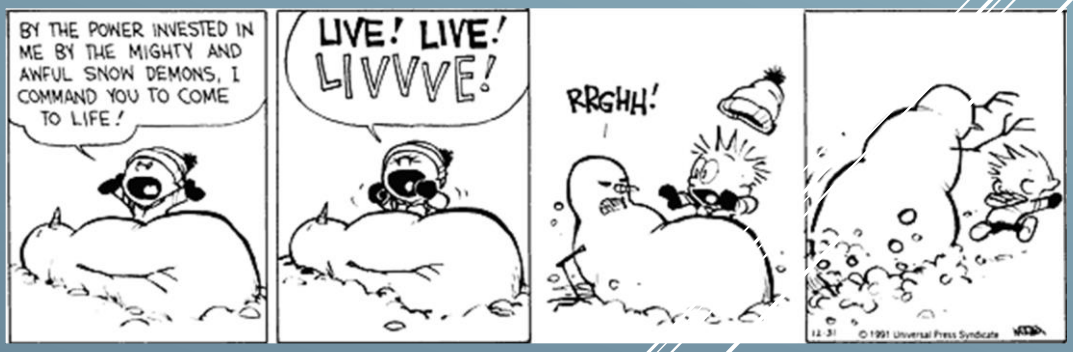
There is Wonder Here



An Analysis of Snow, Ice, and the Arctic through Ecofeminism, Monsters, and Affect

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Abstract

This thesis is an analysis of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950), *Frozen* (2013), *His Dark Materials* (2019), *Wind River* (2017), *The Terror* (2018) and *The Revenant* (2015) through theories of ecofeminism, affect, and monsters with the purpose of establishing an understanding of what ice, snow, and the Arctic mean for fictional tales. In 'ice, snow, and the Arctic' it is understood that the actual instances of these as well as the metaphorical or representatively manifested ones – polar bears, or 'cold' characteristics for example – are considered in these analyses. By applying an understanding of Val Plumwood and Anna Bedford's ecofeminist theories of anti-dualism, ethics of care, and 'writing' wrongs, as well as Rødje's approach to affect in images of blood, and Cohen's readings of monsters as culture, the gender arche- and stereotype breaking-, climate-focused activist-, and visually focusing values of ice, snow, and the Arctic in fiction is established.

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Introduction

Snow and ice serve as backdrop in many stories, and in visual media, in particular, do the two play roles which, while often unspoken, leave an impact on the experience of the reader or viewer. As the manifestations of cold, the two are both elements of nature but serve too as characteristics of human beings in fiction – a tradition with roots in cultural norms and societal structures, which progressive lines of theory would disagree with.

This inclusion of snow and cold in varying degrees of involvement and with different purposes spans a variety of genres, visual styles and is relevant in book, tv and films alike. Because of this, the following analyses will focus on different types of media, both animated, made for television, film, in book form and involving horror as well as children or young adult's stories.

The thesis thus following uses primarily ecofeminist theory, supplemented with monster theory and affect in images of blood, to answer the questions: how do snow and ice influence storytelling, both visually and interpretationally, and what lessons can ice, snow, and the Arctic, as the most eminent source of these elements, teach humanity through fictional tales?

Theory

The Arctic

In the *Routledge Handbook of the Polar Regions* (2018), Heidi Hansson writes in her essay, *The Arctic in literature and the popular imagination,* about the common praxis in writing about and portraying the Arctic. In a rundown of Disney's 1938 animated short film, *Polar Trappers*, Hansson notes how the landscape and its natural inhabitants are jumbled together in a generic picture that does not specify a belonging to either of the poles. The short film alludes to the historic exploitation of the natural environments through Goofy and Donald's trapping and hunting of walruses and penguins. With the lecherous and carnivorous Donald Duck trying to lure in the female penguins for consumption, Hansson points to the animated film as a portrayal of the (Ant-)Arctic as a scape for "heroic quest and exploitation", which is "gendered in a complex manner as a feminine space… that fights back, emasculating its conqueror" (Hansson, p. 46). In the 18th, 19th, and early 20th century, Arctic expeditions and exploration were endeavors of considerable prestige and nobility with the goals of being the first to set foot on the geographical North Pole or finding at last the Northern Passage. Despite uncertainties as to who achieved what first, explorers such as Frederick Cook, and Edward Peary were portrayed as heroes as the Arctic was the last remaining frontier at the of the nineteenth century. The writings about such expeditions followed immediately after their announcements, with dramatizations such as Cpt. Frank H. Shaw's *First at the Pole* and Stratemeyer's *First at the Pole; or Two Boys in the Arctic Circle* being released with the express purpose "to show what pure grit and determination can do under the most trying of circumstances (p. 47). Such tales and books were aimed at boys and deemed as valuable in teaching scenarios because of their focus on traditionally masculine values and morals. At the start of the 20th century, western domestic culture and politics came under influence of an increase in women's rights as well as a rise in the general public's welfare, which increased the

perceived importance of patriotic and stoic values in the eyes of the imperialist and better-off elite (p. 48).

Continuing with the previous thought of the Arctic as gendered space, Hansson quotes the contemporary magazine *Punch* on the 1875 British Arctic Expedition:

> "At her feet the Frozen Ocean, around her head the auroral lights,
> Through cycles, chill and changeless, of six months-days and nights,
> In her bride-veil, fringed with icicles, and of the snowdrift spun,
> Sits the White Ladye of the Pole, still waiting to be won" (p. 51).

In this scenario, the Arctic plays the role of the virtuous and virginal bride, whose purpose is to be conquered by the best-fit man: a brave Englishman of, obviously, noble descent. Other depictions see the Arctic as the oppositional Ice Queen, who possesses the power and will to repel and defeat the explorers who dare encroach on her realm. This depiction of the Arctic strengthens the idea that the explorer must be of resilient, heroic, and masculine stock. Hansson notes that this depiction *could* reflect an idea of a reversal in gender roles, yet ultimately it is a mere strengthening of the existing order and necessity of the man emerging victorious in his wresting with, and submission of nature – and women. As Hansson notes, the Ice Queen character exists as well in fictions such as H. C. Andersen's *Snow Queen*, Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950), and *The Golden Compass* (1995), all stories with which this paper will engage as well, albeit some in other forms than their original (p. 51).

To back up further the common connection between femininity and the frosty elements of nature, Cathrine Norberg writes in her 2009 essay, *Cold and Dangerous Women*, about the tendency to align female temperament with cold and male with heat (p. 157). In most modern languages, anger is expressed with and understood as burning and building with pressure inside the human with a need to release it. Because of this linguistic and cultural

implication, anger is seen typically as a male emotion. The idea that anger has genuine physical implications such as building body temperature or internal pressure is quite simplified and has been debunked, which makes it irrelevant for physiological or medical purposes. The remains of such humoristic theory, however, hold sway still as cultural phenomena. In humoristic theory, one of the bodily fluids believed to determine human character was bile. Bile was connected to heat and fire, which was the more desirable element. A predominance of bile would make for a fiery and short-tempered personality. While women could possess such a composition they were seen generally as less perfect than men and thus of a different element than fire. Women were water: cold, irrational, and emotional – the opposite of fire. As Norberg points out, an inherent contradiction lies in anger being heat and therefore connected to men, while at the same time women were believed to be the more emotional yet still cold. This was explained by male anger being a brief loss of control and the female kind of a more lingering nature, making it more dangerous of course. Instead of a brief loss of control, female anger was a result of their personality which would make anger, like all emotion, primarily female (p. 158-159).

Though the belief in humoristic theory decreased markedly four centuries ago, emotions continued to be perceived as a primarily female attribute. Anger became separated in two categories: legitimate or wrong – male or female. Female anger was more malicious and therefore evil. An angry woman would be proof of her inferiority to men. This kind of anger was the biproduct of a weak mind – something women, children, and the weakest of men would possess. Male anger was understood to be more akin to wrath, which was a more noble expression of one's heart. Women enslaved by biology and their own wicked bodies continued to be a common perception through the 19th century. A woman's biology and proneness to 'hysteria' and 'frigidity' made her, as it was argued, unfit for education and theoretical teachings. As most women would be linked to their bodies and thus perceived as imperfect, the ideal

Victorian woman would be one detached from her own body, sexuality, and feelings: passionless and still cold (p. 160).

Returning to Heidi Hansson and *The Arctic in literature and imagination*, she writes about trends in Arctic fiction. Maps, which showed the North Pole to feature a vortex that would suck ships in, and the notion of the Northern Passage inspired romantic tales wherein the Arctic was a gateway to different utopias. A common mechanic of such stories was that the magnetic qualities of the poles would shift and disorient the sailors' compasses, thus leading them to unknown places. Hansson takes note of several stories – *The Description of a New World Called the Blazing-World* (1666), *The Finding of the Ice Queen* (1879), and *The Goddess of Atvatabar* (1892), which would seem a beginning of imagining these utopias as places or societies where women might have more advanced and leading roles. However, traditional gender definitions, imperialist racism, and class structures remain largely intact – and the rebellious female roles are off-set in the end by author commentary or plots that would reinstate traditional notions of marriage. As with the presentation of the Arctic as a frontier, the utopian tales rely on the view of the polar regions as something awaiting exploitation: tales of feminine rule or the like were tolerated because of the implicit understanding all of it existed to be conquered. In contrast to these stories, recent dystopian fiction sees the Arctic as the main setting for stories which focus on human presence's devastating effect on the natural environment, and the subsequent threat to our survival because of this (Hansson, 2018, p. 53).

In the writing of Arctic fiction, Hansson finds that there is one generality: almost everyone, readers and writers alike, are outsiders to the region, which builds a requirement for common narratives and a collective subscription to how the polar region works and feels. For a long time, this meant that Arctic fiction followed either a "man versus nature" or "man versus man"-narrative. In these stories, characterizations follow generic thoughts about man's struggle against nature or the fight between good and bad on the frontier (p. 53). More recently, Arctic

crime fiction has become increasingly popular. Crime fiction, unlike the two traditional Arctic narratives, requires societies with laws and ethics, and personalized characters with a variety of intriguing motives and goals. In addition to this, the exotic and strange-to-most setting of the Arctic lets nature play a role in the crime plot as well (p. 54). While it is no the Arctic per se, *Wind River* (2017) follows a much similar set of principles. With the backdrop of a wild and snowy Wyoming, one of the protagonist detectives finds herself in a quite foreign territory on the Wind River Indian Reservation, where she must navigate all the locals and their different personas whilst trying to solve a murder. Hansson refers to Dana Stabenow as an early writer of Arctic crime fiction, whose book series about investigator Kate Shugak has run continuously since 1992. The basis of the crimes in these books often comes down to exploitation of both the environment and the indigenous peoples, who occupy the regions in Alaska. Often, the downfall of the criminal in these stories is a result of his or her inability to adapt to natural circumstances. Meanwhile, the detective's primary strength is her connection to nature and skills of survival (p. 54). Once again, the parallel to *Wind River* is clear as the second protagonist in the film is a very capable reservation ranger and much of the story's conflict revolves around a corporate oil drilling site and its employees.

Ecofeminism

In her introduction to ecofeminism, Val Plumwood sums up the traditional understanding of a feminist utopia: a sanctuary where women and nature exist alongside each other, free of any hierarchy, military or economic domination. Existing there as a contrast to, and surviving against a world of men, whose technology, wars, and struggles for power have rendered the earth a barren and dead place, the women's realm remains mysterious and lush with nature. Plumwood agrees with the power of such imagery and the increasing similarities between that hostile world of men and our reality: for being seemingly rational and pragmatic, the male approach to unapologetic technological advancement, and the subjugation and

destruction of the natural world, is entirely irrational when it might mean moving closer the extinction of humanity. To this stance, however, Plumwood has several questions and inquiries: is the unspoiled nature and love available only to women? Will it require the denouncement of all culture and technology? How do such womanly qualities exist separate from their roots in a patriarchal tradition? Will the world be saved by the downtrodden taking power? (Plumwood, p. 7).

Even with a background in environmental, and feminist philosophy and activism, Plumwood finds the romanticized connection between nature and women problematic. The notion that women would possess special abilities of nurture and homeliness, un-sharable by men, and an acceptance of the picture of women as dainty, "barefoot and pregnant" comes across as counterproductive from a feminist point of view as it would only justify their historic exclusion from matters of culture and rationale. Plumwood confirms, however, that this by no means is a uniform stance in feminism. While women's connection to the natural, and if men could share in this is a diverse position, an essential feature of all ecofeminism is that any connection between women and nature is deemed a positive – in opposition to the traditional philosophy of the cultural West. The purpose of much ecological feminism has been to revaluate all things feminine and natural, while recognizing the continued connection between the two as central to shaping female and, as Plumwood seeks to show, male and human identity (p. 8).

To showcase the clearly male tradition of tying femininity with nature, Plumwood has a collection of historically influential sources on the human condition: "Woman is a violent and uncontrolled animal" by Cato; "I cannot conceive of you to be human creatures, but a sort of species hardly a degree above a monkey" by Swift, and; "Women represent the interests of the family and sexual life; the work of civilization has become more and more men's business" by Freud (p. 19). While the diminishing purpose of women's connection to

nature is obvious, Plumwood advices caution in feminism's pathing between the natural and the rational. The exclusions, which would come from alignment with either nature or rationale, are troublesome from an identity-shaping point of view. As nature is understood as "emotions, the body, the passions, animality, the primitive or uncivilized, the non-human world, matter, physicality, and sense of experience, as well as the sphere of irrationality, of faith and of madness" (Plumwood, 1993(2003), p. 19), and the cultural and the rational represent the opposite, Plumwood proposes a line between the two poles where complete rejection of one set of qualities for the other is unnecessary (p. 19).

From a collection of critiques of the woman-nature connection and its masculine counterpart, a problematization of the concept of 'human' arises. The traits, which are commonly aligned with masculinity, are the very same used to distinguish humanity from nature: social and cultural life, rational thought, dominion over other life, and craftsmanship. Early feminist literature would argue in favor of a human idea that would be ungendered. However, as Plumwood say about Mary Wollstonecraft's otherwise groundbreaking 18th century writings, this imagined human exhibits none of the perceived feminine traits and is a man, judging by nearly all implications (p. 25). By implicating 'human' in the discussion of masculinity and rationality, and aligning the two, the division becomes about more than the difference between man and woman: the masculinity here in question is specific to a certain, western, ruling class ideal. To be considered perfectly human is regarded as preferable and a positive, which would mean that any non-human – a lifeform not following these traditional, white, masculine standards – is inferior. As to summarize, Plumwood quotes Simone Beauvoir: "… the tragedy of being a woman consisted not only in having one's life and choices impoverished and limited, but also in the fact that to be a good woman was to be a second-rate human being" (p. 26).

To Plumwood, the solution to ecological feminism lies in negating the dualism of naturalism versus masculine humanity, which she names the *dominant mastery model*. "Both

men and women must challenge the dualized conception of human identity and develop an alternative culture which fully recognizes 'human' identity as continuous with, not alien from, nature (Plumwood, 1993, p. 36). This anti-dualism would see neither men or women as fully aligned with nature or culture, but as beings of both. In the construction of this new, commonly human identity, women would contribute differently from men because of the historical differences between the two. To contextualize anti-dualism, Plumwood considers women's reproductive rights as the basis for analysis. By the 'uncontrollability' of women's bodies and the process of reproduction, dualism places them in the natural sphere where subjective choice is foregone, which is clearly troublesome to feminism (p. 37). The masculinity-driven elevation and appraisal of the naturality of women's reproductive abilities is inherently oppressive by means of duality, as it aims to deny them cultural ways of negotiating with nature – further forcing women into passivity. Once more, Plumwood looks to de Beauvoir to emphasize the implications of assigning women's reproductive system to nature solely: "Because reproduction is construed not as a creative act, indeed not the act of an agent at all, it becomes something which is undergone not undertaken, at worst tortured and passive, at best a field for acceptance and resignation" (p. 38). Plumwood argues that a dualistic view of reproduction is damaging to whichever side it would take. While nature renders women as instinctive carriers with no conscious say in the process, and hinders them from participation in life's other features; a fully cultural approach would make reproduction a matter of rationale, and as an extension of this its agents – medical professionals, institutes of law, and other experts – would be in control. Thus, dualism would have women 'choose' between letting nature ravage their bodies without anyone's say or letting outside agents dictate matters of reproduction through 'rational expertise' (p. 38).

By making women the centerpieces in matters of their own reproductive processes, crediting them with the conscious skill, effort, and power that it takes, Plumwood argues

the arrival of a movement to look past nature/culture dualism. As a feminist movement, anti-dualism would help translate women's will to redefine their relationship with nature, and to give them the space to reflect on their degree of opposition towards western culture. Plumwood credits this critical eco(logical)feminism with rejecting tenets of the branches of feminism which either endorse, or do not engage with the weakened position of women and nature on the dualistic scale. At the same time she sees critical ecofeminism as highly inclusive, as it draws from several of its predecessors: from liberal feminism it finds its purpose of wanting to realize an alignment between women and humanity, and as cultural feminism does, it sees the only possibility of alignment in a redefined concept of 'being human', "one which abandons the dualisms which have shaped western culture" (p. 39).

In her afterword to Vakoch and Mickey's essay collection, *Literature and Eco-feminism*, Anna Bedford points to three essential purposes of ecofeminist literary criticism: activism, authors' ethical care, and constructing an alliance between postcolonialism and eco-feminism (Vakoch & Mickey, 2018, p. 197).

Using water as the activist point of reference, Bedford mentions several recent crises revolving around the problematics of climate change's effect on water supplies around the world: massive droughts in the past decade in Botswana, South Africa, Cyprus, and Australia; the seemingly systematic pollution of resources in First Nation communities in Canada – around 150 drinking water advisories in effect in a total of 634 of such territories; and most famously the Flint, Michigan, water crisis which is ongoing since 2014. Bedfords argues that, in the West, such problems are the outcome of environmental racism, understood as minorities in developed countries experiencing the outcome of toxic waste and environmental degradation at an alarmingly disproportionate rate (p. 198). In Flint, African Americans make up 56 percent of the population compared to the US national average of 12 percent (Wikipedia). As crises such as these become more frequent and severe, the more they attract and deserve critical and

literary attention (Vakoch & Mickey, p. 198). Bedford sees in much literature, ecofeminist or otherwise, a clear connection between it and activism, which could make possible the act of writing as a form of activism. Bedford cites a Theresa Burriss on continuing the postcolonial ecocritical use of *writing* wrongs, which is to produce counternarratives to the 'truths' recorded by the victorious, those in power and wealth who decide the narratives. As an example of *writing* wrongs, Bedford looks to Carolyn Forché's *Against Forgetting: Twentieth-Century Poetry of Witness*, wherein she accounts for "human experiences of war, torture, occupation, and imprisonment". Bedford argues, thus, that *eco*feminism as literary activism, in addition to revealing and *writing* humans struggles, should do the same for non-human ones as well (p. 199).

Much in the same vein as Plumwood, Bedford takes issue with the uncritical "representations of women as inherently closer to nature", of which earlier waves of feminism are guilty also, discrediting it as outdated essentialism and arguing that it is relevant only if viewed as a biproduct of western society. When this idea of essentialism is held up against Plumwood's dualism, the surface similarities are clear: the (essentialist) understanding of women as nature exists only as a result of a patriarchal dualism, wherein women are assigned fixed roles which served to limit their say and social, political and cultural movability. Bedford traces early ecofeminism to areas where colonialism and capitalism degraded and reshaped the land, which was taken care of by women primarily. On a global scale, women account for most of the world's maintenance and collection of foodstuffs and drinking water, as well as they are the primary caretakers of children, both of which are factors which lead them to bear closer witness to the effects of environmental degradation (p. 199). Bedford argues that women's roles as caretakers, even as a result of social and cultural conditioning, enable them to observe more acutely the impact of destructive capitalist practices and the abuse of natural resources. These concerns would, in addition to worrying for their own children, extend women to show further care for non-humans as well (p. 200). Though she makes it clear that motherhood is its

essence a patriarchal and oppressive construct, Bedford sees in it as well the potential for political radicalization as the experience of caring for, and raising a child would lead women to argue for a world in which their children could grow up safely. 1950s' "housewife" fiction is an example of maternal and domestic experience become activism through women writing against nuclear war (p. 200).

From its origins in Françoise d'Eaubonne's essays, ecofeminism carries with it the need to reflect on a "social imperative requiring caring", which is rooted in women's, albeit patriarchally conditioned, experiences in domestic caretaking. More recent ecofeminists find in 'an ethic of care', however, problematics regarding the appointment of ethics to women's already-troubled sentencing to the domestic sphere. Bedford refers to Plumwood as well as a source against the essentialist – or dualistic – privatization and delegation of things such as ethics and responsibility. While caring is commonly understood as a feature of practices deemed to be feminine, Bedford argues that it must be a universal feature in all relationships whether these be public or private; practiced by men or others (p. 201). An example of a relationship, to which an ethic of care should be extended, is that between science and nature. Not only do western practices of science exclude women: they fail to recognize nature's processes as scientific. There is little regard for any knowledge outside of that which purpose is technological advancement (p. 201). Bedford refers to Donawerth's *Frankenstein's Daughters*, an examination of female writers of science fiction which argues that women are objects, rather than practitioners of study and that any literary presence of women as scientists would indicate a utopian tale. Through such literature it is possible to imagine and inclusive, ecofeminist, and postcolonial science inclusive to women, men, and nature alike: one in which the relationships between all parties are built on an ethic of care (p. 202).

At the core of ecofeminism and anti-colonialism is a dismissal of possession of an Other, be this racial, non-human, or sexual which is antonymous with an ethic of care (p.

202). As central to ecofeminism and postcolonialism, the cultural and social connection between women and the non-human is further tied to patriarchal possession, or rape of both. In an analysis of Spanish women's fiction from the 21st century, Carmen Junquera highlights frequent similarities and interreferences between the treatment of nature, women, and rural life in Spain. In *Beatriz and the She-Wolf* (2015), a young woman is displaced to her husband's rural home where she is left behind and becomes enamored with rural traditions and the wild wolves, towards whom her husband and his family hold an irrational anger. The story is told from both Beatriz and a female wolf's perspectives, which draw parallels between their lives of abandonment and loneliness whilst highlighting the silence they maintain through their abusive circumstances at the hands of men. As there are parallels between Beatriz and the she-wolf, so do they exist between overly hunted wolves, in general, and the rural villages in Spain, which' customs threaten to die out with the last remaining, old population. Beatriz sees a reflection of herself in the wolves and likewise becomes invested in preserving the traditions and knowledge of the village, which is bound tightly to the surrounding ecology (p. 141-143). Bedford refers as well to *Hamlet* wherein the titular character and Laertes fight each other, stomping around on the grave of Ophelia to whom both dedicate their love. As an image of colonialism, and uncontrolled, patriarchal capitalism the two men contest entitlement towards the land, and the Other while destroying or exploiting it (p. 203). Following colonial societies and cultures, women, particularly non-white, and their bodies are treated as commodities like natural resources, which only worth is material: "Land is more than rocks and trees, land is also the factories where we work, the water our children drink, and the house project where we live. For women, lesbians, and gay men, land is that physical mass called our bodies" – Cherrie Moraga (Vakoch & Mickey, 2018, p. 204).

Monsters

In his essay, *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*, J. R. R. Tolkien critiques the typical, usually historiographic readings of the Old English poem as he argues that the importance of it lies in its poetic values, which were dismissed almost universally. To express his concern with the scholarly approaches to *Beowulf*, Tolken thus constructs an allegory:

> A man inherited a field in which was an accumulation of old stone, part of an old hall. Of the old stones some had already been used in building the house in which he actually lived, not far from the old house of his fathers. Of the rest he took some and built a tower. But his friends coming perceived at once (without troubling themselves to climb the steps) that these stones had formerly belonged to a more ancient building. So they pushed the tower over, with no little labour, in order to look for hidden carvings and inscriptions, or to discover whence the man's distant forefathers had obtained their building material. Some suspecting a deposit of coal under the soil began to dig for it, and forgot even the stones. They all said: "This tower is most interesting." But they also said (after pushing it over): "What a muddle it is in!" And even the man's descendants, who might have been expected to consider what he was about, were heard to murmur: "He is such an odd fellow! Imagine his using these old stones just to build a nonsensical tower! Why did not he restore the old house? He had no sense of proportion." But from the top of that tower the man had been able to look out upon the sea (Mittman & Hensel, 2018, p. 5).

Tolkien is thoroughly annoyed with the notion that the profoundness of *Beowulf*'s tone detail, style, and effect is somehow undermined by the 'simplicity' of fighting monsters. He argues for the application of any such theory that would read the importance of monsters as

to be by design. *Beowulf* is written from a post-traditional Norse gods-perspective in which the author recognizes the old struggle between man and monsters. Man, alongside the gods, fights heroically in a battle that he is doomed to lose – and the monsters to win. It is a battle to resist evil and death knowing well the outcome but fighting on all the same, yet hopelessly. With the replacement of the many with the one God, the end of the world does not mean defeat, necessarily, but a struggle for the soul which can end in either eternal victory or defeat. Despite it being written after this shift, *Beowulf* is concerned primarily with the "ancient theme: that man, each man and all men, and all their works shall die" (p. 13). The criticisms of *Beowulf* lies in the notion that there are too many monsters, to which Tolkien responds that replacing any of them with mere human foes would diminish the impact and immortality of the tale; both starting the legend of Beowulf through some commonality and it in his fight with the dragon, or the opposite of starting with the slaying of Grendel only to end the hero in some largely trivial manner. A man is meant to die; a man capable of killing Grendel barehanded is meant to die from battling a dragon (p. 18). Mittman and Hensel credit Tolkien's essay with starting monster theory (p. XI).

To understand cultures through the monsters they generate, Jeffrey Cohen presents, in his essay *Monster Culture*, seven theses to do just so. The first thesis says that every monster is the representation of a singular, cultural moment, from which fears, fantasies, desires, and anxieties unite into an autonomous, monstrous body. This body is culture and exists to be interpreted (p. 44).

The second says that no monster is ever truly dead; while the physical body may be disintegrated, the feelings which it embodies remain to manifest once again in a new moment of cultural relevance. Going by the example of the vampire, Cohen notes its different, modern incarnations which play on questions of sexuality and desires as portrayed in *Nosferatu*, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, and in Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*; each time revived with a slightly

different purpose and appearance. While every occurrence is a respawn of the same base monster, each one is also something slightly new, which means that interpretations are never a reusable stable. The monster always escapes and must be chased anew (p. 45).

Cohen's third thesis is that monsters defy categorization. The danger of them lies in their undefinition as they ignore all rules set forth by science and rationality. They represent difference and oppose attempts at binary thought and solution-seeking. As monsters test the very foundations of knowledge and the ideas of a human experience, so are they contestable from different cultural perspectives (p. 46).

Fourth thesis: the monster represents the Other, "difference made flesh", which tends to be of either political, racial, sexual, cultural, or economic nature. Throughout history differences in or alternatives to all these factors have been used to make monsters of other people. Cohen lists a multitude to each, which can be boiled down to demonization of: Muslim cultures, and the East by the West; political figures who have their histories rewritten by their successors; 'disobedient' women as previously mentioned with the Snow Queen; darker skin-colors which must be a sign of demonic affiliation; and the Jewish people whose prosperous communities have seen blame for and persecution because of others' hardships (ps. 47-49).

Thesis five is that the monster connects to the impossible, understood as 'that which cannot be' from a dominant culture's point of view. The monster is taboo and transgresses against the purity of the West: the xenomorph – the *alien* – and King Kong both are pictures of the 'necessity' of preventing the monstrous from corrupting the white woman (p. 52).

The sixth is that the monster attracts just as it frightens. It represents something which the society that birthed it does not condone, thus it provides a means of escape for the marginalized. The desire gives way to horror when the monster oversteps unforgivingly. Both

the escapist freedom and the thrill of the horrific come to an end, of which the spectator is aware and therefore can take pleasure in without consequences (p. 52). The final thesis says that, like our children, the monsters "ask us to re-evaluate our cultural assumptions about race, gender, sexuality, our perception of difference, our tolerance toward its expression. They ask us why we have created them" (Mittman & Hensel, 2018, p. 54).

In Noël Carroll's *The Nature of Horror*-essay, the writer makes clear what it is that differentiates horror stories from fairy- and mythical tales, all of which employ monsters. To him, the reactions of the involved characters are key to marking a horror story as such. To the [often times] human characters in horror, the monster is out of place – in violation of the order that is natural to them, while in the fairytale the monsters are part of the logic of the diegetic universe and as natural as any other animals, which one might find in reality as well. Whereas the xenomorph is singularly terrifying and inexplicable in *Alien* (1979), it would be less so and perhaps even a part of some exotic planet's ecology in the Star Wars-universe, just as werewolves and other horrific anthropomorphs would be more generic in a world like Narnia. "That is, in examples of horror, it would appear that the monster is an extraordinary character in our ordinary world, whereas in fairy tales and the like the monster is an ordinary creature in an extraordinary world" (Mittman & Hensel, 2018, p. 28).

Just as the human characters, whose perspectives the observers follow, react more strongly to monsters in horror stories, so do they act as a guide for the emotional response that horror wants from its audience. The characters recoiling, cowering, showing signs of disgust, or screaming at the sight or touch of the monster signals to the audience the appropriate feelings to have at that moment. Carroll points out that often these monsters of horror are not only frightening but disgusting and nauseating as well (p. 30). s

Blood in Cinema

During the 1960s, blood became more pronounced in American cinema. From the classical Hollywood of the 50s where on-screen blood served as a narrative device only, and its visualization had little physical impact on the viewer, suddenly came films like *Psycho* (1960) and a little later, *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) which portrayed blood for violence's sake – outside of any narrative purpose. To finish this new decade of bloodshed came *The Wild Bunch* (1969) which set a lasting standard for extreme violence in American film. Outside of Hollywood an independent, low-budget flick titled *Blood Feast* (1963) became the first 'splatter movie' as the sub-genre is understood to this day: extreme, and overtly gory. Violence had been a mainstay in cinema, and kept increasing until, and during the 50s. However, blood and the emphasis on violent impact upon the human body, in such a manner as it has become familiar to viewers today, was unheard of at the time. In his book, *Images of Blood in American Cinema: The Tingler to The Wild Bunch* (2016), Kjetil Rødje explores the evolution of blood's use as a mere informational device in *Rio Bravo* (1959) to its visual impact on viewers as it started in, and has continued since the 1960s.

Instead of reading violent images as representations of reality and trying to interpret their meaning, Rødje views them as performative and thus as acts of violence on their own. Rødje's focus lies in the affective qualities of images of blood as violence. He points out that his understanding of affect follows that school which views it as an outside sensation acting on the body rather than originating from within it. Instead of following a specific system, affect is relational matter which occurs in the moment that an image is viewed. It resides in neither the image nor the viewer themselves but in whatever relation is made between them. Rødje creates an opposition between the virtual and the actual. In the virtual lies undefinition but also the potential for a new direction in what is actualized, what is real. Imagery, the virtual, becomes actual in all its unforeseen-ness when it is observed and affect occurs (Rødje, 2015, p. 5). Affect

lies in every interaction between image and spectator which means that in some sense it is there always in its potential. However, potential is not always actualized and neither does affect make a discernable impact every time it is invoked.

Though affect is understandable, or characterizable primarily through its subsequent effects on the body, the potential of it far exceeds what we, the viewers or recipients, are capable of consciously mapping which makes it impossible to register everything about it (p. 6). While every instance of affect is a unique event, there is a pattern to the effects brought about by different viewers actualizing the same [virtual] image. While Rødje and other affect theorists see the trouble in trying to obtain data and operating with affect empirically, there is still meaning in finding a common description for the sensations and responses which can be traced from such encounters which affect. Instead of concerning himself with questions about meaning, ideology, and form as is the classical approach to film studies, Rødje thus asks what images do, or want and which reactions affect provokes in the viewer (p. 7). Rødje argues, both personally and through prominent figures such as W. J. T. Mitchell that films do more than just mean or represent; that, as in music or paintings, there are elements to film which cannot be read – which are outside of linguistics (p. 8). Instead of being a mere representation of it, an image is a reality on its own: it exists as something in between a representation and a real 'thing' (p. 10).

For a subject as difficult to approach empirically, as affect in blood images I, Rødje turns to Actor-Network Theory, ATN, for methodological tools. The explanation to any thing or phenomenon lies its 'trails': how its network connects to other phenomena, the effects of which grant characteristics. There is no representation of any one thing in another: "everything happens only once, and at one place" (Rødje, 2016, p. 15). There is no explaining anything by categorization: things, which appear to be similar, must be traced as to discover what actions they each take that give them relation to the other. In the application of ATN, no

difference is made between human and non-human *actants*, which may partake in the same networks and produce the effects relating them to each other. “It is not truth that is relative, but rather the relative itself that is true”: nothing is ever stable; the relations between everything is ever-changing, which in turn means that any entity or phenomenon, which may come to be in these relations, has liquidity in its own unique characteristics and relations (p. 16). Rødje refers to these entities and phenomena as *assemblages*, which are collectives of relations between bodies and movements, which cannot be traced to any one point of origin and they are connected to a specific field or territory, assemblages are unstable and enact change with and around themselves. Every image of blood is such an assemblage (p. 14).

Rødje’s methodological approach thus becomes “tracing a trail of associations between heterogeneous elements”: an example of associations being blood’s changing role in 50s cinema coming to fruition through a variety of factors [the heterogeneous elements] such as Hollywood studios, production, distribution, audience demographics, and the state of the American society at the time, which are referred to as *mediators*. Mediators are not to be understood as direct causes, however, as these can be overly simplistic, for example: violent video games cause violent teenagers [school-shooters]. Instead, a multitude of mediators, remaining unique separately, come into relation with and make each other act without any traceability to any one point of origin (p. 18).

Rarely is cinematic blood real: through a collective effort of further factors than merely spraying red liquids and filming them, an effect is made. Neither is a depiction of blood one standard: there is no ‘right’ color or consistency as both are impacted by the oxygenic differences between blood leaving [bright], and blood returning to [dark] the heart. Dry blood, deprived of oxygen, turns dark – almost black. The varying appearance of blood and the audience’s subsequently varying perceptions of it, along with an increasing amateur expertise from ever-increasing exposure to images of the real thing, makes a difficult case for the filmmaker

who wants to be convincing to everyone (p. 85). Going back to the 60s, Rødje points to a multitude of factors, which helped to familiarize every American with what blood looks like. Outside fiction, such influences as newscasts, magazines, and other print media reported on and showed the Vietnam war as well as the violence which occurred domestically at political rallies and protests. In addition to increased documentation, everything was beginning to be released in color as well then. Most impactful perhaps were the Highway Safety films which were made to show teenagers the catastrophic, and very bloody consequences of reckless behavior while driving cars. Through actual, and stages footage and sound, the films showed people being killed and mutilated in violent car crashes to serve as a warning (p. 86).

To portray blood somewhat accurately in the 50s and 60s, most productions turned to cosmetics such as Panchromatic blood [for black-and-white] and Technicolor blood [for color film]. Following an increasing experimentation, on filmmakers' behalves, in the production of 'blood', literature such as *Special Effects in Motion Pictures: Some Methods for Producing Mechanical Special Effects*, Clark, 1966, was released. The book details, among other things, how to create realistic blood as well as how to depict accurately the impact of various acts of violence upon the human body (p. 87). Likewise, Dick Smith, makeup-artist on such films as *The Godfather*, *The Exorcist*, and *Taxi Driver*, wrote *Do-it-yourself Monster Make-up Handbook* wherein was a chapter on "Scars, cuts, bruises and blood". Most guides to home-made blood agreed on one thing in particular: the ingredients were easily, and cheaply available in food- and hobby-stores, which made it an obvious stable in low-budget filmmaking. As with all props, blood makes its sense in its relation to other things in the image, and to the viewer – and from the 60s on especially, bloods' dynamic and active role in cinema made it a tool for sensational imagery (p. 88).

On the usually stronger reactions which humans display at the sight of blood – in comparison to most other things, Rødje points to a variety of theoretical schools: biology,

culture, and anthropology. Biology would assign the hesitation or recoil, at the sight of blood, to a behavioral response to what is a perceived danger. From a cultural perspective, blood might have a certain meaning through historical or religious icons and contexts, which would be alarming to those who are connected thereto: blood of Christ; the process of halal slaughter in Islamic law. In anthropology, the 'fear' of blood would come from an inherent want to maintain order and cohesion in social structures: order and normality deems that blood be invisible when it is where it should be, which is inside of the body. Thus, when blood becomes visible to us by leaving its bodily container, social and individual order judges it to be dangerous or abject: as is evidenced as well in traditional views of menstruation and female cycles (p. 90). In the application of such theoretical views to the specific topic of blood in cinematic images, Rødje problematizes the import of representation which is present in all three schools' understanding of blood as a visual factor. Rødje argues for the combination of the previously mentioned relationality, and independent nature of every image with the psychological consistencies which anthropology would maintain (p. 95).

For blood to be a believable and convincing factor in cinema, a list of criteria must be upheld – otherwise it is merely red color on film. Besides its color, it should be recognizably liquid yet not thin as water [there are of course notable, cinematic exceptions to this 'rule' such as *Kill Bill*]; relations with other factors must back up its substance – characters' reactions to seeing it or its placement upon, or as coming from the body as examples; the structuring of images pre- and succeeding the image of blood will confirm it as such by way of narrative sense. While the criteria for, and the understanding of blood as being just such is entirely relational, Rødje finds there are four steps to successfully upholding the illusion. Firstly, the blood's constitution – liquid and red, or dark, is confirmed by surrounding relations; secondly, in every image of blood, there is physical interaction between it and other objects; thirdly, the sense-making of relations between the blood-image and images coming before and

after it; finally, the spectators to the blood-images must be inhabited by such minds as will recognize said images by way of cultural, biological, and social belonging. The joint operation of such standard, yet uncharacterizable, factors results in Rødje's 'blood assemblages'. As the makeup of the assemblages is unique to each one, so are their expressive potentials, a fact whence Rødje gathers three questions usable for analyzing each assemblage: "1) How are the blood assemblages constituted? 2) Which potentials for expression can be found in these images? 3) What happens, and can happen, as the images are actualized in the encounters with their audiences?" (Rødje, 2016, p. 97). These questions, too, are a interrelated as the constitution of a blood assemblage impacts its potential for expression, just as the potential is taken into account when an image is designed and created (p. 98).

Analysis

Snow as Activism

The approach to this chapter is ecofeminist. By following Anna Bedford's idea that this line of theory should, above all, be activist in purpose, comparisons of different texts and interpretations of the differences, and similarities between them happen with the express purpose of highlighting progress or "writing" wrongs through fiction. The primary tool of this ecofeminist approach is the identification of dualisms, either enforced or negated, present in the texts, and how these affect the reading and understanding of said texts.

As this chapter is split in two, somewhat, so are the texts chosen by different criteria and for slightly different purposes. For the opening section, which focuses on 'Snow Queens', the primary criterium is just that. Hereafter there is a clear distinction between the times at which the three texts were written, as the progression and change expected to have occurred over 60 years, from the publishing of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950), are key to establishing an idea such as 'writing' wrongs. In addition to that, there are points to

make when choosing texts so different as *Frozen* (2013) is to *His Dark Materials* (2019) in terms of their differing degrees of nuance and complete reversal, or more suggestive discussions of matters relevant in 2020 and in ecofeminism. For the second part, the choice of *Wind River* (2017) is based upon the sensitive matters around which the story is built, and upon the prominent roles which snow and cold hold throughout the film. Lastly, there are ecofeminist lines to be drawn between the two halves of the chapter, as they intersect at points beyond the opening one concerning the Snow Queen.

Snow Queens

This chapter focuses on the centuries-old narrative around the Snow Queen as a female archetype, which implicates women's emotions and persons with the frosty elements. As part of a history that is guilty of damaging women's prospects and creating a perception of willful women as dangerous or evil, the tale of the Snow Queen has very recent iterations – ones which may have rewritten the purpose of the character.

In the 1950 children's classic, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, C. S. Lewis recreated the classic Snow Queen in the form of the titular villainess, the White Witch [Jadis]. Everything about her person is white and cold except for the golden crown on her head, and her red lips. Edmund finds her beautiful but stern and uninviting – that is until she seduces him by way of feeding him the magical Turkish Delights, which would have him turn to her always. She resides in a distant 'house' where everything that Edmund could want – sweets, mainly – is; by her words "a lovely place" (Lewis, 1950, ps. 37-45). Jadis has no redeeming values. Anything seemingly nice about her has ulterior, sinister motives such as charming Edmund to get him to lure his siblings to her so that she may put an end to them. She controls the snow and everlasting winter. A winter without Christmas, which is quite awful to the Pevensie-children (p. 25). The likening of the White Witch's rule to that of the Third Reich is made obvious throughout the book, with her having a secret police to hunt down any who would speak ill of,

resist, or threaten her rule. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is quite clear about what, Lewis thinks a woman should and should not do, or be. Despite giving Susan a bow and Lucy a knife, Father Christmas makes it clear to them that they must only use them as a last resort, because "battles are ugly when women fight" (p. 119). Likewise, the chapter *A Day with the Beavers* (ps. 72-85) shows the preferred status of women as domestic caretakers very much, when the girls make the table and cook while Mr. Beaver and Peter do the 'manly' fishing. Even when the situations would call for Susan and Lucy to fight, Peter saves Susan from Maugrim (p. 142) and the girls are mere witnesses to the final battle against the White Witch's hordes (p. 191). On the other hand, Aslan, the lion and symbol of masculinity, shows all the qualities of what is traditionally the perfect man – the perfect human: Aslan is strong and wise; he is clever and outsmarts the cold and scheming woman at the Stone Table (176); his anger is wrath, justifiable and short-lived (191); and the girls cry at both losing, and being reconnected with him (ps. 170+175). Lewis' story world works by a clearly traditional an dualistic view of men and women, and what frost and snow should mean in terms of female characterization: scheming, corruption of [male] children, threatening to the world and Western, Christian traditions, and ultimately inferior to male valor and intelligence. By completely ignoring Susan's bow and Lucy's knife, Lewis thus concludes that women's only useful gift is the healing vial – translatable to nursing, and that they should tend house and passively await a prince that would marry them (p. 198).

Disney's 2013 animated film, *Frozen* takes its inspiration from H. C. Andersen's *The Snow Queen*, which is the prototype for this story-type's structure and characters. By purely visual impressions, *Frozen*'s own Snow Queen, Elsa, is very much a mirror image of Lewis' White Witch and the text of the opening song, *Frozen Heart*, would suggest similar:

"This icy force, both foul and fair…-

Cut through the heart, cold and clear

Strike for love and strike for fear

See the beauty sharp and sheer…-

Beautiful. Powerful. Dangerous. Cold.

Ice has a magic, can't be controlled…-

Strong than a hundred men" (00:01:35)

The ice-miners sing about the ice itself, which it of course describes, but the words fit the description of the Snow Queen, as both Andersen and Lewis would write her: beautiful yet a danger to society because she is beyond control – men's control.

In *Frozen*, Elsa learns early on that her powers of frost and snow are parts of herself which she must be ashamed of and hide. What started out as an ability to have fun, and to further bond with her sister, Anna, becomes a fear, which is forced upon her because of her parents, her father primarily, being unwilling to understand, or to learn about it (Lee & Buck, 2013, 00:07:00). Elsa's power and potential grows further as she becomes older – becomes a woman. However, Elsa must "be the good girl you always have to be" (00:15:50), which is expected of girls and princesses in particular – even if it goes against her being or wants. While Elsa's fear of being discovered grows with age and culminates with her coronation, where she will have to keep up appearances in front of everyone, her sister, Anna, lives the 'proper' life of a princess who waits around for her prince while singing jolly songs. When Elsa's powers are exposed at the coronation, her fears are realized as the people – the men in particular – prove ignorant and label her a monster who "has cursed this land" (00:29:40). In their eyes, Elsa is no different than what Jadis is portrayed as in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. At the same, Anna, as the good princess she is, hands over power of Arendelle to the noble and masculine Hans. With Elsa fleeing far into the mountains and raising her castle of solitude, the opening 40 minutes of *Frozen* just as well could have been an origin story to Jadis, the White Witch of Narnia.

Hereafter, however, *Frozen* begins to veer form the archetype story. Anna and Kristoff, who is an agent operating between nature and society equally – thus the best *man* as Plumwood would tell us – find something in the snow, which the Pevensies did not find: the beauty and potential for good in Elsa's abilities (00:45:00). Furthermore, they find Olaf, a living memory from Anna and Elsa's childhood, and a manifestation of Elsa's feelings beyond her fear: Olaf loves summer and sun but more than anything else he, like Elsa, loves Anna. When Anna, after traversing snow and mountains, does find her sister and tries to convince her to come home so that she can thaw Arendelle, Elsa denies that she would be able to do so. Elsa, who has grown up with and under the suppression of a traditional society, a monarchy, which mutes true [female] potential, does not believe that she is able to balance that with nature – her nature. Thus, she feels forced to pick a side, to play into the dualism (00:54:00).

When Elsa is captured by Hans and the other men, she resigns herself to whatever judgment they see fit. Hans, who is yet to reveal his treacherous nature, feigns worry and politeness when he asks of Elsa to "bring back summer, please" (01:12:10), practically asking her to please hide away that potential which is beyond his own capabilities. Hans abuses the societal norms and romanticized views of love at first sight, which are designed to his advantage, and convinces the people – for a while – that he is the male hero, who takes up the mantle of leadership, not because he wants to but because it serves them best (01:16:00). Following the fairytale-rules of love and Anna's self-sacrifice to save Elsa, which proves the loves and acceptance which was always there between the two sisters, Elsa realizes that she can control her own abilities to their full extent. In the end the men, who sought to use the archaic norms of their society to keep Elsa and Anna in check, are banished and Kristoff is rewarded for the balance which he embodies. Elsa, and women's potential to be more than what tradition rules, gain their rightful appreciation in a reformed Arendelle. Elsa's abilities add to society, and with this proof of compatibility, there is never again a reason for her to close the gates: to hide way.

As he was Elsa's enduring love manifest, so does Olaf survive even in the sun now that the norms have changed in Arendelle (01:28:00).

In BBC's 2019 tv-adaptation of Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*-series, where the premiere season covers the first book, *Northern Lights* (*The Golden Compass* in the US), Marisa Coulter is another take on repurposing the Snow Queen. In an alternate universe where dualism is even more prevalent than reality, by ways of overt religious hierarchy and the nature of the daemons, Coulter is a nuanced and tricky character inhabited by some of the archetypical traits of the Snow Queen but also so much more. Reflecting much of Coulter's person, her daughter and the protagonist, Lyra Belacqua plays a central role and counterpoint to Coulter throughout the season. In this alternate world, which is referred to commonly as 'Lyra's world', every human is born with an accompanying *daemon* – an animal wherein the person's soul resides. The daemons are shapeshifters until their humans hit puberty, where their personalities and forms settle. Every daemon is of the gender opposite to that of their human – thus there is an inherent balance to every person in Lyra's world, as man, woman and nature all are present. Their society, however, is a theocratic patriarchy wherein critical and individual though is highly censored. The Magisterium rules as an extension of the Authority, their deity. Just as thought is censored and kept in tight check, so is any perceived sin; here including sexuality and sinful thought, which starts to take place during puberty – when the daemons settle.

This is where Marisa Coulter comes into the picture. Despite or perhaps because of her sensually provocative [to a society ruled be predominantly devout men] nature, Coulter works on behalf of the Magisterium to find a way to separate children from their daemons before these settle, and with them the 'Dust', which the Magisterium wants to present as Original Sin (Thorne, ep. 8). Having lost everything, including the resulting child, from an affair with Lord Asriel, Coulter built herself up to power by seemingly ignoring [in the series it is not

specified whether Mrs. Coulter herself has been split from her daemon] and getting the Magisterium to support her experiments on children. Here start the apt comparisons between Marisa Coulter and the Snow Queen: having been denied the chance of her own child, she charms and abducts others' for the sake of furthering her ambitious cause. Around the children she is able to keep calm and to hide any emotions as she manipulates them into, almost voluntarily, going along with her plans. To keep away from prying eyes and the oversight of the authorities [men], Coulter, like Jadis and Elsa, places her snowy fortress in the solitude of the vast and ever-cold North. Her fortress, The Station or 'Bolvangar', her subjects present as "the best place you could possibly go" (eps. 2+6) just as the White Witch claims her home a lovely place. Just as she can manipulate the children, so can Coulter out-smart and expose the weaknesses of the two male-dominant factions of the Magisterium and the Scholars, whose claims to critical thinking, which would be deserving of protection from the first-mentioned, she dismisses. Mrs. Coulter express directly to the Headmaster of Jordan College her opinion of them: "tired old men, talking in a tired old way about tired old things" (ep. 3).

As calculating, collected, and cold as Maris Coulter appears on the surface, just as explosive and emotional can she get when she is alone, desperate, or dealing with Lyra: in episode 2, when Coulter attempts to shape Lyra in her own image, what she believes is necessary for a woman to do well in a man's world, which is torn between so-called critical thinking and obedient theocracy, the girl's resistance, to what is ultimately an expression of motherly care, makes Coulter drop all control as she throws herself at Lyra in rage. Following that and Lyra's retreat to her, Coulter's rage becomes sadness. Her emotions shift so rapidly, and in so many different directions that despite being a perceived Snow Queen, Coulter represents fieriness better than anyone else in *His Dark Materials*. This variety of emotions is represented in her daemon: a monkey, more than any other animal, is representative of al the expression that humans are capable of. As much as Mrs. Coulter tries to separate herself from the daemon –

either surgically, or by physically rejecting or punishing it (eps. 2+4), she cannot escape the fact that it took the animal form, which best represents an entire human.

Even though she is so multifaceted beneath the pretenses, Marisa Coulter's entire world view is about dualisms and separating everything: church vs college, expression vs control, herself vs Asriel, sin vs salvation, and good vs evil. For a while, there is even a Lyra vs. Coulter's own purpose: eliminating sin. However, Coulter's grasp of her "experimental theology" (ep. 6) starts slipping ever so slightly, yet continuously from the moment that she is reunited with Lyra, her daughter: in episode two, Coulter loses her temper; in episode three she violates scholastic sanctuary and breaks Magisterium law by using a 'spy fly'; in episode 4 she strongarms the Magisterium with the deal that she has with Iofur Raknison; in episode six she loses her fortress and research; in episode seven the bears; and finally, in episode eight Marisa Coulter chooses Lyra over everything else. Despite a nearly endless line of lies, abducting and being responsible for the death of Lyra's friends; hurting, yelling at, and imprisoning Lyra, Coulter, when she finally has the chance of learning the truth and obtaining power, gives it all up for the chance of being with her daughter.

Lyra Belacqua mirrors Marisa Coulter in many ways. Lyra, like her mother, navigates two sides of society simultaneously: the scholars of Jordan College and the Gyptians who live on the fringes of the Magisterium's law. However, because of her affiliation with the Gyptians rather than the Magisterium, as her mother chose, Lyra is free and expressive, which causes the clashes with Coulter in episode two. Having been sheltered away from the Magisterium her entire life, Lyra balances perfectly between Jordan College's promotion of culture and knowledge, and the Gyptians' celebrations of the natural ways of their daemons and growing up. Just as Coulter is able to get her way through manipulation, scheming, and intimidation, so is Lyra able to get people to do her will; only she does so by maintaining symbiotic and

balanced relationships, through which all parties prosper. The Gyptians, Iorek Byrnison, and Lee Scoresby all come to her aid on their own volition as she in turn helps them out.

Lyra's relationship with Iorek is exceedingly interesting from an ecofeminist point of view. In Iorek's binding to Trollesund (ep. 4) lies quite clear connotations of the damage, which colonialism and industrialization have done to both ecosystems and indigenous peoples, both of which are represented in the armored polar bear. Polar bears are perfect pictures of the wild, bright, and unspoiled Arctic as is meant to be; and in the advanced form of a 'panserbjorn', who can fall to human corruptions such as alcohol, lies a clear reference to the way that Natives all over the planet have been tricked out of their homes and into the bottom tiers of Western society. In Lyra and Iorek is a representation of the anti-dualistic, optimal symbiosis that should be present between humans and nature. Just as Lyra aids Iorek in episodes four and seven, so does he aid her in episodes five, six, and eight. When Lyra helps Iorek reclaim the Svalbard bears' throne, it is an act of restoration of nature. Iofur had been seduced by and turned his mind towards human ways: more than anything else he wanted to be human, which had caused the panserbjorns to become greedy and indulgent, taking from nature more than what they needed as is evidenced by the masses of meat and corpses in the throne room. With Iorek's ascension to the throne it was thus a return to "bear ways. Not human" (ep. 7), or a return of nature to its intended an sustainable ways: a clear message of humanity's destructive influence but also of the necessity of human intervention to turn the changes back around – to replace Iofur Raknison with Iorek Byrnison.

Going back to Aslan, there are very notable differences between what, the male lion has come to represent in western culture, and what the polar bear does. The lion is masculinity and patriarchal royalty incarnate as is exampled by a character such as Aslan, but also by the frequency with which it was and still is used to represent various, European, royal families and monarchies via their crests. In comparison, the polar bear does not have such set

connotations, except for in more recent times where it has a become a picture of the damage brought about by climate change: the photographs of starving, skin-and-bone bears are ones with which most are familiar. Likewise, there is a clear difference in the way that we see lions and bears. By looking at an individual, adult lion it is immediately possible to apply a gender and certain qualities to it. With a polar bear, however, most people would not be able to assign anything other than its species by merely looking at it. Through the medium of the bears, the representation of nature in *His Dark Materials* thus becomes an almost unisex one, which denies ties to either human gender over the other. Furthermore, the characterization of Aslan as an infallible icon does not reverberate in that of Iorek, who has to fight back from within exile and as such there is even less glorification of any traits which one might find in the panserbjorn.

Marisa Coulter is ambitious in a world where the rules for 'being successful' are set by a male standard. To Coulter, her ostracism following her affair with Asriel, and the birth of Lyra, meant that being a woman became a hindrance to her and so she denied anything that was essentially *her*. At the end of episode eight, of course, the story has led to a point where motherhood has become an ambition and measure of success in itself; a notion much in alignment with ecofeminism's reclamation of motherhood on female terms. As much as Marisa Coulter chooses Lyra and to be a mother, just as little does Asriel show any interest in being a father. After convincing Marisa Coulter that his plans for Lyra were for the best, Asriel hides away the representation of his shame, Lyra. His ambitions always come first and so he has no qualms with sacrificing even Roger, Lyra's closest relation and her chosen family to reach his lofty goals. In the Victorian tales of the heroic, male explorer, the Snow Queen-character is a foil that must be defeated. In *His Dark Materials*, however, she comes to seek redemption, while the image of the absent, by choice, father in Asriel becomes vilified by then end.

The concern with the absent father is part of Bedford's idea of an ethic of care, whereby this process of analyzing acts of 'writing' wrongs can find in *Wind River* (2017) a continuation of the idea that ecofeminism is for male roles as well.

Caring

In the opening moments of *Wind River*, the viewers are presented with a title card which informs them that the film is "inspired by actual events". Combine this with the closing moments of the film, where we are informed that no one knows how many Native American girls are missing, and a clear desire to wanting to make a change is established. Through these short and poignant title cards, in addition to the story that the film tells, director Taylor Sheridan commits to an act of writing as activism in the manner that Bedford describes. Much of *Wind River* revolves around the portrayal of the degradation of Native, or Indian American culture and its looming extinction at the hands of urban and Anglo-American society's influence.

Despite the Natives always having lived off of, and in balance with the land, the younger generation that is portrayed through characters like Sam Littlefeather and Chip Hanson has become corrupted by elements exported to them from Western life: synthesized and processed narcotics ruin their lives and futures as they spend their time between prison and drug-infested trailer parks. When he is confronted with the life that he lives, Chip Hanson even claims that the very land is an enemy to him (00:50:00) – something which falls completely out of line with what previous generations of Native Americans would find reasonable. Lambert, as the male protagonist contrasts to this viewpoint through action as well as dialogue throughout the film: even though he is not Native American, he lives in close relation to their culture, and has adapted to both them and the "laws" which count in nature. To Chip's animosity towards the land, Lambert responds with the fact that the land is all that remains of Native life. This notion echoes later as well when the rapist and murderer, Pete Mickens, says that there is nothing out here [in Wyoming's wilder areas] but "… fucking snow and silence"

(01:26:00), to which Lambert responds that these two are the only things left to the Native American. The capitalistic Westerners have taken or destroyed everything else. That snow and silence is all that remains for the Natives is backed up largely by the areas where the Indian reservations exist today: outside of Arizona and New Mexico, two very dry states, most of Indian reservation land is in Washington, Montana, Wyoming, North-, and South Dakota, and Minnesota – the northern-most and least hospitable areas of the United States. Herein lies a rather clear message: the Indian reservations are placed on the least desirable land, towards which there is hardly and reason for "civilization" to expand its affairs. What sparse resources might exist, such as oil in *Wind River*, government-backed agencies will just swoop onto and claim, leaving behind the Natives with no profit, and instead disrupting or possibly poisoning their ecological surroundings. Least desirable or profitable land may also be cover for how rough it is to settle on and transform a land that is influenced not so much by geology or biology as it is by weather and the seasonal changes. It is admittance of the un-tamable 'nature' of frost and snow, and how it, even today, remains an unpredictable and lethal hindrance by nature against Western society. The lethality of extreme cold, and its physical manifestation in snow, plays a key role in *Wind River*.

Throughout the *Wind River* there is an aspect of dualism as key to the way that the story, and the characters unfold. This dualism is scaled from natural extremes, frost and snow, in one end to cozy, ignorant, federal, and capitalist "civilization" in the other. The film's characters exist and move around on this scale as they are inhabited by traits belonging to one pole or the other. The scale is a question of nature vs. dominant mastery model just as dualism is criticized in Plumwood and Bedford's ecofeminism, and the film portrays optimal examples of humanity as existences somewhere between the two poles. There is, however, an additional factor to the dualism at work in the film. While the viewer, as an outside observer can place characters on such a scale, so do the characters' biases place each other. Martin Hanson places

Jane Banner on the right-most – society – end of the scale from the moment that they meet: Banner arrives entirely unprepared for the task which has been placed on her shoulders, both in terms of cultural clashes and in dealing with the extreme cold as is shown in her having to borrow the clothes necessary to survive even a short amount of time in the mounting snow storm. At first glance, the viewer's perspective would corroborate Hanson's view based on the immediate impression of Banner. She does, however, prove capable of moving further towards the center of the scale over the course of the film. While Banner shows mobility, Martin Hanson himself is stuck left of the center. Along with mourning the loss of his daughter, Natalie, he is lost himself as there are none left to show him true Native traditions, and he has no interest in taking part in Western culture. He is the one to ask of Cory Lambert that he enact final justice upon those responsible for his daughter's death, not wanting to trust in any man-made law. Martin Hanson is stuck in the past without ever having been a part of it which he acknowledges himself: he paints a "death face" but admits that he has no idea how to, as the tradition has not been properly withheld. Martin's son, Chip, moves opposite of him on the scale and is lost as well as he denies the connection with land.

While Martin Hanson is the one closest to the pole of nature, Pete Mickens is closest to the one of a greedy Western society. Pete shows no regard for life other than his own and has no respect for, or intention of adapting to the land which he describes as a "frozen hell". His mindset of being certain of superiority over the land and the Native Americans and feeling free to take for himself whatever he wants, be this through murdering Matt or raping [and killing] Natalie, becomes his downfall ultimately. Though he is armed to the teeth and has the support of a federal institution, Pete proves weaker than a beaten, half-naked, and barefoot Natalie. Her willingness to fight for what little she possesses in this life far outweighs Pete's as is made clear in her having run six miles, and him only making it a few hundred meters before giving in to the draining and predatory cold. While the Western, technologically

advanced, and capitalist civilization is uniquely equipped towards destroying nature, and in the end the planet, so is the subsequent arrogance and perceived superiority of such a society the biggest threat as they undo themselves: Pete underestimates the 'frozen hell' and is killed by its power which can not be negotiated with or paid off.

As is often the case, the protagonist or hero of the story proves to be the one with the most suitable qualities for the environment. Cory Lambert is at the very center of the scale by which logic *Wind River* operates. Though Lambert is not Native American, he operates largely within their sphere of beliefs. His ex-wife is Native; he teaches his son to respect and interact with nature [through horse-riding]; he is friends with, and respected by the older Natives in the reservation; and while his job is to protect livestock from wild predators, he does not kill other animals than those necessary. Much, of who Lambert is, comes down to him caring for people and nature alike. He lives and has found a balance between the laws of society and the laws of nature, which count for just as much if not more in the cold wilds of Wyoming. Just as his care for nature and Natives has set Lambert up to succeed, so does Banner's 'ethic of care' become the key to her survival and investigation. The Wind River Indian Reservation is seemingly used to federal agents coming and going without showing an interest in bringing just or closure to the Native Americans. However, Jane Banner shows up and though she is young, inexperienced, and unaware of the complications of the place, she proves to care so much that she can engage an otherwise disillusioned local law enforcement and Cory Lambert. Banner's respect for, and alliance with Lambert ends up, along with her own will to fight, saving her life.

The internal logic of *Wind River* follows this scale where the two outer points of nature and civilization, are stifling to the people nearest, and dangerous to those farthest from them. While this scale agrees to anti-dualism's idea of humanity being a product of both nature and society, it operates also by varieties in the degree to which each person in fact is. Instead

of everyone recognizing their humanity's anti-dualism, as Plumwood would prefer it, there is an resistance from each character in diegesis. An unbalanced human will suffer in an encounter with the opposing side, unless of course an agent helps to adjust as Lambert does Banner: Natalie suffers among greedy men who see her the same way they do nature: wholly exploitable – as long as they make the rules, which they do on this privatized, federal land. If, however, these rules are made void by the appearance of an agent, either equally federal such as Banner or one who balances perfectly between the two poles like Lambert, the exploiters are without a shield against the natural forces [such as overwhelming cold]. There are several instances of different factions from the same side of the scale clashing as well. Because they play by the same set of rules, they can decipher the game that is at hand. Unlike Pete and Natalie, both of whom become trapped on foreign territory, the officers who follow Banner at the oil rig are quick to read the situation when the armed guards surround them. They know something is up before it happens and can take some precautions following the intense bust-up with what is essentially a small, private army. They are, of course, out-manned and out-gunned in the end but they do become aware of the danger that they choose to venture into. In a similar vein, the interactions between Tribal Police chief Ben and Sam Littlefeather, as well as Chip Hanson, reflect a knowledge of both sides playing the same 'game' around the local law.

Cory Lambert embodies much of what, Bedford argues for with an 'ethic of care' and the importance of its application to men as caretakers. In addition to the aforementioned care that Lambert shows towards Native Americans and his respect for nature, he exhibits the same qualities on a private or domestic level as well. Despite their separation, Lambert takes an interest in both Wilma's life and well-being and is actively involved in his son, Casey's life. Unlike a character such as Asriel in *His Dark Materials*, Lambert does not use his fractured familial circumstances to leave behind his child and pursue some new beginning. As the emotional heart of *Wind River*, Cory Lambert's care for his own, deceased daughter extends to that

of his friend, Martin's as well; and at no points does he hold nature despite the rough climate and wilds of the Wind River Indian Reservation being what technically killed them both in the end. Lambert recognizes that there is no bias in the snow and cold. Unlike in society, where your fortunes can be decided by the circumstances of your birth, nature plays by one rule only, which is expressed in the final scene between Lambert and Banner: "luck don't live out here", "you survive or you surrender".

In a, to *Wind River*, contemporary film such as *The Revenant* (2015) exists a compatriot to these ecofeminist messages. Hugh Glass in *The Revenant* is in many ways like Cory Lambert: a Western man sympathetic to and respectful of Native tradition and territory, whose care for his child extends beyond the fracturing of the family. Glass, more than anything, and more than most other characters, embodies Lambert's words to Banner: "you fought for you life, [Jane]. You get to walk away with it" (*Wind River*, 01:31:30), which he so does. Much of what keeps glass alive is his affinity with the humans who best represent nature; the Native Americans, and like Lambert does with Pete Mickens, Glass leaves the fate of Fitzgerald to 'nature'. In both films, the protagonist is the one which best walks the line between society and nature, and the antagonist is a greedy, Western intruder who kills the child of the Native, of nature.

Bedford's suggestion that ecofeminist criticism's most important role be activism, and that its application can count as an act thereof, shines through quite clearly when comparisons of *The Lion, the Witch and Wardrobe* are made to much newer texts such as *Frozen* and the recent adaptation of *His Dark Materials*. Though all are representations of their own times as well, there is in Lewis' text a clear desire on his behalf to hold on to a set of values, which were starting to be tested; while in *Frozen* there is a degree of challenge to just such archaic lines of thought ad to the author of the original text by H. C. Andersen upon which *Frozen*, itself, build and 'writes' some wrongs.

The characterization of ‘cold’ women shifts from one told by a demeaning, and oppressing opposition to one that is told from a reverse perspective; one which does not just place Elsa’s abilities as being somehow synonymous with her feelings. Rather, it exposes the damaging animosity which is shown to women who ‘step out of line’. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe,* no one considers a Narnia wherein Jadis can somehow be treated or lived alongside with. *His Dark Materials* further shows the probable origin of the perceived Snow Queen as a biproduct of a patriarchal society, which devalues and hinders women participating on their own terms. Through the ecofeminist lenses all three texts make it clear that the likening of ‘unruly’ women to the cold, uncontrollable, and witch-like snow and Arctic comes down to Western, societal norms.

Beyond women’s prospects, snow and its denizens can make clear the connections between nature and humanity, which is exemplified in *Wind River* as well as in *His Dark Materials* wherein there are icons relevant to the problems of 2020, through which arguments for further male caretaking of the planet and its people, on large as well as small scales, are made.

Returning, on a, somewhat sour, chapter-final note, to the Snow Queen, there are of course still those stories released today, which would portray this archetype female character in a similar vein to its nearly 200 years old original. An example of such can be found can be found in the recent animated film, *Suicide Squad: Hell to Pay* (2018), wherein Killer Frost lives up to the image of a cold, pale, calculating, and overly ambitious woman who gets her due punishment [death] by the end of the film; contrasted of course by Harley Quinn’s, albeit psychotic, take on the jolly, careless, validation-from-male-hero-seeking female sidekick.

Snow as Monster

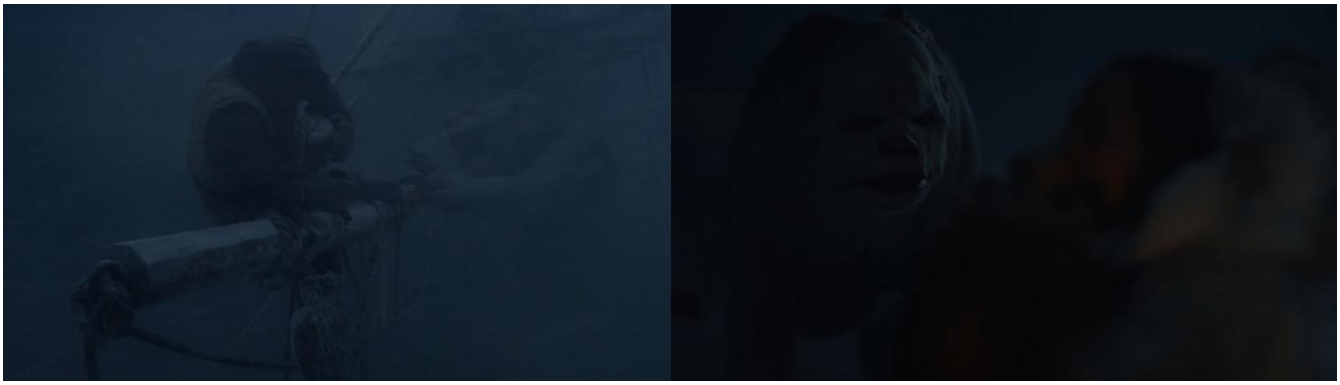
This chapter utilizes Jeffrey Cohen's seven theses on monsters as representations of cultures to analyze the bear-like monstrosity known as Tuunbaq in the tv-series *The Terror*.

The first season of AMCs anthology series *The Terror* (Kajganich, 2018), adapted from a 2007 novel of the same name, fictionalizes the story of Sir John Franklin's lost expedition to the Arctic. The purpose of this expedition was to find and traverse the Northwest Passage, the connection of the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific by waters north of North America, which by then – 1846 – had been a goal for the British Empire, among other colonial outfits, for centuries; establishing such a pathway to Asia would mean new economic possibilities and powers. While *The Terror* chronicles much of what is believed to have happened to the actual crew, the series adds as well an element of horror fiction to the tale. Upon HMS Erebus and HMS Terror becoming landlocked in the ice packs taking over the water off King William Land, the two ships' crews soon fall prey to a murderous monster. The inclusion of such a monster thus beckons interpretation, as Cohen would have it, to understand its cultural becoming.

Going by Cohen's first thesis there must be a cultural moment of generation for the monster. While *The Terror* takes place in, and is based on history from the second half of the 19th century, the show – as an extension of the book – is a product of the 21st century's cultural landscape and so is the monster, 'Tuunbaq'. Looking at the world between the release of the book in 2007 and the release of the television series in 2018, three things seem to be particularly relevant to both the story as it is depicted and today's culture. The two ships, HMS Erebus and Terror were found at last in 2014 and 2016 respectively, answering some of the 150-year old questions about Franklin's expedition. In addition to that the state of the Arctic Sea Ice Minimum, the area total of the Arctic sea ice as it is measured at its yearly lowest in September, has been in a steady and rather rapid decline since the mid-1990s: the total

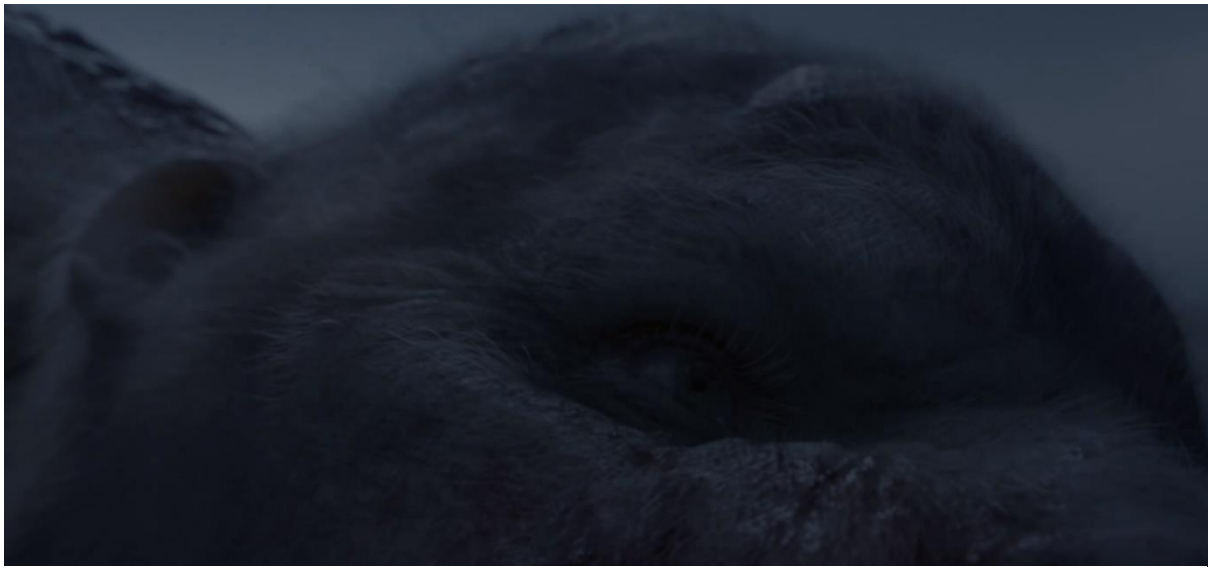
measured in 2012 [3.57 million sq. km] being less than half of that measured in 1996 [7.58 million] (climate.nasa.gov). With the shrinking polar regions and the loss of habitats for original populations and animal life, polar bears especially, already being sources for political and economic feuds, the discovery of two vessels so very representative of Western influence and ambition would be an obvious spark for adapting *The Terror* for tv and renewed interest.

For analyzing Tuunbaq, it seems the most appropriate to save Cohen's second thesis, talk of the monster's death and immortality, for last. Going then for the third one, categorization of this monster is as difficult as the theorist would prefer it. The viewer does not get a proper look at its form for several episodes after its first attack wherein it seems to be describable mostly as a freak polar bear. It becomes clear, however, that Tuunbaq is much more



Episode 5, first real impression of Tuunbaq's physical character *Episode 6, reveal of Tuunbaq's face*

than a bear as the monster outsmarts and baits the crew repeatedly. Tuunbaq's connection to the Inuit tribe of the Netsilik becomes apparent as well when it interacts harmoniously with Lady Silence, or Silna as her name is revealed to be, and it first starts appearing after one of the marines shoots her father [in error]. The monster's spiritual connection to Silna's father is further clarified in the mockery that it makes of John Franklin when it kills the captain in the same hole in the ice, in which Franklin had ordered the father buried most unceremoniously (episode 3). Only towards the end does someone like 'Cornelius Hickey' start to comprehend that they are dealing with "a spirit dressed as an animal" (episode 10), which feasts on the souls of the men as it tears them apart. Because Tuunbaq defies anything that the officers of the



Episode 10, Tuunbaq's very human eye at its death

expedition can convince themselves to believe, so do they become helpless against it. That it dies in the end is not because of some great thinking or conscious plan on the men's part. Tuunbaq dies because of the poison within each man it consumes; a poison that has built up from their way of life. At the end of their fight with the monster in episode 10, its ties to humans become clearer when its eyes are seen clearly.

Tuunbaq represents the fourth thesis' idea of an Other well. Because of the nature of the story, however, this Other may be multifaceted. In diegesis the monster represents to the men of Terror and Erebus a cultural Other as they do not understand or respect, and subsequently demonize the Netsilik's customs and the nature of the Arctic, which leads to Tuunbaq stalking and killing them. The cultural moment that created this monster is in the present time, though, which might suggest that the Other is made on history' behalf to criticize the Royal Navy and its discovery service posthumously. As 'Hickey' says: "What if we're not the heroes of this story?" (episode 10). The series, unlike their contemporaries, is not kind to the ambitions of the Officers, Franklin especially whose vainglorious hubris leads him to push his crew and ships beyond the point of breaking; and as they suffer from malnourishment and are dying left and right, he is concerned with the culinary experience that the chef has to offer (episode 1). Even when Franklin does upset someone like Francis Crozer, his vanity cannot handle that one

person of import should think ill of his actions or person. His attitude towards the Arctic is one of superiority as if his high status in British society transfers to an easy conquest of the snow and frost; he is certain that the Northwest Passage will be his to lay claim to. From time to time, the series shows Franklin's wife mounting a rescue mission from back in England and not only is she convinced that her husband is alive, she too dismisses nature's independence as she calls the Arctic "that icy province" (episode 9). As "difference made flesh", Tuunbaq represents a retroactive political and cultural Other to Franklin and the overly confident people of the colonial powers' ignorance towards nature and the indigenous populations, whose "people are not our concern" (episode 2).

To Franklin and Fitzjames [initially], Tuunbaq is 'that which cannot be'. They are representatives with conviction of the most dominant culture in the world until that point: the British Empire to which it is impossible to imagine any challenger, especially a 'savage' one from such an 'inferior' culture and location as the Inuit's and the Arctic. Franklin is convinced, until moments before his death, that he and the marines will bring an end to Tuunbaq, to "educate this creature to the will of the empire" as he says after he and the squad have their photograph taken for "posterity" (episode 3).

The attraction of Tuunbaq lies in this challenge that it poses to even a power such as the British Empire which "is not the only Empire" as 'Hickey' claims after realizing the nature of the monster (episode 10). 'Hickey' believes at the very end that him choosing Tuunbaq as his god will deliver him from the Empire and British law, which is what he sought to escape from the very beginning. For a moment there is an idea of escapism in both his and the audience's mind – that is until Tuunbaq chomps down on his arm and rips him apart, leading to one final moment of horror for the audience.

Thus comes the second to last question; why the monster was created. As a product of an after-the-fact 2018 the reason for the depiction of Tuunbaq, as it is, is much different to what it would have been, had it been a horror story written in 1860. From the previous five points there is sufficient reason to argue that *The Terror* is an ecological statement to focus on Arctic recovery. Tuunbaq is a physical manifestation of the spiritual link that exists between humans and nature – even if hundreds of years of colonialism and Western hubris has done its best to try to forget this. It is also a representation of the power that nature as overwhelming as the cold and snow of the Arctic still holds. Just as Tuunbaq ultimately dies, so does every man except for Crozier [in this fictionalized tale], making it clear that in destroying nature humans will ultimately destroy themselves as well. That Crozier, in the novel and series, survives it all comes down the respect and understanding he shows in every encounter with Silna and the other Netsilik, as well as the reverence he shows to the Arctic's power over all life up there: "Nature does not give a damn about our plans" (episode 2). Crozier and dr. Goodsir bring us back around to ecofeminism and the ethic of caring. In his second to last words to Crozier, Goodsir makes it clear that he holds no ill will towards the people or the land, even after all it has taken as he says "this place is beautiful to me, even now. To see it with eyes as a child's. There is wonder here" (episode 10). He expresses the need to see nature, the Arctic, primarily as what it is, the wonder that it is – as a child would, instead of as a *man* in the most colonial sense would: a resource to lay claim to and exploit. In the end and even though he finds it difficult to do, Crozier lays behind his culture of male 'honor to protect' as he comes to accept that Silna leaving the Netsilik is part of *their* culture which he must respect.

If no monster, Tuunbaq here included, ever truly dies then neither does nature, which is very much in line with speculations of climate degradation. Even if humanity manages to destroy the planet to such a degree that we die out ourselves, the planet and nature is likely to recover as something new in our absence. Tuunbaq is only one of many spirits to the Inuit

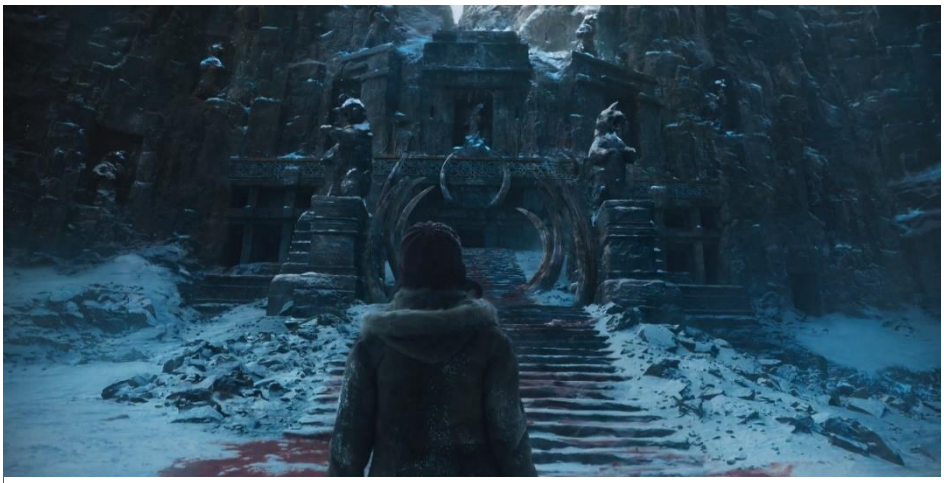
people; another will take his place eventually so that the balance may be restored. However, the crew of Erebus and Terror is gone for good. And as the fight against climate change is not at all over, so is it likely for Tuunbaq to reincarnate in future stories and films.

Snow as Canvas

For the purpose of looking at the image of blood in snow, this section of the thesis utilizes Kjetil Rødje's theory on blood in cinema and his notion of a blood assemblage, which affective qualities, actualized in the meeting with a spectator, are clarified via analysis of the on-screen blood's constitutional justification as such, its relations with other objects, how it makes sense in the larger context of the visual work, and what the audience cultural' baggage would bring.

The works hereafter analyzed are chosen from ones already analyzed so as to not involve more texts than necessary, and from the degree to which they leave visual impressions by way of scenes of blood in snow.

As a family-oriented show meant for televising on BBC's network, *His Dark Materials* (Thorne, 2019) is light on accounts of violence and other advisories with ratings ranging from 10 to 16-years old. In the seventh episode, *The Fight to the Death*, however, when



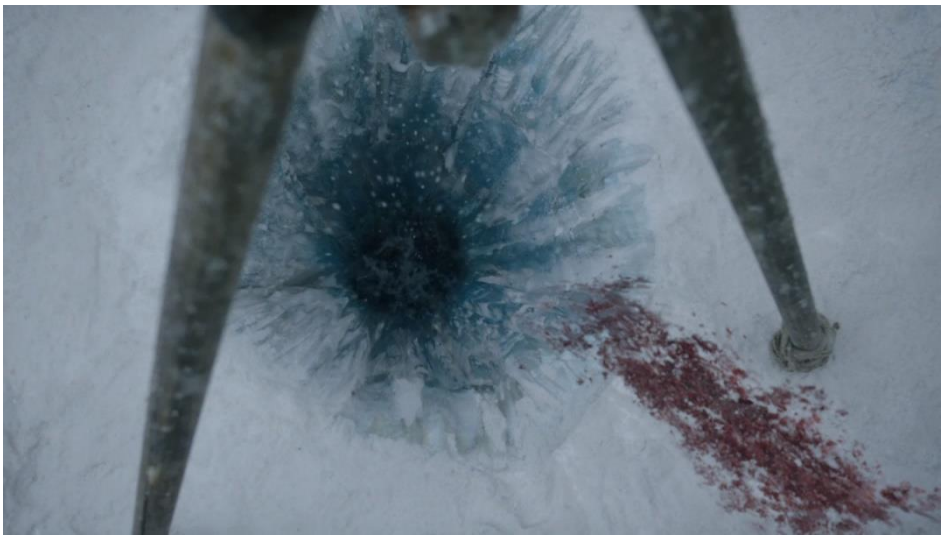
His Dark Materials, episode 7, "The Fight to the Death"

Lyra is escorted to the throne of the Svalbard bears, she and the audience observe a scene unusual to the series thus far.

This scene contrasts the show's lack of blood in otherwise violent scenes and spectacles, such as in the previous episode where the Gyptians invade Bolvangar and kill the scientists and Tartars. Gunshots and knife-slashes in these scenes do not draw blood, visually, and so the sudden appearance of the substance is noticeable. The blood is already there when Lyra arrives, and its source is unknown to her and the spectator alike. Yet this picture is very clearly a blood assemblage as the factors, which Rødje point to in establishing an assemblage as such, are present. In the pictures before Lyra's arrival at the bears' fortress, it is made clear that this is where she is taken to when the panserbjorn shows up and captures her at the beginning of the episode. In the picture itself, the presence of large, presumably whale-, bones gives a clear indication of death and bloodletting, which is strengthened further by the trail leading up the stairs which gives an impression of something, leaking a lot of blood, being dragged into the ominous-looking halls. In frame, however, one relation proves the constitution of the blood more than any other: the snow, which by its paleness preserves the red color of the blood in its various degrees of oxidation and thickness. On a surface of soil or bare ground, the blood would blend in, in color, or be soaked up – leaving little evidence of its presence to an approaching Lyra or to the audience. In the snow there is nowhere for the blood to hide away, nor is there any other things it could disguise itself as. From the audience's cultural understanding, both in diegesis and reality, there is an inherent reading of the [armored] bears as predators capable of great strength and violence, which brings itself to light when Lyra is caught by one. At this point the audience has seen Iorek in action and knows of Iofur's character, which gives way for the imagination to spin presumptions around the evidence of carnage in this blood assemblage. The sight, in its contrast to the series in general, has the potential to disgust or even shock an audience unprepared for such imagery. This actualization of the blood

assemblage's potential can as well manifest in a sense of dread or nervousness on Lyra's behalf as she enters Iofur's throne room, wherein the imagery follows up on the outside blood with the bodies whence it came.

Unlike the BBC's, viewers of AMC's cable tv will be prepared for adult content as experienced over the years in such shows as *Mad Men* (2007-2015), *Breaking Bad* (2008-2013), and *The Walking Dead* (2010-), the latter of which is most like *The Terror* (Kajganich, 2018) in its style of horror and gore rather than sexually explicit content. It is not so surprising then that *The Terror* depicts numerous scenarios wherein humans are torn apart or killed in the

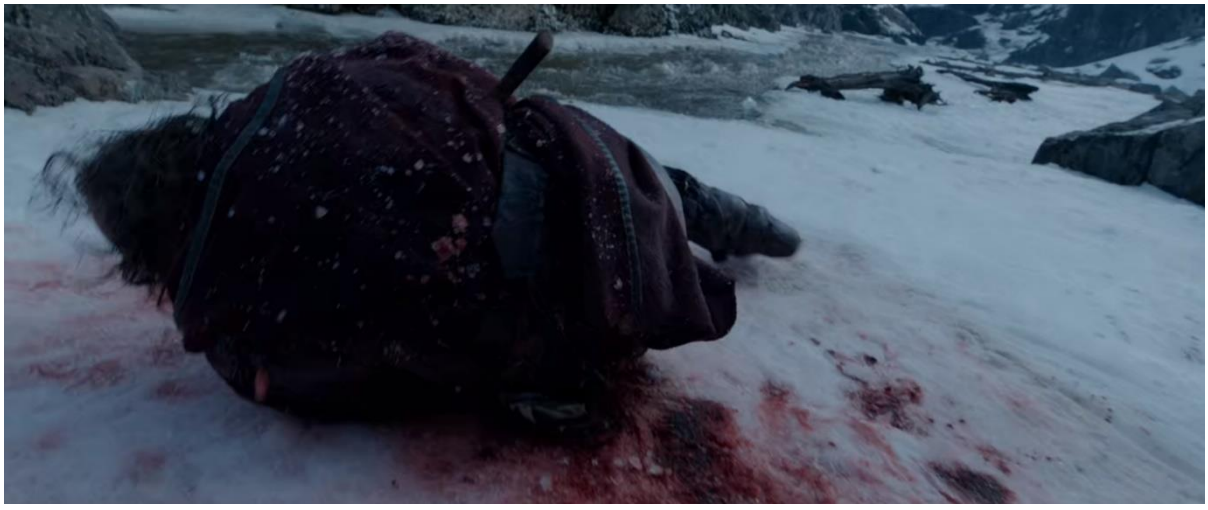


The Terror, episode 3, "The Ladder"

most graphic ways, making for a varied selection of blood assemblages from which to choose. In many ways however, the most interesting blood assemblage is not so because of its gory content but because of the context in which it happens, and the implications it brings with it. Sir John Franklin's death (episode 3) at the hands of Tuunbaq leads to the picture of a blood-stain next to a hole in the ice. The confirmation of our understanding the blood as being such happens several times over in the moments leading up the shot, when Franklin is attacked by Tuunbaq who tears off the captain's legs and drags him to this hole. Just before being pushed down there, the viewer sees his stumped legs and the smear of blood that they create, which removes any doubt that it is blood: Franklin's blood.

The simplicity of this assemblage, the few factors necessary to make sure the audience understands the blood as such as well as its origin, and the recognition of this very hole from previously in the episode are possible because of the uniformity of the landscape, in which the story takes place. This landscape of ice and snow makes an otherwise generic contraption stand out and become ingrained in the viewer as the place where Franklin ordered the Netsilik man, Silna's father, dumped after his death. As this assemblage is actualized in its meeting with the audience, two things happen: the viewer comes to feel a sense of justice as well as schadenfreude in recognizing that Franklin's grave becomes the same as the one into which he had forced Silna's father; a moment of revelation lays itself on the spectator as the intelligence and purposefulness of Tuunbaq becomes clear when it enacts vengeance and humiliation upon the prideful John Franklin.

In Alejandro Iñárritu's *The Revenant* (2015), the violence is as ever-present as it is in *The Terror*. From the beginning, blood is a clear visual factor in the film and the unpleasant imagery hits its height when Hugh Glass is shredded by the bear early on. For the purpose of blood in snow, however, the blood assemblage best suitable is found in the climax of the film when Glass fights Fitzgerald (02:18:00).



The Revenant, climactic fight between Glass and Fitzgerald

The constitution of the blood as such is confirmed time and again in the scene as the two frontiersmen hack and slice at each other. Besides Glass and Fitzgerald, the snow upon

which they fight is the primer for the expression of the blood. As the fight goes on, and they tear each other up further, the snow chronicles the severity of their wounds as the blood becomes part of the white battleground. The ruthlessness, which Glass shows in hacking up Fitzgerald, makes sense as the scene is the climax to a story that has revolved around the former looking not only to survive but also to exact his revenge on the latter who killed his son. In this blood assemblage's actualization come a sense of relief for the audience, who has witnessed all of Glass' struggles and the despicability of Fitzgerald go unpunished. There is also a sense of awe in the imagery itself as it depicts violence in a brutal, yet very grounded and realistic manner that makes every swing of the axe or stab of the knife be felt by the audience. The amount of blood shed and, therefore, visible in the snow becomes a dizzying factor as the viewer loses track of whose blood it is.

The Revenant, what remains after Glass and Fitzgerald's fight

After the fact, what remains of the fight between Glass and Fitzgerald is another assemblage; one which looks a lot like those from *His Dark Materials* and *The Terror*. In all three phenomena, blood assemblages, the trail that connects them is the snow upon which the blood becomes solid and a marker of violence past. The effectiveness of the image of blood on snow means that very little other information, via motion or objects, is necessary to create a realistic and impression-rich cinematic shot.

Discussion

When focus lies on an element of nature, such as snow or cold, the path of ecofeminism is an obvious one to take. In making that choice, however, it seems that a degree of inescapability follows; the concept of dualism is readable in most any text, it seems, even if the initial choice of theory was different.

As an example, without going into detailed analysis: in *Frankenstein*, if one was to approach the wretch in a manner similar to the one with Tuunbaq, there is a feeling of inevitably ending with an ecofeminist interpretation of it when a multitude of factors is taken into account. First of all is the description which Viktor makes of Elizabeth, including: "gentle and affectionate", "docile and good tempered, yet gay and playful", "[he liked] to tend on her, as I should on a favourite animal", and when he contrasts himself to her; "[there was] harmony in that dissimilitude, I was more calm and philosophical". Speaking on his interests: "facts relative to the actual world", and hers, "aerial creations of the poets" (Shelley, 1818, p. 23). This traditional dualism, when facts about the authorship are considered, stats spinning notions that the wretch might be representative of women in the Georgian Era. If every is the embodiment of a cultural moment, then Mary Shelley's perspective of British society' treatment of her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft's legacy, which Shelley herself was brought up to cherish, very well could be the moment which gave life to the creature that, like women, was so unaccepted as equals despite them being made from the same materials as man. There is even the escapism of the wretch's affinity for the snow and cold when it tells Viktor that "the temperature pf this place is not fitting to your fine sensations" (p. 83). This point strengthened further by Viktor conceding that "a creature who could exist in the ice caves of the glaciers… was a being possessing faculties it would be vain to cope with" (p. 128). Herein, and in the creature's flight to the North Pole, lie some of the same recognitions as are made in the

other works analyzed. Territories of extreme cold and snow seem to pose an invariably difficult charge to those in power over most others.

In all of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950), *Frozen* (2013), *His Dark Materials* (2019), *Wind River* (2017), and *The Terror* (2018), snow, cold, and the epitome hereof – the Arctic- challenge the [mostly male] dominant cultures. This might begin to as if snow *is* in fact gendered but it is more so that these conditions ask questions of or eliminate these societally and culturally built hierarchies between genders and peoples. Many of these stories have clear colonial or West-European undertones in their power structures, which further explains the troubled relations, which they have with the snow and Arctic. One only has to look at the numerous ill-fated attempts at invading Russia to get that the lack of influence, which man holds over snow, should be a valuable asset to fiction that wishes to challenge the established order of things. Unlike the mostly dependable climate and the giving nature of the land in Western Europe, the snow and cold, of the farthest North in particular, does not bend to man's will so easily.

While such stories as *Frozen* still adhere to the very standard Disney-structure, there is in this retelling of the Snow Queen a sense of responsibility in its avoidance of categorizing Elsa as definitively cold at any point in the story. This accomplishment, it seems, is down to giving women, who could be considered as so and such, the point of view. This goes for Marisa Coulter as well. Had *His Dark Materials* followed only Lyra's experiences of the first season as it unfolded, it is likely that Mrs. Coulter would have been regarded as no different than a character such as the White Witch.

The snow and cold – that of the Arctic in particular – has a usefulness to modern perspectives unmatched by most other things. Because of the Arctic's stark difference and contrasts to all countries of global influence and culture, the politicization of the fight against

climate change uses this corner of the planet as its reference. The foreign and in many ways exotic nature of the Arctic's vast, snowy landscapes, and its inhabitants are icons that most, who have an ethic of care, wish for to prosper. Not nearly the same global engagement is to be found in preservation of rain forests or marine territories, which are either local commodities or generic nature to a larger portion of people. To clarify such intents and the sensibilities in refocusing dominant cultures towards caring and taking into account more people's perspectives and experiences, ecofeminism and ecofeminist criticism is a most optimal tool as it ties in well with other forms of interpretation, such as the cultural connections and circumstances which monsters embody in their stories and retellings.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, the analyses and interpretations acquired therefrom build into a sense of absence when it comes to what ice and snow does in fiction. Visually, what snow does for a picture is limit the number of objects or resources needed to make a point or create and impression to viewer. Snow alone can enable reading and comprehension of elements of violence as demonstrated by the analysis of blood assemblages. Snow is very much a canvas: a clear sleight upon which any foreign phenomenon, and blood in particular becomes instantly clear.

Both monster- and ecofeminist theory point out as well absences, of colonial societies' and cultures' dominance of the Arctic; of gender and racial bias in the harshest environments; and of many of the connotations which were once drawn to the notion of a female archetype such as the Snow Queen.

Additionally, the presence of snow and ice along with the insistence of ecofeminist criticism upon humanity's necessary connection to nature draw from the narratives, which

have been analyzed, clear activist messages of relevance to the early 21st century's problematics with climate change and its still-partisan handling in media and political landscapes.

While ecofeminist points and criticisms continue to have changes to make and wrongs to 'write', through their lenses it is clear that progress is happening continually; and increasingly nuanced portrayals of women such as Marisa Coulter, or the contrasting readings of caring men such as Cody Lambert in *Wind River* to the ambitious and self-righteous ones like Lord Asriel or Sir John Franklin, give further hope to a unification of all of humanity and us meeting with nature in the center.

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