

## Introduction & Background

This is preliminary research into the idea that women are associated more with nature within society. While the review that was also done this semester was studying movies and television shows, this study examines works of literature, specifically from the pre-Renaissance and Renaissance. By choosing to use the same scales but with a different application, this tests out how the scales would perform if used with literature. Also, by using pre-Renaissance and Renaissance poetic works, this research tests how the scales would perform for non-modern, non-visual works.

This project is explicitly linked with another, "A Review of Media in Respect to Nature and Femininity." Therefore, it holds a similar theoretical framework of acknowledging ecofeminist's contributions to theory pertaining to both women and the environment. It is important to examine this overlap, since both the environment and women are routinely subjugated by a patriarchal, colonial society that all of the works examined are from (Estok 2005; Phillips 2004).

In this project, four works were chosen at the researcher's interest to examine. These were: "Guigemar," "Bisclavret," "A Description of Cooke-ham," and "Beowulf." These were all chosen due to either having a female author, or because of the impact the work has had. The first three had female authors, Marie de France and Aemelia Lanyer, with "Beowulf" having an unknown author.

The fact that these scales can be used for pre-Renaissance and Renaissance literature shows the prevalence of the ideas of ecofeminism, which promote the idea of femininity and nature being explicitly linked in most cultures. With figures like Mother Earth and theories like the Gaia Theory floating around, it's no wonder that ecofeminism is being taken seriously by a lot of people in a lot of fields. Even if a work was no written explicitly to be a commentary on nature or women, if it involves either, it can be analyzed with that lens to gather important data about how those two categories were viewed.

## Methods

The methods of this study were like that described in "A Review of Media in Respect to Nature and Femininity," as both involve the use of the environmental grading scale. An addition to the media scales used in that project are the character scales that were used in this project to gather even more data about the poetic works that this project tackles.

The creation of the character scales, which consist of the Femininity-Masculinity scale (F-M) and the Environmental Associations scale (E.A.), was very similar to the environmental grading scale, as it just involved thinking about questions that should be addressed in a character analysis.

The F-M scale runs on a scale from -5 (very masculine) to 5 (very feminine). A score anywhere in between that would mean that a character has masculine or feminine traits, and a score of 0 shows that a character has a mixture of feminine and masculine traits.

The E.A. scale runs on the same scale, where -5 is not environmentally associated at all and 5 is extremely environmentally associated. With a score between -5 and 5, it shows that a character is not particularly associated with nature.

Having these two scales work in tandem is important for the large-scale character analysis, seeing if a character that scores more positive on the F-M scale will score higher on the E.A. scale.

### Figure #1:

### "Nature" as seen by a Google search



## Results

### Figure #2:

### Media Test Chart

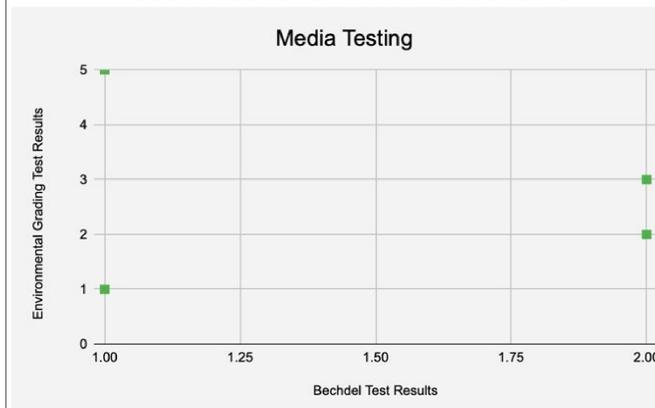
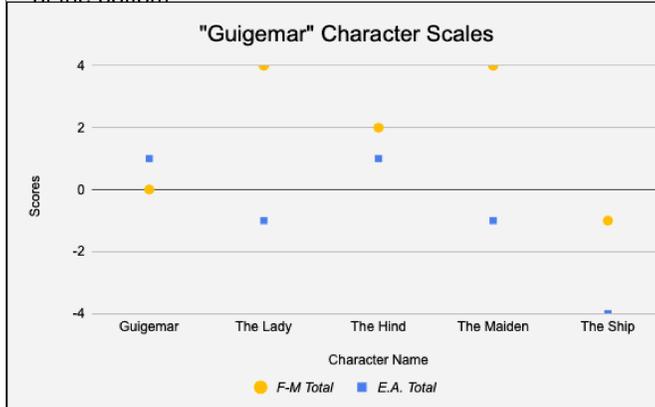


Figure 2: This chart shows the results from the four poetic works and how they scored on both the environmental grading and the Bechdel test. None of the works passed the Bechdel test, and the highest score was a 5/18 on the environmental grading test.

Figure 3: This chart shows the results from "Guigemar" specifically, showing the use of the character scales. It shows both of the character scales for each character, listed at the bottom.



### Figure #3: Character Test Chart

## Conclusions

As both a preliminary study into this field as well as a test to see if the media tests could reliably work for literature as well as static, visual media, this study shows that work is needed overall. For the scales, tweaking and fine tuning is needed to have these work for overall use, especially for literature. The use of the Bechdel test was sort of useless in the context of pre-Renaissance and Renaissance works, because for the most part, poetic works from that time period would not have met the standards of the Bechdel test. Another researcher created test could take its place, but research would have to be dedicated into what would the credentials be.

Limitations of this study include time, amount of poetic works analyzed, and which poetic works were analyzed. With more time, more works could be analyzed, possibly over a greater length of time. This leads to the idea that with more time, maybe a greater time period of works could have been analyzed, as well as different genres and forms of literature besides poetic works.

Further continuation of this research would mean fine-tuning the scales, creating an alternative to the Bechdel test, putting more media through these scales of different form/genres, and expanding these tests to other non-visual and visual media, such as video games or podcasts in an attempt to measure as much media as possible.

## Bibliography or Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and say thank you to Dr. Gresham, Dr. O'Leary, and the ENG 4950 class for their support and guidance throughout this project.

1. Estok, Simon. "An Introduction to Shakespeare and Ecocriticism: The Special Cluster." *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2005, pp. 109-117. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/44086432. Accessed 22 Jan. 2020.
2. Phillips, Bill. "The Rape of Mother Earth in Seventeenth Century English Poetry: An Ecofeminist Interpretation." *Atlantis*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2004, pp. 49-60. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/41055135. Accessed 17 Feb. 2020.