are all servants to their cult leader, Immortan Joe. The three tall rock formations create a 'natural' hyperseparation between those who are favoured by him and those who are not. Immortan Joe has created a heavily masculinised and mechanised society in his Citadel, and even uses the idea of Valhalla, the mythological home of Viking warriors dead on the battlefield, an ideal of masculinity in Western culture, as support. This is what Furiosa, the former free woman raised outside of the cult of the V8, is trying to escape, to return to her birth lands, the Green Place; the land of Many Mothers, of fertility, plants, and nature; the land of females.

Mise-en-scene and Editing

When looking at the mise-en-scene and editorial choices in *Mad Max,* the Citadel and Valhalla have to taken into consideration. The Citadel is the stronghold of Immortan Joe which he uses to house his breeders, milkers, and produce. The place further separates him and his elite from the Other created by him. In the shot from 00:07:45 the camera is used to show the magnitude of the Citadel, as the audience first see it from a worm-level angle. The shot also illustrates the hyperseperation and homogenisation, as the people cannot get to the top and they are all in similar costumes. Throughout the film, Immortan Joe and Nux mention Valhalla numerous times. Immortan Joe uses it as a reward for his warboys, to explain and rationalise their hardship and provide a sense of salvation beyond the earthly bound body. The idea of Valhalla illustrates the mind over body duality in the film, one also apparent in Immortan Joe

himself, as the idea he represent is the important part of his self, not the body. Valhalla is reserved for the male followers of Immortan Joe, the god figure. They are all incorporated into his notion of self, as their minds are deemed worthy to ascend to Valhalla. However, the eternal hunting grounds are replaced by highways in order to apotheosize Immortan Joe's power through his cult of V8. The followers are like the cars they drive seen as property, extensions of Immortan Joe's power and self.

The wives of Immortan Joe are another part of his self. Their costumes stress the essential ideal presented throughout the film. They are clad in white and flowy, yet skimpy dresses to convey both their supposed 'innocence' in the sense that they are healthy and uncorrupted by the illnesses rampant in their society, but also their status as sexual objects for Immortan Joe. He is the one who has created this identity and forced it, quite literally, upon them. Like the rest of his subjects, they are branded with his mark and their identity is only defined through their place in Immortan Joe's society. Furthermore, even his favourite, Angharad, he only refers to with the title 'Splendid' given to her by Immortan Joe. Her own identity is erased and overwritten with Immortan Joe's idea. The wives only exist to bear him healthy sons, so they are heavily instrumentalised and incorporated into the dualised master model of Immortan Joe's cult. They are also kept in the Biodome, a special construction in the main column of the Citadel, a protected place for them to live in and avoid the pollution that makes the rest of the people ill and deformed. Much like the Vuvalini, they live in a place supposed to be clean and uncorrupted, but both are destroyed by Immortan Joe's presence. The wives are removed from the everyday life of the Citadel, which could be part of Immortan Joe's plan, as it can create an emotional remoteness in the wives. A form of exclusion, making them believe they are better than the rest

in order to keep them subdued. This can be observed in the sequence 00:43:26 - 28, when the knowing tells Max "not to damage the goods" still viewing themselves as part of Immortan Joe's self and removed from the others; seeing her self as being more than the rest.

There are a great number of symbols in the film and these symbols can be used to generate meaning about the contexts of the film, both in an ecofeminist and a cinematographic setting. Through the film, brands are shown to represent the status of individuals as belonging to the collective other under Immortan Joe. The first time a brand is seen when the audience is introduced to Imperator Furiosa. Here the editing choices are setting up the connection between her and Immortan Joe. The shot centers on the brand as she moves away from the camera and the rest of her comes into view. By starting the shot, and essentially Furiosa's story, on her connection and enslavement to Immortan Joe, gives the audience a sense of her tragic backstory, while showing her incorporation into the war machine ruled by Immortan Joe. All of Immortan Joe's servant have to carry his brand, making them but an extension of his self; they are denied their selfhood through homogenisation and incorporation. The sequence beginning with this shot, is shot in a way that highlights some quite subtle elements of oppression through cinematography. As Furiosa walks farther away from the camera, the war rig comes into view revealing some of the War Boys. The *mise-en-scene* demonstrates the assimilated nature of the warboys and the refugees surrounding the Citadel.

The warboys, the cannon fodder of Immortan Joe's army are covered in white powder in respect to immortan Joe and have huge brandings all over their bodies, revealing their rank and area of expertise; the brandings represent their level of masculinity, as only those with a high level of masculinity, like Nux, get to drive a car. Like the War Boys the crowd around the

Citadel is indistinguishable from each other from afar, their costumes are used to generate a big brown, faceless mass waiting for their savior to give them water. In the shot from 00:06:21 to 00:06:23, Furiosa enters the war rig and the shaky camera gives the audience a feeling of being in the rig with her. The audience gets a feeling of participation, as the camera, when she enters the rig, shakes a bit, moves slightly and follows the action. The focal point of the shot is not Furiosa or the interior of the driver's cabinet, but the steering-wheel which comes into full focus and the details of it are revealed. The main feature of it is the Immortan Joe's logo, the same logo burned into the skin of disciples and followers, cementing the fanatic connection between him and the machines under his command. It further exemplifies the conditions in the wasteland and shows Immortan Joe's complete mastery.

Furiosa's arm is a mechanical symbol which provides hints to double meaning of the symbolic costumes, as the arm gives strength and simultaneously expresses oppression. The arm, which is mechanic, seems both to be part of her masculine persona, a hindrance for feminine expression, and a weapon to combat and ultimately to kill Immortan Joe. The arm can therefore be seen as a balance between the masculine/culture and the feminine/nature aspects of Furiosa's character. However, as the arm is the thing that kills Immortan Joe, it seems like the masculine part of Furiosa is the only acceptable part of her to rip the mask of him and take his place. Furthermore, the arms symbolises her Imperator persona, as it was originally given to her by Immortan Joe, and is such physical manifestation of her incorporation into Immortan Joe's identity. Still, it is ironic that his 'grace' becomes the instrument that kills him.

Another symbol that possesses a strong double meaning is the mask, which takes on different incarnations in the film; the most prominent ones are Immortan Joe's, Furiosa's, the

warboys', and Max'. Immortan Joe's mask, as mentioned earlier in the neo-formalist analysis, has ceased to be a mere mask, but has become the icon and persona of the man wearing it. It is a part of if him and it keeps him alive. The importance of the mask is told through the cinematographic reveal of the character in the sequence from 00:06:25 to 00:07:32. The audience is treated to the construction of Immortan Joe through a mixture of editing, which focuses on his connection with machinery, and mise-en-scene elements that provide the light, costume and staging of him, the main antagonist. The two devices work together to create a voiceless narrative telling of Immortan Joe and his true self. The angle and movement demonstrate his dependence on his warboys, as he is sitting weak and ill being put together, showing the audience the illusion of his complete independence. Furthermore, the connection and importance of machinery is also demonstrated through editing; the shot shifts from Immortan Joe to the war rig being put together, to a warboy yelling "hooked on", as the scene shifts back to Immortan Joe putting on his life sustaining mask, fully cementing the connection to the machine and the idol of the cult. This provokes the audience to ask if he still is human, or if the mask is the true sign of power and divinity, and not the mortal man, trapped in a feeble body.

Another mask which, throughout the film, has significance is Furiosa's Imperator mask. Her mask, as part of her costume, is used to characterize her, albeit in a different way than in the case of Immortan Joe. Furiosa's mask is exactly that: a mask. She has to put on the face of masculinity in order to free the wives and escape to the Green Place. Throughout the film, Furiosa appears both with and without her mask, as she has not been fully incorporated by her role as imperator; she has not abandoned her self, she only pretends to. Her mask is used when they are escaping Immortan Joe on their way through the canyon, which her status as imperator

would gain them access through. Hereafter, when she does not need to hide her own self, she wear is no more. The big difference between the two masks is actually one of selfhood. Immortan Joe has led his mask consume him, making him into the idol of the cultivated cultural identity, creating a religious cult, as a false prophet which is centered around the mask and machines. Furiosa's mask is temporary and a tool for survival, one she needs now, not later. By taking it off she regains her individuality.

Max' mask is not part of his character, but more an addition forced on him by Immortan Joe. The design is interesting, as it is constructed like a mouthguard; something which is meant to keep him from biting. From a ecofeminist view, this mask can be seen as an attempt to mute other forms for masculinity. As an outsider, Max comes with a different notion of what it means to be male and can be seen as a threat to Immortan Joe and his power. This is further evident by the failed attempt to incorporate Max into the categories of either blood bags or slaves. His mask is only removed with the help of Furiosa, once again pushing the idea of balance in the characters, but not the plot. Lastly, the white powder the warboys wear seem to a religious gesture. Immortan Joe, in the scene mention earlier, is shown to be covered in boils and might suffer from other diseases as well. He is covered in white powder to ease his pain, however, it has made his appearance to be the same shade of white. The War Boys cover themselves in a similar white substance in order to look like Immortan Joe. Furthermore, it seems that the War Boys are aware of the untimely end and use the white powder to create a skull-like appearance, which is both intimidating and fitting.

Mad Max has a focus on who is people and who is property that is enforced through cinematography, in editing and mise-en-scene. Firstly, the mise-en-scene, through costume

design, focuses on the wives and their clothing which provide clues to their position as property. They are shown to wear only light, white dresses which indicate that they are pure and virtuous. Furthermore, in the beginning of the film they are wearing chastity belts, which further cemetens the notion of control of female reproduction by men. Immortan Joe has chosen their dresses and has full control of their sexual expression as he uses them, not for the purpose of sexual satisfaction, but as breeding stock. Secondly, the instrumentalisation is likewise produced through editing of a number of scenes. In the clip from 00:56:17 to 00:56:28, the 180 convention is used to illustrate Immortan Joe's shock whan Angharad so fully betrays him by protecting Furiosa with his child. The visual exchange between Immortan Joe and the Splendid Angharad focuses on the pure disbelief, as Immortan Joe cannot see his own wrongdoing or believe her betrayal. Likewise in the scene where the dying Angharad is cut open for the sake of his dead child, the angle of the shot provides clues to the power relations (01:06:15-44). Angharad is lying on her back, face covered, her pregnant belly in focus, while Immortan Joe stands looming over her, deciding her fate.

Sound

Throughout the film sounds and soundtracks have specific purposes, and are used to produce distinct emotional reactions in the audience. The sounds and music in *Mad Max* have been dichotomised between 'natural' classical music and sounds, and harder music containing drums and guitars. When elements of nature are shown, or the wives of Immortan Joe are first introduced, the classical music is prominent. In contrast, when the cars or engines are centre of attention, the drums and electric guitar dominate the soundtrack. The music emphasises the split

between the masculine and the feminine, as the electric guitar and drums are louder and more aggressive, making them associated with the masculine, and violins and classical music are associated with the feminine, as they often play soft and soothing music. The film uses music for specific purposes. The sequence from 00:27:54 to 00:28:30, where Immortan Joe opens for the water pipes, the music which proceeds it is violins playing a beautiful and sad melody, provoking an emotional response of awe in the audience. Furthermore, when the wives are first introduced to the audience, there is a soft music track playing, indicating and supporting their femininity and vulnerability, making them appear soft and innocent. Right after, the sound of water is playing while Angharad walks toward Max with the hose, cementing the wives', and women's, strong connection to nature, as she brings the life sustaining liquid to Max, a man. This reflects the essentialist notion of women as the nurturer that caters to the male master.

The soft and sad music which plays when the wives are introduced is further used to produce an emotional response in the audience and indicate when an emotional scene takes place. In the sequence form 01:02:10 to 01:03:56, a similar soft theme plays when an emotional connection between Nux, the warboy, and the wife, Capable is established. This further ratify the link between the wives, the othered, and emotions and the bodily. The music additionally hints at the fact that Nux has been incorporated into the other, as he has lost the privilege of Immortan Joe. Moreover, the sequence contains sensitive topics that are hinted at throughout the film; radiation sickness and tumors on the warboys' bodies that are killing them, as they struggle to find meaning in their half-lives.

It reflects a mind/body dualism, as both Immortan Joe and the War Boys are constantly fighting against their failing bodies, which furthermore results in a need to transcend these

broken bodies. Immortan Joe attempts this by making himself into his godlike persona, whereas the War Boys have been convinced that they can reach this transcendence through sacrifice, and then be reborn in the eternal halls of Valhalla.

The last feature of the soundtrack which carries a specific ecofeminist meaning is the semi-diegetic soundtrack of Immortan Joe. The heavily inspired rock music theme that follows him around as he roams the wasteland. This soundtrack is semi-diegetic, as it seems to shift in and out of the universe of the film. However, when it is diegetic it follows Immortan Joe as an extension to his created mastery, being a amplification of his superior masculinity and power; it is his roar, he has nothing to hide from.

Narrative

Where Immortan Joe focuses on the gory ideal of Valhalla, the Green Place is more like the Paradise known in Christianity. It is green, lush and healthy, in contrast to the illnesses haunting the Citadel, and is supposedly the only place left untouched by the ecological crisis that has destroyed the rest of the land, allowing the desert to form and spread. Yet it becomes apparent that the Green Place has died. One of the Vuvalini, the tribe of women living in the Green Place of Furiosa's childhood, explains to her that the earth became too sour for plants to grow, and Furiosa and the audience will realise that the wet, dead marshlands the main characters drove through during the night was what was left of the Green Place (01:14:41-01:15:03). This might be due to the heavy pollution from the 'guzzoline' liberally used by Immortan Joe or the other two cities, Gas Town and the Bullet Farm. This gives the film a distinct ecocritical message, in the sense of a warning that there are no places safe from such pollution. This narrative is

emphasised by Furiosa's reaction and how it is shown in the film, as the camera pans out and shows the desert as a background for her misery. The audience is harshly reminded of the contrast between the dusty desert and the lush Green Place they thought they would see.

While most of the characters in the film fulfill stereotypical ideals of male and female, the former Vuvalini Furiosa is a more nuanced individual. She is a woman of the Many Mothers, but it is unclear if she actually is female. Female in this sense should be understood through the essentialist notions set up in the film, which Furiosa does not match. She has risen to the rank of Imperator, marked by the black grease on her forehead in the beginning of the film, a high rank for anyone, especially a woman. This is visible in how there are no other women in Immortan Joe's society outside of the mob at the bottom of the Citadel, the 'cows' milked for mother's milk and the wives. Furiosa has been allowed to create her own space in the system, and has been mostly stripped of her femininity in order to succeed. Only the remnants of what could have been a wife's dress shows that she had been considered a woman once. She is revered by Immortan Joe, and she is treated as if she has turned into a man, or have been "successfully colonised by reason", as Plato would say (Plumwood, *Mastery of Nature* 78).

Still, her almost genderless identity is defined through her place in the hierarchy of Immortan Joe's cult, signified by the black grease 'mask' she wears. This is only a cover identity for her real self, the Vuvalini girl she has fought to retain beneath the homogenisation and incorporation into Immortan Joe's ideals. She displays enough male characteristics to be considered powerful, which is seen in the fight scene with Max (00:35:39-00:37:26), where the fight choreography carries no feel of a stereotypical "strong male versus weak female" fight, but they are fighting and filmed as equals, both strong and crafty in their fighting styles. Yet she is in

her essence a woman, seen in how quickly the otherwise untrustful Vuvalini accepts her. In a ecofeminist perspective, she is an interesting character in the sense that she is both male and female, but it can be contributed to the fact that she has dual identities: the fake male persona created by Immortan Joe and the real female persona to which she returns. This returns to the essentialist notion that is incompatible with the ecofeminist philosophy.

Furiosa might be a great example of a victim of Immortan Joe, yet she is nowhere near the only one. Another large group exploited by him is the War Boys, his religiously devoted followers. They are a brilliant representation of all the five mechanisms of dualism. They are homogenised visually with their pale skin and dark marking around the eyes, creating a skeletal look. They are incorporated through their branding, and the fact that they are supposed to both live and die for Immortan Joe, denying them any agency for themselves. They are instrumentalised, treated as objects and dehumanised, their individual identity almost completely eradicated, their selfhood removed. They are radically excluded from Immortan Joe himself, the master of this model, in the sense that he is believed to be their immortal God while they are deadly ill and happily sacrifices their lives to him. They are backgrounded in how their services are taken for granted, the admission of medicine to Immortan Joe, 'creating' him and assembling his see-through armour, and the work they do on the cars. Furthermore, the dependency on these services are denied. They have become nothing more than another facet to the created identity of Immortan Joe, a complete other for the master to exploit.

Immortan Joe has made himself an almost flawless master identity, where he himself is the only part of the master sphere. He allows for other groups to think they are part of the master sphere by giving them a 'lower' other to exploit, like the Imperators over the regular War Boys,

the War Boys over the War Pups, all of them over the mob below. This hierarchy only emphasises the fact that Immortan Joe is highly dependent on his other, all the way down to the mob, who supplies him with War Pups. Moreover, the mothers producing milk, shown as fat women in milking machines similar to those used for cows in our own society, are dehumanised and treated much like we would cows; Immortan Joe's son Rictus Erectus even refers to them and their milk just by saying "moo" (00:12:50 - 00:13:04), further underlining the connection to the animalistic and nature. The mob is in the same way treated much like animals, their costumes matching the reddish brown earth, as to give the idea of an animal's camouflage in its natural environment. They are deprived of water and kicked down from the rising platform. The savagery of their 'nature' is shown in how they fight wildly over the sparse water after Immortan Joe cuts off the flow, a savagery in every way created by Immortan Joe.

Cars and machines play a vital part in the story of *Mad Max*, and they have a double meaning in the narrative, as they are both a representation of the ruthless ruling elite who has completely Cartesian(-ised) their worldview, but also the only way to escape the oppressors. Everything from the cult of V8 to their doctor, better known as the Organic Mechanic is understood in terms of the mechanical; their system pivots around machines, oil, and guns. There is great emphasis on the cultural/human constructed in the film; they speak about the internal organs and blood of outsiders as parts that can replace the faulty part in the elite and associated middle class, the War Boys. Outsiders are called full-lives and can be used and referred to as blood bags. In the shot from 00:11:09 to 00:11:22, the Organic Mechanic says that he has "a warboy running on empty", and that Mad Max, a full-life and his blood, can save the War Boy, Nux. Max is only classified in materialistic terms through his blood, they call him a universal

donor. Furthermore, the sequence is used both to illustrate the structure of power in the Citadel, but also to connect the two characters and further the plot.

The cars do also represent freedom in the wasteland; they are the only tool that can take the wives away from Immortan Joe. Many of the symbols and metaphors in the film have contrasting meanings, as they both have a negative and positive purpose to the narrative. The doubleness can, in an ecofeminist setting, be seen as an attempt to show the burden of process. Plumwood, unlike many radical feminists and deep ecologists, argues for balance between the perceived culture and nature, not just a complete abandonment of human process, but a critical reevaluation of the terms on which humans interact with nature. The doubleness in many of the main symbols in the film seem to reflect this love/hate relationship of rational masculine culture vs. mother nature. The approach itself is still dualistic, as the two spheres are never overlapping and the men clearly still control reason and the women have a deep connection to life of the planet. The people who fall within the master identity have names; giving them individuality and rebellious natures. The two other figures shown in the film to posses mastery are the People Eater and the Bullet Farmer. These two characters run the other two industries keeping Immortan Joe in power; gasoline and bullets. They are like Immortan Joe mostly characterized by their costumes and names. There is a Christian undertone in this coalition as they, Immortan Joe, the People Eater, and the Bullet Farmer, represent capitalistic ideals in a way that reflects the hegemonic Christian idea of the Holy Trinity. Plumwood argues that the capitalistic system is self-consuming and is in constant need of influx of capital, products, and consumers. The way the system is presented in *Mad Max* is meant to be a parody, however, the result is worrying; the figures who represent this system and their names reflect some of the critiques of the neo-liberal

capitalist system. The three antagonists in the film are all personified attributes of the illusion of the position and power of capitalism. Immortan Joe is the all powerful leader, who is supposed to be the peak of human evolution, however, he is a mutated old man. The People Eater is the endless need for consumption and calculation as "he's coming to count the cost" (00:43:51). The Bullet Farmer is the embodiment of violence; he is the instrument of destruction.

The Christian theme goes deeper still. The three warlords each represent a commodity; gas, bullets, and produce. Furthermore, they can be seen to represent the cause of the wasted world; the horsemen of the apocalypse. Immortan Joe is conquest or pestilence. He pursues and enslaves people, like Furiosa, and then convince the conquered people to view him as a god-like being, turning them from the true path of salvation. He embodies the the duality of the horseman, as both the false-prophet and the spreading plague. Immortan Joe and his followers enbody pestilence; they all have tumors from nuclear fallout, boils, and other diseases. The Bullet Farmer represents war: he is the embodiment of all war and conflict. In a modern setting this can be compared to unchecked militarism and warfare for the sake of war. The Bullet Farmer does not only represents this, he embodies it. In the sequence from 01:06:35 to 01:08:31, the warlords are stuck in the quagmire and talking; the People Eater tells the Bullet Farmer not to hurt the assets, meaning the wives, but goes on riding off alone and fires wildy with no regard to what he might hit. His complete embodiment of war becomes clearer still in a sequence not long after from 01:09:45 to 01:10:51, where he is blinded by Furiosa's shot. He goes on to say that he is "the scale of justice". He becomes the blind fury of war.

The People Eater represents famine. When saint John sees the black horse, he remarks the price of wheat and barley rise, but the price of oil and wine remains the same (*King James Bible,*

Rev. 6:5-6). The price of luxury goods are unaffected by famine, meaning that the elite will not

suffer while the exploited and poor will. In this way, famine also embodies injustice and gluttony

of the rich and powerful. This is showcased in the design of the People eater; most people in the

wasteland are reduced to eating salamanders, but the People Eater is extremely obese. The fourth

and final horseman is not located amongst the villains, but is one of the main characters; Mad

Max is Death. Nowhere is it more clear than through Max' visions of the dead. People he has

been unable to save. He carries the dead with him, leaves people dead in his own path, and seems

to be unkillable. Max and Death are both remorseless forces of nature, a necessary part of life.

The Hollywood Case of Breadcrumb Feminism

The film has a typical Hollywood feminist message in the sense that the females fight against the

evil male oppressors to win and create a new and more beneficial society for all. Nevertheless,

while it is both feminist and ecocritical, the film is not necessarily ecofeminist in its message.

One of the main faults is the heavy essentialism of the film and most of its characters. According

to Plumwood's philosophy, essentialism is a form of stereotyping, and further serves to separate

men and women into separate spheres, and creates a woman-nature connection, backed by the

ideas of Plato (*Mastery of Nature* 77-78). In the film, the ecological crisis is fuelled by the

patriarchal systems set up by Immortan Joe, and the Many Mothers are fighting against this, as

keepers of the Green Place, a haven of nature. Furthermore, their supposedly large tribe has

dwindled with the size of the Green Place, and it is described how they are the only ones left

(01:21:17), further solidifying the connection and essentialism. They carry a case full of seeds

from the Green Place with them constantly with an assigned Keeper, hoping to reestablish their homeland in due time and place.

The idea of selfhood is a focal point in *Mad Max*. Plumwood identifies a tendency in Western society to divide between people and property based on agency and selfhood, which is a theme throughout *Mad Max*. Immortan Joe and the others who are seen to participate in his constructed self, refer to the constructed other as property or see them as commodities to be used for specific purposes for the master identity/self. In the sequence from 00:56:16 to 00:57:27, Immortan Joe and his most trusted followers have caught up to the war rig, and Immortan Joe yells " [...] That's my child! My property!". Here, the value of Immortan Joe's favorite wife, his Splendid, is apparent. His concern is for the product she is producing, not her welfare or even really the child. The child is a symbol for his total power of production, meaning that Angharad is nothing but an oven. Additionally, another sequence cements the theme of property. From 01:00:15 to 01:00:42, after Angharad has fallen from the war rig, presumed dead, the Organic Mechanic tells Immortan Joe that she "is breathing her last", and his only reaction is ask about the child, not her. After the Organic Mechanic says that "it has gone awfully quiet in there", Immortan Joe commands him to get it out, with no regard for Angharad whose position as breeder has been terminated.

The film touches upon the question of resources, their limitation, and the control of them. The control of resources is one of the most striking characteristics of Immortan Joe; all his power, his apotheosised status, and his army all relay on his complete control of the four most important resources in the wasteland, oil, water, bullets, and reproduction. The film depicts Immortan Joe's control over the distribution of water, selling it for loyalty and slavery. The idea

of nature being an inexhaustible resource for the master subject is a reflection of what Plumwood argues is happening in the world. Just like capitalism and Western culture, Immortan Joe has no regard for the natural or bodily. He uses both nature and women to further his agenda, creating a myth of necessity surrounding himself. The film exhibits this system of exploitation and greed as bad and evil. However, the point becomes mute as the end of the film does not offer an alternative to the system, but continues a binary system based on gender traits and stereotypes. When the film ends, nature is still a resource now in the hands of women, who can communicate with nature and understand its needs so it can support the human race indefinitely. The elite changes from a patriarchy to a matriarchy generating a new dualism and new master identity based on feminine traits and women's natural connection to nature. At the end of the film nothing really changes; the circle of exploitation continues.

Mad Max has been regarded as a feminist film (Smith) and it does provide some quite interesting and strong female characters. However, a deep analysis reveals that it is not. The film tends to leave small bits of 'feminism' throughout, but overall falls short. The film is providing small changes, which do not affect the overall structure of the world the film reflects. It works with the Western established idea of women being closer to nature by focusing on an essentialistic female elite whose main goals are caretaking and reproduction, be it of plants or children. Most of the women are portrayed quite independent and capable of taken care of themselves. However, even though it tries to break with the general, stereotypical vulnerability of women, providing them with enough agency to stand on their own, it still plays heavily on the nature connection; keeping the dualism in place and denying women the sphere of reason. Moreover, the strongest women in the film seem to carry more masculine attributes than

feminine, something also mentioned earlier. Thus, the film seems to offer enough 'radicalism' to dull the viewer without breaking with status quo. Moreover, it still provides enough material to use against the structures supporting the system, as ecofeminism can use films like *Mad Max* to generate a discourse about the general and fundamental issues in Western society concerning the environment. Ecofeminism reflects on what is wrong in a society through the art and media produces in its cultural setting. Lastly, the analysis highlights that many of the themes in the film are comments on issues of Western society, but does not afford any solutions, giving the audience the idea of inevitableness.

PART TWO

Learning

The educational theory that has shaped the lessons produced for this thesis, is developed by Knud Illeris, a Danish scholar on education, with life-long learning as his main research area. His book *How We Learn: Learning and Non-learning in School and Beyond* (2007) is the accumulated knowledge from over 40 years of studies within the educational field (xi), and it uses a comprehensive approach that makes it relevant for almost all instances of learning, while still being applicable to specific cases with terms he specifies in the book. Illeris has built his theory on numerous other theorists and their works, providing both an overview over their theories, their faults, and the improvements he has made. His main focus is on what learning actually is, both in terms of biological and mental development, and his theory is applicable to both learning in school and outside of school (1).

This thesis will take basis in his sections about in-school learning, as it handles learning in *gymnasium*, the Danish upper secondary school. Yet Illeris stresses the importance of out-school learning, and how in-school learning is highly dependent on what is learnt outside of school, both in terms of social skills, but also what kind of mental schemes have been established in the learner, something that will be touched upon later. In his book, he first defines learning as "*any process that in living organisms leads to permanent capacity change and which is not solely due to biological maturation or ageing*" (3). He explains that this definition is kept as broad as possible to avoid unnecessary limitations, as it also covers learning done by other organisms that humans. The book only deals with human learning, which is a quite complex process.

Dimensions

The cornerstone of Illeris' book is his triangular learning model that defines content, incentive and interaction as the main factors of learning. He describes that the thesis of his book is that all learning involves these three dimensions and that society is a frame for all learning (25). Content and incentive are activated simultaneously in the learner and therefore exist on the same horizontal scale, while the interaction requires action, communication and cooperation with someone or something outside of the learner themself. The interaction allows for the learner to integrate the content and incentive into a relevant social situation (27). As the model describes what is required in a situation of learning, it proves a great model for planning education. The teacher must then design the course and its material in accordance to a focus on both the content, the incentive to learn, and an interactional method of learning. This can be remembered by asking *what*, *why*, and *how* they are learning and being taught.
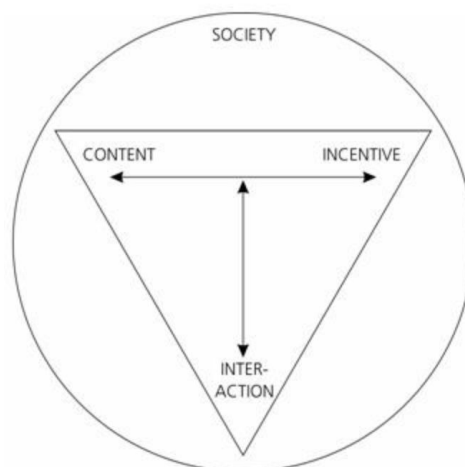
Figure 1: Illeris' learning model with the three dimensions of learning (25).

The content of the learning is described here as *what* is supposed to be learnt. Illeris focuses on

this dimension as connected to the actual knowledge and skills that make up the mental schemes.

This can also be learning how to learn in itself (51). Especially the ability to think critically are

valuable to the subjects of this thesis, the gymnasium students and the kind of learning they are

supposed to do. Here, reflection is a keyword often found in the present debate and that the

learners should be able to reflect on their own learning process (65-66). This kind of learning is

on a high level and needs deep consideration and more psychological energy, but it also allows

the learner to use the knowledge further than just in an immediate assimilation of knowledge.

Here, the sentence *what did you learn today?* becomes a staple, as Illeris explains that "the

acquisition of knowledge without understanding is becoming increasingly inadequate in relation

to the reality in which we live" (74). If an individual cannot fully understand what they have

been taught and how to utilize it, it is largely useless knowledge.

The second dimension to learning named by Illeris is the incentive dimension, addressing

the question of motivation, volition, and emotions (75). Illeris cites Sigmund Freud as a key

source when looking at incentive, referring to Freud's theory about the human drives. He

acknowledges that these have not been based on learning situations, but he aims to adapt some of

the theory to these (76). The importance of integrating the incentive dimension is stressed, as a

teacher must accept that "[w]hat is central to the incentive dimension of learning seems to be that

the learning-related challenges are in agreement with [...] the learner's interests and

qualifications" as to avoid learning barriers to be erected (95). It is important to create an

incentive for the learner to learn, as their own efforts are what drives the higher levels of learning

defined further on in this section. Illeris also identifies some motivational problems in modern

society, one of which is the "globalised knowledge society" and the extremely high competition it creates (93). This can be both motivational and demotivational. Furthermore, there is a constant need to create measurable results, typically through tests, which often happens on the expense of the social and pedagogical climate. As learners have individual methods of learning and expressing knowledge, such testing and comparison to other learners may result in a pressure to perform, which is not beneficial for those learners who do not perform well under pressure (94).

The last dimension of Illeris' learning triangle is the interaction. Illeris highlights the importance of the social situation for a learner, as it has great influence both on what is learnt and how it is learnt, earlier defined as the content and incentive dimension (97). He mentions that all learning is situated in a social and societal context and that the environment greatly influences the learning process. The social context is the immediate surroundings and the societal is the general environment of the society; all levels, from a one-on-one interaction to the globalised society, are part of this interaction dimension. Furthermore, the material surroundings are also defined through the societal environment and there is no part of 'nature' that is untouched by a social context, as the names and categorisations are made and learnt in a social context (99). This additionally emphasises the importance of the interpersonal connections in learning and the need for socialisation (104). The learning should reflect the social-societal situation for the learners, both in terms of content and incentive, thereby strengthening the third dimension of Illeris' learning triangle, and providing a great learning environment for the learners (122).

Levels

In addition to his triangular learning model, Illeris identifies four different levels of learning, based on Jean Piaget's two types of learning, assimilative and accumulative learning. As a psychologist, Piaget is based in the cognitive dimension of learning, which Illeris then expands on while emphasising that he prefers Piaget's approach, yet finds it slightly lacking (34). Illeris explains how he is interested in working with both the *how* and the *why* of learning, where Piaget had chosen to focus only on the *how*, and aims to explore the social, emotional, and personal development more fully than other scholars have done before (36). Drawing inspiration not only on Piaget, he defines his four types of learning as cumulative, assimilative, accommodative, and transformative, each representing a level of development in the learner.

The *cumulative* learning Illeris defines as when mental schemes are built and structured in the learner (38). This is a very basic form of learning, and is especially crucial for the first few years of a human life. The cumulative learning is based in learning something by heart without any connections to existing memories, like learning to walk or talk. This kind of learning is characterised by its rigidity, as it serves as a scaffold for almost all later learning. Furthermore, Illeris explains that most animals only learn on the cumulative level, with mention of Pavlov's experiment on a dog taught to drool at the ring of a bell, making the importance of animal experiments on learning very limited beyond comparison to the very early years of human development. Cumulative learning is described as amnemonic.

Mnemonic learning is based on already existing memories and mental schemes, which makes it *assimilative* learning, the second type of learning defined by Illeris. This was first identified by Piaget, but Illeris separated the cumulative from the assimilative. Assimilative

learning is when the learner is adding to the mental schemes built during the cumulative learning (39). Here, knowledge is adapted and incorporated into the mental schemes assigned to the specific area of expertise. This is the kind of learning that the modern school system typically aim for, although it does have disadvantages. In this kind of learning, a teacher might experience that his students cannot connect knowledge from one mental scheme to another. Illeris uses the example of a physics teacher not being able to make the students use knowledge gained in their maths lessons in their physics lessons (40). This is because the knowledge has been assimilated into a specific scheme and on this level, the learner is not able to connect it to a different scheme. This means that assimilated learning is still as inflexible as the cumulative learning, as it does not allow for any change in the mental schemes or their applicability.

The third level is *accommodative* learning, also inspired by one of Piaget's original terms, but as before, Illeris have sectioned it into two categories and elaborated on these and their differences. The accommodative process is when the learner accommodates mental schemes to new knowledge, meaning that the schemes are partially or entirely restructured (41). Using the example of the gap between physics and maths, accommodative learning would make the learner able to create connections between the two mental schemes and thereby restructuring them. This process can both be short and sudden, when something 'clicks', but also a lengthy problem that creates a new comprehension over a longer period of time. While all learning is individual and personal, the accommodative learning process in particular creates new contexts and connections unique to every learner. Illeris explains how "the differences that makes us develop into separate and distinct individuals even under uniform external conditions" is due to the accommodative processes and what it further does to the individual assimilative learning afterwards (41-42). For

this process, it is important that the teacher is aware of the background of the learner, both socially and intellectually, as it results in differing individual learning styles. The accommodative learning is more mentally taxing for the student, because it requires the mental schemes to be torn down and restructured (43). Yet the accommodative process is crucial, as it is here the learner becomes able to reflect and think critically (44).

While Piaget included the last kind of learning in the accommodative process, Illeris defines it as a separate one: the *transformative* learning. In this process, it is not only a few mental schemes being restructured; it is the individual's personality itself being remade. When imagining the human mind and its mental schemes as scaffolding, an accommodation would be in the upper levels, while a transformative would be in a bearing point at the bottom of the structure. This type of learning has been known and named for a long time, one of the earliest names being *catharsis*; an event that proves entirely, actually life-changing (44). This process has not been considered a part of in-school learning for a long time, but was mostly connected to learning happening outside a school setting. The transformative process is triggered by an existential crisis, where the mental schemes cannot be adapted, but have to be rebuilt. This process has become more and more common in the modern, globalised society, where the labour market is insecure and religion and ideologies are more easily challenged by outsiders (45).

Illeris has been inspired by several theorists, but uses Jack Mezirow's concept of transformative learning as model for his fourth type of learning, both because it is one of the most widespread and best known terms, but also because it linguistically is in line with the three other types (47). Transformative learning is very mentally demanding of the learner, as the restructuring of mental schemes are even more extensive than in the accommodative learning.

Furthermore, this process is mostly driven by the learner's own efforts, further increasing the mental strain in such a learning situation.

Barriers

These terms are all connected to the act of learning and when learning occurs, but Illeris also determines a number of *learning barriers* that block the learning from happening as planned (157). He explains that these barriers are typically erected unconsciously when one or more of the three dimensions of learning fails. He takes inspiration from the scholar Peter Jarvis and his concept of *non-learning*, who defines three different kinds of non-learning: presumption that there is no need or opportunity to learn; a non-consideration where the opportunity is registered, but there is created no relation to the learning; and a conscious rejection of learning in the given context (158). From these three categories of non-learning, Illeris gives three concepts, each one relating to the failure of one of the learning dimensions.

The first, relating to the content dimension, Illeris names *mislearning* (158). Here, the learnt material does not correspond to the communicated content, thereby signalling a miscommunication about the content. This learning barrier can be hard to discover and can prove quite problematic to later learning, as new content will be assimilated into mental schemes with mistakes. There is always a slight difference between the taught and the learnt, yet it is not in itself problematic. This is because of the individual learning styles and mental schemes. Yet what Illeris determines as mislearning is when the individualisation of content proves problematic in connection to other learning or other individuals (159). While mislearning can be difficult to recognise in out-school learning, it is easier to discover in an in-school setting where testing is

done regularly. Still, there can be ambiguity about errors and non-errors. This is not entirely unfavourable, as it can be helpful in producing a sense of judgement in the learner. If presented only with stark concepts of correct and wrong, Illeris claims that a learner will not be able to assess concepts on their own, as that ability is also something that has to be learnt (159). Yet in an in-school setting, it is crucial to stress the importance of the content, as to mostly avoid mislearning.

The second learning barrier defined by Illeris is *defence* against learning, and is concerned with the dimension of incentive (160). When the incentive dimension fails, it often produces an unwillingness to learn, which can be caused by different elements. In Illeris' example, a defensive barrier is erected if the new knowledge " [...] which, for one reason or the other, can be threatening, limiting, or in some other way places a strain on maintaining mental balance" (160). This is a mostly unconscious mechanism and often occurs in defence of accommodative or transformative learning, where there is a need for mental restructuring and the mental strain is high, aiming to preserve psychological energy (161). This can result in the learning being completely blocked and no learning of any kind taking place, or a distorted assimilation, where the content is forced to fit into an already existing mental scheme. It also happens in situations where both young and adult participants of learning have not accepted the education in which they partake as necessary for them, or suitable for their needs (165). This can be caused by a sense of the fact that they have been placed there more than they have chosen to be in the learning situation. Still, it is mostly an unconscious barrier.

The last learning barrier categorised by Illeris is *resistance* to learning. It is very similar to and can be mistaken for defence against learning, but is a conscious choice to reject the

intended learning. He explains how " [...] one does not have to be within institutional education programmes for very long before one experiences participants who resist the intended learning", meaning that this barrier is very common in the educational system (169). Still, he remarks that this topic is not researched very much and that many schools and educational personnel refuses to face the fact that students refuse to learn.

Resistance to learning happens in instances where the intended learning is deemed unreasonable, frustrating, or incomprehensible for the learner, and cannot be assimilated, distorted or not, into a mental scheme (170). It can also trigger a defensive accommodative process, as a learner might restructure mental schemes to fit the fact that they simply cannot understand maths, instead of the taxing process of restructuring a much larger part of the mental schemes to be able to understand maths (172). Furthermore, it is characterised by a learner seeing the other learners and the teacher as enemies. This barrier is most often seen in adults who resist learning to avoid having to restructure or completely rebuild their mental schemes, but it can also happen in youths. Still, the most important thing in youths is to avoid the defensive accommodation happening, but also correct it if it has already happened. The resistance to learning can create problem for planned activities and learning, but it can also lay ground for personal development and transformative processes that comes with overcoming one's own defences.

Spaces

As earlier mentioned, all learning is situated. The space in which the learning takes place, both physically, socially, and societally, has great influence on the learning and which mental

schemes are taken into consideration by the learner. The *learning space* most relevant to this thesis is the in-school educational setting of the gymnasium, and it is important to remember that a specific learning space will result in expectations of the content and incentive in the learner (Illeris 216). In the gymnasium, the learner has an expectation of what kind of material they are supposed to work with and why they are supposed to learn this, and the preconstructed space does not deviate much from the expected in most instances.

This kind of systematic, situated learning can create problems, as the learner will connect the content only to specific school-related mental schemes that do not connect easily to the learning done outside of school; this is what Illeris calls a transfer issue (220). This was also mentioned before, with the issue of learners not being able to use their maths knowledge in their physics class. They are simply not aware that what they learn in one space can relate directly to another space. This is caused by the fact that much in-school learning is structured in a way that needs restructuring to be relevant in out-school spaces, and thus needs to be re-accommodated to new situations, a mentally taxing process often unwanted by the learner. Therefore, teaching should be done in a way that activates both in-school and out-school mental schemes, removing the differences between the two to create one universal classification of knowledge. This can only be done by constantly accommodating teaching methods to reflect the societal situation.

Sexes

Another factor that has influence over how a learner learns is the biological differences between the sexes (Illeris 188). In females, the left half of the brain, which is mostly used for language functions, is more developed than in men, whose right half of the brain, which is connected to

logical and spatial functions, is well developed. Still, Illeris explains that research have shown how language functions can be developed and located differently in each individual, so that they might not be tied to the left half of the brain (188). Yet these are not the only aspects of biological differences to be aware of, as females also have more connections between the two halves of their brain, while males have more connections between the front and back. Furthermore, he recounts research showing that "the female brain is hardwired to empathy [and] the male brain to build and understanding systems" (188). Illeris goes on to stress that this is not a fact but a tendency and that it could be caused by other factors like social-societal influence, as a child's brain is not fully developed at birth. However, it is important to be aware of these differences often tied to the learner's sex, as it can influence both the incentive and the interaction in learning.

Identity

Another issue particular to the target group of learners for this thesis is the issue of identity. In his book, Illeris has dedicated a section to how "Young people want to construct their identity" (201), as it is crucial to be aware of this when aiming for learning in youths. Historically, the age group is a new one, as it emerged after the Industrial Revolution and the growing global knowledge society. This made extended schooling necessary, but it was also tied to personal development (202). In modern society, a young learner is often forced to choose a preliminary direction for their future career at around 16 years of age, while only a hundred years ago, they rarely went to school for longer than a few years and often started working with their fathers and mothers at around 13 years of age. Today, they have quite a few more choices of careers and in

the process of finding a career, the learner must also find their own identity. Illeris describes how most learning after the age of 13 is oriented towards forming an identity and that it clashes with how the educational system focuses on academics (203). The gymnasium is the most typical battlefield in this conflict, covering the ages from about 15 to 19 years old. While it has become the standard in modern society for the three years in gymnasium to be a "coming of age"-process, the school has yet to adapt to this different focus in their students.

> "The identity process is, for most young people today, far more immediately
>
> important and for more urgent than career orientation, and in some way it is also
>
> a precondition for the choice of career, or part of it" (Illeris 204)

This gives the school a responsibility to adapt to the learner, as to give better incentive and create great interaction for the learning to be most beneficial, but also to focus on the both academic, social, and emotional development they undergo during their three years at gymnasium (205). This can result in learning of both accommodative and transformative nature, the highest levels of learning, and more self-aware and socially, emotionally stable people leaving the school to develop their career.

The Course

As a tool for planning the course on film analysis and ecofeminism, the FIMME-model proved invaluable (Hobel). The name is an acronym for *formål, indhold, metode, materiale,* and *evaluering*, translating to purpose, content, method, material, and evaluation. It can be used to plan both individual lessons and entire courses and is a very flexible model made in the form of a table. The model makes the teacher able to schematise the course or lesson, with the ability to quickly create an overview or adjust the plans.

Purpose	Content	Method	Material	Evaluation
...	...	...	...	...

Figure 2: Example of how a FIMME-model is constructed.

In the first column, the *purpose* of the activity is explained, conveying what the learners are supposed to learn during this particular activity. Each activity during the class would be described in a new row. The second column, *content*, explains what activity the learners are doing and for how long the activity is supposed to last. Especially the time annotated may differ if a teacher assesses that the students need more time for the activity. The column for *method* describes how the student learns or how they are being taught, for example whether it is a teacher-controlled blackboard discussion, group work, or individual work. The last column for *evaluation* describes how the teacher recognises learning in the students and how it is ensured that there is no mislearning or other barriers.

The Content

The FIMME-model used for this course of two continuous classes can be found in appendix A. Here, it is shown how the first lesson consists of three activities, the first being a quick walk-through of cinematographic terms relevant to the students. It is important to ensure that the students have a fresh recollection of the terms and equal footing before going on to an analysis and it is therefore teacher controlled. This is also done to assess how much time they need for the group work intended, as many questions about the material would suggest that they need more time for the analysis. For the material, the chapter "Filmanalyse" in *Analyse af Billedmedier: en Introduktion* (Haastrup) is used along with a PowerPoint presentation (appendix B).

Next is the analysis of the chosen clip from *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) at 01:34:23 to 01:37:27, specifically chosen for how it exemplifies most of the cinematographic terms. The students are divided into five groups corresponding with each a cinematographic device, which is listed in the notes section on the first page of appendix A. This activity tests their ability to use the terms in an analysis and they are given only 10 minutes, as it is not supposed to be a complete exhaustive analysis, but simply a revision. The last activity is also group work, but the prior groups are split up and one from each group form a new group. Here, they are supposed to recount their findings to their classmates and how it creates meaning in the film. This is done to ensure that all students have an idea of the cinematographic concepts and how they work in this specific film clip. Furthermore, it allows for the students to teach each other and they may be more likely to listen to each other, rather than a teacher.

The teacher's role in both activities with group work is to walk between the groups and answer questions in an effort to avoid mislearning. This may not be possible to avoid as the

teacher cannot be everywhere at once, but having the advantage of two teachers in the course of this thesis as well as it being a revision and not completely new concepts to be learnt, can be a factor in not experiencing mislearning. The content of this lesson is not unknown to the students, but it is clearly given for the students what they are supposed to learn. In an effort to secure the incentive dimension, an action scene was chosen to give the students something interesting and high-paced to analyse. The interaction dimension is achieved through the group work, as well as the freely wandering teachers. This should ensure that all of Illeris' dimensions of the learning model is taken into account and thereby lay the base for a productive lesson.

The second lesson is focused on the ecofeminist theory and its application to film analysis. The lesson is started with a short summary of the plot of the film to make sure that all students are acquainted with it, as it is not been required of them to watch the film, so they are able to discuss it when applying the ecofeminist theory. The second activity is a presentation of ecofeminism as a theory and its key terms, based on Plumwood's theory defined in the first part of this thesis. During this activity, it can be hard to avoid learning barriers, as it is based on a politically loaded philosophy and this can create controversies, defences, or outright refusals to learning. This will lay base for a discussion on the ecofeminist theory in relation to two short new clips from the film chosen to display the key terms of ecofeminism, as well as the one analysed in the first lesson. This will be a teacher-controlled class discussion, where the aim is for the students to be able to apply the terms both to the film analysis, but also how the knowledge can be accommodated to make it possible to use in the societal context of the students themselves. The teacher will most likely need to ask leading questions for the students to make the connections at first, but the goal is for the students to make them by themselves. As a

conclusion to the lessons, a short evaluation is done to help gain an overview over the students' experience with the material, and to be able to answer the question behind this experiment; whether or not critical theory is applicable to their level of study.

The content for the second lesson may be difficult for the students to understand, and it can result in mislearning if the teacher is not mindful of explaining it clearly. As for the incentive, the goal is for the students to find this new method of working interesting, and for them to realise its value in both in-school and out-school settings. Therefore, it is also important to explain what value the content has, in order to ensure a level of incentive in the students. It is very possible that the incentive fails, as they may realise that this subject has no relevance for their exams, and they then choose not to listen as a way of relaxing between lessons deemed 'important'. Furthermore, it is crucial to ensure a clear interactive dimension, both in the immediate social space between the students themselves and the teacher, but also the societal context. This can be done to draw the question of the creator of this film, a Hollywood studio, into account and stress how art, like literature and films, is a reflection of society. This can be connected to the incentive dimension, as it may create incentive for the learner to know that it is not only applicable in academic contexts, but also is relevant in their daily life.

Considerations

The aim of this short course is both to achieve assimilative and accommodative learning if possible. The assimilative learning is based mostly in the first lesson, where the students are presented with terms relating to methods of analysis they already have been acquainted with, and most likely, this knowledge will be assimilated into the mental schemes related to analysis of

differing media. The ecofeminist theory might also be assimilated into mental schemes, but the goal is to create accommodative learning, where the students need to restructure some of their mental schemes to fit the new knowledge and its connection to society. Depending on their political views, it can range from assimilative learning, in instances where the student may already be invested in critical approaches to exploitation, to the accommodative learning. This can also result in a defence against learning if the student is unconsciously blocking the new knowledge to avoid restructuring their mental schemes. A longer course than that of this thesis might make it possible to work with and repel the defence against learning.

While the content dimension in this case is given, a special care has been shown the planning in relation to incentive and interaction. As for incentive, a main factor was using a film instead of a short story, in an attempt to work with something different than normal for the students, and through that create interest and incentive to follow the lesson. Furthermore, a critically acclaimed Hollywood film (Hawkes) was chosen for its appeal for the students, and *Mad Max* in particular has a broad target audience, as it contains both action scenes, a feminist message, an interesting plot, a bit of romance and tragedy, and a typical happy ending, but also incredible cinematography. This makes it enjoyable to most viewers. For the interaction dimension, the focus has been on both the social and societal context. The immediate social space of the classroom and group work with the classmates ensures interaction in a physically close way and discussions with the teachers about the societal context provides the interaction in its broadest definition. In this case, it is in the interaction connected to the societal context the intended learning and goal of this experiment would happen.

While using a film and film analysis as the medium can be beneficial, it also has weaknesses. The film enables the students to visually recognise the ecofeminist concepts, as they are especially prominent in the scenes chosen for the second lesson, but it also entails a plentitude of analytical points that the students are not able to discuss in full due to the limited time frame of this course. As earlier mentioned, not all of the cinematographic categories are easy to analyse in this case, as the students so not possess the ability to analyse the sound on a level that makes an ecofeminist perspective constructive to the general analysis. Still, it can also prove beneficial that the film allows for the students to apply the theory to more than simple text, as a way of further placing it in both the in-school mental schemes and the schemes connected to daily life, as a way of bridging the gap often found between these two categories. Furthermore, it is both an advantage and disadvantage that film carries a large amount of material in very short clips. It can be an advantage as there is enough material for an analysis in very short clips, but a disadvantage in just how much there is to consider for the analysis to be considered comprehensive. In this course, a comprehensive analysis is not the focus, but instead the application of the ecofeminist theory to the analysis. This allows for the students' analysis to not be perfectly exhaustive, and still being relevant to the discussion.

The PowerPoint presentation (appendix B) is used as a tool to create an easy overview of the teaching material. The first slide presents the students with the agenda for the two lessons, to make sure that they understand and are prepared for what they are going to work with. Providing a clear scope of the lessons can be beneficial for the interaction dimension of learning, as the students experience coherent communication of expectations. The slides go on to define the cinematographic elements that is going to be the focus of the analysis done by the students, using

illustrations where it is possible, to avoid misunderstanding. Generally, the slides are kept simple in the effort to make the students use their own notes and knowledge. The use of a PowerPoint presentation also makes it easy to show the film clips, as links are added to the corresponding slides and the clip opened directly from the slides in the internet browser. For the second lesson, there is a single slide for the short mention of narrative and plot, and then the focus changes to ecofeminism. Like the cinematographic concepts, the slides only show the main categories and a few related pictures and the rest is explained by the teachers and shown in the clips. Screenshots from the film is used to fill out empty space in some of the slides, like the ones dedicated to the time spent doing group work during the first lesson and to the reflection at the end of lesson two, to tie it all together.

To be able to accommodate the teaching method in the best way possible to the students in the classes, it was deemed necessary to observe the classes before doing the planned teaching. This allows for the teachers to acquaintance themselves with the students and how they are best taught. Through observation, it would be possible to assess the academic level of the students beforehand and prepare accordingly, as well as familiarise oneself with the class and give an insight into its social dynamics. These concepts are, according to Illeris, important to take into account when learning is supposed to take place. Furthermore, it gives an overview of how many students there are in the classes, as well as what kind of physical surroundings they are situated in and if they would be beneficial to adjust to. Additionally, it can give the advantage of not being entirely unknown to the students. The factor of the teachers in this experiment not being the usual teacher should be taken into consideration, as it can heavily influence the dimensions of

learning, and even trigger learning barriers. Therefore, being able to observe and assess the class prior to teaching them could prove valuable for the course and the thesis of this paper.

Criteria

It was decided that for the experiment to be credible, at least two different classes at two different schools should be taught in a similar way. This creates a larger test group, and therefore a better chance at a general overview of the students' ability to work with a critical theory in this way. In the limited time frame of this thesis, it was only possible to establish a partnership with two gymnasiums, Hjørring Gymnasium & HF-kursus and Frederikshavn Gymnasium & HF-kursus. Although it would have beneficial to test the thesis with more students, the base criteria had been met, and thus the result of experiment can be considered valid. The test is meant to be conducted on 3.g (senior level) students, age 17-19, as it ensures that they are well acquainted with academic work on a low level. They have practised analysis and discussion of various texts and media during their two previous years of school, which is necessary for an acceptable application of critical theory. While this is technically above their level, it is the purpose of the test to challenge the students and provide a taste of the critical theory that is fundamental to the humanities, to see if they are able and willing to learn this, and if it might be beneficial for their overall academic study.

Both schools in this experiment are of the *STX*, the general upper secondary school. This was desired, as this type of gymnasium is the one generally inclined towards the humanities. Besides the STX, there are also *HHX*, business and mercantile gymnasium, and *HTX*, technological and natural science gymnasium. It is preferable that both courses are taught in the

same kind of school, as they each have a different focus in their teaching and the student in their learning, as well as the individual study regulations and course descriptions being different from one school to the other. For the best result, the general gymnasium was chosen as a focus. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that the classes are as homogenous as possible, to generate the most credible result. It is also a question of to what students such a course would be most beneficial and where there would be the best incentive and interest in the students to learn. While critical theory and the ability to think critically is beneficial to students of all three gymnasiums, it was considered most fitting, in terms of material and the nature of it, for the general gymnasium, STX.

In relation to the study regulation, it is important to keep them in mind when planning the course. It is designed for A-level students, the highest level, and to be taught in their last year at the school. The Danish study regulations for this level can be found in appendix C. The course of this thesis was planned in accordance to these regulations. Firstly, in terms of the goals of the education, the course will practise analysis and discussion of a multimedia text, as well as exercise their language through the group work and discussion. Furthermore, there will be drawn connections to relevant trends in both the American and British society and political climate, and even the Danish one. The materials used functions as the additional material mentioned in section 2.3 in the appendix, but can be incorporated into the core material if done as a part of a topic over several lessons. It also provides the students with new analytical terminology that can be applied to both fictional and non-fictional texts, which is mentioned in section 2.2. Thus, it is argued that this course is relevant to the students and that it is well tailored to their level and what is expected of them in accordance to the regulations provided by the state of Denmark.

Evaluation of the Course

The following section will explain the course as it proceeded at both Hjørring and Frederikshavn Gymnasium & HF-kursus. The course was first completed at Hjørring and almost two weeks later at Frederikshavn. As earlier described, the class was observed a week prior to the lessons taking place, in order to get to know the class, the students, and the social and physical environment. In Hjørring, the class consisted of 26 students placed in a quite small classroom, and the air quickly became hot and heavy. This is important to remember, as it would be beneficial for the students' concentration levels to use time during the lessons outside of the stuffy classroom. The social environment was generally better than the physical one; the students worked well together and they did not seem much disturbed by the observers. Their academic level was between average and high. In Frederikshavn, there were only 20 students in the class, and the classroom much larger, resulting in a much better indoor climate. However, the size of the room also constituted to the students sitting further apart, which made grouping during the course time consuming. The students worked well together and were respectful when answering their teacher, although he worked hard for adequate answers. While observing the class, a presentation took place, and the students were engaged in the subject and answered and posed relevant questions. The academic level of the class was also between average and high.

Hjørring Gymnasium & HF-kursus

When teaching in Hjørring, it was characterised by being the first time teaching the course. The walkthrough of the cinematographic concepts took longer time than expected, yet it was not entirely surprising, as it was unpractised material and it was hard to discern exactly how much to

explain about each concept. The teaching was done mostly in English, only translating when asked. This was expected as the students have had lessons in English since first grade and have most likely been heavily exposed to the language through pop culture and media. Most of the students were active during both group work activities and often asked for clarifications of concepts. This is a sign that they had the incentive to make sure that they used the content in the right way to avoid mislearning and a very promising sign when learning. This was understood as an indication of that the first lesson was successful and that the students did learn something they thought to be important, interesting, and useful. The focus groups seemed to gain their interest as well, even though the execution turned out rather confusing. It was a challenge to re-assign each student into a new group and make sure that every group had one from each of the first groups, but when cleared up, it became quite successful. Furthermore, they were allowed to leave the classroom for both activities, to avoid the classroom being to hot and noisy for them to be able to concentrate in, of which the students were grateful.

It quickly became apparent that the ecofeminist theory was more challenging to the students than the film analysis had been. The theory got a mixed response, but very few seemed to completely disregard the lesson. Their normal teacher was beneficial as she asked clarifying questions throughout the lesson that the students either did not wish or think to ask. While it had been preferred for the lesson to include this information from the beginning, it would have been hard to determine exactly how much to explain. Although the observation gave a general idea of the academic level of the class, it was not possible to accommodate completely to the students, and thus the teacher and her knowledge about her students became valuable. The ecofeminist concepts were quickly explained to a level they understood, and while it did take a few minutes

of leading questions from the teachers, several students then employed the terms well in connection to the film clips shown. Furthermore, a few was even able to relate it to the general society and stories read in the news recently, proving that they were able to transfer these concepts to an outside-school setting. In one case, it was clearly because the concepts were assimilated into a mental scheme of feminism, and it spurred a discussion that revealed ideological standpoints. This is considered as a very successful use of these concepts, and it proved that the students were able to make the connections.

When asked for feedback, the students provided positive comments on the choice of material, both in terms of the film and the critical theory. Some remarked that it had been interesting to learn about something different from their usual way of working and discussing texts, even though it had been harder than normal. They too were positive about the focus groups, which may be because it lessens the workload for the individual student, while still providing them with a complete overlook over the material. Their main critique was that the ecofeminist terms and their use were too hard to remember through just one explanation, and that they wanted to have been given a hand-out with the terms and their explanations. Still, the lessons worked as intended, and they were able to employ the ecofeminist terminology in connection with the film analysis. Furthermore, they were able to compare this to their own society, referring to present debates relating to their personal interests. Generally, the content was fitting for the students, both in terms of amount and level. The exercise in cinematography during the first lesson was praised in particular for giving a great general overview of film analysis and its main topics. Furthermore, it was unexpected to experience how some of the

students were better at using the ecofeminist terms in connection to their societal context, than the film analysis.

Frederikshavn Gymnasium & HF-kursus

In Frederikshavn, the first lesson passed smoothly and in accordance to the time plan. This can be attributed to the fact that the material had been practised and there was no longer any hesitations concerning what was to be told. The teaching was also conducted in English, with few translations and clarifications throughout the lesson. The group activities had a mixed result. Some groups left the classroom and one of those groups did not remember the key terms to analyse their specific subject, which was then provided by one of the teachers; they did remember how to use the terms. Other students were very engaged in the work, showing that there was a big gap in who connected to the incentive and who did not. Furthermore, one group disappeared completely during the first part of the group work, making it hard to monitor if they did the exercise as asked, or they had any mislearning to correct. This was reflected in the second part of the group work, where it was noticeable that the groups had differing levels of analysis to present to each other. This can be contributed to the fact that the school called a number of the students to meetings one after the other, thereby removing them from one part of the lesson. This resulted in that some students came back to their classmates doing a new task that they had not been presented to. This is not beneficial for their incentive to focus on the lesson and learn.

This was also apparent in the second lesson and its discussion of the ecofeminist themes of *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015), where some students were more engaged than others. Having taken into account the feedback from the class in Hjørring, the students were here given a sheet

of paper with short explanations of the five main mechanisms of dualism as defined through Plumwood (appendix D). This proved to be a strength, as the students actively referred to the hand-out during the discussion. There was still a few instances of confusion and terms being mistaken for another, but it was expected as the terms do overlap on many accounts. Those instances of mislearning happening were then quickly corrected and explained to make the students able to discern between the concepts and the nuances of these. In this class, their usual teacher proved both a help in some instances and a hindrance in other. The teacher did help to monitor the group work and start the following critical discussion, yet when aiming to provide the students with the connection to their own society, the teacher took over the discussion and the students were quickly lost to their seemingly more interesting computer screens. This was a shame, as a few of the students did seem to be invested in understanding the use of these terms, but most likely were intimidated by the teacher's use of the terms, that ended being a discussion between the teachers as scholars of the English language.

In the evaluation, the students also emphasised the fact that the film analysis, and the way it was treated, was interesting in how it was different from their normal material. The group work was praised again, and the fact that they each had a focus and was supposed to present it to the others was said to keep it interesting. Still, the level of engagement was generally low due to the students coming and going. It was highly disruptive to the concentration of the students present in class and made it confusing for the students who missed parts of the lessons. Their incentive to learn was greatly hindered by the fact that they did not have the same cohesion in the course as their classmates, and furthermore, they most likely did not wish to disrupt the other students' concentration by asking for an explanation. It should also be taken into consideration that the

class consisted of only twenty students; this meant that even though only five or six students were gone for the meetings, it had a direct influence on at least a fourth of the students, and indirectly maybe even half of them. Still, the hand-out used as reference for the ecofeminist terms was a definite success for the students still invested in the lesson, and it was evident that they did try to understand and apply the terms, even if they were not all able to use them in their own societal context.

Comparison

The hand-out was made as an addition to the PowerPoint presentation, as it had been mentioned as an improvement during the evaluation of the first lessons in Hjørring. While it had been the point of this experiment to teach the two classes in the same way, it was chosen to be added because it was considered a great idea. The students did not have the same idea of the concepts as the teachers, who have studied this theory over a long period of time, and thus the value of such as sheet was recognised. It would enable the students to have a point of reference in the discussion, laying the base for a more productive discussion during the second time the course was taught. Furthermore, it worked well as the onset of a five-minute discussion with their nearest classmate as preparation to the class discussion. Although the result was mixed, it was due to factors not connected to the sheet, and it was clear that the students did use the hand-out as intended with success. In one instance, a student referred directly to it by using its phrasing to underline the point made, which was the goal with the hand-out. Thus, it is concluded that it was beneficial to add it to the course.

When comparing the two classes, it becomes apparent that even though they are of the STX, the general gymnasium, their individual environment, physical as social, differed greatly. While Hjørring had a small classroom with 25 students present, Frederikshavns rooms were at least twice the size and only housed between 15 to 20 students. The air was a lot cooler in Frederikshavn, and the physical environment significantly better. This would suggest that the students at Frederikshavn Gymnasium had a better foundation for learning. Yet the social environment is also an important space to consider in a learning situation. With this, Hjørring seemed to have the advantage with what seemed like a closer-knit class socially, reflected in how they were physically placed closer to each other in the room. Furthermore, the distance to the teachers may also have had an influence. In Hjørring, the small classroom meant that the teachers were quite close to the students at all times, suggesting a better teacher-student connection than in Frederikshavn, where there was a large empty space in between them. Still, it is concluded that the largest factor in the differences was the disruptive meetings in Frederikshavn.

Improvements

One of the features stressed throughout the thesis is the relevance of the ecofeminist subject to the students, both in terms of their scholarly career and their life outside school. While this point has been argued for during the previous sections, the students themselves also need to be aware of it. It is then key for the teaching of this material to emphasise the importance of this knowledge in both in- and out-school settings. This would further improve their incentive to learn. In order to best create this awareness, it is crucial to relate the material to a societal

context, and during this course, it became evident that a few students in particular favoured this nuance to the discussion. This also works to diminish the transfer issues sometimes experienced between subjects both in school and outside. The course work on ecofeminism did at least in part succeed in making the students able to transfer the knowledge to a societal context, and a longer course may have been able to create links to multiple mental schemes. Still, as it is based on Val Plumwood's personal life philosophy, this theory is politically and ideologically loaded with a message of environmental and social responsibility; teaching of any kind connected to an ideology should be treated with great care to the message. The aim is not to misinform or even radicalise the students in any way or direction, but to provide them with different ways of looking critically at literature as a reflection of society.

While this experiment is considered credible under the constraints it was conducted, much could be done to further improve it. First of all, a larger sample group, meaning more schools and classes, would be beneficial, as well as attempting the same in the HTX or HHX gymnasium. This would mostly be relevant if such a perspective was to be added to the study regulations. Furthermore, a longer course spanning more than two lessons would have beneficial in examining whether or not the students actually learnt how to apply the ecofeminist terms to both literature and societal structures. More time would have allowed for the teachers to apply the terms to more literary material as well as explain the terms and the dualistic power structure more in full than was done during this experiment.

As for what could be improved on this specific course, it would have been beneficial for the corresponding PowerPoint presentation to have been made available for the students at the beginning of each lesson; this would make sure they each had a reference to both the

cinematographic and ecofeminist concepts when applying them in analysis or discussion. One thing that was improved, was the hand-out containing short explanations of the ecofeminist concepts being added to the material for the lessons in Frederikshavn. This was done because it would have a positive effect on the probability on the experiment succeeding, as well as providing the student with references to return to even after the experiment had ended. It was a shame that it had not been considered for the class in Hjørring, and as it did not have any influence on the time constraints, it was chosen to be added.

Hindrance to learning

A factor that hindered the class discussion was the students' limited English vocabulary. While they have been taught English in school since first grade, it was clear that they struggled to express their points during the discussion, and that they simply lacked words to describe them. Their grammatical structures were also influenced by their native tongue Danish, but not at a level that altered the meaning substantially, and for the sake of the coherence of the discussion, these mistakes were not corrected. This further emphasises the importance of using such discussions as practise in producing language simultaneously with thought. This is a skill mentioned in section 2.1 of the study regulations, where the ability to produce language spontaneously with fluency is emphasised (appendix C).

Moreover, the students might not be comfortable to display their competences if they feel like they are inadequate. This insecurity can be counteracted with vocabulary exercises, but they would have to be incorporated into the general curriculum throughout the year. Through these, the students would be able to develop a nuanced vocabulary to utilise both in verbal discussions

as well as the texts they have to produce as required by the regulations. In the context of this thesis, it would prove beneficial to the discussion that create the crucial link between the in-school and out-school mental schemes. Furthermore, it would lessen the chance of a learning barrier being erected in defence of the students not being able to say what they want to.

Another factor that most likely have had an influence on the results of this thesis is the fact that the course was not taught by their regular teacher. According to Illeris, the social environment is one on the central pillars in learning, and providing an unknown teacher to instruct the students in new material can disrupt the social environment beneficial to learning. Still, the interaction was not crippled, which can be contributed to the externally imposed teachers simply filling a role in the already established social context, which is strongly enforced through the physical surroundings of a school and its classroom. Furthermore, the interaction dimension was important to consider in this context, as it easily could affect the motivation dimension in both positive and negative directions. While the students could have treated it as a break from their normal course work and something new and interesting to learn, they could also just have lost all interest due to the knowledge that they would not be tested on this material. Yet the immediate surroundings may also have aided the motivational and interactional dimensions, as the students automatically connect this environment to learning and therefore more easily accepts the different kind of learning happening in the well-known surroundings.

Summary

To summarise, the experiment can definitely be considered successful. While there are many factors that would have been beneficial to adjust, the experiment of this thesis has a certain time

frame to consider. Within these limitations, the lessons were conducted without much trouble, and the dilemmas they presented were handled well. The students were generally engaged and enjoyed the new perspective on the film as well as the societally connected discussion. In the first lesson, most of the learning was assimilative in nature, as they were provided with concepts that would easily fit into their mental schemes concerning analysis of different media. It may have been able to correct mislearning, but it was not possible to test this. Furthermore, the group work provided great interaction between the students, and they considered it an interesting way to work that gave them new perspectives on their material, as well as the responsibility of explaining it well to their classmates.

The second lesson was more challenging, but the students met the criteria and were able to use the ecofeminist concepts of homogenisation, hyperseparation, incorporation, backgrounding, and instrumentalisation in relation to their film analysis, as well as in the context of their own society. This was also dominated by assimilative learning, as the new concepts also fit into their analytical mental scheme, but it could result in accommodative learning for a few students, who would have to rearrange their mental schemes to be able to work with these concepts in these situations. The class discussion was great practise for their production of verbal language, and again, the interactive dimension proved strong.

Still, not all students participated at the same level, and this was most likely due to some kind of learning barrier. Mislearning of the key concepts can have been a factor, but also defence against learning, where the students might not feel the need to engage themselves in the learning situation and unconsciously turn their focus away. A few may even have felt a resistance to learning if the course material was irreconcilable with their worldview. This can be a result of

choosing a politically loaded theory. Nevertheless, the experiment can be considered a success,

as the students were able to apply the ecofeminist concepts both to the film analysis and their

own societal context.

Discussion

This discussion will be divided into two parts; the two sections will respectively focus on the experiences from teaching the course of the thesis, discuss if it succeeded in introducing a critical aspect in the students, what could have been better, if the students can be introduced to critical theory earlier, and how it can be beneficial in their reading of a variety of texts. The other part will be a discussion of two essays written by Greta Gaard, where she focuses on the benefits of ecofeminism as literary theory, why ecofeminism was chosen, and if it was the best choice for Danish gymnasium (upper secondary school) students.

Experiences

In order to test the thesis statement, different schools were contacted and two schools offered their help. The course was then taught to two different classes, which produced more data. After a general walkthrough of both the elementals in neo-formalist film analysis and ecofeminism, the students were told to analyse small sequences of the film *Mad Max*. As they talked with their partners, the teachers walked around helping and listening to see if they were able to go through the different cinematographic categories: mise-en-scene; editing; sound; and narrative; and generate analytical meaning of the categories through Plumwood's five key terms; homogenisation, incorporation, instrumentalisation, backgrounding, and hyperseperation. The students seemed engaged in the subject and they all found it interesting to talk about the film. Most of the students were able to recognise some of the structures of oppression on more than one of the categories. This shows that the students were able to follow and seperate the abstract notions introduced by Plumwood and see them at work in the elements of a film. It was possible

to make the students see how ecofeminism can be an additional layer of analysis, through applying it to the already familiar concept of film analysis. The objective was to develop the students' theoretical base from which they could build further knowledge, by teaching it in relation to an already existing mental scheme. Furthermore, many of the key terms introduced to them are transferable to other classes such as History, Social Studies, and even Biology. These terms address the big structures of oppression and can be applied, like here, to specific texts or issues, or it can question the whole system. Thus, it would be a good exercise for the students to work with ecofeminism in a macro and micro setting, as it will help them realise the possibilities of the theoretical approach and strengthen their uses of it.

The course was taught in two different classes with different main subjects. In Hjørring, the walkthrough of the material went well and the students worked efficiently. The conversations in the classroom were focused and they seemed to understand the connection between the different cinematographic elements. After introducing them to ecofeminism explaining what it is, how it works, and why to use it, they were given the rest of the class to see if they could connect the different terms to the short film sequences shown to them. This also went smoothly and most of the students could connect the two levels of analysis. However, when it came to discussing what they did, the general dialogue between the students and the teachers was lacking. They had a hard time articulating the connections and seemed too shy to answer; only a few students interacted in the discussion about the uses and purpose of using such theories, even though they all seemed to comprehend the idea.

In Frederikshavn, a number of the students had to leave throughout the class, which caused some disruption during the lessons. The cinematographic lesson focused on the students

having different areas of expertise in the film analysis and aimed to create a common ground for discussion. This further meant that the students were less attentive and had a harder time connecting the two fields in the discussion. Moreover, their teacher was quite vocal and asked quite abstract questions, in order to help the student connect ecofeminism to a subject they already had experience with. However, it did more to confuse them and alienate ecofeminism than help to connect it to something they knew. When they had to work with the film sequences related to ecofeminism, some of the students caught on, however, the students not present during the walk-through of ecofeminism had difficulty in applying the terms to film analysis. A few of the students saw that the five terms have overlapping feature and are working together to enforce the dualised structure separating the masculine from the feminine, culture from nature. It was interesting that they were able to see this imbrication, as the teachers did not spend much time on explaining it; the focus was an introduction of the theory and a relatable connection to the film analysis.

The two classes produced two different experiences, which arguable means that in order to fully see if an application of critical theory in gymnasium is feasible, more data is needed. Full experimental curriculums are needed to get the full scope of the effectiveness and usefulness of such an approach. Another question would be if it is realistic to introduce a multitude of theories or only a few. A exercise which may heightened the credibility of the data could be if the students were provided with a short essay about ecofeminism and how it works in a text to read beforehand. Furthermore, more time with the classes would be beneficial, as it would then be possible to provide a comprehensive base for the students to work from.

Why Ecofeminism?

The reason why introducing a critical theoretical element in the gymnasium is beneficial, is because awareness of this approach is missing. An increased focus on critical literary theories can generate a critical assessment in the students, as they become aware how the theories can be used to critically judge the context of the literary text analysed; this means that the students will be given tools to think critically. Moreover, there is a intersectional element in this approach as well. The students will be able to use the critical aspect of the lessons in other subjects, constructing a bridge between different subjects which is specified in the study regulations, subsection 2.2 (appendix C). It might be able to provide a connection between natural science subjects and the humanities, as ecofeminism can be applied, using for example Biology to accentuate its points. The critical level can further constitute gymnasium readings of short stories and poems, as they will be given a way to use these texts to examine ways of oppression and exploitation present in the societal environment of the texts, providing them with a broad context in which to activate their readings of these stories. However, the reason a film was chosen as the subject matter these lessons was that it provides a visualisations of the concepts as explained earlier in the thesis. Through the film, the students can see how the War Boys are homogenised or how Immortan Joe is hyperseparated from the rest of the survivors and the incentive to learn is supported through the multimedia text, which provides a break in their usual analytical lessons using written texts.

The approach to ecofeminism that has been used throughout this thesis has the potential to be adapted to a variety of texts, evident in the theoretical discussion and analysis of this thesis. This will further be supported with a discussion of two reflective essays by Greta Gaard in

the second half of this section. A focus on written texts at first could provide the students with the ability to recognise how ecofeminism can comment critically on different levels of analysis. This can be transferred to a multimedia text, as they will have a prior expertise in identifying ecofeminist structures. This is not the structure replicated to introduce the students to ecofeminism through film analysis in this thesis, as it was anticipated that the visual aspect of the film would clarify and ease the learning process. However, a switch from film to written texts could provide the students with a reflective aspect, as other critical theories can with less work be applied to a text than a film, showing them how different readings can provide different outcomes.

Moreover, the point of this thesis was to introduce critical literary theory to gymnasium students and provide them with a new analytical perspective. As mentioned above, this has been tailored to senior level students, but the discussion will now focus on if it is possible to introduce critical theories at the beginning of the gymnasium. The students could be introduced to a few critical literary theories from the the beginning of their time at the school, while they were taught to analyse and write assignments in the gymnasium setting. The theories would enable the students to apply an abstract level of analysis to their given texts. This means that they would be able to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the different theoretical perspectives they have been introduced to, and realise that theories in relation to other theories have strengths and weaknesses. This would further provide the students with the ability to critically assess the societal setting of the texts, both in relation to other texts and theories, but also their own societal environment. Additionally, providing them with such tools, the school system would create more

critical aware citizens who are conscious of how they can be manipulated, both by cultural

contexts and by theoretical points of view.

In contrast, it can be argued that introducing too large a corpus of critical approaches to

the students before their senior year might be too challenging for the students. The variety of

different approaches might be overwhelming and can be cause for mislearning and other learning

barriers; the different approaches would easily be mixed together, not giving them a clear idea of

the various theoretical approaches. As discussed above, it can furthermore be added to the

general teaching about assignments and analysis, which can generate a confusion and ambiguity

about how to use the theories. Moreover, the students should be able to discern between the

individual theories and their influence on their analyses.

Other Ecofeminist Approaches

The following section contains a discussion of two essays written by Greta Gaard, one where she

focuses on using children's literature to generate an eco-consciousness in children and an

awareness in their parents of what literature children consume and how it can affect their view of

nature. The second essay focuses on creating a model of literary critical analysis based on

ecofeminism. She writes in details about how she has created a course for university students,

with a extensive corpus, in order to make a theory surrounding some of the core terms in

ecofeminism with the help of her students. This will be followed by a discussion of the analysis

presented earlier in this paper and how the literary theory of ecofeminism is expanded to be

applied to a multimedia text, based on the analytical results presented and Gaard's observations.

Lastly there will be a discussion about using ecofeminism in the gymnasium and why this approach has been chosen.

Greta Gaard's essay *Children's Environmental Literature: from Ecocriticism to Ecopedagogy* expands the scope of ecofeminism and ecocriticism by applying a eco-pedagogical angle to it. The main focus is an analysis of children's literature and how it raises some interesting questions about the fields' general contribution to society. She focuses on how children are first exposed to the environment and what children's literature actually teaches them about humans' relationship with nature. Gaard suggest that the fields of ecofeminism and ecocriticism should work to generate an ecopedagogical reading of children's literature in order to figure out how it presents the culture/nature paradigm, and if such an analysis can help parents in creating a eco-consciousness in their children from a young age. Gaard provides a summary of scholars who have already analysed literature for children and have discussed how it represents humans, nature, race, and gender in different ways. Her essay can be viewed as a presentation of the early results of what she hopes becomes a much larger focus in the fields, as it can be a way to counter the indoctrination of children into the mindset of the master identity and the created master/other relationship.

The previous research mentioned by Gaard has focused on some of the classics in American children's literature such as *The Lorax* and *Dora the Explorer* with mixed results. There seems to be subtle messages in the books and tv-shows aimed at children that the environmental problems facing the human race and nature need to be fixed by changing the approach and structures in society. However, it should not be changed by the people who caused the problem, but rather by the new generation, as the 'persuasive' discourse of the parents have

failed to impact the situation: "According to the principles of classical rhetoric, the Lorax fails at persuasion through his ineffective use of ethos, pathos, and logos" (9). Children's literature tend to emphasise the next generations obligation to find a solution to the problems created now.

Gaard further writes that Richard Kahn argues for three varieties of ecoliteracy as goals for an ecopedagogy.

> First, ecopedagogy seeks to develop basic environmental literacy, which often
>
> means bioregional literacy, developing an understanding of the ways that local,
>
> regional, and global ecologies interact for better and for worse. Its second
>
> feature, cultural ecoliteracy, involves both a critique of unsustainable cultures
>
> and the features thereof, as well as a study of sustainable cultures and their
>
> strategies for resisting assimilation, strengthening community, developing
>
> appropriate technologies, and organizing collective knowledge. [...] Developing
>
> cultural ecoliteracy leads to the third aspect of ecopedagogy, a critique of the
>
> anti-ecological effects of industrial capitalism, colonialism, imperialism, and
>
> ruling-class culture (which involves defining humanity over and against all that
>
> is ''other''—lesser humans, animals, and nature) (Gaard 6)

These approaches which Gaard argues can be applied directly to children's literature in order to examine how children are introduced to nature and how the stories represent a non-human other. The point is to register how it affects their relationship with the other and if omitting literature which replicates oppressive structures can help to stop them, as the children would be exposed to literature which focusing on co-existence, rather than subjugation. An increased focus on children's literature in ecocriticism and ecofeminism will lead to a rhetorical focus in the narrative, which can be used to point out and make conscious how it affects the children's approach to nature and what kind of narrative message they consume. Ecofeminism and

ecocriticism can help the field investigate how children's literature exhibit the relationship between culture and nature, men and women through the relationship between children and animals with a particular focus on subjectivity and objectivity of the animals depicted in these narratives.

Greta Gaard's second essay, *Hiking Without a Map: Reflections on Teaching Ecofeminist Literary Criticism,* focuses on how to create a literary approach suited for university students. She attempts to identify a number of key terms by having the students read and discuss a large corpus of theoretical and literary texts, as she works with the students to find common themes in these texts that can be used to compose a theoretical foundation. All the students have a background in the humanities or language with a focus on feminist or gender theory. Gaard uses their knowledge to generate assimilative learning to make them think of the connections between the exploitation and oppression of women and nature in an intersectional structure. Gaard expresses concern that ecofeminism mainly has been used to critique cultural structures, rather than using it to locate and recognise how these structures are produced in literature to uphold the status quo. She indicates that ecofeminism as literary critique can be used to generate activism through reading and teaching, as it provides a vocabulary to oppose the exploitive structure argued to be present in Western society. In her essay she provides a detailed evaluation and reflection of the course and goes through the different stages. The course follows a ten week plan where she has divided the corpus according to the genre of the texts, going through novels, short stories, and poems trying to create a broad theoretical approach which can be used on many different kinds of texts.

As she goes through the readings, she discusses the main points the students work out to be the main issues of this critical approach; many of the issues fall under Plumwood's dualism and the five key terms she uses to argue for its power. However, they also work with other aspects of ecofeminism which intergrate Plumwood's ideas to analyse concepts like the gender binary and anger, the one emotion denied the other (160). Gaard's focus is described in four main features or sides of ecofeminist analysis (178). The students and Gaard generate an analysis which center the human/nature dualism in terms of gender, race, class, and sexuality, and how their relationship shifts to fit the oppressive needs of the master identity. They are naturalised, homogenised characteristics of the culturally determined other. This model can be used as a global critique of the structures of exploitation, as Gaard argues in her essay through Ursula Le Guin:

> Le Guin's text offers a number of entry points for an ecofeminist critique, among
>
> them the technical device of shifting point of view, narrating from the viewpoint
>
> of the Other; interrogating the culture/nature relationship through the
>
> girl-child/animal relationship
>
> (fable); examining the role of language in constructing nature, self, and Other;
>
> interrogating the role of science in constructing nature; comparing the
>
> relationship between poetry and prose in their effectiveness in conveying ideas;
>
> and explaining the uses of retelling myth and story from a liberatory perspective
>
> (*Hiking Without a map* 177-178).

By examining the role of language in a narrative through ecofeminism, the critique would be of the general structures. The focus of the theory, according to Garrd, is to generate a sense of urgency and activism in the students and readers, making it clear that hyperseparation of the patriarchal capitalist structure between culture and nature, science and humanities, is the tool

which can be used to restructure the system. Literary analysis is a way to realise that the structures are being reproduced constantly in texts of all kind, and by teaching a method to visualise such structures in students, will provide them with the objective of rejecting them. In conclusion to her essay, Gaard writes that with her students, she has assembled a list of central questions which are paramount to ecofeminist literary critique. Questions which cover all the bases of exploitations, analysing how specific elements are presented in the texts such as the erotic, emotions, eating, or dualisms (179). These broad questions can also be transferred to the gymnasium and can be useful in further research on implementing critical literary theory in gymnasium**.**

Reflections on Approaches

Greta Gaard, compared to this paper, had the opportunity to create a ten week course focusing on developing the students' understanding of ecofeminism individually and collectively through readings from a variety of genres, and discussions centralising the issues in the texts. Moreover, with the help of her students, she establishes a set of key terms and focal areas of ecofeminism. Because it is a gymnasium level, not university, this course was designed with the key terms and critical areas of analysis given to the students, trying to expand the students' sense of critical thought. The goal was to give them the ability to analyse a multimedia texts by using ecofeminism. Gaard, as she had more time and was able to elaborate on a more advanced level, could get a much more in-depth, abstract level of analysis. She uses assimilative and accommodative learning to connect ecofeminism to the subjects known to the students; something that would be achievable for the students of this experiment as well, in time. Gaard's

essay accentuates the importance of criticism, deliberating the intersectional qualities of class, race, gender, and nature, providing teachers with another way to teach ecofeminism, while still focusing the analysis around Plumwood's key terms.

As discussed above, there are different ways and levels where it would be appropriate to apply ecofeminism and use it as a literary theory additional to an analysis. It is possible to establish a critical theory focusing on a set core terms. These terms, because of their cultural significance, can be used for a variety of texts and contexts, as they examine the cultural foundation of exploitation and the link between race, class, gender, and nature. Greta Gaard argues that in order for ecofeminism to grow as a critical field, the theory needs to reflect the activism, which is central to it (*Hiking Without a Map* 1). Moreover, the key texts in the curriculum should not be specifically centered around nature or gender, but the reading should focus on abstract texts as to discuss and recognise the structures of oppression and exploitation in writing outside the scope of 'nature-writing'. There are different ways to visualise ecofeminism as a literary critique in accordance to the level of education. Gaard's approach, though it is good, is not suited for gymnasium, because of the enormous curriculum and abstract level of analysis. However, by making the readings less substantial and providing the students with a set of key terms, her approach would be able to give a good and critical introduction to ecofeminism; the approach this thesis have worked with is similar but simpler, as the students were provided with five specific terms from which they should be able to make analytical comments. It was not the goal to go into specifics about class, race, gender, and nature in terms, but to focus on ways these categories are connected and exploited through the structure discussed by Plumwood.

The analysis in this paper extended the use of ecofeminism to a multimedia text, as the goal was to analyse a film from a neoformalist perspective focusing on how ecofeminism can approach the different layers of film analysis. Greta Gaard's essays, discussed above, have given an insight to how ecofeminism can to utilised to analyse written texts and comment on how the different structure of exploitation are produced and reproduced in literature. By analysing a multimedia text it has been possible to generate an analytical model which takes all categories into account, as it focuses on analysing and discussing the different layers of meaning created in a film. Furthermore, it shows how they interact to produce and reinforce the premises of the master identity, as the different structure of the film analysis can exhibit meaning collectively and individually.

As stated in the analysis, *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) is a film produced in Hollywood, which means that there is a lot of redundancy in the film. The cinematographic elements are constructed in such a way as to provide clues and meaning about characters and action. However, these redundancies have made it possible to locate specific generalisations and homogenisations of the perceived sound, editing choices, mise-en-scenes, and narrative choices made by the director. These choices have had an impact on the ecofeminist analysis, as a number of them can be used to critique and discuss the potential weaknesses in the master identity. Furthermore, the use of a multimedia text provided the opportunity to generate knowledge on different levels, as the categories, analytically, can provide critical stipulating comments both individually and in conjunction; many of the analytical observation advance into several categories.

The theoretical approach that has been used throughout the paper has been ecofeminism. Ecofeminism is a hybrid theory, based partly in the philosophical sphere as a critique of the structural abuse and exploitation of the non-human other and women. As stated earlier it has been applied to the analysis as a critical literary theory on a multimedia text, in order to discuss and analyse the structural connection between women and nature, and the exploitation of this constructed other in patriarchal capitalism. Ecofeminism is applied in order to recognise ways the system of the patriarchal master identity dualises the system through a methodical exploitation of the other based on class, race, gender, and nature. The master identity believes he alone possess a rationality and reason which he denies the other, who he perceives as shackled by emotions and locked in bodily.

Ecofeminism was chosen as the theory for this experiment because it handles contemporary issued for the students to analyse through this theory. It is a complex theory that works on different levels which will challenge the students to think in new ways and patterns, and create new connections between subjects. Moreover, when the concepts of master/other dualism is explained through Plumwood's five key terms that keeps the dualism in place, it is natural to start thinking about who the other is in a given text and how they are being Othered. Because the categories of class, race, gender, and nature all fall within the perceived other, ecofeminism has the potential to pique the interest of a large number of students, because it works with a broad definition of the exploited. Furthermore, the topic of feminism and nature are contemporary topics they students will have come across before and might find relevant and interesting as students of English. A problem with the theory is that it stems from philosophy, a field with a complex discourse, which might make access to the original text problematic and

time consuming to get through. The teaching will have to be based on the teacher's interpretation

of it, or second-hand essays using and illustrating how the theory can be articulated.

Conclusion

Throughout the two parts of the thesis, the aim has been to answer these questions:

- Is it possible to adapt Val Plumwood's philosophy on ecofeminism to use as a literary critical theory, and is this applicable to a neoformalist film analysis of *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) in order to add an additional layer to the analysis?

- Would it be feasible to use this material to introduce a literary critical aspect in the English course in the Danish *gymnasium*, and make the students aware of the cultural contexts of texts?

Through an exposition and discussion of Val Plumwood's approach to ecofeminism in connection to three other ecofeminist theorists, a set of unambiguous terms that proved suitable for literary criticism is defined. The key terms derived from this are Plumwood's definition of the dualised master/other relationship and the five mechanisms supporting it: hyperseparation, incorporation, homogenisation, backgrounding, and instrumentalisation. These provide the reader with a number of concepts that give the ability to recognise the exploitive and oppressive structures in texts as reflections of society. Moreover, Plumwood elaborates on further tools supporting the dualised structure, such as reason, remoteness, and monological and dialogical conversation, which have been treated through three essays written by other ecofeminist scholars. As a result of this, it can be concluded that the approach to ecofeminism presented in this paper can be used as a literary critical theory.

This theoretical approach was added to a neoformalist film analysis of *Mad Max*, to provide additional analytical meaning to the four categories film analysis, editing, mise-en-scene, sound, and narrative, as defined in David Bordwell's and Kristin Thompson's book *Film Art*

(2008). The ecofeminist angle accentuated how the dualised structure is revealed through the cinematographic devices mentioned. As examples, camera angles demonstrate unequal power relations between characters, the costumes express homogenisation, differing soundtracks following the characters enforce their identity, and the plot exhibits an anti-patriarchal message, but does not subvert the dualised system, only upends the power relation. This confirms that the ecofeminist theory are applicable to a multimedia text such as *Mad Max*.

On the basis of the aforementioned, a two-lesson course in English for senior students in Danish upper secondary school was designed in accordance with the study regulations for the education. Knud Illeris' educational theory provided the background in order to develop appropriate course material. It was apparent that the students found the material and teaching method interesting, and a number of students were able to contextualise the ecofeminist theoretical approach to their own societal context. As argued in the discussion, ecofeminism is beneficial for the students to know of because it describes social issues that are relevant in contemporary society. Furthermore, ecofeminism is a favourable introduction to literary criticism, both because it can elucidate the exploitive structures of society on a macro and micro level, as well as it has intersectional properties. Therefore, it can be concluded that ecofeminism is a feasible introduction to the literary critical aspect for students in *gymnasium*, and that it allows for the students to examine texts in their cultural context.

This thesis has proven that it is possible and beneficial to introduce the students to literary critical theory, herein exemplified with ecofeminism. Nevertheless, further research is needed on the subject, including the full curriculum, more time and a larger test group of students than available to this thesis.

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Resumé

This thesis examines if it is possible to adapt Val Plumwood's philosophy on ecofeminism to use as a literary critical theory, and if this is applicable to a neoformalist film analysis of *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) in order to add an additional layer to the analysis, as well as if it would be feasible to use this material to introduce a literary critical aspect in the English course in the Danish *gymnasium*, and make the students aware of the cultural contexts of texts. The thesis is divided into two parts. The first is concerned with the theoretical and analytical background, and the second is the experiment and a discussion of these elements.

In the first part, an account of Val Plumwood's ecofeminist philosophy is discussed in relation to three scholars in the field, pattrice jones, Sunaura Taylor, and Greta Gaard, and their essays. This is done to generate a set of key concepts of ecofeminism useful to a literary critical assessment, as well as to argue for the continued relevance of the theory in contemporary society. Through the theory, the thesis defines the dualism of culture and nature as a key term, as well as the five mechanisms of support for it: homogenisation, incorporation, backgrounding, instrumentalisation, and hyperseparation. Subsequently, Plumwood elaborates on these in terms of monological and dialogical conversation, reason, dependency, and remoteness. These are used to provide an extra analytical dimension to a neoformalist film analysis of *Mad Max*, where they expose the underlying cultural structures that maintain the dualised society through the film.

In the second part, the theoretical and analytical background is used to develop a two-lesson course for senior level students of English at the Danish *gymnasium* (upper secondary school), in order to introduce a literary critical aspect to the students, and to determine whether this is feasible or not. The course was tested in two classes, one at Hjørring Gymnasium &

HF-kursus and one at Frederikshavn Gymnasium & HF-kursus, and the experiment shows that the students were able to apply the critical approach to film and reflect on their own societal context in relation to this. Furthermore, a discussion determines that the critical approach is valuable for the students, and it could be expanded to include additional theoretical approaches. Lastly, a discussion of two of Greta Gaard's articles focusing on other approaches to ecofeminism supports the conclusion of this thesis, but further research is needed.