



The Green Border between Monster and Human illustrated in *Maleficent* (2014) and *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil* (2019)

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Abstract

Borders cannot be avoided and will always be present in everyday life. Border issues may vary, starting from politics, geography, socio-economics, culture, and nature. Not to mention, much literature and films expose border issues as the main themes. *Maleficent* (2014) and *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil* (2019) depict the division between humans and nature, with humans representing the kingdom and the Moorland creatures as nature. This research employed a qualitative descriptive method with a thematic approach to identify and explore the main ideas underlying the films. This research found that the films highlight human behaviors like envy, lust, greed, and craftiness, while fairies are marginalized. Understanding and trust are needed to overcome border conflict, as seen in Phillip and Aurora's wedding. This article contributes to ecosystem preservation and future research in ecocriticism and border issues. However, since this article only focuses on the ecological and border issues, any other issues are ruled out.

Keywords: border studies, maleficent, human, nature, monster



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Introduction

The action of bordering is common in everyday life. Even those that don't seem to show differences turn out to have invisible barriers that differentiate them. They are complex, multidimensional, and multidisciplinary structures and procedures that span administrative, geopolitical, cultural, economic, and social domains (Donnan & Wilson 1999; Newman 2003; Paasi 2005; Popescu 2012; Scott 2012; Van Houtum 2011; Wilson & Donnan 2012a, 2012b; Haselsberger 2014). The complexity of borders then creates various kinds of borders.

Geographers generally view a border or boundary as a linear feature separating political, social, and economic spaces (Bourdieu 1993; Newman 2006). According to social interactions or cultural content, Borders create several partitions within geographic space (Rumley & Minghi 1991). Borders can be identified in different kinds of linear features, for example, natural borders, artificial physical borders, and administrative borders. Natural borders can be mountain ranges or water bodies that separate cities or even countries. Meanwhile, artificial physical borders are roads or railways that humans built but later used as border marks. Administrative borders then include country frontiers or city boundaries (Jin et al. 2021).

According to scholars, borders serve as both separation lines between geographic spaces and spacious contexts for social interaction between social groups and entities (Emirbayer 1997; Newman 2006; Somers 1994). In addition, Batty (2013) suggests that flow and network are important aspects in order to understand urban space. Researchers are inspired by these border theories to explore the geographic borders formed by human activity from spatial interaction flows, and further compare them with administrative borders (Ratti et al. 2010; Shen & Batty 2018; Sobolevsky et al. 2013; Thiemann, Theis, Grady, Brune, & Brockmann 2010).

However, the discussion about borders continues. The discussion above tends to be anthropocentric, where humans are the pole of border dynamics. Eduardo Kohn, an American anthropologist, criticizes modern sociocultural anthropology for considering human characteristics such as language, culture, society, and history and utilizing them as instruments to comprehend people. E. Kohn proposes undertaking thorough research of nonhuman entities, referring to his method as "anthropology beyond the human". The primary objective of his approach is to appreciate that humans are also the product of things that lie outside human contexts (Kohn 2013). Kohn attempts to consider human language and its connections to other forms of representation that we share with nonhuman entities. He shows how language becomes (iconic and indexical) signs for nonhuman entities, which are

not symbolic¹. According to Kohn, life and thought are fundamentally the same thing, and all beings are constitutively semiotic. In this particular case, it is no longer possible to identify man as the sole language carrier in the natural world. Although the human language is symbolic, there are other language tools along with its other possibilities (Spirova 2019).

Hence, the correlation between humans and nature creates a so-called green border. This border was built by the general understanding of human nature, which tends to destroy nature, making a clear distinction that humans are destroyers, whereas nature is the purest form of being despite its actual non-being form. According to Weston (2022), it took ancient humans thousands of years to wipe out species, whereas it would only take decades for modern humans. In the modern day, we are not just killing species but obliterating entire landscapes in a matter of years. Farming is the main cause of destruction, and 96% of all mammals on Earth are livestock or humans. Based on UN estimates, up to one million plant and animal species are in danger of going extinct. This brings the discussion of humans and nature to an urgent level.

The problem of the green border could also appear in movies such as Disney's. Disney as one of the world's largest and most influential movie production companies, often has a special connection with children and families, using the concept of fairy tales to make their targets more immersed in the imaginative story. Its story revolves around a climax and a resolution that gives the connoisseur a moral lesson. Also, it is not uncommon for their film adaptations to make side characters, or even villainous characters, stand out (Ohmer 2023). That's how Disney expand their reach even further. Examples of Disney movie adaptations that bring the villain's life into the main story are *Cruella* and *Maleficent*². They bring a different point of view from the main story.

Maleficent movies focus on retelling the story of "Sleeping Beauty" through the perspective of the evil character, Maleficent. The story of *Maleficent* brings many new insights that were previously unimaginable to its enjoyers. It focuses on how the villain that people know is not born evil, but is made by society itself. Maleficent is a dark fey, a subspecies of Fairy, that has a job to protect the Moorlands. Her faith was destroyed by a man when she was young, making her hate humans and isolate herself from them (*Maleficent* 2014). It turns out that the man who deceived her

1 Charles S. Pierce classify sign into three different terms: iconic, index, and symbol. Like a picture, iconic signs are similar to their subject; the interpreter is the mind understanding the sign. For instance, a red book, 'red' here refers to the color of the book. Meanwhile, indexical signs—such as the use of smoke to signal a fire—have a clear, causal connection. Lastly, symbolic signs have a taught, arbitrary relationship, such as how some cultures loathe the number 4. From inherent similarity to cultural agreement, these concepts describe how meaning is created. (Burks 1494: 673-675)

2 *Cruella* (Craig Gillespie 2021) trace the evolving narratives of *101 Dalmatians*, while, Robert Stromberg's (2014) *Maleficent* expand the view of *Sleeping Beauty* tale.

was a prince, and he needed to cut off Maleficent's wings in order to be the next king of his kingdom. However, fast forward to the second movie, *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil* (2019), and Maleficent's trust towards humans is healed by her relationship with Aurora. Maleficent became the fairy godmother of Aurora and lived with her in the Moors. The peace of their lives did not last long, since eventually, Aurora fell in love with a prince from another kingdom and wanted to get married soon. From here, the conflict between natural beings and human beings is exposed and illustrated clearly, especially when Maleficent meets other dark feys who have been living in the shadows, hiding from humans who hunt them.

Previous studies have conducted research that focuses on analyzing the Maleficent movies. Arora & Yadav (2020), in their research, use ecofeminism theory to analyze how Maleficent and the Moors represent Mother Nature, which stands against humans who tend to destroy them. The destructive nature of humans is illustrated by how King Stefan robs Maleficent's wings and King Henry's ambition to exterminate the Moorlands. Such an act comes with consequences, in which Maleficent punishes them. The application of ecofeminism and Gaia to Maleficent is sufficient to support the idea that human betrayal of the natural world and patriarchy toward women have always had repercussions. Fadiyah et al. (2023), who in their research used the same concept and had similar findings to Arora & Yadav, further emphasized that Maleficent is a representation of Mother Earth, who looks after the natural world as well as the symbolization of genuine love between a mother and her child, not even sexual love between a man and a female character. Fadiyah reaffirmed that the examined environmental criticism underscores the importance of coexistence between humans and nature, as they share the Earth as one. Raheemah & Alhelal (2024), who also use the ecocriticism concept in analyzing the Maleficent movie, stated that the movie's depiction of nature serves as a catalyst for criticism of the patriarchal control over women and their environment. The connection that unites Maleficent and Aurora conveys a message about how nature provides for human needs as well as how we should serve as stewards of the planet for the next generations. Through the lenses of ecofeminism and the Anthropocene, which take into account the intricate relationships between power, nature, and mankind, Maleficent embodies the politics of much more recent environmental movements focused on preserving and sustaining the ecologies. Their findings highlight the movie's message, which is the urgency of harmony between nature and humanity as a prerequisite for restoring a healthy ecological relationship during environmental emergencies. To further enhance the discussion about humans and nature in the Maleficent movies, the researcher aims to build upon and expand previous studies by incorporating a border studies perspective into the ecocriticism discussion, while setting aside anthropocentric approaches that tend to dominate border studies discussions.

The border issue between humans and nature that is shown in the movie's theme led the researcher to conduct this research, which somewhat ruled out anthropocentrism and embraced nature. This study primarily focused on utilizing the geographical aspect presented in the artificial world within the movie as the main disciplinary field, as the borders between human and non-human creatures were highlighted by the wall of thrones and the river that separates them. Those examples of borders presented in the movies represent what Rumley and Minghi (1991) called natural borders and artificial physical borders. Analyzing Maleficent movies using both borders and ecological perspectives can give information about the symbolization presented in the movies. This research aims to explore how the different depictions of Moorland and human kingdoms create the green border that separates the two, and how the border provides a symbolization of the illustration of humans and nature.

Method

This research used the qualitative descriptive method with a thematic approach. The thematic approach in film analysis focuses on identifying and exploring the themes or main ideas underlying a film (Yilmaz & Demir 2021). Themes often include universal concepts, moral values, or social criticism that the film was intended to convey to the audience. Thus, this approach helps reveal the underlying messages behind the story, characters, and visual elements associated with border issues illustrated in the Maleficent movies. The primary source of this research comes from *Maleficent* (2014) and *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil* (2019). The research data consisted of dialogues gathered from both films, which illustrate each border represented by both human and supernatural beings. Meanwhile, books and articles from national and international journals that relate to the discussion of the research serve as secondary sources. That includes a book or article that discusses the border issue, theories of border studies, and statements from books or articles that support the researcher's arguments.

Meanwhile, for the analysis method, the researcher used the model from Miles and Huberman (1994) by dividing the analysis process into three stages: Data Reduction, Data Display, and Conclusion Drawing & Verification. Data reduction involves filtering data from specific categories, integrating it with existing research, and eliminating data deemed irrelevant. Data display is a stage in organizing data to facilitate easier interpretation. Drawing conclusions and verification is the final step in the analysis. This stage includes interpretation, highlighting bias, and evaluating the results.

Result and Discussion

Green Border in Maleficent (2014) and Maleficent: Mistress of Evil (2019)

Maleficent (2014) is a film that reinterprets the classic children's tale Sleeping Beauty. It presents the story through a fresh lens, positioning Maleficent as the central heroine. The sequel, *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil* (2019), further explores the relationship between Maleficent and Aurora following their reconciliation. Alongside the theme of reimagining the Sleeping Beauty narrative, the film subtly addresses border studies through an environmental critique.

The tale of *Maleficent* starts by establishing the film's setting. Long ago, two kingdoms were in constant conflict: the moorlands, home to diverse fairy creatures, and the human kingdom ruled by a king. These two regions interpret two inversely proportional symbols.

“[Narrator narrates the setting of the story] Once upon a time there were two kingdoms that were the worst of neighbors. So vast was the discord between them that it was said only a great hero or a terrible villain might bring them together. In one kingdom lived folk like you and me with a vain and greedy king to rule over them. They were forever discontent and envious of the wealth and beauty of their neighbors. For in the other kingdom, the Moors lived every manner of strange and wonderful creature. And they needed neither king nor queen but trusted in one another.”

(*Maleficent*, 2014, 00:00:38 - 00:01:19)

From the quotation above, it is seen that the human kingdom is being illustrated as a bad place compared to the Moorlands. The narrator emphasizes the state of human life by labeling it using expressions such as greed and envy. Greed is a human trait that is often viewed negatively due to its potential to harm others and negatively impact society (Zeelenberg & Breugelmans 2022). The greed of humans makes them envious of one another, never feeling satisfied with what they already have. The depiction of human lives was far different from that of the Moors. The story of the Moorlands is full of love, peace, and happiness. All the fairy creatures live in harmony with each other as well as the environment. They do not look for trouble nor destroy the nature where they live; in fact, they are the guardians of nature itself. The difference between each depiction of humans and fairies also acts as a comparison between the human realm and nature. *Maleficent* (2014) and *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil* (2019) then displayed a border concept issues between humans and nature, where both contain opposite stereotypes and live in conflict.

The act of bordering between humans and nature does not stop there. The green border in the films was further illustrated by the romance story between Maleficent, the guard of the Moors, and Stefan, the human folk. Stefan was once a little boy who wandered off to the Moorlands and tried to bring back some treasures he found in the river near the border between the human realms and the Moorlands. His act triggers the defense mechanism of the Moorlands, summoning tree guardians that surround the little Stefan. As soon as the fairies told Maleficent there was an intruder, she rushed there to see the boy herself. She calmly told the boy to come out from his hideout and put the treasures he stole back in their original place. Both of them were very young and innocent. Little Maleficent's curiosity about humans is expressed through Stefan. Because they were the same age, they soon became good friends, playing and spending time together. That friendship soon evolved into feelings of mutual love. However, as time passes by, they grow in separate ways. Stefan, who could not resist the temptations of the human kingdom's life, chooses to live among the humans, pursuing his greed, leaving Maleficent in her homeland. During their separation, the conflict between the humans and the Moors continues to grow. The current king despised the fairies and wanted to take over the Moorlands.

“[Narrator] For the human king had heard of a growing power in the Moors, and he sought to strike it down. ‘Guards, hold! Guards, hold!’, [said the General]. [Then, King Henry shouted,] ‘There they are! The mysterious Moors where no one dares to venture for fear of the magical creatures that lurk within! Well, I say: Crush them!’”

(*Maleficent*, 2014, 00:09:35 - 00:13:47)

The humans who are afraid of the growing power of the Moors' entities, especially Maleficent, who became stronger day by day, start launching attacks on the Moors. The king orders the soldiers to attack Maleficent, who tried to warn them. He wanted to exterminate all fairies and take over the treasures that were buried in the Moorlands. The king's unreasonable reason for attacking the moorlands out of fear was not without foundation. Despite humans' greed for wealth, their fear of unknown entities encourages them to destroy the Moorlands even more. The fear of the unknown is also a human trait that is rooted within them. They are afraid of something that is out of their control. Just like how humans were afraid of natural disasters because it is unpredictable and deadly. Take another example of how humans share the same characteristic: fear of the darkness. Quoted from Emanuel & Abbiss (2017), Martin Antony, professor of psychology at Ryerson University in Toronto, stated that in the prehistoric past, people would have been more vulnerable to attacks by adversaries or predators while it was dark.

It is therefore no coincidence that humans have evolved a fear of darkness. The illustration of the king's fear of Moorlands in *Maleficent* (2014) further emphasizes how much humans are afraid of nature. The king's troops' unsuccessful attack drew them back. After the incident, Maleficent raises a wall of thorns that separates the two realms: the kingdom where humans belong and the moors, the homeland of fairies. The existence of these walls of thorns then represents and symbolizes the artificial physical borders, the so-called green border, bordering the human and nature entity in which they could not live in harmony. Not only that, the camera frame then brings the viewer flying away to see the moorlands turn from bright and colorful into a dark and gloomy area, initiating Maleficent's heart that is undergoing changes.

The sequel to *Maleficent* (2014), *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil* (2019), exposes the hidden truth of Maleficent's origins. After Maleficent was framed by Prince Phillip's Mother, Queen Ingrith, she was struck by an iron bullet and fell into the ocean. This event led Maleficent to meet her own kind, the dark fey camp that is far from the humans' hands. The wounded Maleficent, who is saved by her kind, is brought to the dark fey nest, their hiding place. Maleficent learned something new after meeting other dark feys.

“... [Conall argues Borra's statement], ‘Humans have used iron against us for centuries’. [Borra responded,] ‘And we are almost extinct because of it.’”

(*Maleficent: Mistress of Evil*, 2019, 00:43:05 - 00:43:10)

“We're all that remain. Unseen here, far away from mankind. ... As more human kingdoms emerged, we went into hiding... from every corner of the earth... doing what we had to, to survive. [Explain Conall while showing Maleficent the dark fey hideout]”

(*Maleficent: Mistress of Evil*, 2019, 00:47:19 - 00:47:35)

The dark fey that once lived happily across the world were expelled and forced to live in isolation due to the humans hunting them without stopping. They isolate themselves far from mankind as more kingdoms form, and eventually, they choose to hide. It turns out that the conflict between humans and fairies has existed for centuries, long before the conflict that occurred between Maleficent and the king. The iron bullet that pierced Maleficent is seen as a war ultimatum by one of the dark fey named Borra. It is Queen Ingrith's new invention that specializes in hurting the fairies. However, Conall suppressed Borra's provocation. Conall thinks that there is still a chance for humans and fairies to live together in harmony, and a war would not solve anything. However, Maleficent, who has experienced various

injuries, betrayals, and disappointments, knows well that this is impossible to happen. Not to mention how her bond with her goddaughter, Aurora, was cut by misunderstanding and lies that were thrown at her. The green border then expands even more after Maleficent knows how hard things are for her kind and the cruel things that Queen Ingrith has done. The greed of humans that is depicted in the characterization of Stefan and Queen Ingrith can be interpreted as an allegory for capitalism's desire to control and take advantage of nature for financial gain, ignoring its intrinsic worth (Jones 2018: 44; Raheemah & Alhelal 2024: 570 - 571).

The Depiction of Humanity and Nature

The illustrations of humans and natural creatures' characteristics differ in the *Maleficent* (2014) and *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil* (2019) films. This can be seen in various events throughout the films. The humans and the fairies have different personalities and beliefs within them. Those depictions then create a clearer depiction of how human figures are shaped in such a way in films, as well as how fairies have stereotypes that circulate among humans.

Human assumptions about the Moors' creatures have existed and formed a negative stereotype about them. Stereotypes are collections of opinions that people have about members of other groups; these opinions are typically expressed as categorizations. Usually, these ideas are oversimplified in comparison to the objective facts. For instance, a group of people is characterized by their physical characteristics, intelligence, and their personalities (Rinehart 1963: 137). In this case, the people of the human kingdom labeled the Moorlands' creatures as hideous and cold-blooded. This first showed in the first film *Maleficent* (2014), where Stefan was caught stealing jewels from the Moors River. He is hiding from the tree guardians, afraid of their looks that are 'hideous', even after Maleficent convinces him that it is okay to come out from his hiding spot and put the jewels back into the river (*Maleficent*, 2014, 00:04:05 - 00:04:06). The dreadful appearance of Moors' creatures such as sharp edges, bizarre body shape, fangs, dark shading, and also made giant or even very small, then made humans assume that they are brutal and evil. Stereotypes like this are very common among humans. Other examples are featured in the sequel, *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil* (2019).

“‘What do you have against Moor folk, Percival?’ [asked Prince Phillip].
‘Moor folk? Is that what we’re calling them now? ... Winged beasts,
murderous trees.’ [Percival responded]. ‘Guard your tongue, General’
[Phillip snapped]”.

(*Maleficent: Mistress of Evil*, 2019, 00:13:19 - 00:13:23)

The dialogue above shows how Percival, the general of Ulstead, like any other human, despises the Moorfolks, also known as the nature creatures. He even used terms such as 'murderous' and 'beasts' to refer to the Moorlands' inhabitants. His degrading action incurs Phillip's outrage and displeasure since the one he had just insulted was part of his fiancée's, Aurora, family. The stereotypical beliefs were then embedded deep into society, creating negative images of the fairies.

These malicious images of fairies also affect Maleficent's reputation. She is known for her evil deed that everyone remembers, cursing little Aurora with a wicked spell during her birth celebration. Even though in the end, she regrets her action, which she did at that time because she was overwhelmed by anger and a desire for revenge towards her ex-lover. Maleficent is also the one who broke her own curse, waking Aurora from her everlasting sleep. However, humans tend to overlook the good parts that she did, and they were buried and forgotten just like that. Everyone just highlights her wrongdoings, and the fact that she is a fairy just adds to the bad images of her. For instance, it can be seen from the human reaction towards Maleficent when she arrives at Ulstead to attend the dinner party, celebrating Aurora's engagement with Prince Phillip. The folks look at her as if she were the evilest being on earth, despite the fact that she is actually just a fairy trying to protect what is important to her. Everyone was running and hiding after encountering Maleficent, even children started screaming out of fear, and others thrust weapons such as pitchforks and torches towards her. The children's scream upon seeing Maleficent suggests that the perception of nature creatures as evil has been instilled in them since early childhood and passed down from generation to generation (*Maleficent: Mistress of Evil*, 2019, 00:23:44 - 00:23:50). Yet, are humans actually better beings than the Moors' creatures? Or are they actually more foul than other creatures?

This is where the discussion becomes more serious by discussing the depiction of human behavior towards nature as shown in both films. The illustration of human characters that were highlighted in this film focuses on two antagonistic characters: King Stefan and Queen Ingrith.

King Stefan has proved his evildoings throughout the first movie, showing greed, cunning, egoistic, and ruthless behaviors. He left Maleficent in their teenage years to pursue his lust for wealth and the pleasures of the human world. As if it were not enough, he came back to Maleficent with an alibi to apologize for his behavior and warn her of the danger that was about to befall her. But in fact, he just drugged the wine he gave to Maleficent so that he could cut her wings and offer it to the king. Soon, all his worldly desires were right on his fingertips, entitled as the new King, married the king's daughter, and the wealth and life he longed for long ago (*Maleficent* 2014).

As for Queen Ingrith, the queen of Ulstead, she shows even more vile things

to the creatures of the Moorlands. Queen Ingrith, Prince Phillip's mother, once met Aurora during a dinner party, sneezed, and said to Aurora that she was allergic to flowers, or did she? (*Maleficent: Mistress of Evil*, 2019, 00:25:28 - 00:25:35). If it is observed deeply, it seems that her allergies actually have a connotation that shows her hatred for things related to nature, like fairies. The queen's dislike of natural creatures is shown sarcastically throughout the film. She even pretended not to know that Maleficent could not touch iron since iron is a fairy's weakness. Queen Ingrith deliberately gave Maleficent iron cutlery as if she clearly wanted to declare that she knew Maleficent's biggest infirmity. Queen Ingrith's goal was defined more after her worker creates poison that can kill fairies, "Finally, the Moors will be mine. No more fairies," [said the Queen while holding the dead fairy] (*Maleficent: Mistress of Evil*, 2019, 01:01:11 - 01:01:16). Her hatred towards nature entities was proven at this point, she wanted to take over the Moors and eradicate all fairies there, highlighting the point that human tends to destroy nature.

"This is where we bury our dead. They've destroyed it," [as Maleficent arrives, the tomb blooms have all been taken away]. 'This is what the humans do. They're nothing but locusts that swarm the earth.' [Borra added]."

(*Maleficent: Mistress of Evil*, 2019, 01:03:57 - 01:04:12)

The soldiers, ordered by the queen, pluck all the tomb bloom flowers, representing the act of destroying nature. Borra, who follows Maleficent to the tomb site, added that destruction is what humans do. Borra draws attention to the phenomenon of overconsumption and the harm humans cause to crops and the environment by comparing humanity to locusts. This metaphor highlights the serious environmental destruction caused by human avarice. The anthropocentric mindset of mankind, which puts our demands ahead of those of other animals and ecosystems, is criticized in the conversation. Furthermore, the burial site's degradation demonstrates a lack of respect for the interdependence of all living things. The border between humans and nature was built by these illustrations, making a clear distinction that humans are destroyers, whereas nature is only maintaining and protecting what exists, living in harmony with the surroundings. According to Weston (2022), ancient humans took thousands of years to wipe out species, whereas modern humans would take only decades. In the modern day, we are not just killing species but obliterating entire landscapes in a matter of years. Farming is the main cause of destruction, and 96% of all mammals on Earth are livestock or humans. According to UN estimates, up to one million plant and animal species are at risk of extinction. This fact enhances the illustration that Rønning (2019) wants to emphasize: the continuous struggle between the

creatures of the Moorlands, who represent nature, and humans who symbolize colonization and industrialization. The tomb's demolition serves as a metaphor for the broader issue of human encroachment into natural areas, which leads to the loss of ecological balance, biodiversity, and cultural heritage.

Despite the Moorfolks' appearance, it is not what Stefan did that was more evil than the natural entities' appearance? Or the queen of Ulstead's actions that poisoned her own husband, kidnapped fairies and turned them into guinea pigs, as well as created weapons to exterminate the fairies, are far more heartless and cruel? The stereotype of the Moors' creatures exists among the people and continues to haunt them. It is human nature to always be afraid of something outside one's control, especially nature. Also, it is their instinct that led them to destroy Mother Nature with an alibi 'for survival'. This ultimately strengthens the depiction of nature as represented by the fairies and the kingdom inhabitants, which represents mankind as they have been depicted for centuries. Humans are destructive and greedy, whereas nature is caring and wise. Nature is not self-sufficient and coexists with other living creatures. Nature itself even encompasses all living creatures. Without any interference, nature is supposed to be natural (Bergthaller 2020; Eissa 2020). Whereas humans will always try to destroy nature, as implicitly shown in Stromberg (2014) and Rønning's (2019) movies. The downfall of those greedy humans was given directly by nature itself, which Maleficent represents (Arora & Yadav 2020; Fadiyah, Wulandari, Pujimahanani, & Pasopati 2023; Raheemah & Alhelal 2024). King Stefan died as a victim of his own unrelenting desire for power and revenge, and Queen Ingrith's authority was taken from her as she was turned into a goat by Maleficent. Dickerson and Evans (2006: 167) emphasize that "the green world archetype" illustrates nature's dual role as both nurturing and destructive, mirroring humanity's connection with the environment. The ones who respect and recognize this equilibrium thrive, while those who try to overwhelm it eventually fail.

The Law, The Monsters, and Nature

One of the pivotal moments in Maleficent's first encounter with Diaval was when Diaval was about to be beaten after being caught by a human farmer. Maleficent intervened by transforming Diaval into a human right before the farmer's eyes. Seeing something so out of the ordinary, the farmer fled in fear, labeling Diaval a 'demon'. This scene illustrates how humans perceive a thing or being that is considered unnatural as the devil's incarnation or a monstrous being. Thus, talking about moorfolk who are feared by humans brings the discussion into a specific area about the meaning of monsters and their relationship to law and nature.

Humans instinctively view monsters as physical threats, seeing each one as

an abnormality (Benedetti 2020: 1). The word monster itself is generally defined as a large imaginary creature, a malformed animal or plant, a person with an unnaturally repulsive character, or a marvel (Oxford English Dictionary 2020). However, these prevalent definitions clashed with Mary Shelley's depiction of 'monster'. Monster is often associated with the classic monster figure in Mary Shelley's creation, *Frankenstein* (2018). *Frankenstein* in the modern era is often characterized by its square head, green skin, and a set of different body parts sewn together, showing horror and terror. However, the conceptualization of 'monster' that Mary Shelley wanted to convey differs from the image of Modern *Frankenstein*. Shelley's *Frankenstein*, despite its uncanny and grotesque appearance, shows human characteristics within its narrative. It is completely inverse proportional to its creator, Victor, who embarked on his research that is against moral values. The true 'monster' in Shelley's work is more precisely directed towards Victor. People tend to "judge the book by its cover," revealing human nature that immediately assumes the unnatural and hideous form of a being or thing as a monster. Meanwhile, the real evil-doers, in this case Victor, despite having a human embodiment that people respect, have tendencies to do cruel things against moral values. As Baldick (2011) notes in his book, monsters in classical mythology often have disjointed parts, sometimes taken from different creatures and combined together. For instance, centaurs, satyrs, the Minotaur, and the Sphinx. This physical deviance from human categories makes the monster seem otherworldly, raising questions about its objective, derivation, and meaning. Not to mention that, according to Baldick, in Shakespeare and other texts, humans portrayed as 'monsters' break the natural bonds of duty to friends and family, acting without concern for those close to them. By portraying monsters as those who defy societal norms, the monstrous becomes a creature not just abnormal in appearance but also in behavior.

Thus, the connection between monster and law appears in how the real 'monster' takes advantage of the law to be used against the monster. The Moorfolk, that is marginalized, are seen as monsters by the civilians throughout the movies. For instance, during Philip and Percival's conversation after Philip proposes to Aurora, or at the beginning of the first movie, when the young Stevaun refers to the tree guard as hideous. These stereotypes then created an unwritten law among humans, making them stay alert and stay away from the Moor's creatures. Those unspoken laws also refer to the social norms that everyone understands, dictate what people should or shouldn't do, and encourage them to take actions that are costly to them personally but good for society as a whole (Andrighetto 2024: 1). However, this does not rule out the possibility that the unwritten law and the stereotypes is created and formed by the party who hold the power over society. A cold war based on power struggles and personal grudges enveloped the hearts of the kings (King Henry's ambition, which soon passed on to King Stefan) and

the queen (Queen Ingrith), who wanted to conquer Moorland. In addition to fear of the unfamiliar, the unknown land that stores abundant treasure and natural resources also contributed to this quarrel. The misuse of power and law can be seen from two events. First, when King Stefan ordered everyone to burn every spinning wheel and prohibited its existence for the safety of his daughter. He also uses his authority to exploit natural resources, producing a large amount of iron weaponry to defeat Maleficent. The second was Queen Ingrith's attempt to exterminate every fairy from the Moorlands. Like Stefan, she used her sovereignty to conduct illegal research and produce plentiful iron equipment. Not only that, she also ordered her army to pick the tomb bloom flower (this can also be considered a natural resource) for a bomb that can destroy the fairies. Those actions then highlight how the real 'monster' is using law against nature, exploiting and destroying the natural environment.

The anthropocentric mindset of mankind, which puts human demands ahead of those of other animals and ecosystems, is presented and criticized throughout the movies. Thus, making the horror from the 'monster' depiction an artistic reflection of contemporary societal anxieties (Godin 2022: 117). The Anthropocene acts just like a double-edged sword; it can both give positive and negative effects on the Earth. If the Industrial Revolution marked the start of the Anthropocene, it's ironic that now, losing control of the thing humans have done marks its decline. Despite the desire to dominate Earth, humans find themselves unable to live in the world created by this pursuit. Most importantly, the 'monsters' that embody social anxieties (Hellstrand et al. 2018: 144). The term, from Latin *monstrum* meaning 'to warn,' reflects their role as messages. Horror frameworks have evolved, harnessing societal worries to evoke fear (Stryker 1994: 247; Grant 2010: 1). In this way, gothic horror and the Anthropocene are twin products of the same anxieties and era (Godin 2022: 118).

The Process of Blurring Borders

Stromberg's (2014) and Rønning's (2019) movies ended with the same pattern. Stromberg ended his movie with Aurora finally crowned as the Moorlands' Queen, bringing joy and peace among the Moorfolks (*Maleficent*, 2014, 01:27:05 - 01:27:13). Because of her dual identities, Aurora is able to act as a mediator and comprehend the viewpoints of each side, promoting tolerance and cooperation in areas where there was prior confrontation. She transforms into an actual representation of harmony, signifying the blending of magical and human worlds and the dismantling of the boundaries between them. In addition, the sequel also portrayed how Aurora, Prince Phillip, and the king of Ulstead wanted to end the eternal disconnection between the humans and the Moorland creatures. The film

ended with Rønning featuring the happy ending by uniting the two kingdoms with the wedding of Aurora and Prince Phillip as a symbol of peace (*Maleficent: Mistress of Evil*, 2019, 00:14:57).

The assumption that love and peace between species are not only desired by the open-hearted human characters but also the fairies who have long been marginalized and live in hiding far from humans, “‘Maybe we don’t have to hide from the humans. Maybe we can exist without fear... and war. Find a way together.’ [Conall said his hope to Maleficent].” (*Maleficent: Mistress of Evil*, 2019, 00:49:21 - 00:49:30). Conall, the dark fey who rescues Maleficent, want to live in harmony with human just like Aurora, the king of Ulstead, and Prince Phillip’s was hoping. Even the fairies who have long felt discrimination and human cruelty still have sympathy and empathy for humans and want to live together side by side with each other without being haunted by fear, without war.

The green border that separates both entities does not exist without solutions. Humans are undoubtedly responsible for irresponsible exploitation, but they also have an enormous role in how nature is being cared for and maintained. They have the ability to repair the damaged environmental component (Kamboj et al. 2022: 3). Under circumstances of environmental crisis, *Maleficent* (2014) and *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil* (2019) films present a vision of reconciliation as a state of equilibrium between humans and nature, which is necessary to restore an ecologically sound connection between them (Raheemah & Alhelal 2024). The human efforts to restore damaged nature were represented by the warmth of a living being’s heart, which brings both humans and nature together, as seen in Phillip and Aurora’s success in unifying their kingdom. Cooperation and harmony between humans and nature are crucial for living in coexistence, as each has its own unique role in life. According to a theory proposed by Paul R. Ehrlich and his wife, Anne H. Ehrlich (1981), each species is aptly compared to an airplane’s rivets, which serve as a metaphor for ecosystems. The gradual loss of the rivets represents the gradual loss of species, after which the ecological system and the plane additionally deteriorate and collapse. This hypothesis also applies to the human-nature relation, where in the context of the films, humans would not be able to live without nature as their life support. Thus, making them have to preserve nature and avoid over-exploitation of nature. If nature is annihilated, then life will be destroyed since the most important component of life will be lost. The peaceful coexistence of humans and nature depends on symbiosis, which, if not practiced properly, is dangerous for all living things (Arora & Yadav 2020). The attempt to connect Anthropocene and horror opens up discussion about how fictional stories can shed light on the world’s current realities, highlight the impact of absences, and explore the emotions they evoke (Godin 2022: 123). Through the examination of the concept of monstrosity, the uncertain, the incomprehensible, and the

unknown—that is, to coexist with the unfamiliar, appear to be more acceptable and make sense. The idea of the ‘monster’ gives us a historical perspective on how to think about, discuss, and interact with what seems impossible. Thus, after finding a way to live side by side, the border between the humans and the Moorfolks has now been scraped off, and there will be no more conflicts. Humans and fairies can finally live in harmony. The war ends, and the hatred ends as well. The environment in which the thick border has thinned is shown in the film, where at the end of the film, the dark fey helps humans who fell and supports them to stand (*Maleficent: Mistress of Evil*, 2019, 01:41:21 - 01:41:30). The border now becomes blurry, and they live happily on the same earth, the union of two kinds.

Conclusion

Maleficent (2014) and *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil* (2019) portray how the division that occurs between humans and nature creates the green border. The humans were represented by the people living in the kingdom region, and the Moorlands creature, including the dark fey, symbolizes nature. The bad behaviors of mankind are highlighted by Stromberg and Rønning: envy, lust, greed, and craftiness. Whereas the fairies were marginalized due to their appearance and odd existence, even though they did not seek any trouble, and only wanted to live in harmony with each other. In order to overcome the border conflict, understanding and trust between species are highly needed. This was achieved in the sequel, as seen during Phillip and Aurora’s wedding, which indicated the union of their kingdom.

This article provides an understanding using ecocritical and border studies concepts in analyzing Stromberg and Rønning’s films. The researcher hoped that this article could contribute to ecosystem preservation by providing awareness of the importance of nature. Furthermore, this article also offers data and arguments for future studies that are interested in conducting research in ecocriticism and border issues.

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