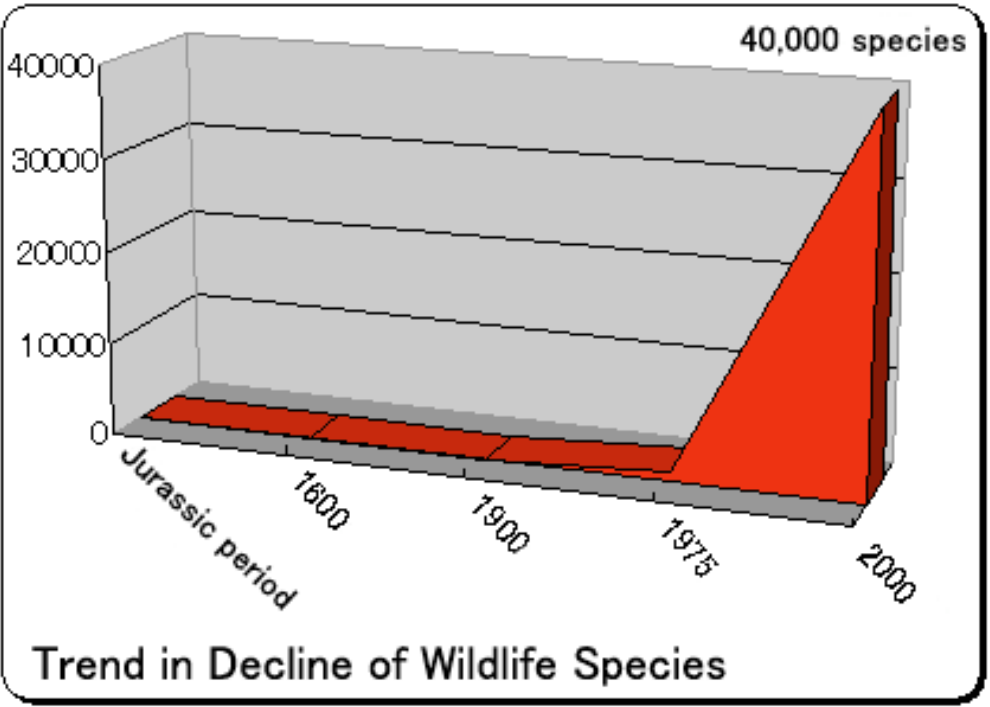


Western Views of Nature: return to the garden?





Following Merchant, western ideas of nature are:

1. marked by a 'declensionist' narrative coupled with a 'recovery' narrative



- I. Judeo-Christian
- II. Modernist
- III. Environmentalist
- IV. Feminist
- V. Marxist

Ideas of Nature – part 1 – Western Ideas

i. Fall from Grace – cast out of Eden

ii. People against nature – frontier conquest



Return to Nature



Dominate nature



Contemporary relations of nature:

what remains the same? What has changed?

Before 1800 (1620s): idea of human improvement of nature

Bacon: *New Atlantis* Excerpts

In these we practise likewise all conclusions of grafting, and inoculating, as well of wild-trees as fruit-trees, which produceth many effects. And we make by art, in the same orchards and gardens, trees and flowers, to come earlier or later than their seasons, and to come up and bear more speedily than by their natural course they do. **We make them also by art greater much than their nature;** and their fruit greater and sweeter, and of differing taste, smell, color, and figure, from their nature. And many of them we so order as that they become of medicinal use.

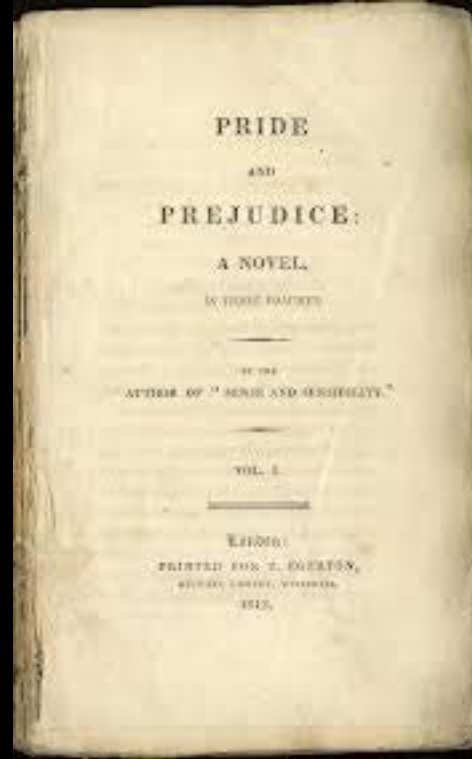


Pride and Prejudice
1813:

Very contemporary
feel;

So different than
previous sentiments
about nature:

is this a RECOVERY
NARRATIVE?



- a. Beauty of tanned skin
- b. Beauty of body in Nature





Grand Canyon of Yellowstone:
Native Americans Expelled 1870s

Teddy Roosevelt in Yellowstone



Clarence Glacken: *Traces on the Rhodian Shore*

Ideas of nature (and society) **changed more** between 1800-1930s than in previous millennia (until 1800).

- History of ideas, of progress
- Experience of the earth

The dust bowl and the great depression:

we alter the earth's surface, 'make' the environment

What happened circa 1800?





**Paradox: imposing our presence in nature?
Returning to nature *via* domination
'Eden Lost' as social Narrative: Destroying Eden to Reclaim it?**



Recovering nature
Through marketing?



Environmentality: Marketing the environment as a product



Jaws: An earlier vision of nature & technology

**Contemporary
Narrative of
'Return to
Nature'**

**(Return to
Eden)**

In Avatar,
Our ability
To relate to
nature is
mediated
through
technology



Ethics & Factory Farming

- The. U.S. ideal of the small farmer is rapidly fading into history



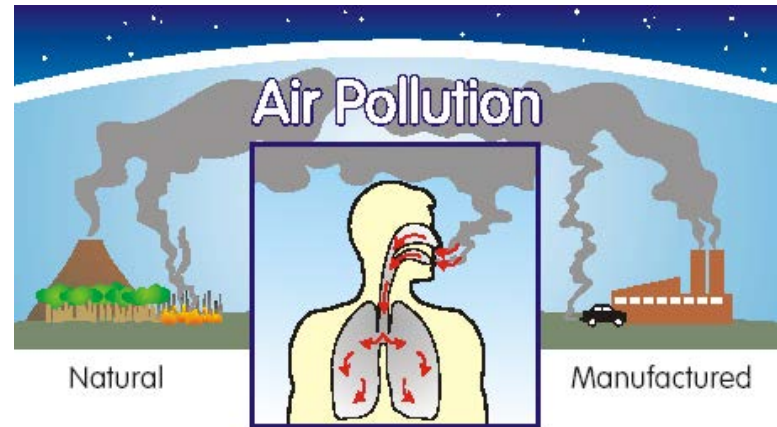
- Farms have become factories
- As of 2000, only 30% of the 640,000 farms in the U.S. provided pasture for their animals.
- All the rest are confined in CAFOs (Confined Animal Feeding Operations).



- These operations generate enormous amounts of waste. One 55,000 cow CAFO operation generates more solid waste than a small US city.



- CAFO operations emit:
ammonia (NH_3),
- nitrous oxide (N_2O), NO_x ,
- methane (CH_4),
- volatile organic compounds (VOCs),
- hydrogen sulfide (H_2S),
- particulate matter (PM_{10} and $\text{PM}_{2.5}$), and odor. Most of the emissions stem from microbial breakdown of manure stored in pits and lagoons and spread on fields.



9 **billion** animals killed each year for food in the U.S.

- Animals confined in spaces so small they often cannot turn around.
- Stacked in cages by the hundreds of thousands.



Laws Are No Help – Or Worse



- Humane Slaughter Act excludes poultry
- State Anti-Cruelty laws exclude “generally accepted agricultural practices,” (i.e. whatever the industry usually does is legal).

Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic

- “[A] land ethic changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such.
- “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”

Cheap Meat?

- CAFOs reduce the price of meat, but *externalize* costs as pollution, public health such as illnesses (BSE, antibiotic resistance, salmonella), larger carbon footprints, and reduced property values of nearby residents

FIN



Frankenstein, horror of technology
(Book 1818; movie 1931)



King Kong: (1933)
Primitive Nature

Monsters provide insight into evolving anxieties about nature:

This provides another way to think about post-1930

ULTIMATE DECLENSIONIST view of nature?



Zombies: Anxiety over loss of internal nature? Or being what we truly are?
(1968, Romero *Night of the Living Dead*)



Japan: Godzilla & Nuclear Apocalypse (1954)



Forward to Avatar: Seeking a better way to relate to nature...
(This also revisits the colonialism story...)

Survey Question:

Which country did not sign the Global Convention Biodiversity Conservation?

Iran, Syria

Russia, India

China, Somalia

USA, South Sudan

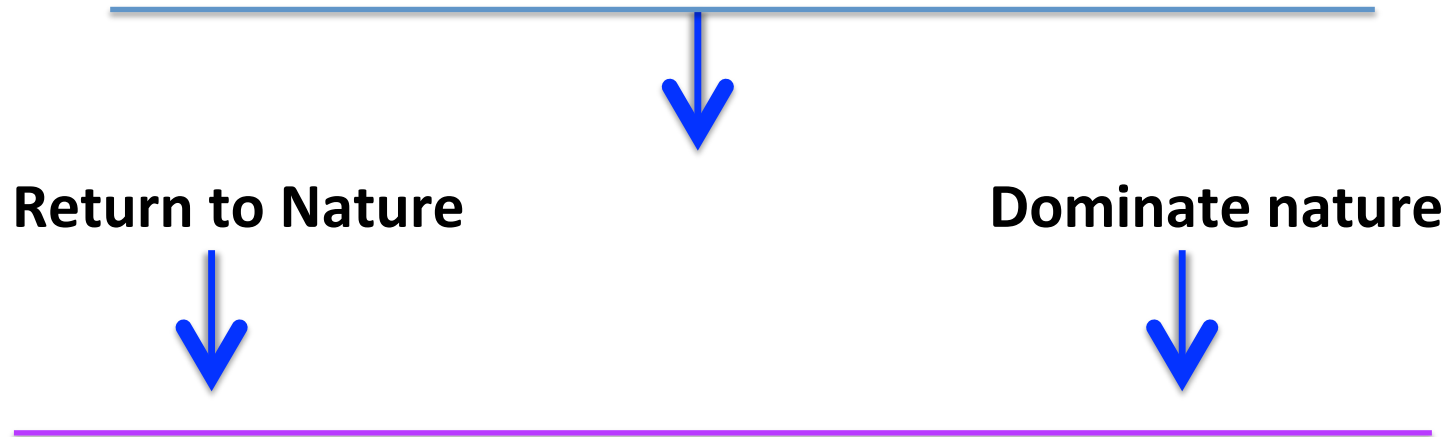
Zombies: Why the resurgence in the modern era?

- i. Fear of enslavement: original 1968 'night of the living dead' movie dealt pointedly with racism in the context of shared humanism
- ii. Generalized fear of nature: *I am legend, Walking Dead*
 - the wholesale destruction of the natural world is exposing us to pandemics, climate change, and ultimately to a loss of our 'way of life':
 - Loss of control OVER nature: returning full circle from Francis Bacon's 'New Atlantis', nature exerts its control over us, the infection inside
- iii. Post-9/11 trauma: another take on the loss of control, but in this case 'bio-political'; we fear a reduction to nothing but our biological self, loss of citizenship, loss of humanity. *World War Z, Walking Dead*
- iv. A reflection of contemporary capitalist consumer experience:
Dawn of the Dead, Zombieland
 - i. Fixation on consumption, e.g., black Friday stampedes, 'mindless' shopping, consumption, food, cellphone addiction
 - ii. Elusive goals and lack of satisfaction, an iteration of the 'rat race' and the stripping of individualism—the 'herding' meme on *walking dead*

Ideas of Nature – part 1 – Western Ideas

i. Fall from Grace – cast out of Eden

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Contemporary relations of nature:

what remains the same? **What has changed?**

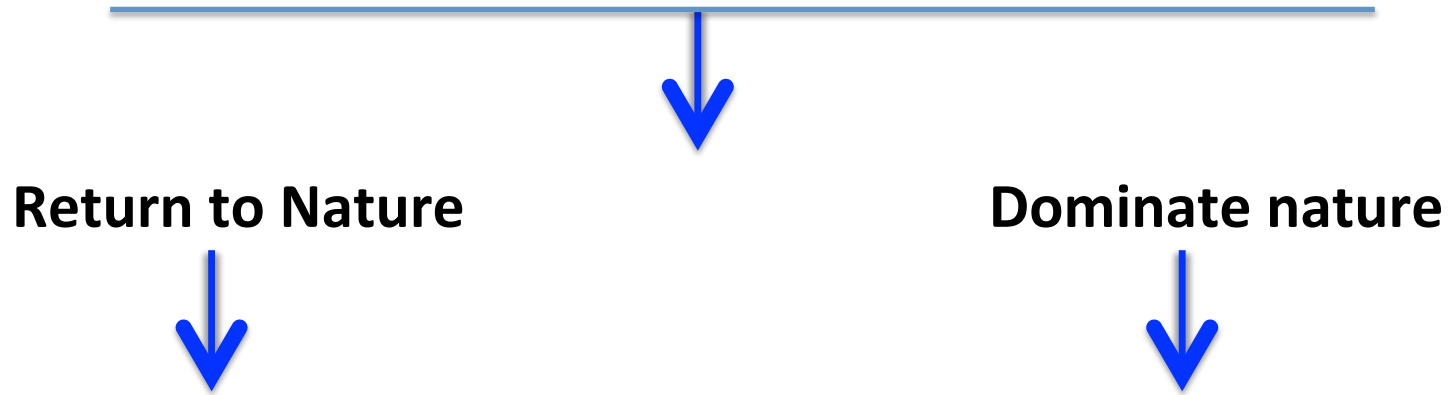
1. Consumption of nature: nature as a commodity to be purchased
2. Nature affected by international exchange relations:

- Same: Natural processes shaped through commodity chains
- Different?: New types of natural commodities: 'organic', 'sequestered' CO2

Ideas of Nature – part 1 – Western Ideas

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Contemporary relations of nature:

what remains the same? **What has changed?**

1. Consumption of nature: nature as a commodity to be purchased
2. Nature affected by international exchange relations
3. Anxieties about nature

- **Same: Terror of what science may create?**
- **Different: Terror that we have already become infected**