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Essay Title: Making a global difference: One small action at a time

Question: How can small actions make global differences to our watery environments?

My ancestry connects me to the materials of the earth, to the land, to the mountains and to the sea. Our family tree dates back to 1688 when the lead-mining family, the Ingleby's of Derbyshire, relocated to a little mountain in North Wales. Here is the beginning of my Welsh coastal heritage and, almost three hundred years later, I was raised in a little village just seven miles away. A strong tradition of seafaring runs through my family; they served in the Merchant Navy, worked in boatyards and on the docks. I have also spent much time at the coast and on the water, from family holidays in Wales and Devon to sailing yachts across the Irish Sea, competing in wooden boats in Conwy's Equinox Series and racing catamarans in Swansea Bay. It is in these moments, when I am in, on or near the water, that I feel connected to the ancestral flow. Living between the mountains and the sea, childhood memories are filled with the muted hues of my homeland; slate greys, misty mountain greens, and stormy sea blues. In the words of singer-songwriter Jimmy Buffett, '*The sea's in my veins, my tradition remains.*' (1978) This maritime genealogy has led to an Independent Project that will focus on how small actions can make global differences, thereby positively impacting our watery environments. The following examples demonstrate the influence of two environmental activists who work in this way. Firstly, Sir David Attenborough, now aged 96 and having spent the majority of his life involved in the natural sciences, said that "No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced" (Williams, 2013). Emotively connecting us to our planet through documentaries such as Blue Planet I and II (BBC, 2001 and 2017) and Frozen Planet I and II (BBC, 2011 and 2022) is a series of small actions which are making a global difference, with a combined audience totalling over 35 million. Secondly, Greta Thunberg, who has also spent much of her life fighting for environmental change, first caught public attention in 2018. Aged just fifteen she initiated a school strike in protest against the Swedish Parliament's

inaction against climate change. Now known globally as *Fridays for Future*, over one million schoolchildren have been involved, making over one million small changes towards a global difference. Referencing the climate crisis in *No one is too small to make a difference* (2019, p.7) Thunberg states:

Every single person counts.
Just like every single emission counts.
Every single kilo.
Everything counts.

These points define the power of small actions that have a considerable, indeed global impact; further inspiring the investigation of global environmental issues throughout this extended essay. Exploration of these current crises will focus on two key theories related to the environment (Buchanan, 2018); namely ecocriticism (p.148) and Mentz's 2009 term, blue humanities. Blue Humanities (or 'blue cultural studies) is a recent addition to the field of critical theory, and Mentz uses the word 'blue' here to reference our watery expanses; his intention being to "promote a kind of poetics of the ocean, thus re-establishing a humanistic connection with it." (Buchanan, 2018). Inspired by ecocriticism, his research has expanded to include both environmental and blue humanities, often exploring oceanic culture (Smith and Mentz, 2020, p.1) and environmental philosophy (Mentz, 2019).

It is these specific references to the 'blue' aspect of humanities that influence and impact my practice. The Festival of Humanities refuses to place limits on humanities and embraces the inclusion of art, cultural studies, film, music, and modern and contemporary literature (Being Human Festival, 2021). This annual hosting of events across the UK is designed to promote collaboration between communities and researchers; the intention being to better understand not only ourselves but to help face the current challenges presented in an ever-changing world. The intention is to explore how we can reconnect to our watery

environments through the lens of new and visual media; art, music, design, film, and literature, thereby informing and impacting global awareness one small action at a time.

Ecocriticism, a term defined by Rueckert in 1978, studies the relationship between literature and the natural environment; however it was not recognised in literary and cultural studies until the late 1980s, coinciding with the time that society was becoming more aware of environmental issues. In her article detailing the changes in environmental humanities Cecilia Åsberg (2020, p.5) states that the environment is a term that has only been in use for sixty years. Whilst being instrumental in locating the Northwest Passage, Dr. John Rae was documenting environmental issues in his journals between 1833 and 1856 (Fig. 1), depicting ice flows, icebergs and fracturing ice in his drawings (Fig. 2). These drawings provide an insight into the environmental changes to the ice that were happening almost a century ago, although it is not known whether he was aware of the importance that his work would have for future climate change researchers. Given Åsberg's statement regarding the relatively recent usage of the term 'environment', it is likely that, during this period in time, these issues were largely ignored by society in general.

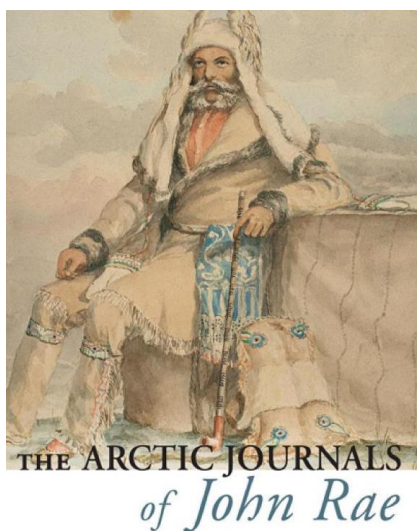


Fig. 1: *The Arctic Journals* (John Rae, 2012)

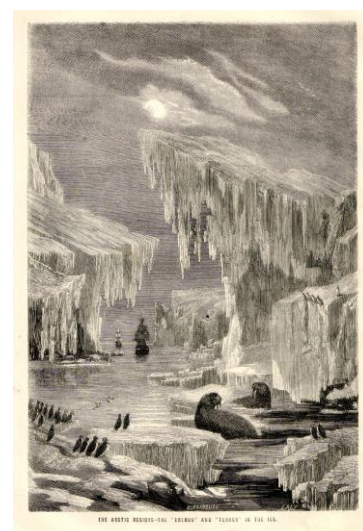


Fig. 2 : *Erebus and Terror* (John Rae, c.1848)

Olafur Eliasson, Goodwill Ambassador for the UNDP, is one of today's most powerful ambassadors for our planet, consistently creating installations and exhibitions that have a profound impact on all that view them. Delivering an important environmental message in order to influence change is at the forefront of Eliasson's practice and ice features in much of his work. *Ice Watch London* (2018), his installation of Greenland ice blocks (Fig. 3), served to "raise awareness of climate change by providing a direct and tangible experience of the reality of melting arctic ice." Not only were observers able to see the ice melting away, they were encouraged to touch it, hug it and to place their ears on it; they could then hear its cracking and moaning as it bade its final farewell before disappearing forever.



Fig. 3: *Ice Watch* (Charlie Forgham-Bailey, 2019).

Continuing with this theme, Eliasson took a series of photographs depicting glaciers in Iceland in 1999: twenty years later, he photographed these glaciers again in an effort to depict the impact of global warming (Fig. 4). He later commented in a blog post (United

Nations Development Programme, 2019) that this series “bore witness to a degree of change for which he was wholly unprepared”, further stating that “comparing those photos side by side make the consequences of human actions on the environment painfully and tangibly real.”

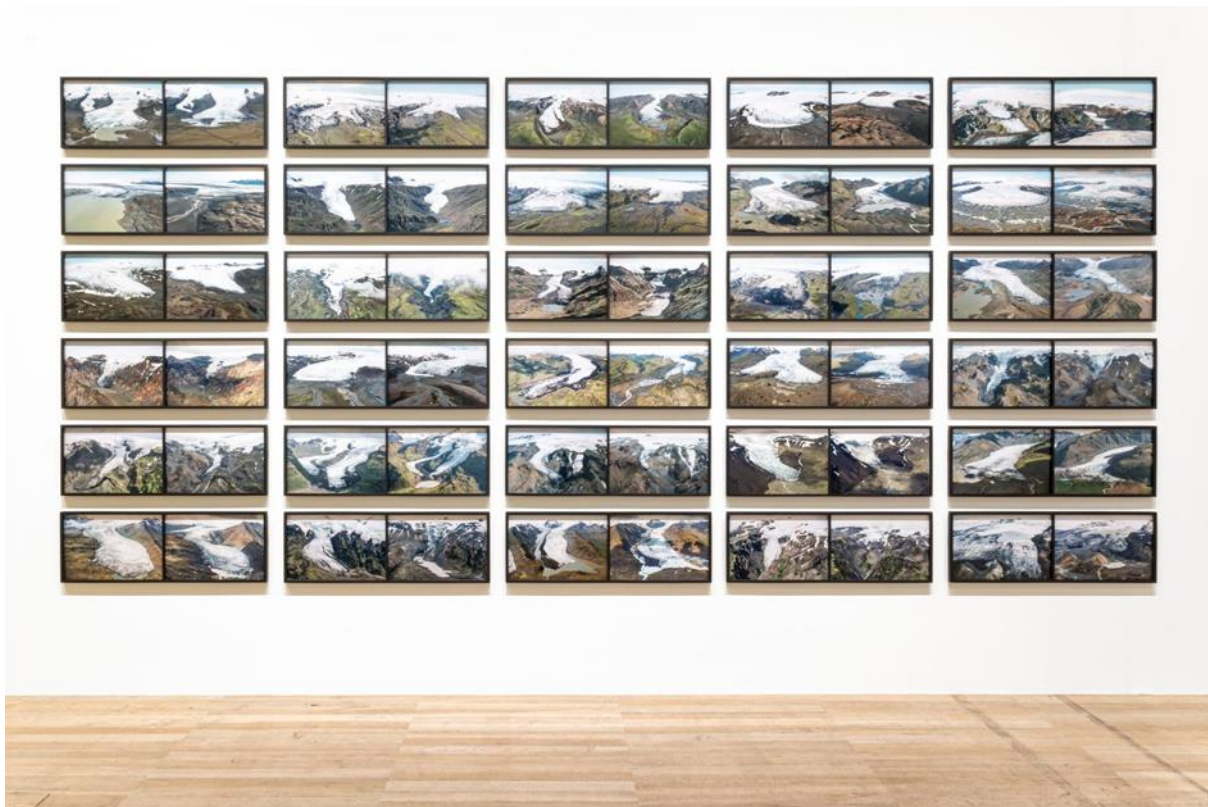


Fig. 4: *Glacier Melt Series: 1999/2019*, (Eliasson, 2019)

Eliasson is making a difference by (in the words of Mentz) aiding “*the re-establishment of that humanistic connection with the ocean*”, and subsequently our planet. Framing glacial crises and informing others is a powerful series of small actions contributing to global change.

Illustrator Charlie Mackesy also contributes to these small actions, one print at a time. He has previously promoted awareness of global issues through the Nelson Mandela & Charlie

Mackesy Collaboration Series – Unity: Freedom (2006). Turning his attention to environmental issues in 2022, he has created a poignant new illustration (Fig. 5), directly linked to the climate change crisis affecting our oceans and the wildlife they sustain. This image features a conversation between a boy and a polar bear.

Boy: “What do you want to be when you grow up?”

“Still here,” replies the polar bear.

This is reminiscent of questions asked by a small boy and the spoken response provided by a fictional bear in many of our childhood stories. This then serves as a reinforcement of knowledge; we learn, and then remember, the important messages repeated throughout these stories.

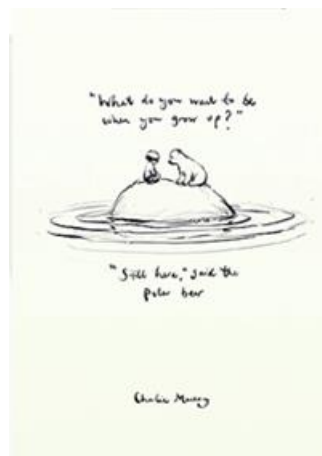


Fig. 5: *Polar Bear* (Charlie Mackesy, 2022)

In choosing the polar bear to illustrate climate change, Mackesy’s message is strengthened by the fact that Smithsonian Magazine (2021) suggests ‘the polar bear has become perhaps the pre-eminent symbol of the consequences of climate change because it needs sea ice to survive’ (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6 *Polar bear, Manitoba* (Neil Ever Osborne, 2021)

The ice is the polar bear's domain, its hunting ground; as climate change causes it to fracture and break up it affects the success rate of the hunt, the odds being stacked in favour of the prey. The article concludes with an all too real risk to their very survival;

If a warming climate shrinks sea ice at projected rates, most polar bear populations will be too nutrient-starved to reproduce by the end of the 21st century.

Moving on to more liquid environments Wyland, an ocean artist and activist best known for his Whaling Walls (Fig. 7 and Fig. 8), set up the Wyland Foundation in 1993, campaigning for "our oceans to be cared for by all". His website (2022) features a quote from Al Gore, environmentalist and co-recipient of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):

Wyland is leading the front in water conservation.



Fig. 7: *Hawaii* (Wyland Foundation, 1985)



Fig. 8: *Hawaii* (Wyland Foundation, 1991)

Wyland has tirelessly worked on education and conservation projects and has collaborated with the United Nations to educate and raise awareness of the importance of 'clean water and healthy oceans'. He donates proceeds from his artwork to enable the Wyland Foundation to continue making a series of small differences, whilst also supporting schools and educators with free downloadable resources (Fig. 9 and Fig. 10).

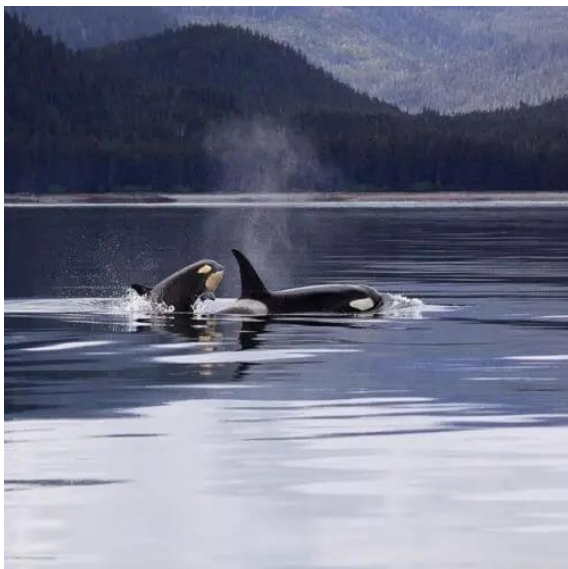


Fig. 9: *Orca Duo* (Wyland, 2022)



Fig. 10: *Orcas Starry Night* (Wyland, 2022)

Artists aren't just visual however, with many opting for music as their preferred medium. Music has a powerful ability to effect the emotions and, lyrically, perhaps none more so than the traditional shanties born upon the sea. Although "sea stories, shanties, and marine painting are by no means new, it is only recently that they have been subject to academic scrutiny" (Humanities, 2013). Their recent revival is in part due to TikTok overnight sensation Nathan Evans' rendition of Wellerman (YouTube, 2021) and the film versions of Port Isaac's Fisherman's Friends (2019 and 2022). The lyrics for The Last of the Great Whales (Barnes, 1983) powerfully evoke the age of whaling and its devastating impact on the extinction of a species.

My soul has been torn from me and I am bleeding
My heart it has been rent and I am crying
For the beauty around me pales and I am screaming
I am the last of the Great Whales and I am dying.

This morning the sun did rise crimson in the north sky
The ice was the colour of blood and the wind did sigh
I rose to take a breath it was my last one
From the gun came the roar of death and now I am gone

Whilst the whaling depicted in these shanties feels like it belongs in a bygone age, it is unfortunately very much an issue of today. Each story of the sea told through song makes small differences, reminding us of our long history with the sea whilst making sure we remain aware of the past sins and continued abuse of our mighty oceans. Referring to the dangers whales face in addition to whaling; pollution, loss of food sources, loss of habitat, climate change, toxic substances, being entangled in or ingesting plastic, sonar testing, net entanglement, trapped as incidental by-catch of the fishing industry, and ship strikes, this is the devastating claim from Save the Whales (2018):

No marine species is unaffected by human activities

The Vaquita porpoise, with only ten remaining, is on the edge of extinction due to the illegal use of gillnets in Mexico; just over sixty years since their discovery, they may now disappear forever (WWF, 2022).



Fig. 11 *Vaquita* (Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society, 2020)

Whilst many artists are inspired by the sea, it is the ones who inspire us to reconnect to the sea through their own bravery that really make a difference. A prime example of artists taking action and making a global difference are brothers Ed and James Harrison; the plight of the vaquita has been their motivation.

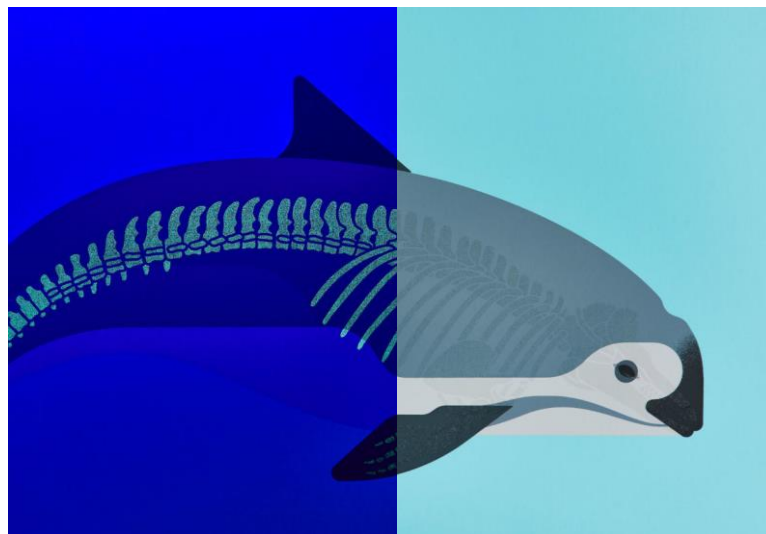


Fig. 12 *Vaquita* UV screen-print (Under the Skin, 2022)

Known collectively as *Under the Skin of Endangered Animals*, they create screen-prints which, under UV light, show the animals skeleton. Whilst donating 20% of their profits to charities such as Lonely Whale (2022) they continue making a difference through their awareness-raising prints. Collaborating with Sea Shepherd (a worldwide marine wildlife organisation) to create the documentary film *The Last Vaquita* (2021) helped reach a global audience featuring at international in film festivals, including Britain, Vancouver and Oregon, in addition to the International Ocean Film Festival and the Wildlife Conservation Film Festival.

A project which aims to “reinforce connections in local communities, between different parts of the country, between the land and the sea, between ourselves and our environment” was created by sculptor Marcus Vergette. A subsequent collaboration with bell designer Neil McLachlan resulted in The Time and Tide Bells, twelve of which are currently installed across the UK (Fig. 13 and Fig. 14). These bells make a profound statement about climate change and the rising sea levels – indeed, it is the high tide itself that rings the bell, each strike tolling a small protest against coastal injustices.



Fig. 13 *Time and Tide Bell*, Cemaes Bay (Author, 2022)



Fig. 14: *St Patrick's Time and Tide Bell* (Author, 2022)

The world of design is increasingly embracing the need for sustainable products that are kind to our planet. It is our responsibility to inform ourselves about how our shopping habits affect our oceans; many responsible companies are adopting new practices to help care for the sea and its inhabitants. Each packaging change, each ethically sourced material, each tree planted with an order is a small action towards making a global difference.

Unfortunately, it is not all good news; the next section details 'The Good', 'The Good Who Once Were Bad', and 'The Bad'.

The Good: Ocean Plastic Pots: Making a difference, one pot at a time

The story of Ocean Plastic Pots (2022) is simple and beautiful; here it is in their own words:

In December 2019 a whale washed up on Luskentyre Beach on the Isle of Harris. It had 100kg of rope, fishing net and plastic debris inside of it.

10,000 tons of plastic enters the North Sea every year

Intention is to make a difference

Rope collected from harbours and beach cleans, is recycled into Ocean Plastic Pots

Ocean Plastic Pot – RHS Chelsea Flower Show Product of the Year 2021

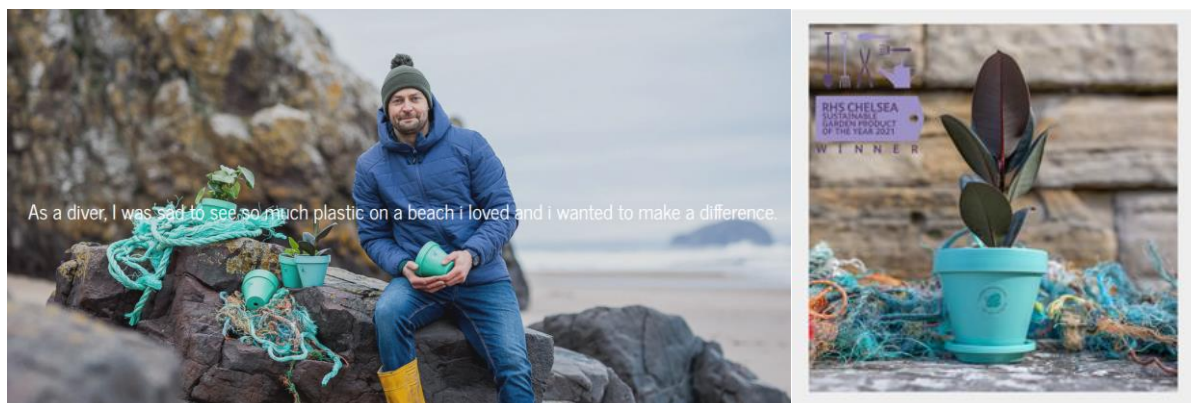


Fig. 15: *Ocean Plastic Pots* (2022)

The Good (who once were Bad): Lego

Despite an impressive Sustainability Progress Report (2021), Lego are still (literally) picking up the pieces after twenty five years, in what has been called “the biggest toy-related environmental disaster of all time with long-lasting consequences.” In 1997 a rogue wave hit a container ship carrying five million pieces of Lego; ironically much of it was sea-themed. Inspiring a book (Fig. 16), *Adrift: The Curious Tale of the Lego Lost at Sea* (Williams, 2022), the pieces are still washing up today (Ripley’s, 2022). Plastic pollution is a very real issue for our oceans and estimates state they are currently home to 75 to 199 million tons of it (Cho, 2022). Wales recently introduced an innovative bill to ban single-use plastic (Welsh Government, 2022), making small actions one plastic spoon at a time.



Fig. 16: *Adrift: The Curious Tale of the Lego Lost at Sea* (2022) Amazon

The Bad:

Surfers Against Sewage (2022) publish a Dirty Dozen list each year, detailing “the most polluting parent companies”. For three years running CocaCola and PepsiCo have taken the top two places; add in McDonalds at number three and between them they are responsible for a staggering 39% of packaging pollution (Fig. 17).

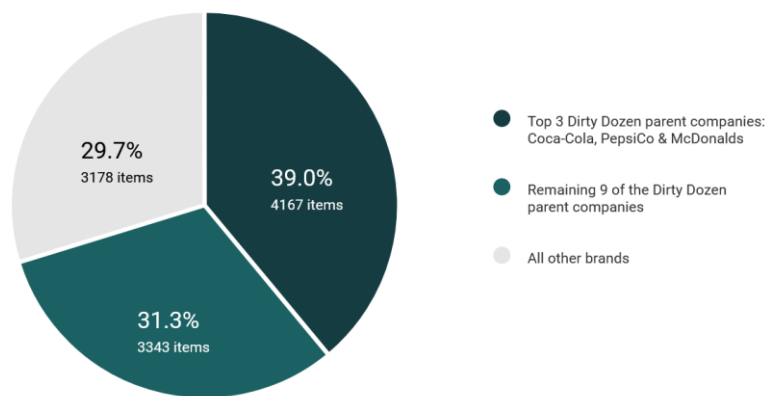


Fig.17: Surfers Against Sewage (2022) Citizen Science Brand Audit

Among targets published within the report, CocaCola has stated “100% of packaging to be recyclable by 2025” and that they will “Bring people together to support a healthy, debris free environment”. PepsiCo assures the public that “100% of packaging recyclable, compostable or biodegradable by 2025 globally” and they will “invest to increase recycling rates in key markets by 2025”. The report further details how McDonalds has committed to ensuring that “Customer packaging will be made from renewable, recycled or certified sources and will be designed to be recyclable or compostable by 2024”; they are at least currently trialling a “reusable cup scheme”. Although these statements committing to better practice have been issued to Surfers Against Sewage, previous promises have not impacted on their inclusion on the Dirty Dozen; the results, therefore, remain to be seen.

The Language of the Sea

When we think metaphorically of the sea we may impose our own emotions and meanings on it - moody, stormy, angry, calm, buoyant. We may call it home, or believe it to be an alien environment; emotions may run on the surface, or be buried deep beneath the waves. We think of it in terms of constancy, yet also its constant ebb and flow. We use colours such as

sea-green, stormy grey and far too many shades of blue to count, but which include aqua, azure, pacific and lagoon; all of which conjure up images of watery environments. Nautical metaphors have pervaded our language for centuries, so much so that their original meanings may be lost to many. We relate easily to phrases such as 'sailing close to the wind' and 'batten down the hatches' but rarely would we connect 'a flash in the pan' to the sea; this refers to the flash of gunpowder in the pan of an old-fashioned gun, often used by mariners (Phrases Dictionary, 2022). Lakoff and Johnson (2003, p.9) state that most people consider metaphor to be "a device of the poetic imagination" as opposed to being concerned with ordinary language. They believe however that metaphor is prevalent not just in our language, but also in our thoughts and actions. Bauman's *Liquid Modernity* (2000, pp.2-3) is, in parts, laden with metaphor. Relating a liquid history of society, he uses metaphor to explain and explore the fluidity and solidity of humanity and modern life, of this new cultural way of being:

Fluids travel easily. They 'flow', 'spill', 'run out', 'splash', 'pour over', 'leak', 'flood', 'spray', 'drip', 'seep', 'ooze'; unlike solids, they are not easily stopped - they pass around some obstacles, dissolve some others and bore or soak their way through others still. From the meeting with solids they emerge unscathed, while the solids they have met, if they stay solid, are changed - get moist or drenched.

When engaging with the Blue Humanities through film there is a seemingly endless supply of resources, with the sea ably filling its leading roles. The sea is home to the white whale that taunts Ahab in the adaptation of Melville's *Moby Dick* (1956), to the marlin who lures the old Cuban fisherman out to sea in the adaptation of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* (1958), and to the predatory Great White in Spielberg's 1975 adaptation of Benchley's *Jaws* (1974).



Fig. 18 Moby Dick (1956), Fig. 19 The Old Man and the Sea (1958), Fig. 20 Jaws (1975). IMDB, 2022

These films portray the age-old battle between man and the sea: humankind has often sought to conquer, hunting creatures of the sea who, in general, are just living their life in *their* natural habitat. Returning to the sea shanties placing whale hunting in the past, this is reinforced when viewed through the lens of a sixty-six-year-old black and white film. In reality however, in this apparently enlightened age, we are still harpooning whales. A recent press release by the Animal Welfare Institute (2022) details the slaughter of five hundred and eighty whales by Norwegian whalers (Fig. 21), the highest number in six years. Despite sixty per cent of Norwegians being against whaling, an international agreement being in place since the 1980s, and contrary to popular belief, Norway kills more whales each year than any other nation.



Figure 21: *Norwegian Whalers* (Animal Welfare Institute, 2022)

Since the International Whaling Commission (IWC) ban on commercial whaling took effect in 1986, Norway has been responsible for the slaughter of over 15,000 whales; these are not humane killings, grenade harpoons are typically used which causes the whales to suffer for up to twenty-five minutes before being granted the release of death. It is not just whaling though; a new crisis is affecting our seas. In *The Old Man and the Sea* (1956), fishing is Santiago's livelihood; this is also true for the crew of the *Andrea Gail* (Fig. 22) in *The Perfect Storm* (2000). Signifying the powerful intensity of nature, Petersen's adaptation was based on a true story. Since the bodies of the crew were never found, Petersen presents his perceived version of the final hours of the trawlermen who lost their lives when they encountered waves of up to eighty feet in the 'perfect storm' of 1991 (History, 2022).



Fig. 22: *The Perfect Storm* (IMDB, 2000)

Despite dramatic cinematography, a solid cast and box office success this film is probably best known for Captain Billy Tyne's opening and closing lines, painting a vivid picture of life as a swordboat captain:

The fog's just lifting. Throw off your bow line; throw off your stern. You head out to South channel, past Rocky Neck, Ten Pound Island. Past Niles Pond where I skated as a kid. Blow your air-horn and throw a wave to the lighthouse keeper's kid on Thatcher Island. Then the birds show up: black backs, herring gulls, big dumb ducks. The sun hits ya - head North. Open up to 12 - steamin' now. The guys are busy; you're in charge. Ya know what? You're a goddamn swordboat captain. Is there anything better in the world?

Unfortunately, it appears that fishing (or rather, overfishing) is now threatening our oceans. The removal of fish from the sea is happening so quickly that it doesn't allow for species to replace themselves. Surprisingly, the earliest record of overfishing dates back to whaling off Cape Cod in the early 1800s. Favourable policies, loans, and subsidies on the mid-20th century then led to a rapid rise in industrial fishing operations. National Geographic states that in 2003 it was estimated that industrial fishing had reduced the number of large ocean fish to just 10 percent of their pre-industrial population (2022). Overfishing affects biodiversity by interfering with the balance of the biological system of the sea, damaging coral reefs and harming many marine species through bycatch. In a 2006 report by Science Journal, it was predicted that the world's fisheries could collapse by 2048 if these unsustainable fishing rates continue. Although efforts to prevent overfishing are being made by, amongst others, the World Trade Organisation and the United Nations, concerns over the rate of progress remain.

It should be noted that within this new Blue Humanities, not all media influence is good. Fredric Jameson (Buchanan, p.178) suggests that the shark in the Jaws series of films is an floating signifier because it is open to multiple and possibly contradictory interpretations. He suggests that it "does not have a specific meaning itself, but functions primarily as a vehicle for absorbing meanings that viewers want to impose upon it." The film seemed to result in the scarring of a generation whilst simultaneously destroying the reputation of sharks; each year, more people are killed by jellyfish, lightning, or even vending machines, than by sharks! (Rushkult, 2022). The greatest threat currently faced by sharks is the global fin trade, led by Hong Kong; furthermore, more than 70% of the shark species concerned

are at risk of extinction (Forbes, 2022). It is possible that film and literature are not only damaging their reputation, but could be having an adverse effect on their very survival.

When we move to the exploring blue cultural studies through literature, Shakespeare seems a good place to start; indeed the humanities often defer to literature in order to study human culture. In *At the Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean* (2009), Mentz views our relationship with the ocean through the text of *The Tempest* (p.96):

Long ago we crawled out of the water. We can't go back.

This, to me, suggests that the sea was our home. Our bodies mimic our blue planet, also being two thirds water and, although it is no longer home for us, it can still be a place of solace. The sea sustains us and supports us; feeds us and restores us. Yet we don't care for it as it once cared for us. We need to save Mother Ocean, to return the favour and to restore the balance. Furthermore, Mentz (p.2) states that "when the ocean appears, even in metaphor, it wrenches us out of our land-based perspectives." Referring to the sea as eternal, as being ever-present, as being all-encompassing, Mentz echoes much the same views that were held by the writers and poets he quotes (pp.4-5). :

Lord Byron - "time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow"

Melville – "the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago"

Hugo – "There was now nothing but the sea"

Glissant – "The ancestor speaks, it is the ocean"

We cannot remember a time when the sea was not present and this constancy serves to reassure us. We cannot then imagine a time in the future that the sea will not be as it has always been, it is as natural and necessary to us as the air that we breathe.



Fig. 23 *New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina* (Getty Images, 2005)

In an instant though he drags us out of our romanticised reverie, likening the storm scenes on Shakespeare's ocean to the scenes in New Orleans in the wake of 2005's Hurricane Katrina (Fig. 23): "the hungry ocean gaining advantage on the kingdom of the shore (Sonnet 64)" (p.14).

Carson (1951, p.243) refers to the sea as containing the beginnings of life and believes that, in the end, all "return to the sea – to Oceanus, the ocean river, like the ever-flowing stream of time, the beginning and the end." Thoughts that are reminiscent of John F. Kennedy's words when attending an America's Cup dinner in 1962 (Dockwa, 2021)

All of us have in our veins the exact same percentage of salt in our blood that exists in the ocean, and, therefore, we have salt in our blood, in our sweat, in our tears. We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea - whether it is to sail or to watch it - we are going back from whence we came.

Hoare writes (2013, p.309) “Every island, no matter how large or small, promises a story, a narrative of its own.” Tales of the sea colour the history of all island nations, passed down from generation to generation. It our history, our heritage, it is in our hearts, our blood, our very souls; yet it is still shrouded in mystery and we can never assume to know the sea for she holds so many secrets. Hoare (p. 281) refers to the seven-mile deep Mariana Trench as equally “as much of an archive of the ancient atmosphere as the air bubbles trapped in ice cores taken from the Antarctic.” The sea itself contains its own history, and we may be destroying areas that we don’t yet understand, but that may prove vital to our continued survival. For all the sea gives us, surely it is our responsibility to ensure we always have a sea to return to; to reverse the tide of pollution and plastic, of endangered and extinct species, of climate change and crisis.

Returning to Mentz, this time in *Object Lessons: Ocean* (2020, p.61), he paints a picture of a once experimental culture evolving in to the seaside escape that is familiar to many:

Beach culture in the West began with medicinal dunking of often female patients in cold saltwater that was thought to rebalance bodily functions. But after the mid-twentieth century the beach became synonymous with leisure, pleasure, and a respite from urban life.

Every page turned in this new wave of literature (albeit with a nod to Shakespeare’s ocean) is a small action towards knowledge, understanding and connection – a connection that our seas desperately need us to restore.

We are now turning to the sea for solace, for wellbeing, and for comfort in what have become difficult times, upsetting our equilibrium: Brexit, the Covid-19 Pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the economic and environmental crises. My personal practice is named “*At the*

edge of the sea...”: this is where I breathe, restore the calm, and refocus. Personal practice for me is influenced by message and meaning and opportunities to educate through art, to raise awareness, to promote sustainability and to support wellbeing are welcomed. The freedom to interpret briefs which align with personal beliefs and interests underpins current projects – for me that is the sea in all its many guises and recurring themes include Blue Mind (the sea and wellbeing) and Blue Humanities (the sea and sustainability). The intention is not only to promote the benefits provide by our blue spaces, but to raise awareness of the plight of our oceans and the current crises they face through the mediums of glass, ice and found objects.



Fig. 24: *Personal Practice* (Author, 2022)

A 2022 project was the design and creation of a bronze medal for the British Art Medal Society. Entitled “It’s not Ok...” the medal is inspired by the death, and funeral, of Okjokull; Iceland’s first glacier to be declassified.

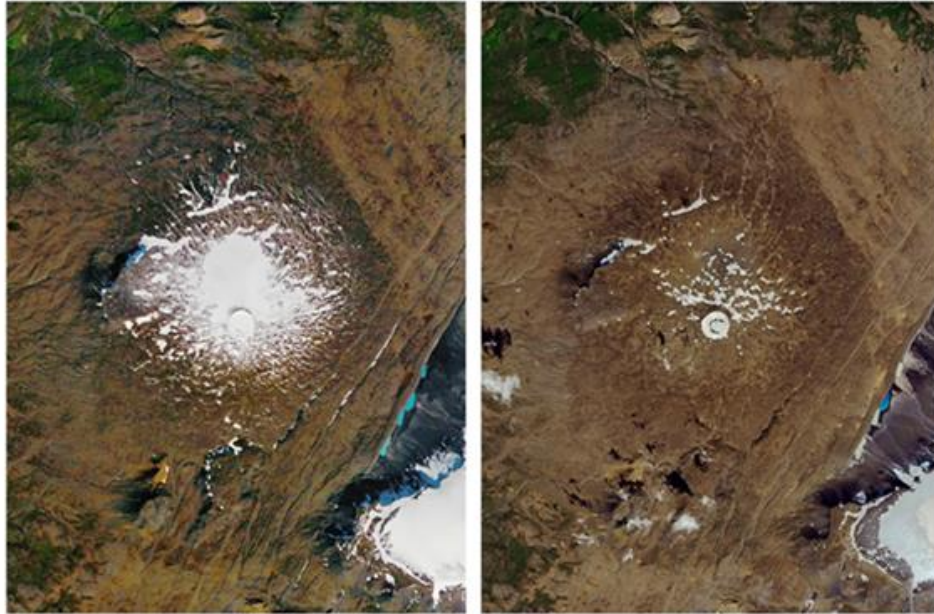


Fig. 25 *Okjokull Glacier 1986 - 2019*, (NASA, 2019)

The medal front depicts Ok as a glacier in 1986; the reverse shows only what remained of Ok at its funeral in 2019 (Fig. 25). A plaque on Okjokull (Fig. 26) suggests that only time will tell whether we succeeded in saving our blue planet for future generations. Surely the message here is that we must do something, and we must do that something now.

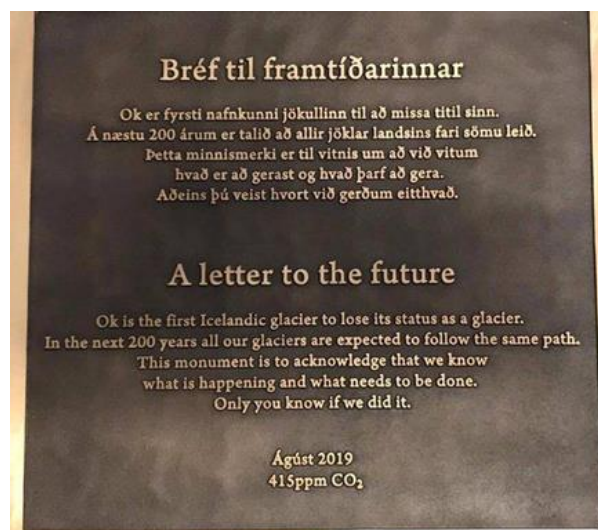


Fig. 26: *Okjokull glacier plaque* (BBC, 2019)

On the meaning behind why we make, Peter Korn pondered why we choose the ‘spiritually, emotionally and physically demanding work’ of creating; this led him to what he calls a ‘fundamental truth’, that is that the making itself becomes a form of ‘self-transformation’. We absolutely need to connect with our work in this way, to invest a part of ourselves in it, to learn about ourselves and our priorities, for this then becomes a platform for our own small actions. I gain a deeper understanding of myself with each piece I create and the opportunity to connect, and indeed reconnect, to the sea is what continues to motivate me. Studying a BA (Hons) Design Crafts not only develops creative and technical skills; it has encouraged me to question and not just accept, to collaborate with peers and external organisations, and to responsibly select sustainable and ethical materials and processes. Ultimately, to continually make those small actions that can make a global difference.

Over seventy per cent of our planet’s surface is water whilst the oceans themselves contain 96.5 per cent of all Earth’s water (Water Science School, 2019); Mentz argues that our planet should be called Ocean, Arthur C. Clarke thought a better name for our planet would be Sea, and Sir David Attenborough refers to it as the Blue Planet. In order to address some of the issues facing our seas Thunberg created *The Climate Book* (2022) by bringing together over one hundred experts to illustrate the small actions required to avoid disaster. Francis (p.62) discusses Arctic warming and its impact on local and global weather. This has been especially noticeable this year with the UK reaching temperatures over 40 degrees. Warming oceans and rising seas are also the focus of Rahmstorf (p.78) whilst Kvale (p.86) covers the intensifying issue of microplastics.

Continuing to raise awareness of these issues, through a range of media, will inspire others to make their own small actions towards a global difference. This is not only beneficial, but crucial to our own survival. Our responsibility is to create a world that future generations can inhabit safely; to ensure that a Blue Planet that has already endured for 4.5 billion years still has a future, despite the inadequacies of humankind. Perhaps creatives are also activists and changemakers, as we seek to use our work to influence social awareness and facilitate change. As designers we have a voice and it is our responsibility to ensure we use it for good. Encouraging this focus on small actions of positive change, Sir David Attenborough believes that together we can positively impact our planet: during COP 26 he said:

If working apart, we are force powerful enough to destabilize our planet, surely, working together, we are powerful enough to save it.

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