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Original citation:

John Parham (2018) Stretching and bending the frame – green possibilities in popular romantic narratives, Green Letters, DOI: 10.1080/14688417.2018.1556111

Permanent WRaP URL:

http://eprints.worc.ac.uk/7422/

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Publisher's statement:

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published online by Taylor & Francis in Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism on 15 December 2018, available online: http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/14688417.2018.1556111.

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Framing is too crude a model for studying popular culture. This is true, as often applied, though it does not do justice to the complexities and variety of paradigms of frame theory developed semi-autonomously across cognitive and social science, linguistics and discourse theory, journalism, communication studies, and fine art. In this piece I will argue, as an example of that variety, that in stretching and bending frames 'green popular culture' holds a potential both to convey the complexities of ecological thinking and nurture ecological awareness. My example will be popular music.

Frame Theory: definitions and background

Axel Goodbody has suggested that the emergence of 'insurmountable differences' between nations and in national priorities at the 2009 UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, reconstituted climate change as a question of economic priorities and social values rather than 'hard scientific facts' (2011, 1).[1] That, in turn, compels two things: a need, Anders Hansen has suggested, to analyse claims, claims-makers, and the basis by which claims are made and succeed (2010, 28-9); and an acknowledgement, say Scheufele and Iyengar, that changes in attitude or behaviour come about not because of 'differences in *what* is being communicated, but rather to variations in *how* a given piece of information is being presented' (2011, 1). To a significant degree each of these endeavours has coalesced around framing.

At the risk of mixing metaphors, frame theory is the prism through which an issue is described, explained, blame attributed, or solutions proposed. Frame theory also has other dimensions: ; frames can simplify or focus a complex issue or argument generally via triggers – visual images, sounds, or, most commonly, key words e.g. captions, phrases, tropes, idioms, clichés, or slogans; frames often (though not always) underwrite a dominant idea, ideologically speaking; and frames can be aesthetic as well as ideological, the former in the sense of the

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literal frames we see in paintings, photographs, or comics, or by the more implicit framing of narrative or genre in literature and film.

The clearest example of framing in connection with environmentalism is most likely the practice by which news journalists construct frames to tell and give sense to a story. In a much cited example, the British climate scientist Mike Hulme draws on Mike Shanahan's model of six distinct news media framings of climate change, each designed to appeal to a different audience: as 'scientific uncertainty', 'national security', and 'cost'; and as 'polar bear', 'catastrophe', and 'justice and equity' (Hulme 2009, 228-9; Shanahan 2007). The initial three holds, for environmentalists, troubling ideological connotations in diverting the issue towards other economic or nationalist agendas. One could recall, for instance, the rather nauseating video in which Cameron Diaz and Gwyneth Paltrow implore us to save energy and drive hybrid cars partly to reduce dependence on foreign oil. But even 'progressive' frames can be, Hulme argues, problematic: the 'catastrophe' frame, for instance, might engender despair or resignation. For example, images of polar bears stranded on Arctic ice floes perhaps lead to a sense that environmental issues are too distant for us, as individuals, to act or of a scale too large to even think about coherently. And yet simple framings can be powerful and effective too. Woody Guthrie's 'This Land is Your Land', for example, frames access to nature by triggering an enduring, evocative belief in common land rights, equality, and justice and has been utilised widely as a slogan, from the UK land rights and 'Right to Roam' movement to anti-Trump protestors, e.g. Lady Gaga's performance of the song at the 2017 Super Bowl. Correspondingly, framing need not be static and can be pliable. Creative re-framing – crafting novel, relevant and accessible narratives – might shift a debate. Nisbett argues, for example, that framing a discussion of climate change around its public health implications can be a way of attracting the attention of non-traditional audiences (2009, n.p.). The implication in both these examples is that one way in which the environmental movement might connect its claims to us, the public, is by understanding frame theory and developing its own frames. This is acknowledged in Hulme's referencing of Shanahan's work as press officer for the International Institute for Environment and Development as well as

Goodbody's discussion of Tom Crompton's advocacy of framing strategies in a report commissioned for various environmental organisations (Goodbody 2012, 15, 18-20). Central to that endeavour is to ponder the relationship between three distinct traditions in frame theory.

The first two are 'strategic', pragmatic, or 'advocate' frames – produced by politicians, journalists, pressure groups or social movements – and deep frames, cognitive structures by which an individual associates an experience or message with their own values. Addressing their interrelationship, George Lakoff connects strategic and cognitive framing within what he calls 'frame-circuits'. 'Physically realized' in neural circuits in the brain, our unconscious frames are triggered by words, sounds, images, and narratives. Yet, because frames operate in systems, a whole 'system' of thinking is invoked, not just a given idea. Strategic frames work by triggering these deeper, neural frames, thereby co-opting the recipient into a wider system of thought. This is problematic. Because 'synapses in neural circuits are made stronger the more they are activated' there is, Lakoff implies, every likelihood that the systems of thought triggered will accord with dominant ideology (2010, 71-2). Lakoff does argue that social movements can utilise frames, but this too has its problems. For instance, if the counter-frames of social movements have to conform to pre-existing narratives they may find it difficult to escape ideology (e.g. the equation of climate change and national security) without, for example, retreating to avant-garde forms. Nonetheless, as Alexa Weik von Mossner demonstrates in her contribution to this issue, cognitive frames can sometimes circumvent the strategic frames produced by dominant groups. What I will argue here is that one way in which to develop that potential is via a third dimension to framing theory.

Cultural Framing

Cultural framing has been defined through a series of key contributions from, amongst others, Gamson and Modigliani (1989), Zald (1996), Benford and Snow (2000), van Gorp (2007), and Goodbody (2012). Mediating between individual cognitive frames and the public frames generated by, for example, the media,

cultural framing is generally defined with reference to what Benford and Snow call the 'culture out there' (2000, 622). That is, the way in which an issue is defined, interpreted, and *framed* evolves from the broader culture of a society or nation; at the same time, it is partly from within a cultural mind-set that individuals respond to a frame. Cultural framing has its own perils. Baldwin van Gorp underlines that audiences exist in the same cultural milieu as journalists, both drawing from a 'shared repertoire of frames in culture' (2007, 61). Such frames, too, can be ideologically powerful because, as 'common sense' constructions, they operate more or less invisibly (van Gorp 2007, 65). Nevertheless, the gist of Goodbody's argument, in particular, is that environmentalists seeking alternative frames might turn to culture partly to eschew the manipulative frames of policy makers, politicians, or journalists but also, fundamentally, because shaking rigid resistance to environmental imperatives compels a longer-term project of shifting the cultural ground (see Goodbody 2012, 15). In the model of frame circuits, whereby public discourse interacts with private interpretation, cultural frames are dynamic, perpetually in the process of being 'constituted, contested, reproduced, transformed, and/or replaced' (Benford and Snow 2000, 617).

New frames can emerge by shifting cultural narratives. This can mean one of two things: reshuffling the existing 'cultural stock'; or developing entirely new narratives. The first refers to the idea that 'counter' frames might be constructed by drawing on alternative, hitherto neglected ideas, values, narratives, or myths from within the common culture. Gamson and Modigliani distinguish between 'conventional and normative' cultural frames and 'counter-frames' that are 'adversarial and contentious.' They note how, in debates over nuclear power, the dominant social frame of technological progress always has to compete with a tenacious, anti-technological counter-theme that has run from Emerson and Thoreau through Chaplin, Huxley and Kubrick (1989, 5-6). Hansen, likewise, argues that journalistic and media frames are fed by a deeper-lying cultural 'reservoir' (2010, 107) which, in an environmentalist context, means relevant popular genres such as nature documentaries or science fiction. He emphasises, for example, the role that science fiction has played in continuing to frame

technological developments – nuclear power, AI, bio/genetic technology, or cloning – negatively (112-13). And, via Hulme and Greg Garrard, Goodbody too speculates that long established literary frames such as 'Eden', wilderness, dwelling, apocalypse, or justice might nourish alternative strategic frames which reaffirm, for example, the ecological truth that humans co-exist and evolve with their environments (2012, 21-22). But I'm unsure about this. Hansen notes that film, in particular, has actually played a role in naturalising nuclear power, even extolling it as an abundant source of energy (114); and, that television nature programmes consistently reinforce dominant ideological assumptions or develop questionable, humanist constructions of nature. Cultural forms are customarily infused with ideology; furthermore, reactivating hitherto neglected dimensions of the cultural stock, as Garrard or Hulme propose, has had only limited success. Perhaps, then, the solution to developing more environmentalist frames lies in developing entirely new cultural frames.

To be successful a frame has to 'resonate'. This can happen by the claim made being objectively credible or through what Benford and Snow call 'salience' (619). Frames achieve salience in three ways: social centrality by which the frame connects to a shared ideology; experience (people themselves connect to it); and 'narrative fidelity' – the frame taps into a common culture's shared stories (621). Here, Benford and Snow cite George Rudé's distinction between 'derived ideology' – the dominant assumptions, myths, and cultural narratives of a society – and an often divergent 'inherent ideology' of the people (622; Rudé 1980, 27-33). To promote counter-ideologies like environmentalism, frames must resonate with individual and/or collective cultural experience.

These possibilities have been explored in the work of the American psychologist Jerome Bruner. Bruner suggests, in essence, that 'folk' culture engenders alternative 'frame-circuits' and, in *Acts of Meaning* (1990), sees stories as integral to this because they 'play out on a dual landscape – (social) reality and subjectivity (character and reader)'. Stories engage with social reality but, as fictional and imaginative texts, introduce into that reality 'a wider "horizon" of possibilities' (53). Moreover, because fiction deals predominantly with 'subjective states', e.g. with how characters experience the world, readers find the themes

easier to identify with. If the story works for them, they are more ready to enter into the scenarios and possibilities entertained in a book (54) so that stories become 'especially viable instruments for social negotiation' (55). Bruner also argues, elsewhere, that stories circulate within a wider context or circuit mediating normative, intersubjective, and 'actional' modes (1996, 97). That is, stories do not exist in isolation. They link to theories, ideas, other stories, other cultural texts. If, concurrently, works of fiction, film, comedy, music, or computer games all shift the 'horizon of possibilities' in one particular direction, then we end up with a recalibrated common culture.

To Bruner's useful model, one can add a further dimension. Murray Zald suggests that moments which he defines as 'cultural breaks' or 'contradictions' – which would include, surely, environmental crisis – inculcate a more general cultural reconstruction enacted principally by 'moral entrepreneurs'. Such figures, who may or may not be activists, include journalists and 'writers' (1996, 269). Developing the work of both Bruner and Zald, Goodbody's ecocritical reading encompasses an entire paradigm of cultural reframing. Writers, he argues, first draw 'ideas from the reservoir of the collective imagination' (2012, 23), or cultural stock, and then reframe issues such as how we think about nature by, for example, deploying fresh metaphors, symbols, narratives, or generic forms. These in turn force us to think afresh, question, and re-consider our attitudes to any given social and cultural issue (see 2012, 23-24), something Goodbody exemplifies via the German journalist Dirk C. Fleck's trilogy of climate change novels.

In his article, Goodbody cites both Hulme's apparent dismissal of the impact Hollywood films might have on understandings of climate change and a perception (by other critics) that radical re-framings reside solely or largely in 'complex and sophisticated' literary texts. While this is not his own view, such arguments imply heavily that popular texts and artists are not up to the task of creatively reframing environmental values, an assumption not always disputed, as we shall see, by media ecocritics. Yet for new frames to resonate significantly they need a large audience which is the terrain, most commonly, of popular media. I don't think we need to dismiss that possibility. In *Green Media and*

Popular Culture I posited that a hallmark of 'green popular culture' was its 'elasticity' (2016, 31-3). This referred to the ability of 'green' filmmakers, musicians, comedians, or journalists to speak in the modes, language, and narratives of the dominant culture while also adapting and stretching those modes to convey and advocate ecological ideas in the mainstream. A prime example of that flexibility, I will now argue, is the creative manipulation of frames.

Popular Culture and Frame Theory: an ecocritical model

Few critics have applied frame theory directly to the study of green popular culture. One who has, Paula Willoquet-Maricondi in *Framing the World: Explorations in Ecocriticism and Film*, takes a somewhat literal approach. She argues that from the Enlightenment onwards the 'picture frame' has increasingly been the 'dominant reality-structuring device' anchoring meaning through a 'power [...] to contain and fix reality' (2010: 19, 227, 231). Those meanings she sees as three-fold: the endorsement of an Enlightenment separation of 'nature' from humans or culture; an emphasis on human superiority; and dominant ideology. Reaching its zenith, she argues, in the twentieth century, with camera technology and the establishment of visual media frames (227), Willoquet-Maricondi connects photography, television, but in particular film to a scenario in which visual popular culture frames nature in humanist and/or ideological terms; for instance, by prioritising the capitalist values of modernity above nature. Frontier narratives, colonialism, globalisation – all patterns of expansive human economic control – are framed, for example, in the panoramic landscapes that characterise westerns, adventure, action movies, even narrative drama. Yet aesthetic frames do not necessarily function so instrumentally, something we might consider through the most literal example of all, the picture frame.

Significant in debates about framing in fine art and art history has been Jacques Derrida's *The Truth in Painting*. Derrida takes issue with Kant's conceptualisation of the frame as *paraergon*, something supplementary (*para*) to

the work, an embellishment or ornament. For Derrida, precisely because the '*parergon* stands out [*se détache*] *both* from the *ergon* (the work) and from the milieu' (61; *my emphasis*) we can understand frames as porous, as mediating between the work and the world i.e. the room, gallery, street, or society. With marked parallels to discussions of framing in very different disciplines this means two things: first, that unless we 'bear on the frame' we'll be manipulated by its apparent invisibility into seeing works of art in a preferred way thereby missing the frame's structural function: "the *parergon* is a form which has as its traditional determination not that it stands out but that it disappears, buries itself, effaces itself, melts away at the moment it deploys its greatest energy' (Derrida 1987, 61). Secondly, that by consciously and visibly manipulating frames, art lays bare its relationship to the world and the construction of social meaning. Pedro R. Erber describes the Brazilian artist Lygia Clark's 1954 'Breach of the Frame' series in which she incorporates frames into paintings (see fig.1). With echoes of Bruner, Erber cites the poet-critic Ferreira Gullar describing her paintings as between 'fiction and reality.' Clark removed the sanctity of the pictorial space and rediscovered it (Gullar writes) as 'a space that no longer remains separate from the world but, on the contrary, borders it, thus penetrating the world and letting itself be penetrated by it' (see Erber 2015, 98-100).

Fig 1. Lygia Clark, 'Composition no.5'

Comparable things happen with aesthetic frames in popular culture. Focusing on comic books, for example, Carter Soles and Kiu-Wai Chu argue that the gaps ('gutters') that separate comic panels invite the reader in, allowing a space in which to construct their own meaning (18-19). Moreover, the three-way interplay between image, text and gutter creates a 'tension' which frustrates easy interpretation and offers an opportunity for potentially more complex, polysemic or radical readings (23). They explicitly link comics to an ecocritical perspective by citing Kom Kunyosying's argument (made with reference to Charles Burns' *Black Hole*) that because comic panels exist alongside each other, metonymic rather than metaphorical, they elide an anthropocentric equating of nature with culture while also opening up spaces which imply or present a differentiated, sometimes uncomfortable co-existence of posthuman ecologies (19). Soles and Chu demonstrate that creative framing in popular culture can nurture ecological awareness. Yet their closing statement – that while 'the frame directs what we see, […] it is not inflexible, impermeable, or monolithic' (2016, 24) – also makes a more general point: that an ongoing construction of fluid frames across popular culture can help reframe environmental thinking. They discuss photography, comics and film. I will now explore similar possibilities in another form, popular music.

Music frames the world

Graeme Turner has argued that music appears to elude any instrumentalist purpose because it lacks 'the cultural and epistemological function serviced by narrative' and the signifying properties of visual media such as film, television or photography. Music generates signs but signs 'without a referent' (1992: 11). Akin to the white space of comic gutters or the 'blank' frames of paintings, this nevertheless has its uses. In *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, Jacques Attali argues that while, because of its non-discursive, non-narrative properties, music evades a tendency in other cultural forms to frame an ideological real, those properties can nevertheless articulate feelings, beliefs or aspirations lost or submerged in society while prophesying by making audible 'new world[s] that

will gradually become visible' (1985, 6, 11). In fact, music has its own framing mechanisms. For the dialogue Attali envisages between new and old worlds is effected through the arrangement of aspects such as clamor, melody, dissonance or harmony (6). Such musical signifiers, like all cognitive triggers, connect us to broader frames. Working alongside individual cognition, as von Mossner describes in this issue, the ways in which musicians play with, innovate, and re-shape sound can stretch frames, opening up new horizons of possibility.

One of the ways in which meaning in popular music is framed is through genre. Bruner sees genre as fundamental to how stories transcend their particularity. Readers recognise conventions. These trigger a relation of the story to its wider social context, the genre giving 'generality to meanings constructed under their [a story's] textual control.' Such generalities will often – like news framings slip all too easily into socially dominant meanings. An example would be the way in which the generic structure of the romance novel invariably underwrites socially cohesive ideologies of patriarchy and the nuclear family. Genre can also 'trigger ways of thinking and talking about' events in the novel 'and what those events "stand for."' (1996, 97-8). It invites social discourse. While green themes are not a central preoccupation of popular music (see Parham 2016, 151), a small number of performers, of whom I now offer two examples, have consciously deployed music towards ecological awareness. And they do this by bending popular genres into fluid, intricate, and potentially transformational frames.

The British band British Sea Power might loosely be described as 'Indie Rock'. Thematically, they are also known for consciously raising environmentalist themes that are unconventional in pop and rock. These include dwelling in place, animals, avian flu, light pollution, climate change, nuclear power, and apocalypse. Hence the band meet the complexity of ecology with both fluid musical genres, often reconciling electric guitar music with acoustic folk forms, and eccentric, agile collisions between the music and these loosely deployed themes. For example, lush melodic pop (incorporating birdsong) conveys the beauty of place on 'North Hanging Rock'; 'Atom', a song of foreboding, marries the genres of new wave and punk into an increasing

cacophony of noise punctuated by indistinct found sounds – missile attacks, air raid sirens, a baby crying; while the anthemic stadium rock of 'Who's in Control'? signifies a generalised call to protest against commodity culture and the apathy of the young. Notably, however, environmental themes are repeatedly presented via probably the most common popular music frame of all, romantic love.

Discussing the track 'Lights out for Darker Skies', the band's singer, Yan, describes writing about the campaign for dark skies but says 'In this song I'm really writing about a relationship, which is something bands have done for years, so you have to find a way of doing it differently' (Mugan 2008, n.p.). A further track, 'Gale Warnings in Viking North' carries the line 'my heart is suffering like an open cast mine.' However, this romance framing is most apparent on one of British Sea Power's best-known songs 'Oh Larsen B', referencing, of course, the iconic part-collapse of the Larsen B ice-shelf in Antarctica. Not especially radical, musically speaking, this conventional rock song gains its rhetorical power through reversing the trope by which nature is deployed to illustrate romantic love into one in which a romantic love song is used to explore and articulate feelings of love and loss towards nature. Deploying humour too, Yan exclaims 'Oh Larsen B, oh you can fall on me.' While eulogising his 'favourite foremost coastal Antarctic shelf" Larsen B's own heart nevertheless remains 'unbroken'. In this condition of unrequited love, the song's most melodic selection – the closest it gets to a chorus – describes how the ice shelf had been, Yan whispering of a brutal natural power of whose love 'now we're not so sure'. And then the human voice is utterly silenced, the five-minute track concluding with over two minutes of instrumentation. Bass and drum heavy music, and a chiming echoing guitar creates a mimetic interpretation of depth, emptiness, mysteriousness, invoking a desalinated sea that will continue beyond and without us. Here 'Oh Larsen B' comes close to courting the 'catastrophe' framing of climate change that Hulme rightly worries might engender despair or resignation. Yet offset by its playful and humorous, though disorienting and disturbing, subversion of the romantic frame, the catastrophe is ours. The band deploy a common coinage in pop and rock, the broken romance, to subtly reframe

climate change as an act of imagining what we may have lost for good, unless perhaps we can understand and act upon this now.

Björk's *Biophilia* album (2011) was an ambitious multi-media project that encompassed planned educational classes for children, a documentary, live worldwide shows, and an app suite, available on Apple's iPhone and iPad. The project was inspired by her reading of science books, musicology and cultural theory. Tackling a spectrum of themes including dark matter, plate tectonics, mineralogy, genetics, viruses, and human biorhythm, Björk utilises intermingling frames and equivalent musical triggers to convey a complex systems ecology. She deploys, for instance, microbiology on the track, 'Virus', and astronomy on 'Cosmogony'. Correspondingly, she mixes genres, from choral sound to drum 'n' bass, even commissioning the manufacture of invented or archaic instruments to convey such complex ideas e.g. gravity harps, controlled by an ipad, are deployed on the bassline of 'Solstice' to encapsulate the energy processes described by physics. Drawing this together, on 'Crystalline', for example, a blend of avant-garde electronic music and allusions to her native Iceland's inhospitable volcanic environment triggers a framing of nature as strange, discordant, but resilient and loveable. A precarious balance in which humankind struggles but also thrives in such a condition is driven home when the song explodes into the generically recognisable sound of jungle, the last music you'd expect to hear conveying kinship with nature!

While an array of frames and triggers conveys the near incomprehensible mesh in which humans co-exist and co-evolve with nonhuman nature, Björk also employs the same central thematic frame as British Sea Power: romance. It's implied, of course, in the knowingly deployed title: *Biophilia* – E.O. Wilson's notion that our evolutionary instinct for survival has meant we are genetically programmed to 'love' other forms of nature. In fact, on 'Thunderbolt' Björk describes the romantic gene as her 'dominant gene' hungering for 'union' and a 'universal intimacy/all embracing'. Yet the album's conception of biophilia as a romantic relationship is more complicated than that. In *The Progress of Romance: The Politics of Popular Fiction* Jean Radford suggested that, while 'generic forms are […] signals in a social contract between writers and readers,

changes in these conventions will be regulated by transformations at other levels of social relationships' (1986: 9). As we have seen, this works in reverse too. Changes in generic conventions trigger new framings that, themselves, might prefigure altered social relationships. Central to *Biophilia* is not the easy closure of happily requited romance but a framing of love relationships – whether with nature or other people – as an interplay of harmony and the non-alignments, misunderstandings, quarrels, and 'disequilibrium', which characterise such relationships. The track 'Mutual Core' emphasises a constant discordance – 'strife' and perpetual resistance – in which equilibrium can seemingly only be reached when one self defers to another. The harmony of a mutual core on Earth is as impossible amongst ever shifting 'tectonic plates' as is the harmony of love against the vicissitudes of relationships. Yet, on 'Solstice', where the earth is compared directly to the heart – both travel along oblique, elliptical paths, invariably in darkness – there is, nevertheless, a recurrent flickering, an acceptance that we subsist by a mutual exchange of 'light' with others. By framing these interacting musical and thematic triggers into the fundamental 'discordant harmony' of both human and ecological interrelationship, Björk, a major global popular artist, achieves the not inconsiderable task of channelling complex systems ecology into a comprehensible and accessible frame. Her frame emphasises both that we must exist now, somehow, in a bewildering posthuman condition of dual affinity with/estrangement from other species, and how essential 'love' is to work through that process.

Conclusion – reading the romance in green popular culture

Given a variety of perspectives and often loose application of terms, there is a danger that frames and framing can easily become meaningless concepts. Yet, it seems self-evident that both British Sea Power and Björk knowingly deploy frames. In their critique of 'The State of Framing Research' in political communication Scheufele and Iyengar make two key points: that an 'emphasis' model of framing, which falls too readily into older hypodermic theories of media effect, has prevailed over an 'equivalence' model. The latter stresses that the

same information can be presented across a variety of different frames and examines the 'interplay of complementary or competing frames' not least the possibility that creative re-framing can allow in dissent and, potentially, shift public understanding (2011,5). Secondly, they argue that this preoccupation with 'emphasis' in framing research (how meaning is engendered by the frame) has been at the expense of understanding how frames themselves operate: 'Unfortunately, many political communication researchers have been studying paintings rather than frames over the last two decades' (2011, 19-20). Yet central to understanding how the music of these two artists might support the fundamental need to reset how we think about ecological interrelationship is their dextrous use of diverse, miscellaneous musical triggers. These bend and stretch the romantic frame, thus potentially nurturing ecological frames in their listeners' heads.

They are not alone, for romance is not an entirely unfamiliar frame in green popular culture. Attesting to the ideological framing that Willoquet-Maricondi critiques in mainstream environmentalist cinema, *The Day After Tomorrow* closes with a budding romance between Sam (Jake Gyllenhaal) – the son of the film's hero Jack Hall (Dennis Quaid) – and his schoolmate Laura (Emmy Rossum). That statement of faith in the future underwrites the film's central message that capitalism can continue if it can be more mindful of its ecological impact. Yet other popular cultural texts, around the world, distort the conventional romantic frame and highlight the compromises, vagaries, difficulty of ecological interrelationship, with other people, other species, or the earth. In the British soap opera *Coronation Street* – which represents prosaic everyday life in northern, working-class England – a romance between an eco-activist and one of the show's regular female characters breaks down, tacitly acknowledging the inability, for now, of radical environmentalist beliefs to fit 'everyday life'. In the musical *Wicked!* the relationship between Elphaba, the putative 'Wicked Witch of the West', and Fiyero, her beau, fails to develop because their values – which include collapsing the boundaries between humans and animals – are incompatible with those of the 'Land of Oz'. Each of these examples – and others, like the doomed or unconsummated romances of, respectively, the UK-Canadian

TV drama *Burn Up* and the Studio Ghibli film *Only Yesterday* (see Parham 2016: 89-90, 257) – demonstrates a point that Anthony Lioi makes concerning another Ghibli film *Laputa: Castle in the Sky*. At the end of the film the eponymous floating, paradise island, almost destroyed as a result of human resource conflicts, ascends even further from the Earth. Accordingly, Lioi views a parallel between humans' inability to value Laputa and the inconclusive romance of the film's central characters, Sheeta and Pazu, as offering a central message, one shared by all these texts: for now, 'Ecotopia lives on, but not for us' (2010, para 12).

In green popular culture's knowing subversion, manipulation, and stretching of frames we find narratives that transmit the complexities of ecology. These can nurture the biophilic schema by which we'll begin to cherish our human ecology or, alternatively, generate fractured frames that starkly dramatise a state of disrepair in humans' ecological relationship with the nonhuman. Strategic framing may explain how the *facts* around environmental issues can be simplified in the interests of environmental communication. Yet it's an elastic popular culture that is most suitably adapted to engendering new environmental narratives for a mass audience, deeper-level stories that might inform how we live ecologically and which might convey the contradictions, compromises, and leaps of faith involved.

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