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Illustration List

Fig 1. Holloway, Z. (2020). [Photogram]

Fig 2. Attenborough, D (unknown) [Quotation]

Fig 3. Burtynsky, E. (2013) [Photogram]

Fig 4. Wissah, D (2019) [Photogram]

Fig 5. Beltra, D (2009) [Photogram]

Fig 6. Hughes, A (2012) [Photogram]

Fig 7. Burtynsky, E. (2006) [Photogram]

Word Count = 2640

Context

Within my dissertation proposal, I will be exploring the cause and effect of detritus in the waterways in Wales. I have always been passionate in highlighting detritus on our beaches and in our estuaries; thus far, I've predominantly focused on photographing rubbish along the local coastline. I'm intrigued why people say, "Oh I had a lovely day at the seaside today" but then left all their rubbish behind and think that this is acceptable behaviour, and their excuse is "the bins were full", they love to enjoy the environment but tarnish it for others and walk on by. Besides the esthetical disturbance, these pollutants have a devastating hidden effect on our ecosystem. The social ideology of its someone else's problem, must stop before we kill the planet. During my exploration, I plan to expand my location and type of waterways to identify if this behaviour is similar across all localities but also to research whether plastic and rubbish are truly the most detrimental pollution in our water or are other factors such as deforestation, water treatment plants, agriculture and farming are the hidden danger to our environment and future of the planet. My research will examine the following artists and activists who have similar passion as myself Daniel Beltra, Dharshie Wissah, Sean Gallagher, Andy Hughes and Zena Holloway. To strengthen my understanding of my three research words, **pollution, deforestation and industrial**, I will use research articles, environmental reports and scientific papers as investigatory articles alongside media documentary resources.

Pollution

Pollution is the effect when there is an introduction of contaminants into a natural environment that cause adverse change. The definition of water pollution is,

the release of substances into subsurface groundwater or into lakes, streams, rivers, estuaries, and oceans to the point where the substances interfere with beneficial use of the water or with the natural functioning of ecosystems. In addition to the release of substances, such as chemicals or microorganisms, water pollution may also include the release of energy, in the form of radioactivity or heat, into bodies of water. Britannica.

The Glassbook edition, that features the Zena Holloway, Body of Water series, she explores reflection of the human race's influence of pollution in our oceans and other natural waterways and shocks us by recreating famous poses such as Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man on a bed of human-made debris, in another the model hangs lifeless which in interpret the messaging as we are killing our planet.



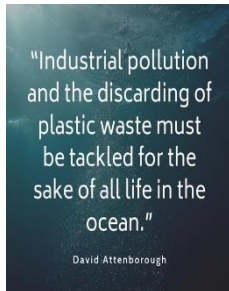
Fig.1

Fig.1 'Photographed in the ocean around the island of Bimini, close to the mystical Fountain of Youth; a fabled wellspring thought to give everlasting life to whoever bathed in or drank from it.' (Glassbook, 2020) A quotation from Zena Holloway Interview with Manual Productions

"The oceans used to represent an escape, a space to disappear in; but less so now. There's no getting away from human impact, even underwater. In my lifetime I've seen the quality of our oceans decline. The Anthropocene is a scary reality and with words like drought, melting ice caps, flood, rising sea levels and ocean acidification I often think that water is the face of climate change. Our oceans, lakes and waterways are the lifeblood of our planet and increasingly, they are being shaped by human processes. I see water as a bridge between us and the natural world. Capturing this connection is what informs the images I create" Zena Holloway

This resonates that we as humans are responsible for destroying the planet.

There is a plethora of artists and influencers that highlight plastic pollution, in particular, most of us are aware of The Blue Planet effect where Sir David Attenborough raised awareness of the effect plastic waste was having on oceans and sea life in his popular TV programme Blue Planet II and most of us were appalled by the plight however I can almost certainly say that whilst we talk about it how many of us actually do anything about it.



In this quote Fig.2, Sir David Attenborough states that it's not just about plastic industrial pollution also needs to be exposed.

Fig.2

Water Pollution can be split into two categories, natural and manmade sources, this can occur in all waterways including freshwater and seawater. Some pollutants, that are devastating to our water are oil leaks, sewage, chemical additives, and farming runoff. An area of interest is how the coastal waters are affected by the development of offshore windfarms, and the removal of the seabed does this affect what is washed up to our shores and has it impacted the dispersal of sewage and chemical pollutants.

Welsh Water and National Resources Wales both report on significant events when pollutants are dispersed into the waterways however smaller breaches are classed as acceptable and do not need to be reported or available for the public to review. These smaller leaks still have a detrimental effect on the water quality in Wales and not only impact the fauna and wildlife it can also impact humans with quality of drinking water and sewage in our rivers and seas. 'Healthy' chemicals that are used in the wastewater filtration and clean water processes will end up in our water at some point in the cycle. Farming run off, pesticide and fertilizers often end up in our waterways, these are often the hidden pollutants, but these are just as deadly to our climate as plastic waste.



Fig.3 Edward Burtynsky's Water series showcases oils and chemical spills in rivers and oceans. *Burtynsky travelled to capture BP's oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2013 and this quote depicts that whilst this was a large-scale spill this was still not reported on international news channels.*

"I understand that it has an editorial aspect to it, but nothing I photograph is typically a news event. I'm not so much into chasing disasters as I am into looking at big industrial incursions into the landscape or in this case, the seascape." Burtynsky

Fig.3

I am intrigued that this style of photography, capturing a menacing environmental disaster has a powerful impact, the image is a surreal atmospheric thing of beauty. During my research it was harder to find artists that are capturing this style of photography in their art to raise awareness however there is an overabundance of plastic pollution artists. However, there are many informative articles that could support this development idea of exploring other types of pollution in our waterways including the article, Welsh Government tackles agricultural pollution to protect Wales' rivers which can be found on gov.uk.

Deforestation

In Wales particularly the South Wales valleys, vast forestry has been felled due to disease. The impact of disease has forced the clearance of very large areas of larch. Climate change, extreme storms have been landing in these areas and significant flooding has occurred but is the long-term effect of deforestation in the areas impacting drainage and the water has nowhere to go.

Tackling this disease in our larch trees is a difficult task. We are working on a new Welsh government strategy which aims to slow down the disease by felling in new areas of infection. However, there is a positive side to this disease as we have a once in a lifetime opportunity to redesign the forests, we manage to make them more resilient to disease and a better place for people and wildlife. Muir, N. National Resources Wales

Lesley Griffiths, the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, has stated in the revised strategy management of tree disease affecting larch.

*High quality woodland ecosystems can provide real benefits both on a local and national scale. We know that Wales' woodlands enhance our landscape and increase biodiversity and we are committed to ensuring ecosystem services have the ability to respond to climate change and support woodland-based industries. We recognise pests, pathogens and invasive non-native species have significant potential to impact on the health of trees and woodlands in Wales. The refreshed strategy will play a key role in minimising the social, environmental and economic impacts of *P. ramorum* in the CDZ2 area whilst maintaining our commitment to managing the spread of the disease. Griffiths, L*



Fig.4

In Fig.4, Dharshie Wissah, winner of Water, Equality and Sustainability prize for his image Water Scarcity captured the emotive image of a young boy drinking from muddy water a resultant negative effect of deforestation in the area. This image is a commonplace plight for many and the mass destruction of forests in the UK could affect our water supply and chemical imbalances within the local ecosystem. Could this be our future if we do not replant what is being destroyed by disease?

In addition to deforestation due to disease, there is increase over the last 50 years in woodlands being removed for housing and industry and for manufacturing means. The BBC news article Climate Change: Wales could be 'first deforestation free nation'

Every year an area of woodland about nine times the size of Wales is lost globally.

Charities say the Welsh Government must curb the use of some goods in a bid to make Wales the "world's first deforestation-free nation".

The Welsh Government said tackling deforestation was "vital".

A report, compiled by WWF Cymru, RSPB Cymru and Size of Wales, calls for action to limit the amount of goods being imported into Wales linked to deforestation.

Raises awareness that Wales are leading the way in trying to influence the global market in not using bi-products of deforestation, for example products that contain palm oil may be banned from import into Wales.

In the Scientific deforestation case study, The Effect of Deforestation on Water Quality: A Case Study in Cienda Micro Watershed, Leyte, Philippines

Deforestation has an impact on the quality of water flowing through the watershed and alters the discharge, chemical and physical properties of water. This paper presents the effect of deforestation on water quality, in particular on physical and chemical characteristics of water and evaluates the community-based watershed management schemes. SABUP

Confirms that ultimately any deforestation whether for culling disease or for-profit reasons affects the water quality and the fragile water ecosystem and that any deforestation activities we should be aware that this can have a devastating long-term effect. Sean Gallagher depicts in Fig.5 the effect China is trying to show progress in their environmental drive by building around the forests.



Fig.5

The relationship between the people of the region and the forests is a fragile one as the west of China continues to develop and try to catch up with the progress of the east.

Industrial

Industrial water pollution is caused when heavy industries such as oil refineries, coal mining and steel works of which historically were the main industries in Wales, leached harmful chemicals and other compounds into the rivers or other water sources either by accident, overflow or within the acceptable discharge criteria. Within Wales, heavy industry has dramatically reduced over the last 50 years. However, the potential long-lasting effects of seeping these chemicals into our freshwaters could cause issues with quality of water for humans and other wildlife. The mining industry and the extraction of minerals through mining and drilling caused industrial water pollution in Wales. These processes caused the landscape to become swamped with slag heaps, flooded mineshafts, which culminated in the land useless for agricultural purposes. Even though all underground mining has drastically reduced, the rainfall, surface and ground water flowing through the abandoned mine sites leaches out metals and making many of the discharges acidic. This polluted drainage has severe environmental impacts and likely to affect the surrounding waterways.

Another hidden danger of water treatment plant is when raw sewage is released into the rivers and ultimately the sea. A recent Panorama investigation has found that Welsh Water has had been discharging raw sewage into rivers illegally.

Recent figures published by the Environment Agency reveal untreated sewage, including human waste, wet wipes and condoms, was released into waterways for more than three million hours last year.

- Sewage discharged into rivers 400,000 times
- Hundreds of sewage leaks detected thanks to AI.

One of the worst offenders was the not-for-profit company, Welsh Water. The data shows three of its treatment works were in breach of their permits. Its Aberbaiden plant illegally dumped untreated sewage into the River Usk on 12 consecutive days in December. The Usk is supposed to be a protected river, as it is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation. Panorama also discovered Welsh Water has been using a sewage overflow pipe on the River Usk that doesn't have a permit. BBC Panorama (2021).



Fig.6

Thought provoking, isn't it? Shouldn't the media and photographers be highlighting this type of blatant disregard for our environment with the same veracity that plastic pollution has been to force a behaviour change. Andy Hughes, a renowned environmental photographer has fuelled my inspiration as he captured plastic pollution across the UK coastline. He is an active member of Surfers Against Sewage. Fig.6 was

taken at the surfers against sewage demo at Langland Bay in 1992. This group have been very successful in making a difference so much so the following positive impact can now be heralded a long-term success

'98.5% of England's bathing waters passed the Bathing Water Directive's minimum standards in 2016, compared to what would have been only 27% in 1990 when Surfers Against Sewage started campaigning'. Surfers against Sewage

Oil leaks and spills are a daily occurrence but whilst we hear on the news about the large oil tanker spills and disasters, it isn't well known that our oceans are polluted every day. Some facts are:-

Oil spills make up about 12% of the oil that enters the ocean. The rest come from shipping travel, drains and dumping. An oil spill from a tanker is a severe problem because there is such a huge quantity of oil being spilt into one place. Oil spills cause a very localised problem but can be catastrophic to local marine wildlife such as fish, birds and sea otters. Oil cannot dissolve in water and forms a thick sludge in the water. This suffocates fish, gets caught in the feathers of marine birds stopping them from flying and blocks light from photosynthetic aquatic plants. water-pollution.org.uk



Fig.7

In Fig.7 Edward Burtynsky highlights the effect of continual leaching of oil on local wildlife.

This documentary photography subject has the potential to highlight not just the large environmental events as this often has impact on wildlife not just water quality however the everyday leaching and constant discharge of industrial waste could be more detrimental to our rivers and oceans than plastic. There are informative articles that could support the development of this keyword and would give a wide base to delve into understanding the impact on the ecosystem.

My research for this proposal has identified some pollutants that are seemingly acceptable everyday occurrence in Wales but something we shy away from addressing. When formulating my dissertation, I want to explore how visualising pollution as art can possibly influence negative behaviour and promote positive change in our waterways. Moving forward, I want to investigate the notion that now is the time to make that visual impact through my academic and conceptual practice. Through my writing, I want to uncover how acts of purposeful and accidental pollutants can influence my experimental practices and how contemporary visual activism could sway change.

My research thus far, has led me to the following questions which I intend to evolve in my dissertation. Is plastic pollution the main contributor to coastal pollution in Wales or are the 'hidden factors' of deforestation and agricultural waste causing more harm than plastic in our waterways? The discovery of disease in trees in Wales has led to Welsh Government ordering the removal and decimation of our forestry to limit the impact of the disease on remaining forestry; however, has this decision had a negative impact on the pollutants in our local waterways? Has the decline in heavy industry in Wales in the last 50 years, had a positive impact on water pollution in our rivers and oceans?

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