

University of Pardubice
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

Environmental Issues in Nevada Barr's Crime Fiction
Bachelor Thesis

Univerzita Pardubice
Fakulta filozofická
Akademický rok: 2023/2024

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(projektu, uměleckého díla, uměleckého výkonu)

Jméno a příjmení: **Šárka Pohořálková**
Osobní číslo: **H22077**
Studijní program: **B0231A090018 Anglický jazyk**
Specializace: **Anglický jazyk pro odbornou praxi**
Téma práce: **Environmental Issues in Nevada Barr's Crime Fiction**
Zadávající katedra: **Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky**

Zásady pro vypracování

Bakalářská práce se bude věnovat populárnímu žánru detektivky, konkrétně tvorbě americké spisovatelky Nevady Barr(ové). Z její série o Anně Pigeon(ové) si studentka zvolí několik románů, v nichž bude analyzovat, jak jsou do detektivního žánru zakomponována environmentální témata. V úvodu práce nejprve studentka charakterizuje detektivní žánr (crime fiction), stručně představí zvolenou autorku a zařadí ji do literárního kontextu. Jádrem práce pak bude analýza a komparace zvolených děl. V práci se studentka bude opírat o relevantní kritické zdroje a své tvrzení doloží ukázkami z primárních textů.

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:
Rozsah grafických prací:
Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**
Jazyk zpracování: **Angličtina**

Seznam doporučené literatury:

selected novels from the Anna Pigeon series by Nevada Barr
Bertens, Hans and Theo D'haen. *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2001.
Bubíková, Šárka and Olga Roebuck. *The Place It Was Done. Location and Community in Contemporary American and British Crime Fiction*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2023.
Bubíková, Šárka. "Wilderness in Nevada Barr's and Dana Stabenow's Crime Fiction." In *Places and Spaces of Crime in Popular Imagination*. Ed. by Bubíková, Šárka and Olga Roebuck, 95–108. Krakow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2021.
Danielsson, Karin Molander. "Ecology, Capability and Companion Species: Conflicting Ethics in Nevada Barr's *Blood Lure*." *Animals in Detective Fiction*, edited by R. Hawthorn and J. Miller, Springer International Publishing, 2022, pp. 105-125.
King, Stewart. "Crime Fiction and the Environmental Imagination of Place." *Journal of Popular Culture* 54.6 (2021): 1235-1253.
Knight, Stephen. *Crime Fiction since 1800*. 2nd edition. 2004. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
Pepper, Andrew. *The Contemporary American Crime Novel: Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Class*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000.
Scaggs, John. *Crime fiction*. London and New York: Routledge, 2005.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **doc. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D.**
Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **7. května 2024**
Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **7. května 2025**

doc. Mgr. Jiří Kubeš, Ph.D.
děkan

Mgr. Olga Roebuck, Ph.D.
vedoucí katedry

Prohlašuji:

Práci s názvem Environmental Issues in Nevada Barr's Crime Fiction jsem vypracovala samostatně. Veškeré literární prameny a informace, které jsem v práci využil/a, jsou uvedeny v seznamu použité literatury.

Byl/a jsem seznámen s tím, že se na moji práci vztahují práva a povinnosti vyplývající ze zákona č. 121/2000 Sb., o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon), ve znění pozdějších předpisů, zejména se skutečností, že Univerzita Pardubice má právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití této práce jako školního díla podle § 60 odst. 1 autorského zákona, a s tím, že pokud dojde k užití této práce mnou nebo bude poskytnuta licence o užití jinému subjektu, je Univerzita Pardubice oprávněna ode mne požadovat přiměřený příspěvek na úhradu nákladů, které na vytvoření díla vynaložila, a to podle okolností až do jejich skutečné výše.

Beru na vědomí, že v souladu s § 47b zákona č. 111/1998 Sb., o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších předpisů, a směrnicí Univerzity Pardubice č. 7/2019 Pravidla pro odevzdávání, zveřejňování a formální úpravu závěrečných prací, ve znění pozdějších dodatků, bude práce zveřejněna prostřednictvím Digitální knihovny Univerzity Pardubice.

V Pardubicích dne

Šárka Pohořálková v. r.

ANNOTATION

This bachelor thesis explores the depiction of the environment and environmental issues in the detective fiction of the American author Nevada Barr. The thesis describes the genre of crime fiction and the literary discipline of ecocriticism, explores the understanding of what wilderness is, and further analyses and compares the novels *Track of the Cat* and *Ill Wind*, primarily based on the findings from the previous chapters.

KEYWORDS

Environmental writing, crime fiction, national parks, wilderness, ecocriticism, Nevada Barr

NÁZEV

Environmentální problematika v detektivní fikci Nevady Barr

ANOTACE

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá vyobrazením životního prostředí a environmentální problematiky v detektivní fikci americké autorky Nevady Barr. Práce popisuje detektivní fikci jako žánr, literární disciplínu ekokritiky a zvažuje chápání pojmu divočina. Dále analyzuje a porovnává romány *Track of the Cat* a *Ill Wind*, primárně na základě nálezů vyvozených z předešlých kapitol.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Environmentální literatura, detektivní fikce, národní parky, divočina, ekokritika, Nevada Barr

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	7
1. Environmental Crime Writing	9
2. Literary Context of the Work of Nevada Barr	25
3. The Characters of the Anna Pigeon Series.....	28
4. Environment in Nevada Barr's <i>Track of the Cat</i> and <i>Ill Wind</i>	34
5. Crime and the Environment in Nevada Barr's <i>Track of the Cat</i> and <i>Ill Wind</i>	40
Conclusion	47
Resumé.....	49
Bibliography	52

Introduction

Nevada Barr is an American author whose work is regarded as a prime example of environmental crime writing. Barr made her debut in 1993 with her award-winning novel *Track of the Cat*, a book that marks the beginning of her famous series of novels, starring her protagonist, Anna Pigeon. Through Anna, a park ranger, Barr offers a new and fresh view on the wildlife from the setting of national parks in the United States. Each novel from the series takes place in a different national park or natural reserve across the US. This thesis analyses and compares the novels *Track of the Cat* (1993), which takes place in Guadalupe National Park in Texas, and *Ill Wind* (1995), which takes place in Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado. The novel *Track of the Cat* was chosen for comparison due to its title as the series' first book, whereas *Ill Wind* was chosen upon recommendation and after a more thorough consideration of its environmental and cultural context.

The first chapter of the thesis aims to explore and introduce several topics which are closely related to the work of Nevada Barr. The first topic of the chapter defines the popular genre of crime fiction, describes its development and considers the context of Barr's detective fiction in relation to the established framework. The following paragraphs tackle the ideas of ecocriticism in literature and how the discipline developed throughout its considerably short life. While on the topic of environment in literature, the thesis delves deeper into the understanding of what wilderness is. It does so by considering and contrasting the white settler and Native American mindsets, while not omitting the ethically conflicting processes of the establishment of national parks across the United States.

The following chapter concerns itself with the life and work of Nevada Barr. After a brief biographical entry, the chapter elaborates on the literary and historical context of her work primarily by listing some of her predecessors and peers, shortly describing their work and why it could be considered relevant to that of Nevada Barr and defining the contemporary crime writing of which Barr is considered a part. This segment concludes the theoretical part of the thesis.

The practical part of the thesis analyses certain aspects of the novels *Track of the Cat* and *Ill Wind*. Since both books are part of the same book series, they share characters. The first chapter of the practical portion of the thesis establishes the character of Anna Pigeon, the series'

protagonist. The main points of the analysis of the protagonist's character focus on her values, mindset and motivations. Among her core traits, the chapter also aims to analyse her development and does so on the basis of the shifts of her behaviour and values in *Ill Wind* in comparison to *Track of the Cat*. The chapter lists two other characters recurrent in the series and analyses their links to Anna Pigeon and how they may influence her.

The following chapter analyses the portrayal of the environment in both novels, how the differing setting influences the stories' narrative and elaborates on the processes of preservation, research, and transportation in each of the national parks. The last chapter analyses the dynamic relationship between crime and the environment described in Barr's writing and considers recurrent story patterns.

1. Environmental Crime Writing

Crime fiction, often also addressed as detective or mystery fiction, is an integral part of American and British popular culture and has been for ages. This type of fiction is characterised by recurring key themes such as meticulous plotting, mystery, clever characters, deduction and investigation.¹ Allan Edgar Poe is by many viewed as the originator of the genre. Poe popularised detective fiction along with horror in his short story *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*.

Allan Edgar Poe's short story *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, published in 1841, is considered to be the first official piece of detective fiction. According to Bill Phillips, the main character of the story, Auguste Dupin, serves as a blueprint or even as an archetype of sorts that is later followed by future popular detective fiction protagonists such as Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot.² These characters do, in fact, have a sense of justice, but their main focus shifts towards the puzzles they desperately need to solve. Their intentions and morality can, for that reason, be questioned as they do not entirely care for the cases themselves and rather treat them as their own logical challenges and are most concerned with their own egos.

The abovementioned character archetype is often mentioned in connection with the topic of the hard-boiled mode of crime fiction. John Scaggs explains that the term 'hard-boiled' describes a character who is tough and shrewd³, a level-headed character who is often an extraordinary private detective with logical thinking and an inflated ego. This type of detective story hero came to be during the inter-war period in the United States. The first hero to be defined as such was John Daly's Race Williams, a character of a strong build who is violent and tough. Obviously, over time, the definition and prototypes changed and morphed into something completely different as, with time, they grew rather cunning and clever than physically tough.⁴

¹ Horsley, Lee. *Twentieth-century Crime Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 54.

² Bill Phillips, "Crime Fiction: A Global Phenomenon," *IAFOR. Journal of Literature & Librarianship*, vol. 5, no. 1 (November 2016): 5.

³ John Scaggs, *Crime Fiction: The New Critical Idiom* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), 55.

⁴ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 55.

The hard-boiled fiction emphasises the characters' connection with violence and betrayal⁵ rather than reason and logic. According to Scaggs, this type of detective fiction emerged in the early 20th century and, with time, diversified into several other subgenres. One of the developments of sorts is gangster stories where originally a disadvantaged individual becomes wealthy through a criminal career, only to find themselves to be the victims of their 'new' lives. Interest in such stories or even the feasibility of a criminal career became strong within the capitalistic society, and many works of such, therefore, became immensely popular.⁶ To note some other subgenres that had emerged in the second half of the 20th century, Scaggs lists historical crime fiction novels⁷ and police procedurals.⁸

The second most prominent pattern in crime fiction is the 'whodunnit' mode. The main characters of such stories are intellectuals, who are trying to uncover the real crime along with the audience. This typically British mode follows the general rule of the true criminal being revealed only at the end of the book.⁹ The whodunnit mode encourages its readers to try and guess, rendering the story more immersive and perhaps interesting to the readers. To combat predictability, contemporary literature often tries not to follow it faithfully to differentiate its new stories and to make them more intriguing. It is, after all, considered a mystery genre where it is almost necessary to be inventive and to be able to take readers by surprise and further enhance the mystery.

American and British crime fiction novels used to be quite distinct. The 'whodunnit' mode was mainly attributed to British crime fiction, and the 'hard-boiled' to American crime fiction. But essentially, it all boils down to works of similar principles and patterns. Both British and American crime fiction consists of the same elements, such as the complex act of violence and crime, a character in the role of a detective, puzzles, elements of mystery and uncertainty and often ambivalence.

To progress further in time, the Golden Age must not go without a mention, as it is deemed to be one of the most important chapters in the story of crime fiction. The predominantly British

⁵ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 28.

⁶ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 29.

⁷ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 122.

⁸ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 85.

⁹ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 28.

period of the Golden Age is identified between the First and Second World Wars.¹⁰ In Britain, this period had a clear start and such with Agatha Christie's first novel, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, published in 1920, while its end is marked by the time of the Second World War. Agatha Christie's contribution includes the development of country-house murder, the now classic whodunnit pattern contemporary crime fiction usually follows, as well as even deviancy and subversion of the latter, challenging the genre. However, Christie was not the sole contributor, as there were three other female authors who wrote in a similar spirit. Those being Dorothy L. Sayers, the creator of Lord Peter Wimsey, one of the most imitated detective figures in the Golden Age of an aristocratic background, Margery Allingham, the creator of Albert Campion, who first appeared in *The Crime at Black Dudley* in 1929 and was, at first, deemed to be a parody of the latter as he shares many similarities, namely his aristocratic background and developing maturity and wisdom throughout his series and Ngaio Marsh, a New Zealand writer and the creator of Roderick Alleyn of Scotland Yard.¹¹ Despite all, Golden Age's detectives lack, according to Scaggs, depth and are more or less one-dimensional and seldom exhibit character development.¹²

The world of crime fiction and its characters start changing as the Second World War ends and the authors start redefining the genre. Horsley deemed the authors of the post-Second World War period, the "heirs of the traditional crime fiction", to be quite conscious of the modern world, which they started reflecting in their works by illustrating the shift in dimension and scope of criminality and no longer confide their mysteries to for example country-house murder mysteries and instead take into account how difficult it is in the modern world to contain criminality.¹³ The post-Second World War writers engage directly with societal issues in the modern world. Horsley analyses the works of Margery Allingham, P. D. James and Ruth Rendell and illustrates the shift in the genre in their work. Each author "re-examines what she perceives as the ordered world of classic detective fiction, entering a dialogue with the assumptions stereotypically

¹⁰ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 35.

¹¹ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 26–27.

¹² Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 36.

¹³ Horsley. *Twentieth-century Crime Fiction*, 53.

associated with it”¹⁴. Earlier works of authors of the Golden Age did not entirely concern themselves much with the moral socio-political agenda compared to the abovementioned authors, who, as was already hinted at, made delving into such issues play a central role in their works.¹⁵

Horsley also hints at the implementation of modernism into contemporary crime fiction in the works of the three chosen authors. He supports this claim by pointing out how, despite still retaining the key characteristics of a detective novel, the authors break the traditions established by the Golden Age authors. In their novels, they shift the attention to the criminal and offer the readers a different point of view¹⁶, unlike how they were used to from the Golden Age authors, such as Agatha Christie. Another defining feature of contemporary crime fiction is the more realistic and dynamic depiction of roles. Most investigators in contemporary detective fiction no longer conform to the idea of a hard-boiled detective and are rather realistic in terms of the balance of intellect and brawn. Investigators would often take part in police procedurals and would co-operate with the police force, which is no longer deemed as incompetent, as it would in earlier works of detective fiction, but instead consists of qualified officers who assist the investigators.¹⁷ The genre of detective fiction has undergone many important changes since the end of the Second World War and offers more creative freedom to the writers.

As time progresses, we may observe the emergence of female protagonists in detective fiction. Notable authors who reinvented the hard-boiled mode by introducing the female PI were, for example, Sara Paretsky and Sue Grafton.¹⁸ Paretsky’s V. I. Warshawski and Grafton’s Kinsey Millhone are, according to Scaggs, “not reluctant to fire their guns”.¹⁹ The emergence of female private eyes, in contrast to the belief that such a position is a male-dominated field, could be viewed as a feminist subversion of the genre.

If we study Nevada Barr’s work and her protagonist, Anna Pigeon, from the standpoint of detective fiction, we may observe several influences. Since her writing could be considered contemporary, her work blends all of the abovementioned patterns and modes. To illustrate: Barr

¹⁴ Horsley, *Twentieth-century Crime Fiction*, 53.

¹⁵ Horsley, *Twentieth-century Crime Fiction*, 54.

¹⁶ Horsley, *Twentieth-century Crime Fiction*, 54.

¹⁷ Horsley, *Twentieth-century Crime Fiction*, 55.

¹⁸ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 78.

¹⁹ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 78.

follows the whodunnit principle in *Track of the Cat* by revealing the culprit at the very end of the book. Throughout the book, the readers may try to deduce who the culprit might be as she explicitly lists all the characters we could consider to be the suspects. She uses several methods throughout the book to hint at who might have done it. On the other hand, Barr follows in the footsteps of Sara Paretsky and Sue Grafton by making her protagonist a hard-boiled female detective. Anna Pigeon, Barr's primary protagonist, is, according to Bertens and D'haen, the most asocial and private female detective of all.²⁰ Anna is not exactly shrewd or extraordinarily tough, as are the first protagonists of hard-boiled mode described, but a feature she shares with the hard-boiled male protagonists is the fact that she's level-headed and works well alone. She compensates for her "lack of strength" by being resourceful and capable, which is an ability she often demonstrates throughout the novels and which makes her such an intriguing character.

In regard to Barr's protagonist, Anna Pigeon, it is important to mention that, unlike Grafton's Kinsey Millhone, who actually worked for the police force and later decided to work as a private eye²¹, Anna Pigeon is a park ranger and therefore a law enforcer.²² Anna has no detective training, and in *Track of the Cat* (1993) has to work hard to prove there is, in fact, a case that is to be solved. Since detective work is not her expertise, Barr offers us an insight into a somewhat simple sort of investigation process done by her protagonist in her free time. Despite being a law enforcer, her powers and duties only cover those of a park ranger, so she lacks any sort of detective training, experience or even credibility. For that reason, her methods may seem a bit unorthodox compared to the classical detective stories, and the people around her often do not regard her as a true detective. Despite her rough beginnings, in *Ill Wind* (1995) Anna is considered as an actual detective and, for the purpose of the investigation, is paired up with an FBI agent, with whom she cooperates. Such a change illustrates Anna's slight shift in her position as a law enforcer and interprets her as an actual appointed investigator.

What sets Nevada Barr's work apart is not necessarily the detective subject matter, but rather the setting and environment, which are the most prominent aspects of her work. Barr includes wilderness in her work, giving her novels a tinge of romantic features. Bertens and D'haen classify

²⁰ Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 89.

²¹ Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 24.

²² Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 89.

Barr's work as environmental crime writing and point out that, historically, 1990s writers would concern themselves with ecology²³, to which Barr conforms. Barr's environmental focus contrasts with the early, typically American, hard-boiled mode, which takes place mainly in urbanised areas.²⁴

As Ursula K. Heise states, ecocriticism is a "rapidly growing field in literary studies"²⁵ that uses a critical approach to the analysis of the relationship between the environment and literary concepts. The field is conceptually so vast that it can consist of many perspectives and angles, and raises countless questions and issues.

Glotfelty describes ecocriticism in simple terms as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment".²⁶ The common questions theorists may ask, if they approach a text from an ecocritical standpoint, are

"How is nature represented in this sonnet? What role does the physical setting play in the plot of this novel? Are the values expressed in this play consistent with ecological wisdom?"²⁷

Such are the ways or perhaps methods of viewing and critiquing in the manner of ecocriticism. Ecocriticism considers not only nature and its depiction, whether it is realistic or not, but the discipline stretches across many other areas. According to Liza Long, a lot of emphasis is put on interdisciplinary measures such as biology, ecology, cultural and environmental studies and so on. The approach studies the dynamic and complex relationship between human beings and the natural world²⁸. For example, nature plays a very significant role in the evolution of human culture, which is reflected in the diversity of the culture of humankind.

²³ Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 85.

²⁴ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 57.

²⁵ Ursula K. Heise, "The Hitchhiker's Guide to Ecocriticism" *PMLA/Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 121, no. 2 (2006): 504

²⁶ Cheryll Glotfelty, "Introduction." In *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, ed. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 18

²⁷ Glotfelty, *Introduction*, 19.

²⁸ Liza Long, *Critical Worlds: A Targeted Introduction to Literary Analysis* (Idaho: College of Western Idaho, 2024), 49.

Ecocriticism emerged in the 1990s²⁹ and is considered to essentially be a postmodern approach. Heise mentions that in the 1980s, several works touched upon the relationship between the environment and literature, and yet there was no literary discipline that would be able to classify their work as a whole. For that reason, we may observe the emergence of ASLE: The Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment.³⁰ In fact, in 1993, ASLE established the journal *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* and started holding biennial conferences.³¹ Buell also notes the slightly later emergence of ISLE's British counterpart, the *Green Letters*, as both are remarkable publications among scholarly journals.³² ASLE grew popular over time and all over the globe. Since its establishment, we may observe a rapid growth in the emergence of articles and books. Heise does not consider the popularity of ecocriticism to be too surprising. She is rather taken aback by the fact that the formal establishment of the discipline was so delayed.³³ Literary analysis was being established in the second half of the 20th century, and to one it may seem strange that critics did not concern themselves with the issue of environment and setting in literature. At the time, literary theorists would rather concern themselves with the ideas of narration, textuality, identity, subjectivity, and historical discourse. Between the late 1960s and early 1990s, literary critics, under the vast influence of French philosophies of language, would often view the environmental matter as a part of the socio-cultural landscape.³⁴

To further define ecocriticism as a literary discipline, Heise studies its development and identifies said process to be diametrically different from the development of literary disciplines such as feminism. Her main argument is the fact that feminism, for example, developed gradually as a standalone literary subgenre, whereas ecocriticism was more or less already established prior to its official namesake. Ecocriticism emerged once environmentalism was already a vast field

²⁹ Long, *Critical Worlds*, 49.

³⁰ Heise, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to Ecocriticism*, 505.

³¹ Heise, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to Ecocriticism*, 505.

³² Lawrence Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (Malden, USA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 6.

³³ Heise, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to Ecocriticism*, 505.

³⁴ Heise, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to Ecocriticism*, 505.

consisting of “converging and conflicting projects” that allowed other humanistic subdisciplines, such as environmental philosophy and history, to arise.³⁵

The approach is connected to environmental writing, which it analyses. Geherin gives an example by listing two famous authors, well-known for the locations they situated their works in: Thomas Hardy, known for placing his novels in the environment of Wessex in England and William Faulkner, who situated his novels in the fictional town of Yoknapatawpha. Neither author used the environment they chose as a mere backdrop for their stories. In fact, they integrated it within the story, making it play a pivotal role in the narrative of their works and become an unmistakable part of it.³⁶

Ecocriticism, as well, concerns itself with the issue of environmental degradation and the negative effects human activity has on the environment. Authors may emphasise such problems in order to shed light on the decaying environment. While others, on the other hand, use the approach as a way to enhance their literary work, rendering it more elaborate, factually exact and rich. Barr could be considered to be an author who does both, as she illustrates crimes done both in and against nature in her work.

Wilderness is a topic closely tied to the work of Nevada Barr as she situates her work in the environment of American National Parks. What makes wilderness such an interesting topic for analysis is the sole fact of different subjective interpretations of it. But since wilderness is a topic naturally dominant in the American context³⁷, we may start defining it by introducing the Puritan settlers’ understanding.

According to Nash, the European settlers of the New World understood wilderness as something alien and uncomfortable, even despite the fact that the Continent was not yet fully urbanised before their departure, and they did, in fact, come into contact with wilderness in some form before crossing the Atlantic.³⁸ The early understandings of wilderness are closely related

³⁵ Heise, *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to Ecocriticism*, 505.

³⁶ David Geherin, *Scene of the Crime: The Importance of Place In Crime and Mystery Fiction* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2008), 3.

³⁷ Šárka Bubíková, *The Place It Was Done. Location and Community in Contemporary American and British Fiction* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2023), 110.

³⁸ Roderick Frazier Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 8.

to the Judeo-Christian tradition, which very clearly paints wilderness as a place of exile³⁹ and a place of danger. To support this argument, Garrard points out the connection between the understanding of wilderness as a place of exile and the biblical story of the ejection from Eden. The Judeo-Christian belief very clearly manifests in early literature, such as *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, where the demonisation of nature is more than apparent, since the epic explicitly paints wilderness as a threat.⁴⁰ As a result, people approached wilderness with their preconceived idea that it is evil and immensely dangerous.

In relation to the American understanding of wilderness, we should consider the idea of the Old World pastoral and holistic approach to nature, amplified by Romantic beliefs. The American pastoral brought ambivalence into the early understanding of nature. One of the pastoral beliefs regarding nature implied that nature is a place of peace and refuge, which directly collides with the negative prejudice the early settlers harboured towards wilderness. Garrard views this idyllic comprehension of rural life to be of negative value since it erases the true hardships and horrible conditions, and overall paints an inaccurate picture of rural areas.⁴¹ One of the main takeaways concerning the diverse views of nature is the fact that man dislikes the unknown and automatically likes to assume it is dangerous to preserve their well-being. On the other hand, humans yearn to escape from the confining nature of everyday life. The idyllic imagination of rural areas is what comes into play at that very moment. In retrospect, the people's attitude remains ambivalent unless we inspect their intentions and beliefs closely.

According to Garrard, the issue of ambivalence, established by the Judeo-Christian tradition, was solved by early modern philosophy.⁴² The view of modern philosophy has a much sober and realistic view of rural areas in comparison to the preceding beliefs. The origin of the ideology dates back to the 17th century, when Thomas Burnet depicts an almost apocalyptic scenario in his book *Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1684) to try and illustrate certain biblical stories and recall them in the real world. He was met with interesting reactions, such as the people finding this depiction of nature "strangely appealing"⁴³. This way of understanding nature is defined as

³⁹ Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism: The New Critical Idiom* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2004), 61.

⁴⁰ Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 61.

⁴¹ Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 33.

⁴² Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 63.

⁴³ Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 63.

the sublime. The most revolutionary aspect of this view is the sole fact that it is positive despite its negative attributes and the fact that it was originally terror-induced.

Nash points out how the picturesque movement of the sublime gave the American writers the motivation to combat the common misconception of wilderness.⁴⁴ In this case, we may speak of “Romantic wilderness”⁴⁵ as authors, often distanced away from the nature they write of, started idealising nature in their works. Their work painted a convoluted picture of wilderness, as their ideas consisted of the primitive dream of a life closer to nature. A great role in their work was played by the new implementation of religious beliefs, which, compared to the conservative Puritan attitude, painted wilderness as something divine. Authors basically started associating God with wilderness and presented nature as a complex and harmonious source of divine power.

The American understanding of wilderness officially shifted with Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden*. Buell paints Thoreau as the “patron Saint of American environmental writing”⁴⁶. Garrard marks *Walden* to be the “terminus of the Old World pastoral in American literature”.⁴⁷ The New World wilderness narrative is similar to the narrative illustrated in the previous paragraphs as inaccurate and idyllic. A possible reason for that would be the scientific and technological advancements made and people’s need to run away from urbanised areas, which were the exact opposite of what they believed wilderness to be. Thoreau wished to explore the true nature of wilderness, not being influenced by the negative attitudes of early beliefs or the unrealistically idealistic ideas of his predecessors. He did so by experiencing nature on his own and living in seclusion by the lake of Walden in the state of Massachusetts. *Walden* is a non-fiction work and describes Thoreau’s transcendentalist philosophy, which is, by definition, a philosophical discipline which adapted complex views on nature, God, humankind, and individual persons. Transcendentalism was the very thing that sparked interest in Thoreau, who then tried to study the dynamic relationship between man and nature, as the philosophy specifically dictates that nature is

⁴⁴ Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 44.

⁴⁵ Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 44.

⁴⁶ Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 115.

⁴⁷ Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 66.

a part of the material realm that is in close correspondence or even parallel with the higher realm of spiritual truth.⁴⁸

The reason why wilderness is contextually the most well-adapted by American authors has a historical and cultural relevance. After the newly won freedom, Americans wished to establish their national identity even beyond economic and cultural growth. They wished to justify their national freedom by establishing something uniquely “American”.⁴⁹ It is widely believed that this immense motivation to establish an identity may stem from the fact that the nation is so short-lived and lacks any sort of elaborate history, has weak traditions and possesses very few artistic achievements in comparison to their European peers. According to Nash, the main motivation behind the entire movement was to “transform embarrassed provincials into proud and confident citizens”.⁵⁰ It was wilderness that the Americans chose to represent a part of their national identity, and which soon became an “American asset”.⁵¹ Ultimately, it can be said that Americans were searching for something that might be the source of admiration for the country, since their nation was fairly young and they believed that its beautiful natural environment could become one of the defining symbols of their nation.

The white settlers were not the only ones who held wilderness and nature in high regard. In fact, their recent bewilderment by nature could be viewed as almost arrogant since it took them such a long time to establish a more positive outlook on nature. Native Americans have, on the other hand, harboured a deep and spiritual relationship with nature and wilderness at a considerably earlier time compared to the white settlers. Their connection to nature is completely alien to the likes of American settlers and has a far richer and more colourful nature. Their attitude was well described by Leslie Marmon Silko in her essay *From a High Arid Plateau in New Mexico* (1977), where she concerned herself with the tradition of the Pueblo people in New Mexico. In the following excerpt from the essay, we may observe the Pueblo people’s sober view of the course of life and their understanding of the relationship between the human world and nature as a whole:

⁴⁸ Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 85.

⁴⁹ Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 67.

⁵⁰ Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 67.

⁵¹ Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 67.

With the plants and wild game the soul may have already been borne back into bones and blood or thick green stalk and leaves. Nothing is wasted. What cannot be eaten by people or in some way used must then be left where other living creatures may benefit.⁵²

Based on what Silko writes, the Pueblo people of New Mexico treated nature as an ecosystem with which they are in harmony. As opposed to the Americans, who kept themselves at a considerable distance from the wilderness. In fact, their attitudes are so drastically different that they came into a clash. Nash mentions the occurrence of a new dilemma for white Americans. They concerned themselves with the preservation of wilderness, and by which means they should implement their newly arisen concerns.⁵³ Their concerns for preservation led to the establishment of a multitude of national parks across the United States. The American approach to nature was, simply put, more radical and controlling, and it would only make sense that they would feel the need to preserve ‘the most beautiful peculiarities and places the American nature has to offer.

Kantor describes national parks in the United States as places where people are meant to experience the wonders of virgin nature untouched by man. He emphasises how incorrect and distorted this idea behind national parks is, stating that they are built on an illusion.⁵⁴ Before the establishment of national parks, each area used to be a working ecosystem where animals would be hunted, where forests were utilised, and where plants were harvested. All was done by Native American tribes whose history with the wilderness dates back millennia. These tribes were forcibly removed, and all traditions in the areas were prohibited.⁵⁵ This form of preservation is a showcase of the hypocritical approach white Americans exhibited in regard to the nature they named as one of the most pivotal symbols of their national identity.

The specific prerequisites of the establishment and definition of national parks were first legally denoted in the *National Park Service Organic Act* (1916). The act classifies national parks

⁵² Leslie Marmon Silko, “Landscape, History, and the Pueblo Imagination.” In *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, ed. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 264.

⁵³ Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 98.

⁵⁴ Isaac Kantor, “Ethnic Cleansing and America's Creation of National Parks,” *Public Land & Resources Law Review* 28, no. 5 (June 2007): 42.

⁵⁵ Kantor, “Ethnic Cleansing,” 42.

as federal areas with the sole function of preserving scenery, historical sites, and providing enjoyment for future generations:

The service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations hereinafter specified by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks, monuments, and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.⁵⁶

It is important to mention that, despite the fact that it is thanks to the act that we may still see and visit national parks in their beauty, the federal government completely omits any sort of compensation for Native Americans. Kantor points out the important fact of illusion we are coming into contact with yet again, as the act presents said areas as having always been pure and devoid of any sort of human interaction.⁵⁷

The *National Park Service Organic Act* was not the last legislation that concerned itself with wilderness in the United States. Another document to be published is the widely known *Wilderness Act* (1964). The first section of the act, on top of paraphrasing certain points of the *Organic Act*, establishes the National Wilderness Preservation System:

For this purpose there is hereby established a National Wilderness Preservation System to be composed of federally owned areas designated by the Congress as "wilderness areas," and these shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, [...].⁵⁸

The National Wilderness Preservation System creates a clearer picture of the arrangement of national parks within the US. Kantor argues that this section suggests that the land the act brands as "wilderness areas" has been inhabited in the past and that the federal government is merely trying to preserve these natural sites.⁵⁹ This leads us to the next important idea that the *Wilderness Act* proposes. The idea being the new definition of what wilderness is:

⁵⁶ "Organic Act of 1916," Laws & Policies, National Park Service, last modified April 22, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/grba/learn/management/organic-act-of-1916.htm>.

⁵⁷ Kantor, "Ethnic Cleansing," 44.

⁵⁸ "The Wilderness Act," Wilderness Connect, accessed May 25, 2025, <https://wilderness.net/learn-about-wilderness/key-laws/wilderness-act/>.

⁵⁹ Kantor, "Ethnic Cleansing," 44.

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.⁶⁰

In the context of ethnic erasure, Kantor points out that the act further paints an inaccurate picture and insists that the natural environment in national parks is “untrammelled” by man, completely disregarding indigenous use.⁶¹

In his essay, Kantor brings attention to the three main instances of the removal of Native Americans who inhabited the land of today’s national parks in the US. The first national park to be established in the US was the Yellowstone National Park, and it was done so by President Ulysses S. Grant in 1872. The establishment of Yellowstone National Park was met with difficulties such as the reoccurrence of the Crow, Shoshone, Bannock and Sheep Eater people who frequented the area and posed as an obstruction to tourism. For that reason, the early headquarters of Yellowstone National Park resembled more of an armed military fort than it did a normal park establishment.⁶²

The Glacier National Park is yet another park which plays an important role in the case of ethnic erasure across American land. The eastern part of Glacier National Park was purchased by the American government from the Blackfeet tribe at a staggeringly small sum of \$1.5 million.⁶³ The Blackfeet tribe was at the time a powerful one, but their vast reservation, located on the eastern side of the continent, was hit with disease and the decimation of the bison population, and the people of the Blackfeet tribe therefore found themselves in a tough position.⁶⁴ It was, in fact, the very possible future of a very tough winter that later convinced the tribe’s Chief White Calf⁶⁵ to sell the land, today known as the eastern block of Glacier National Park.

The last prominent instance described by Kantor is the Mesa Verde National Park incident. According to him, it was the “most recent and evolved taking of lands on our spectrum of Native American removal and dispossession”.⁶⁶ Unlike in the case of Glacier National Park, the land

⁶⁰ “Wilderness Act.”

⁶¹ Kantor, “Ethnic Cleansing,” 44.

⁶² Kantor, “Ethnic Cleansing,” 49.

⁶³ Kantor, “Ethnic Cleansing,” 52.

⁶⁴ Kantor, “Ethnic Cleansing,” 51.

⁶⁵ Kantor, “Ethnic Cleansing,” 52.

⁶⁶ Kantor, “Ethnic Cleansing,” 53.

agreements in the case of Mesa Verde National Park were thoroughly discussed. The main issue was the unequal bargaining power of negotiating parties. To introduce the national park better, it is important to mention that the land of today's Mesa Verde National Park used to be inhabited by the Anasazi tribe – often referred to as the “Ancient Ones” – who left the land much earlier than the white settlers had even discovered it. The Anasazi left behind fascinating archaeological sites such as the ruins of their dwellings in the sides of Mesa Verde's cliffs. Since the land of Mesa Verde stretched over the Ute Mountain Reservation, most of the land fell into possession of the Ute clan. Utes were, in fact, those who negotiated with the US government and those who were considered to be severely disadvantaged. The situation reached a verdict when President Theodore Roosevelt, “pursuant to the newly minted *Antiquities Act*”, signed the Mesa Verde National Park Bill in 1906. Land trade negotiations with the Utes did not stop there, as, based on the findings of certain surveys, the government found out that many of the high-quality Anasazi ruins still remained outside of the Mesa Verde National Park. These findings were followed by multiple land trades, and finally, under a certain amount of pressure, the Utes reluctantly agreed to exchange 10,000 acres for 19,500 acres of land on Ute Mountain. The government negotiators did not stop there, and their last pursuit of land was followed by the Congress passing a bill that indefinitely took 1,320 acres more for Mesa Verde without any notification to the Utes, creating the national park as we know it today.⁶⁷

The American arrogant attitude toward wilderness, in a way, shaped how we understand the word today. Terms such as anthropogenic or anthropocentric⁶⁸ are key to understanding the true meaning of what wilderness actually is. The term “anthropogenic” describes a change made by humans, and “anthropocentric” describes a system of beliefs and practices that favours humans over other organisms. With that said, we may call today's most famous national parks both anthropogenic and anthropocentric, since they were all in some way touched by the human hand, be it construction or simply establishing their borders. The *Wilderness Act*, on top of everything, states that national parks are “administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people”⁶⁹, contributing to the misleading and illusionary depiction of American nature and its purpose.

In today's age, wilderness, in the form of national parks, symbolises some sort of escape from urbanised areas to a natural oasis or generally just a vast natural reserve. Despite the fact that

⁶⁷ Kantor, “Ethnic Cleansing,” 53.

⁶⁸ Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 183.

⁶⁹ “Wilderness Act.”

federal employees take extensive care of these natural areas and their wildlife, national parks today have more of a commercial use. They have simply become a place for tourists to take a small family trip, per se.

To illustrate wilderness as a literary space, we should consider the nature in which certain authors choose to describe it. Bubíková mentions that wilderness could be described as porous and gappy. Sometimes that may result in a somewhat subjective or perhaps even generalised description that does not manage to capture it accurately as a whole, as authors may sometimes choose to only describe certain details befitting their narrative.⁷⁰ To put wilderness in a wider context of environmental crime fiction, we should consider the following:

In acknowledging that wilderness as a truly uncultivated land resisting „affective habitation“, a land „untrammelled by men“ does not really exist – as hardly any place nowadays is devoid of human presence and activity – we realise that crime can happen literally anywhere. Even in designated wilderness sites such as National Parks and Nature Preserves as well as in areas with low population density due to inaccessibility or harsh conditions [...] ⁷¹

The excerpt describes not only the warped contemporary understanding of what wilderness is, attributed mainly to the rhetoric of both the *Organic Act* and the *Wilderness Act*, and what could qualify as it, but also how, regardless of the environment, crime can happen just about anywhere. Nature offers new opportunities for crime fiction writers as the crime itself can not only concern humans, but also nature and the wildlife: the non-human, broadening the scope of the crime itself. The work of Nevada Barr, specifically the novels *Track of the Cat* and *Ill Wind*, that this thesis will analyse, is a prime example of utilising environmental issues in crime fiction.

⁷⁰ Šárka Bubíková. “Wilderness in Dana Stabernow’s and Nevada Barr’s Crime Fiction Series,” in *Places and Spaces in Popular Imagination*, ed. Šárka Bubíková, Olga Roebuck (Krakow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2021), 98.

⁷¹ Bubíková, *The Place It Was Done*, 111.

2. Literary Context of the Work of Nevada Barr

Nevada Barr is an “award-winning novelist and New York Times best-selling author” of a number of detective novels starring her protagonist Anna Pigeon and several other books, along with short stories and a number of articles.⁷² Barr was born in the small town of Yerington, located in the western part of the country. Both of her parents were pilots and mechanics, and Molly, Nevada Barr’s older sister, followed in their footsteps and became a pilot for USAir.⁷³

Barr leaned towards the arts and, after receiving a BA and MFA, pursued her acting career for about eighteen years. It was around that time she discovered her new passion – wilderness. After years of acting, Barr decided to spend her summers working in national parks such as Isle Royale in Michigan, Guadalupe Mountains in Texas, Mesa Verde in Colorado and the Natchez Trace Parkway in Mississippi. Art and seasonal work in national parks are two drastically different careers, but Barr found an elegant way to combine the two – the written word. Her greatest literary achievement was *Track of the Cat*, first published in 1993 and the one to introduce her most famous protagonist, Anna Pigeon. For *Track of the Cat*, a novel set in the breathtaking scenery of the Guadalupe Mountains in Texas, Barr received both the Agatha and Anthony awards for best first mystery.⁷⁴

National parks play an important role in the life of Nevada Barr since she has spent several years working as a park ranger and since she sets her most famous novels in them. Her professional career makes her a suitable person to write about park rangers and national parks. Her vast knowledge of the system and nature is well reflected in her work. So well, in fact, that Barr had, in 2010, received the Robin W. Winks Award, which awards people who broaden the knowledge of the public about national parks in the US. Nevada Barr was also awarded the 2015 Pinckley Prize for a Distinguished Body of Work for her Anna Pigeon book series.⁷⁵

Nevada Barr officially started writing in 1978 with a specific motivation in mind. It was “a desire for women to do more to move along the plot more because all the women I knew were

⁷² “Biography,” Nevada Barr, accessed May 26, 2025, <https://www.nevadabarr.com/biography.html>.

⁷³ “Biography.”

⁷⁴ “Biography.”

⁷⁵ “Nevada Barr,” Mississippi Writers, Mississippi Writers & Musicians, last modified 2015, <https://www.mswritersandmusicians.com/mississippi-writers/nevada-barr?cn-reloaded=1>.

movers and doers.”⁷⁶ For that reason, Barr could be considered both a feminist and an environmental writer. The revolution of female writers in crime fiction is not a new concept in the world of literature, even despite the fact that, according to Bertens and D’haen, detective and mystery fiction was in the past heavily masculinised in the American context and marginalised women. The 1950s were revolutionary as American women writers officially started breaking through on the American crime fiction scene. The first women to win the acknowledgement of their peers during the period were, for example, Dorothy B. Hughes, Margaret Millar, Charlotte Armstrong and Patricia Highsmith.⁷⁷ The mentioned masculinisation of American crime fiction was heavily attributed to the idea of hard-boiled fiction protagonists who presented as tough and shrewd masculine private investigators. Bertens and D’haen state that the first female author to break this stereotype by introducing a female private investigator was Marcia Muller. They also mention that Sue Grafton and Sara Paretsky, who published their first novels in the 1980s, have greatly contributed to the expansion of the female PI trope.⁷⁸

In the 1990s, the female private investigator was no longer the only viable option for female writers in crime fiction. In fact, as Bertens and D’haen describe, authors started branching out and no longer reduced their stories and characters to the heavily urbanised areas and private investigation. They illustrated this literary phenomenon on the works of Katherine V. Forrest, Lynn S. Hightower, and Nevada Barr, as all their characters are different and revolutionary compared to the standard their predecessors set. The characters of both Katherine V. Forrest and Lynn S. Hightower are members of an urban police force,⁷⁹ But Barr’s Anna Pigeon, despite still being employed by a governmental organisation, works an even more specific and objectively more alternative job as she is employed as a park ranger in a different national park or other natural establishments in each novel.

From the viewpoint of environmental writing, Barr is often studied along with authors like Tony Hillerman, Dana Stabernov, and Anne Hillerman. Bubíková mentions that the American Southwest is a setting that Nevada Barr, Tony Hillerman and Anne Hillerman often employ in their

⁷⁶ Mississippi Writers & Musicians, “Nevada Barr”.

⁷⁷ Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 89.

⁷⁸ Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 17.

⁷⁹ Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 77.

stories.⁸⁰ According to Geherin, Tony Hillerman is especially famous for presenting a fresh point of view of the American Southwest through the eyes of his two main characters of Navajo tribal policemen.⁸¹ To introduce the abovementioned authors better, Bubíková points out the continuation of Hillerman's detective series taken up by his daughter, Anne Hillerman. She retained both of his main characters, Joe Leaphorn and Jim Chee, but introduced her own as well. Her character, Bernadette Manuelito, became the central one, but Hillerman still kept the tradition of Navajo tribal police protagonists. Although Dana Stabernov does not situate her novels in the environment of the American southwestern wilderness, unlike her mentioned peers, but in Alaska, the main similarity between her and Barr's work is the natural reserves, where they both choose to place their stories. Stabernov's main protagonist, Kate Shugak, is not, unlike Barr's Anna Pigeon, a park ranger, but rather works as a hired consultant or a private eye and has a history of private investigation, which makes to be quite a different protagonist from Anna Pigeon.⁸²

⁸⁰ Bubíková, *The Place It Was Done*, 118.

⁸¹ Geherin, *Scene of the Crime*, 35.

⁸² Bubíková, *The Place It Was Done*, 122.

3. The Characters of the Anna Pigeon Series

In her series of books, Nevada Barr tells the story through her main protagonist, Anna Pigeon. Anna is a park ranger and thus a law enforcer with expert training and vast knowledge of the wildlife. The character of Anna deserves her own section mainly because she remains one of the unchanging aspects throughout the series, along with her sister Molly and the mentions of her deceased husband Zachary, whose death was the motive behind Anna's departure from New York City, thanks to which she had become a park ranger.

Bertens and D'haen describe Anna as an individualistic person whose "only loyalties are towards her older sister, a New York City psychiatrist, and the natural world."⁸³ Anna clearly demonstrates her need for retreat throughout the novels, and this aspect of her personality remains unchanging. One of the rare instances where Anna chooses the romantic approach to life by running away from the bureaucratic environment of the park's commercial district could be illustrated by the following excerpt from *Ill Wind*:

After closing time, on the pretext of a patrol, she would slip down into the new quiet of Cliff Palace, one of the largest of the Anasazi villages ever discovered. Climbing as high as was allowed, she would sit with her back to the still-warm stone of the ancient walls, around her rooms and turrets and towers, sunken chambers connected by tunnels, plazas with stone depressions for grinding.⁸⁴

Her retreats are primarily psychological as she often seeks respite in nature. As a matter of fact, it is not always the lack of people surrounding her in those places, which is something she, as an introverted "loner", often yearns for, but it is the soothing sight that nature offers to Anna. She views nature as it truly is, and she loves it unconditionally. Bertens and D'haen mention that Anna is one of those protagonists who have no illusions about the world, nor themselves, and are devoid of any sort of need to save it.⁸⁵ She simply enjoys being in nature and only does her job while still having a strong sense of justice regarding the wildlife: "The beauty of the Chihuahuan Desert had been smoothing the wrinkles from Anna's mind since she'd saddled up at eight a.m."⁸⁶

⁸³ Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 85.

⁸⁴ Nevada Barr, *Ill Wind* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2004), 5.

⁸⁵ Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 91.

⁸⁶ Nevada Barr. *Track of the Cat* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2003), 85.

Her retreats to nature are the only romantic attitudes Anna assumes towards nature. Anna has proved many times throughout the stories that she has a deep respect for wildlife. So deep, in fact, that, in a way, she may at times put its importance above the law. She does so both in practice and in theory. The crime plot in *Track of the Cat* is an amazing example of Anna's morality towards nature, as her doubtful attitude towards the initial conclusion of the case motivates her to investigate further, to reveal the true culprit behind the killing of her colleague. Anna did not necessarily doubt the system out of spite; she was rather motivated to doubt it based on certain discrepancies at the site of the crime she had then later realised were there. Her expert knowledge has led her to believe that something simply isn't right, and she proves that during her conversation with a fellow ranger, Paul Decker, trying to convince him to help her investigate or to at least prove to him that the authorities may be wrong in classifying the case to be a lion kill:

Paul, there were no grass cuts on Sheila. None. Lions wrestle their prey around, drag it. Even if it just chased her into the saw grass and killed her clean, she'd've had to get cut up some.⁸⁷

Anna was convincing enough and as a fruit of her labour, she received not only support, but help in the investigation from her fellow employee, even if only temporarily, since she ends up solving the crime more or less on her own in the later chapters.

As was already mentioned, the respect Anna has towards the park's wildlife transcends law or any social construct, unlike some of her other colleagues, who do not seem to feel as strongly about nature as she does. Along with her loner mannerism, loyalty to her older sister, love for her cat Piedmont and alcohol, her respect for nature is still her defining quality in both *Track of the Cat* and *Ill Wind*. Said respect Barr manifests through Anna in her very realistic descriptions of nature:

The vultures did not drop down in her wake to resume their meal. Evidently the big birds did not feed at night. Anna was grateful. Notwithstanding her appreciation of the food chain, she wasn't sure she could've stood a night listening to its graphic demonstration. The sepulchral snacking would've been unsettling, to say the least.⁸⁸

In one specific case, taking place in the later chapters of *Ill Wind*, Anna can be seen practically disobeying the law established by the Mesa Verde policy. This happenstance proves Bertens and

⁸⁷ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 34.

⁸⁸ Barr, *Track of the Cat*, 17.

D'haen's statement that "the law she enforces is her own"⁸⁹ true. Knowing she will not be found out, Anna decides to let a bear roam free and even considers smoothing out the tracks it had made later, no matter the danger it may pose in the future:

Stars hung close to the mesa, not dulled by moisture or atmosphere. A half-moon spilled enough light to see by. Garbage was strewn over the walk, and as she walked to the car Anna saw a big brown rump vanishing into the underbrush. When she returned she'd clean up the mess and not mention the marauder to the brass. At Mesa Verde the solution to problem bears might be to shoot first and justify later.⁹⁰

Another occurrence which is important to note in this context is to be found at the very end of *The Track of the Cat*. In the morally ambiguous ending of the book, Anna comes into direct conflict with Harland Roberts, the later-revealed culprit, and it is up to her to decide his fate. We may argue whether or not she actually let nature take its course, or whether she intended to kill Harland by leaving him behind, but Anna made it abundantly clear that we, as humans, may outsmart or overcome law, but nature will always find its way.

"You can bring the law on me, Anna. But you won't win." Harland said. He was only a voice from the shadows. The flare had died, and the helicopter's light had robbed Anna of her night vision. "You can beat the law," Anna said. "But you can't beat the desert." She started up the slope.⁹¹

Regardless of her personal standpoints regarding people and nature, Anna is still a federal employee who plays an important role in the ecosystem of the bureaucratic system, adjacent to the national parks where she works throughout the series. In *Track of the Cat*, Anna is a seasoned employee well integrated within the park management's society. Her duties are those of a regular park ranger, and in no way does anyone consider her to be an investigator, nor does she, until the turning point in the novel – the finding of Sheila Drury's corpse, which sets off the crime fiction plot. Anna carries out her duties as she normally would. In fact, at the very beginning of the book, we are met with Anna on her appointed scouting trip, whose purpose is to collect samples so the park management may monitor the mountain lion population in the Guadalupe Mountain

⁸⁹ Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 89.

⁹⁰ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 251.

⁹¹ Barr, *Track of the Cat*, 244.

National Park: “Because she hated to go home empty-handed, Anna dutifully measured, recorded, and photographed the little heap of dung.”⁹² It was this very quest that had led her to the victim.

In *Ill Wind*, Anna has, based on her previous endeavours, gained a better reputation regarding her eligibility to do detective work. The progression of the crime plot is quite slow, as the first chapters of the book focus primarily on Anna’s assimilation into the new environment and society of Mesa Verde National Park. But eventually, when Anna’s colleague’s disappearance is announced, she, along with other park rangers and the park’s employees, sets out to seek the missing person. Upon finding the missing person’s dead body, Anna is appointed as the investigator and is assigned a partner from the FBI. Said federal agent is an old acquaintance of Anna’s from the time she had spent on Isle Royale (from the book *Superior Death*, first released in 1994), Frederick Stanton: “We worked together once.” Anna said. “We’re more like old acquaintances.”⁹³ Anna’s investigation, therefore, becomes official; readers may now follow the crime story along with her.⁹⁴

Each novel shows Anna in a slightly different light in regard to her detective career. Some changes could easily be attributed to her character development in terms of personal experience with investigation and the process of it, while the others are solely dependent on the nature of the crime each story presents. The contrasting natures of each of the crime story narratives promote Anna Pigeon’s adaptability and her capabilities to apply her critical thinking as well as her expert park ranger knowledge.

Despite there not being many, Anna Pigeon is not the only recurring character in *Track of the Cat*, *Ill Wind*, and generally in the entire series. Her older sister, Molly, who is possibly loosely based on Nevada Barr’s own sister,⁹⁵ always plays an important role in the story. The only information the books reveal about Molly is the fact that she is a psychiatrist and that she resides in New York City, just like Anna once did. Despite never being physically present in either book, Molly proved herself to play an important role in Anna’s life. Usually, at the end of some chapters in both books, we may spot Anna calling up her sister when the situation is dire. In most cases, Molly offers her sister a few blunt but true remarks that eventually lead Anna to understand her

⁹² Barr, *Track of the Cat*, 4.

⁹³ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 157.

⁹⁴ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 28.

⁹⁵ “Biography.”

situation slightly better, be it her feelings or her investigation. According to Bertens and D’haen, Anna has a strong bond with her sister and “regards her as the only person she can open up to.”⁹⁶ Opening up to her sister oftentimes proves beneficial, because she is very good at reading her and therefore helps her come to terms with certain things Anna is uncomfortable admitting to herself. Their usual exchanges can be observed in the following quote from *Track of the Cat*:

“Death, darkness, vultures munching, brought back the bad old days after Zach was killed. That’s pretty straightforward. But what I’m hearing through it all is an outraged sense of injustice. Am I close?” Anna felt around inside her brain, probed down her esophagus, took a left at her sternum, and peered into her heart. “I guess that’s right.”⁹⁷

Even if not at all physically present, Anna Pigeon’s deceased husband, Zachary, plays an important role in the establishment of the character of Anna. As was already mentioned, Anna fled New York City and became a park ranger after the death of her beloved husband. In fact, Bertens and D’haen attribute Anna’s scepticism to “the death of her husband in a Manhattan traffic accident a dozen years before.”⁹⁸ She still keeps her deceased husband’s ashes and often recalls him, though, as time progresses, her mentions become less frequent. It should be noted that in *Track of the Cat*, Anna reminisces about her husband far more often than she does in the later novels:

In New York she’d lain for hours in the tub in the kitchen of a five-floor walk-up in Hell’s Kitchen making pictures from the water stains on the ceiling and waiting for Zach to come home and make the wait worth her while.⁹⁹

In this context, she did so in connection with her current lover, Rogelio, because she could not help but compare her current lovers or love interests to Zach. In this book, we may also observe that she still keeps Zach’s ashes along with his picture, which she sometimes looks at.¹⁰⁰ In *Ill Wind*, Anna’s attitude shifts slightly. Bertens and D’haen point out that she now keeps her husband’s ashes in a drawer along with her underwear.¹⁰¹ Based on this information, we may

⁹⁶ Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 88.

⁹⁷ Barr, *Track of the Cat*, 28.

⁹⁸ Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 87.

⁹⁹ Barr, *Track of the Cat*, 19.

¹⁰⁰ Barr, *Track of the Cat*, 40.

¹⁰¹ Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 88.

assume that, as slow as her progress may be, she is able to level with the loss of her husband a bit better than she was able to in *Track of the Cat*.

The character of Anna Pigeon, aside from offering us a new perspective and that of a park ranger, has a lot of depth and is considerably complex. Bertens and D'aen appreciate her character for her “insecurity, her vulnerability, her independence, and, not least, for the unusual, arresting perspectives that she offers”¹⁰² as well as they point out Nevada Barr’s effective way of channelling a “light-hearted and ironical but insistent and effective feminism” through her.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 90.

¹⁰³ Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 89.

4. Environment in Nevada Barr's *Track of the Cat and Ill Wind*

Nevada Barr is considered to be an environmental writer, and thus the environment plays a pivotal role in her books, and *Track of the Cat and Ill Wind* are no exception. Barr tackles environmental topics primarily in the setting of national parks or other natural reserves. As was already mentioned, once Barr became interested in the environment, she took up the job of a park ranger in certain national parks in the US, namely Isle Royale in Michigan, Natchez Trace Parkway in Mississippi, Guadalupe Mountains in Texas and Mesa Verde in Colorado.¹⁰⁴ Her experience renders Barr more than qualified to write about Anna Pigeon and her work.

In her books, Barr describes nature and the characters' surroundings realistically. In fact, she does not romanticise how nature may look at a certain moment, and neither does she manipulate the environment to fit her narrative needs, which Geherin deems as fundamental in crime fiction that considers itself to be realistic.¹⁰⁵ Such a sentiment may be connected to, as Dean puts it, understanding that wilderness represents something "organically pre-human".¹⁰⁶ In *Track of the Cat*, Barr provides readers with beautiful descriptions of the canyons in the Guadalupe Mountains early in the book. She describes Anna's scouting quest, on which she set out with the intention to collect samples for administrative purposes, so that the staff of the national park may monitor the population of animals in the area. Even through the limiting idea of the realistic depiction she chose to enforce, Barr manages to paint a very lively and impressive picture of something so mundane as Anna going on a patrol:

Anna has sat down on a smooth boulder, the top hollowed into a natural seat. The red peeling arms of a Texas madrone held a veil of dusty shade over her eyes. This was the third day of this transect. By evening, she would reach civilisation: people.¹⁰⁷

Of such depictions is an abundance throughout the book. We may observe that they oftentimes appear at moments where Anna is left alone with her own thoughts. The previous excerpt takes place during a time when Anna has been out on a patrol for several days, and multiple trains of thought have crossed her mind. These circumstances further confirm Anna's sympathies towards

¹⁰⁴ "Biography."

¹⁰⁵ Geherin, *Scene of the Crime*, 8.

¹⁰⁶ John Dean, "The Uses of Wilderness in American Science Fiction," *Science Fiction Studies* 9, no. 1 (March 1982): 69.

¹⁰⁷ Barr, *Track of the Cat*, 1.

nature to the extent of personal solace she often seeks in *Track of the Cat* due to the simple reality that she, throughout the first half of the book, is desperately trying to convince her colleagues of the incorrect conclusion of the murder, which she believed was not caused by a mountain lion like others all believed.

This phenomenon is present in *Ill Wind* as well. Though it is important to mention that the environment of Mesa Verde is far different from that of the Guadalupe Mountains. Realistic descriptions are slightly more scarce in comparison to *Track of the Cat* because Mesa Verde is, according to Anna, more urban in comparison to other national parks she has worked at:

After working backcountry in wilderness parks—Guadalupe Mountains in Texas and Isle Royale in Lake Superior—Mesa Verde, with its quarter million-plus visitors each year, struck her as urban.¹⁰⁸

The seemingly unfavourable environment of Mesa Verde in terms of peaceful, people-free nature does not stop Barr from inserting her quality descriptions:

Out on the canyon's lip the sandstone had been worn into a shallow trough sixty feet wide. Over the centuries summer rains have scoured it smooth.¹⁰⁹

But what may *Ill Wind's* Mesa Verde lack in vast areas of natural reserves, it makes up for in the cultural heritage the lands of the national park carry. The previous chapter, which dissected the complex issue of ethnic cleansing across the territories of multiple national parks in the United States, brought to light the cultural significance of Mesa Verde, as it retains the most important sights left by the Anasazi clan, who no longer reside in the area.¹¹⁰ Barr repeatedly proves her expert knowledge of the area and its history by mentioning:

Since Mesa Verde's cliffs had first been inhabited the Anasazi, the Utes, the Navajo, cowboys, hunters, and tourists had all tramped the trails. Yet there remained a tremendous sense of discovery. In that lay much of the park's allure.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 5.

¹⁰⁹ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 152.

¹¹⁰ Kantor, "Ethnic Cleansing," 53.

¹¹¹ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 150.

Despite mentioning the area's previous inhabitants and why that would mark the area to be historically important, Barr systematically omits the indigenous use of the lands in her novels, essentially conforming to the anthropocentric¹¹² rhetoric the *Wilderness Act* preaches.¹¹³

In both books mentioned, Barr always manages to illustrate the environment in such a way that it always and without fail elevates the story. The combination of her writing abilities and her professional experience provides us with a clear and considerably beautiful interpretation of how the environment in specific scenes may look like while still retaining the feel of a mystery novel. These characteristics remain unchanging throughout Barr's books, no matter the circumstances and the natural reserve's geographical placement.

The wildlife's ecosystem is not the only one that exists within the establishments. National parks in the United States all have their policies, but their main mission is the preservation of "wilderness areas" and "to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness"¹¹⁴. This bureaucratic sense of the purpose of national parks does not go without a mention in either *Track of the Cat* or *Ill Wind*, as it is a part of the daily life of a park ranger.

Track of the Cat takes place in Guadalupe Mountains, often described to be a vast and arid area. The national park possesses an abundance of desert, mountaintops and canyons, all of which bear great significance in the story. The most important earthly formation, though, are the canyons, where important aspects of the story of *Track of the Cat* take place. The Dog Canyon, whose namesake, according to Barr, comes from its history of prairie dog colonies: "Once there'd been prairie dog colonies; hence the name Dog Canyon."¹¹⁵, plays a great role in the crime narrative. Guadalupe Mountains are not considered to be anthropogenic¹¹⁶ in comparison to other, more urbanised areas of the Southwestern wilderness. The park is still a natural area with its own complex wildlife ecosystem. As was already mentioned, a part of the job of a park ranger in Guadalupe Mountains is taking care of such ecosystems by tracking their composition and further superficially interfering with it with the purpose of preserving it. A factor, persistent throughout

¹¹² Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 183.

¹¹³ "Wilderness Act."

¹¹⁴ "Wilderness Act."

¹¹⁵ Barr, *Track of the Cat*, 57.

¹¹⁶ Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 183.

any sort of natural reserve across the United States, that is considered to require intervention is the threat of fires. Guadalupe Mountains National Park is no exception, as Barr mentions in the first chapter of the book:

Thunderclouds were beginning to build to the north and west. There'd been lightning the previous night over Dog Canyon. Anna had watched it from her camp on the ridge between Dog and Middle McKittrick. It was the first storm of the season—all lightning and no precipitation. The weather pattern would continue that way till the rains came in July. Fire danger was high. Already fires burned half a dozen places in New Mexico and Arizona. Everyone in the park was on the lookout for smokes.¹¹⁷

Fires are an omnipresent threat in all that regards nature. Bubíková mentions that elements and the human struggle against them are a recurring theme in literary depictions of wilderness.¹¹⁸ Despite fire or other natural elements not posing an immediate threat in either book, Barr nuances the preventive measures the staff take against wildfires. *Ill Wind's* Mesa Verde is no exception to the rule. The main difference that can be noted regarding the fire regulations in each park is the number of staff on standby, which is more particularly described than in the previous book. *Ill Wind* is, compared to *Track of the Cat*, more concerned with characters and the communities they are a part of. One of the greatest reasons behind that is the fact that Anna is the newest addition to the staff of Mesa Verde and Barr, therefore, takes time to establish herself within the pre-existing society. To focus on the fire hazard most natural reserves face, it is important to understand the possible casualties each park may face in the case of a crisis. Mesa Verde puts great emphasis on security, for which the reason is simple. Mesa Verde, as was already mentioned by Anna, is a considerably frequented and historically important area, for which fire will leave the park with casualties far beyond the destruction of the fauna or the wildlife habitats.. In *Ill Wind*, Barr mentions the hazards fires may pose and how it is of utmost priority to protect the cultural remains:

Because of the wealth of ruins and artifacts on the mesa all wildfires were put out in their infancy by a crew of wildland firefighters flown in by helicopter. Dozers and other heavy equipment customarily used to cut fireline would be so destructive to the cultural aspects of the park that fire was never allowed to spread if it formed the high- and low-angle rescues often needed to evacuate sick and injured people from the less accessible ruins.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Barr, *Track of the Cat*, 11.

¹¹⁸ Bubíková, "Wilderness in Dana Stabernow's and Nevada Barr's Crime Fiction Series," 102.

¹¹⁹ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 20.

Fires are essentially a seasonal threat as the heat, affecting the land, may contribute to both the onset and the spread of wildfires. The summer seasons are not only overwhelming due to the hot weather, but the number of tourists that come to visit the Mesa Verde ruins causes the entire park to be less accessible and significantly more crowded. For that reason, the park employees had to adopt convenient ways of transportation around the park. The Mesa Verde rangers use cars almost exclusively, and it is perhaps up to personal interpretation whether cars stray the human race even further from nature for the sole purpose of convenience. Through Anna Barr expresses a sort of alienation she feels in regard to cars as she reminisces about Guadalupe Mountains and Isle Royale, where rangers travelled primarily on horses or, in the case of Isle Royale, by boats:

On Isle Royale Anna had patrolled in a boat, in Guadalupe Mountain on horseback. Both were preferable to the automobile. Anna wondered what it was that was so alienating about cars. Somehow, more than any other machine, they seemed to create a world of their own, a mobile pack-rat midden full of personal artifacts that utterly separated man from the natural environment he hurtled through.¹²⁰

The excerpt raises the question of ethics and morality regarding nature and humans' need to preserve and shape it according to their beliefs, a concern present in many ecocritical works.¹²¹ Anna is seemingly opposed to the idea of urbanisation of national parks and expresses it several times throughout *Ill Wind*. In *Track of the Cat*, Barr dedicates small portions of the book to the description of the Roads and Trails department, which, simply put, oversees the transport across the land and, since rangers travel primarily on horseback, takes care of the park's horses. Anna proceeds to even list the names of all the horses she would ride and expresses a certain fondness towards them.

The last notable difference in the tradition of park upkeep in Mesa Verde and Guadalupe Mountains is the tourism culture and how park employees enforce each of the parks' policies. In *Track of the Cat*, there are not many mentions of tourists across the land. In fact, the book mostly concerns itself with the park's wildlife and the community of the employees, which, despite its breathtaking scenery, "At this height there was still sun to the west. Rich and red, it slipped toward Guadalupe Peak, the highest point in Texas."¹²², could likely be attributed to the lack of historical heritage in Guadalupe Mountains. *Ill Wind's* Mesa Verde is met with a considerably greater number

¹²⁰ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 95.

¹²¹ Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 21.

¹²² Barr, *Track of the Cat*, 11.

of tourists who travel the land as the wilderness area is riddled with ancient artefacts, relics and ruins. The staff of Mesa Verde National Park are diverse. In the summer, during season, the park employs several seasonal employees such as interpreters, firefighters, rangers and more. It should be noted that the Guadalupe Mountains also employ seasonal rangers, one of whom Anna is not a part of. In Mesa Verde, rangers are the staff who typically ensure the tourists' safety by offering them water along the trails or typically come to rescue in a time of need. Such a situation did, in fact, occur in *Ill Wind*, when Anna and her colleague Stacy Meyers were called to Cliff Palace to aid a little girl who had trouble breathing.¹²³ The role of firefighters in the park is not only self-explanatory, but it was also followed up upon earlier in the chapter. Interpreters, archaeologists, and the guide's roles are also quite clear, as their main role in the park regards the remains of the Anasazi. To give a more specific example, we may focus on how interpreters rake out footprints not only to avoid trespassing but for aesthetic reasons as well:

It was customary for interpreters to rake out human tracks made in closed areas. Both so the footprints wouldn't entice others to trespass and to retain an illusion of freshness, of the first time, for those who would come next.¹²⁴

From the viewpoint of environmental writing, the core difference between *Track of the Cat* and *Ill Wind* lies primarily in the environments where the books take place,¹²⁵ as they are drastically different. Each of the environment's attributes is reflected in the customs adapted by the parks' employees, and both parks have policies that correspond with their environment. *Track of the Cat's* Guadalupe Mountains are, as was already mentioned, located in a vast and arid area with a rich wildlife ecosystem. In this book, Barr mostly concerns herself with animals and how humans treat them, in contrast to *Ill Wind*, where her main concerns target humans, cultural heritage and fauna, as Mesa Verde is considered to be the significantly more urbanised area in terms of its facilities and the sheer number of tourists the park experiences. An unchanging feature in both books is the undeniable view on national parks and how wilderness is always objectified since national parks remain and have staff that constantly care for it with the intention to preserve it.¹²⁶

¹²³ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 69.

¹²⁴ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 121.

¹²⁵ Glotfelty, *Introduction*, 19.

¹²⁶ Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 59.

5. Crime and the Environment in Nevada Barr's *Track of the Cat* and *Ill Wind*

The central idea of the work of Nevada Barr is not considered to be solely environmental writing, but a detective fiction above all. Barr expresses contemporary environmental issues and ecological concerns mainly through her crime narrative, just as Bertens and D'haen mention in their book while describing the establishment of the environmental subgenre of crime fiction.¹²⁷ In the case of the Anna Pigeon mystery novels, wildlife often falls victim to human greed and entitlement.

A way in which Barr incorporates the environment in her detective stories is usually present in the early stages of the progression of the crime plot. In *Track of the Cat*, we may observe the environment's involvement in a crime in the very first chapter of the book. Namely, it was the circumstance under which Anna was able to find the victim's body. During her expedition across Middle McKittrick Canyon, Anna noticed a suspiciously large flock of vultures circling the perimeters:

Eleven of the big birds spun in a lazy whirlwind of beaks and feathers. Whatever they hovered over was hidden from view by the steep cliffs of the Permian Reef. A scrap of rotting carrion the size of a goose egg drew vultures. But eleven? Eleven was too many.¹²⁸

Anna's expert knowledge led her to believe that a carcass of a bigger animal might be their next intended meal, and since she was on a quest to collect any information regarding the mountain lions in the park, she decided to pursue the unusually large number of vultures, looking to find out whether it was a lion kill:

A high-pitched throaty sound grumbled from her perching audience. "I'm not going to eat your damned carrion," Anna reassured them with ill grace. "I just want to see if it's a lion kill."¹²⁹

To her surprise, she was met with a dead human body and that of her fellow ranger. It should be noted that, if we omit the death of her husband, this was Anna's first brush with human death: "So far all she'd have to deal with in the line of duty were off-leash dogs and Boy Scouts

¹²⁷ Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 85.

¹²⁸ Barr, *Track of the Cat*, 4–5.

¹²⁹ Barr, *Track of the Cat*, 8.

camping out of bounds.”¹³⁰ Even through a notable amount of discomfort, Anna was able to evacuate the victim’s body. The decomposing body was not solely at fault for Anna’s discomfort. The inaccessibility of the canyons and the time forced Anna to wait until the next day, having to accompany the body and to chase away the hungry eyes of vultures.

Since Anna got to spend quite a lot of time with the body, she not only took the photos required for documentation but also got to examine the body thoroughly. It was the examination that later prompted Anna to further pursue her belief that the incident at hand was no simple lion kill, as she was able to spot discrepancies. One of them is the simple fact that the lion did not eat at least part of the body, which is not a typical way for a lion to treat its victims.¹³¹

The beginning of the crime plot in *Ill Wind* was different from that in *Track of the Cat*, as the victim’s body was not found by Anna herself, and the circumstances were drastically different. It was thanks to the wildlife that Claude Beavens, one of the park’s interpreters, found the dead body of Anna’s colleague. In fact, it was a family of canyon wrens he was pursuing that had led him to Cliff Palace, where he later found the victim’s body: “In the end, it was the interpreter Claude Beavens who found Stacy. Or, more accurately, a family of canyon wrens that had made their home high in the ancient ramparts of Cliff Palace.”¹³²

The investigation went considerably smoothly as no incorrect conclusions about the case were made, and Anna did not have to disprove anything, unlike in *Track of the Cat*. The nature of the crime itself was, in a way, thematic to its location, as the dead body was found in the ruins of Cliff Palace in a kiva by a fire pit. Anna considered the scene of the crime to look unnatural and “out of place”¹³³ as the victim’s body was “curled into the fetal position”¹³⁴. Now accompanied by another district ranger, Anna took Polaroid pictures of the victim, assessed the scene of the crime professionally and gave out orders, as the lead investigator:

Three times in her career there’d been bodies to deal with, but the crime scenes had been so unstable, they’d need to be moved. “Secure the scene, collect evidence,

¹³⁰ Barr, *Track of the Cat*, 13.

¹³¹ Barr, *Track of the Cat*, 17.

¹³² Barr, *Ill Wind*, 108.

¹³³ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 116.

¹³⁴ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 116.

maintain the chain of evidence,” she said, parroting a list from her federal law enforcement training.¹³⁵

Despite her advanced experience, Anna still had a hard time coming to terms with seeing the corpse of her colleague. His body was not fresh and was riddled with maggots and flies, making it the more of an unpleasant sight for Anna: “The bitter sting of bile backed up in Anna’s throat and her vision tunneled. She had been expecting a corpse – expecting Stacy Meyers’ corpse.”¹³⁶ Despite all, with the company of an FBI agent, Frederick Stanton, Anna was able to tackle the perpetrator and solve the case by the end of the book. Her professional male companion, though, might raise questions in regard to the feminist writing Barr is considered to write of.¹³⁷ According to Bertens and D’haen, crime fiction started off as a genre mainly masculine, but certain authors managed to shift the tides and redefine the role gender plays.¹³⁸ By keeping in mind these two simple factors, we now understand what Horsley means by linking modernist features with contemporary crime writing.¹³⁹ In *Ill Wind*, by accompanying her very “private and asocial”¹⁴⁰ protagonist with a male detective and creating a well-functioning dynamic, Barr shifts the paradigm established by her predecessors, who popularised the female PI in contemporary crime fiction. Such a decision could receive a multitude of impressions, but ultimately, we could understand it as something new and perhaps revolutionary in contrast to Barr’s first novel in the series, where her protagonist was left to fend for herself during her investigation.

Both books not only differ in environment, but the crime plot heavily draws from Anna’s experience in detective work since she is the books’ appointed investigator. Despite her training and experience, Anna is in both books, met with a specific case the likes of which she had never encountered and is therefore forced to adapt while still remaining professional. Besides the specifics of Anna’s investigation procedure, we may also observe certain similarities both stories share in terms of the progression of the crime plot. The most outstanding similarity, which was specifically analysed, is the circumstances under which the crime was discovered and that in both

¹³⁵ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 120.

¹³⁶ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 117.

¹³⁷ Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 89.

¹³⁸ Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 10.

¹³⁹ Horsley, *Twentieth-century Crime Fiction*, 54.

¹⁴⁰ Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 89.

cases it was the wildlife that had led each explorer to find the victims' bodies. Another striking similarity, which has been vaguely hinted upon, is the relevancy of each of the bodies' placement to the place where each story takes place: the body of Sheila Drury in *Track of the Cat* was located in a remote, inaccessible and dangerous spot among the vast areas of Guadalupe Mountains canyons and the dead body of Stacy Meyers, from *Ill Wind*, in the historical ruins of the ancient cities left behind by the Anasazi. Remoteness, seeming inaccessibility and danger are some of the defining characteristics of the Guadalupe Mountains National Park, whereas the "urban"¹⁴¹ areas of old ruins are those of Mesa Verde National Park. Each location and nature of the crime is unique, and each book offers a new perspective.

Nevada Barr sheds light on contemporary environmental issues through her books and does so by regarding nature and its ecosystem as secondary victims in her mysteries. Her crime plots always give readers a clear idea of who the victim of a crime is, but ultimately hint at the still-persistent environmental issues. According to Bertens and D'haen, ecological concern is a newly typical subgenre of 1990s detective fiction and that Barr was not, in fact, the one who was concerned with such topics. Judith van Gieson's first ecological novel, *Raptor* (first published in 1990), brings attention to the survival of a certain rare species of birds in Montana, and Karin McQuillan's *Deadly Safari* (first published in 1990) to the "destruction of Africa's wildlife". Other authors of the decade would, similarly to Barr, Van Gieson and McQuillan, express their concerns on specific ecological topics to raise awareness within the public.¹⁴²

In *Track of the Cat*, Barr concerns herself with the problematic topic of poaching in national parks. In the special case of *Track of the Cat*, we may observe an issue that goes beyond simple poaching, as it was, in fact, a trusted employee of the park who exploited the nature he swore to protect and preserve. Harland Roberts, the Roads and Trails foreman, was successfully discovered by Anna and was apprehended by her at night during his and his colleagues' mountain lion hunt. The mountain lion present at the culprits' rendezvous point was the second documented mountain lion the group harmed. The first mountain lion was "dispatched"¹⁴³, as park ranger jargon dictates, prompted by a wrongful accusation. It was Harland and his accomplices who staged a mountain lion attack to save themselves from being discovered, as Sheila Drury, the story's victim, had

¹⁴¹ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 5.

¹⁴² Bertens et al., *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 85.

¹⁴³ Barr, *Track of the Cat*, 10.

tangible evidence which could put their illegal operations at risk. Anna had made this deduction and asked Harland whether it was true that he had staged her death:

“Trophies. You used them to make Drury’s death look like a lion kill, didn’t you? Severed her spinal cord with an icepick or something, then bit her with dead jaws, raked her with severed claws.”¹⁴⁴

Harland remained elusive with his answers, not giving Anna confirmation, likely to scare her or put her off balance. His tactic ends up being ineffective as Anna’s motivation to bring him to justice and have him atone for his transgressions towards the wildlife trumps his strategies. Her sense of justice and motivation were further enhanced by the presence of another mountain lion on the scene. The said mountain lion was the poachers’ next intended trophy. In fact, during the heated conflict, Harland described to Anna their process, during which they allegedly first dose the animals with ketamine to earn themselves the freshest kill possible:

“Didn’t want to kill her till the last minute. Time of death and all. Didn’t want marks of struggle on the body. There’s not a problem with needle marks using ketamine: the stuff is so strong you can administer it in eyedrops.”¹⁴⁵

The present mountain lion was a stark example of this practice as it was lying unconscious beside the two rangers. During their confrontation, Harland made it clear that he has little to no regard towards the wildlife, as, during the heated conflict, he used the unconscious mountain lion’s body as a shield, trying to exploit Anna’s sentiment towards the animal: “he yanked the lion onto his lap, held its torso against his chest, his face almost hidden behind the lolling head.”¹⁴⁶ His tactic proved useful as Anna refused to harm the animal, but ultimately, Harland loses to Anna in close combat and is left for the dead by her. Through this happenstance, Barr may be trying to communicate the power the ecosystem holds over the greed of humans, as the culprit paid for what they have done to disturb and hurt it.

The greater environmental issue expressed in *Ill Wind* is of a completely different nature from that of poaching. The book’s culprit was a contractor who had worked on the premises, repairing a local pipeline:

¹⁴⁴ Barr, *Track of the Cat*, 237.

¹⁴⁵ Barr, *Track of the Cat*, 238.

¹⁴⁶ Barr, *Track of the Cat*, 234.

Theodore Roosevelt Greeley of Greeley Construction had a job to do and was being paid handsomely to do it. Though Greeley had a veneer of bonhomie, he struck Anna as a hard-core capitalist.¹⁴⁷

His misdemeanour in the end proved to be quite simple. Greeley was allegedly unloading toxic waste in the Mesa Verde premises to cut costs. During the final debrief with her FBI partner, Anna reached the conclusion that Greeley's company had financial problems and was not able to meet deadlines with its latest pipeline project. Greeley's solution was to take commissions to get rid of toxic waste for electroplating plants in Colorado:

There's electroplating plants in the area. One in Cortez, one near Shiprock, and a couple around Farmington. They use an acid for the wash and cyanide in the brass plating process. Greeley was contracted to dump it. I haven't got the particulars yet but evidently Greeley Construction was in financial trouble. Greeley couldn't finish the pipeline, he'd already spent the money. By dumping illegally he hoped to fix his cash flow problems long enough to avoid the penalties.¹⁴⁸

Anna's initial impression of Greeley being a "hard-core capitalist"¹⁴⁹ was not far from the truth, as he would essentially do anything for money. He proved that several times by going as far as killing people who posed as an obstacle. Stacy Meyers was not his only victim. Tom Silva, a somewhat problematic recurring character, employed by Greeley, found himself to be the culprit's victim as well. These two characters could be considered Greeley's "true" victims, as he intended to dispatch them, since they stood in his way. They were not the only casualties, as the toxic waste, unloaded by Greeley, caused a small girl to die in the hospital after being rescued by Anna on her hike, since she reportedly had issues breathing. This claim was later confirmed by agent Stanton, who, during the final debrief, lists all the medical conditions the toxic waste may cause to a human organism: "But the gas was what was drifting up the canyon. Nausea, palpitations, confusion, tachycardia, hyperventilation, hypoxia."¹⁵⁰ The mentioned gas was caused by a simple chemical reaction between the washing acid and cyanide, which sometimes happened during Greeley's weekly unloading sessions, causing the harmful gas to spread into the atmosphere of Mesa Verde.

¹⁴⁷ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 4.

¹⁴⁸ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 308.

¹⁴⁹ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 4.

¹⁵⁰ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 308.

Greeley's brutal and materialistic nature had become apparent during the final confrontation, as he did not hesitate to attack three officers who apprehended him during the act. The consequences of the final fight by the end of the book were dire, as Anna came into contact with a dangerous amount of acid, and Greeley ended up getting shot by Stanton.

Both books express the ever-present issue of corporate human greed. The culprits of both books did not respect the wildlife ecosystem and exploited it for their own benefit. Each character did so in their own way, but ultimately, they share more similarities than they do differences. Both Harland and Greeley committed their crimes in collaboration with other people, and both of them exploited the authorisations rangers have or the information rangers have access to. Harland used the rangers' information to track mountain lions or valuable game, whilst Greeley used Stacy Meyers by having him leave the door to the maintenance yard open to him each Monday night at the end of Stacy's shift: "Greeley paid him to unlock the Four-Way and make sure the coast was clear. That's why Greeley did it Monday nights; Stacy was on the late shift."¹⁵¹ Considering the fact that both perpetrators disrupted the ecosystem from within the force whose mission is to protect it, a certain distrust and uncertainty could be spotted in the writing of Nevada Barr, hinting at the possibility that bureaucracy may not be completely trustworthy.

¹⁵¹ Barr, *Ill Wind*, 306.

Conclusion

This thesis defines topics in close relation to the work of Nevada Barr and, by utilising the knowledge from the theoretical chapters, analyses the novels *Track of the Cat* and *Ill Wind* from the standpoint of both environmental writing and crime fiction. Since the primary genre of Barr's work is crime fiction, the first chapter describes its history and does so chronologically and by listing specific authors along with their contributions to the genre. Besides the authors themselves, the thesis also mentions their main protagonists through whom said authors narrate their stories and establish the archetypes of said characters. Historical context was not the only topic the detective portion of the first chapter discusses, as it delves deeper into the specific modes that had come to be through the times in certain cultures. The paper further elaborates on the dynamic relationships between the two most prominent detective fiction modes and the character archetypes they are often associated with, as well as it mentions the subsequent subversion the genre had undergone in the following centuries as contemporary authors aimed to differentiate their work from one another.

The second focus of the first chapter concerns itself with environmental writing, signs of which are heavily present in Barr's work. This part of the chapter first establishes the idea behind the literary discipline of ecocriticism by considering interpretations of several authors, who elaborate on said discipline in their work, and describes its brief history. Furthermore, the last part of the chapter concerns itself with the complex topic of wilderness and the common understanding of it. This section primarily expresses the understanding of wilderness of white settlers, which had registered dramatic changes over time and describes specific influences and authors who contributed to the variable beliefs the people have adopted. To offer a slightly different view on the matter, the thesis devotes a few paragraphs to the diametrically different view on nature that Native Americans adopted in comparison to the white settlers and illustrates this with a short excerpt from the essay of Leslie Marmon Silko, a Native American author. In relation to the conflicting ideology of the two groups, the thesis follows up by discussing the processes in the establishment of national parks and natural reserves in the United States and their ethically questionable nature.

The last chapter of the theoretical part of the thesis primarily focuses on the life of Nevada Barr and does so by offering a short biographical entry about the author and setting her work into

the context of contemporary environmental crime fiction. To illustrate the more specific context better, the paper makes loose connections between her work and the work of a few other authors who either situate their novels in similar settings or have similar characters and briefly mentions them.

The first analysis chapter of the thesis focuses on the main characters of the series, as they remain a never-changing aspect of the series. The chapter defines the main protagonist and her most prominent traits. The analysis primarily focuses on the protagonist's relationship with nature and what meaning the wildlife carries in regard to her personal life. The following two characters, despite being quite important, are both secondary, and the chapter focuses on the influence they may have on the story's protagonist.

The following chapter considers the nature of the surroundings where both of the analysed novels take place and compares them on the basis of the depiction of the environment, which is heavily dependent on the current natural reserve's geographical location and on the basis of staff stratification and the ways in which they aim to preserve the wildlife in selected locations. The last chapter of the thesis is devoted to the analysis of the dynamic relationship between detective fiction and environmental writing, present in Barr's work. Firstly, the two novels are analysed on the basis of the involvement of the wildlife in the crime plot, as, through the findings we have obtained from the analysis, we found out that, in the case of the two novels, Barr tends to follow a similar narrative pattern. Secondly, the thesis analyses how in both novels Barr expresses considerably urgent and, in today's age, relevant environmental topics and issues through her crime stories. The analysis shows that she does so by fashioning the environment in the role of a victim that is not entirely apparent at first glance, rendering her environmental writing complex and, in a way, educational.

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce s názvem „Environmentální problematika v detektivní fikci Nevady Barr“ pojednává o tématech úzce spojených s tvorbou americké autorky Nevady Barr. V praktické části práce analyzuje její historicky první román v knižní sérii Anny Pigeon, *Track of the Cat*, a *Ill Wind*, jež pochází ze stejnojmenné knižní série, ale odehrává se v diametrálně odlišné oblasti. Román *Track of the Cat* (1993) je první kniha v sérii, což byl hlavní důvod k výběru knihy k analýze. Román *Ill Wind* (1995) byl vybrán na základě doporučení. Práce je rozdělena do pěti kapitol, přičemž první dvě jsou teoretické a podrobně zkoumají historii a sociálně-kulturní náležitosti detektivní literatury, literární disciplínu ekokritiky, chápání pojmu divočina, popisuje eticky kontroverzní proces zřizování národních parků na území Spojených států amerických a stručně představuje autorku a řadí její práci do literárního kontextu. Zbýlé tři kapitoly pomocí nálezů a informací získaných z výzkumu z prvních kapitol analyzují vybrané romány.

Literatura autorky Nevady Barr je primárně detektivní a z tohoto důvodu se práce v první části první kapitoly zaměřuje na téma detektivní fikce, kterou definuje z hlediska historického a sociálně-kulturního a Nevadu Barr do kontextu řadí. Práce při výzkumu postupuje chronologicky a prvně uvádí autory, kteří se na definování žánru podíleli a krátce představuje jejich protagonisty, skrze které své detektivní příběhy vypráví. Práce se mimo jiné soustředí na detektivní literární módy, jimiž je tzv. „hard-boiled“ mód, původně typicky americký, a tzv. „whodunnit“ mód, známý primárně jako typicky britský. Mimo jiné i zmiňuje, jak k těmto módům autoři v průběhu času přistupují a jak je mísí, aby dosáhli co nejlepších a čtenářsky nejzajímavějších příběhů. V návaznosti na moderní detektivní literaturu, práce věnuje několik paragrafů i konkrétním autorkám, které detektivní literární scéně představily ženské postavy v roli vyšetřovatelek. Oborníci toto hnutí označují jako subverzi žánru zejména proto, že doposud v hlavních rolích detektivní příběhu figurovali zejména muži a ženské postavy nebyly zpravidla dobře rozvinuté či komplexní. Tvorba zmíněných autorek, včetně Nevady Barr, je označována za feministickou.

Následující téma první kapitoly se zabývá definicí literární disciplíny ekokritiky. Odborníci disciplínu považují za poměrně mladou, a to zejména kvůli vnímání životního prostředí literárními kritiky, kteří jej zprvu vnímali jako téma sociálně-kulturní. Jádrem ekokritiky je vnímání a zkoumání role, kterou prostředí hraje v analyzovaných dílech či jak jej ve vyprávění využívá pro barvitější příběh nebo, jako v případě autorky Nevady Barr, jak dílo poukazuje na problematiku

životního prostředí. Úzce spjatá problematika s ekokritikou je otázka divočiny, která hraje důležitou roli v knihách Nevady Barr. Kapitola zkoumá a popisuje chápání pojmu divočina ze strany kolonizátorů a původních obyvatel. Chápání obou skupin je diametrálně rozdílné a zejména spočívá v přístupu, který si každá skupina volí. Původní obyvatelé žijí v souladu s již existujícím ekosystémem a nevnímají jej jako něco, co mají ovládnout či jako něco, co bylo stvořeno přímo pro ně. Bílí kolonizátoři si naopak divočinu stanovili jako symbol své národní identity, kterou chtějí zachovávat a upravovat k obrazu svému. Perfektním příkladem tohoto přístupu je samotná existence přírodních rezervací, kterých je na území Spojených států amerických nespočet. Obě skupiny mají, v otázce zakládání národních parků, spleť historii, která je, dalo by se říci, morálně a eticky kontroverzní. Práce věnuje několik paragrafů konkrétním případům odsunu původních obyvatel americkou vládou se záměrem vytyčení hranic kolem chráněných oblastí.

V druhé kapitole práce stručně představuje autorku vybraných románů a zasazuje ji do literárního kontextu. Nevada Barr je původem ze státu Nevada, kde trávila dětství. Na rozdíl od zbytku své rodiny, Barr inklinovala k umění, které potažmo i studovala. Autorka postupem času našla novou vášeň: divočinu. Hlavním důvodem toho sentimentu je fakt, že Nevada Barr trávila svá léta v amerických národních parcích, kde, stejně jako její hlavní protagonistka, byla zaměstnaná jako strážkyně parku. Svou lásku k umění a přírodě autorka snoubila ve svých románech, které jsou odborníky pokládány za environmentální literaturu. Není ovšem sama, kdo ve své tvorbě píše o životním prostředí. Práce na stručný úvod o životě autorky navazuje zmínkami autorů, jejichž tvorba se nějakým způsobem pojí s tvorbou Nevady Barr. Autoři jsou vždy považováni za environmentální a někteří, podobně jako Barr ve vybraných románech, situují své příběhy do jihozápadní Ameriky.

Třetí kapitola zahajuje praktickou část bakalářské práce, a to analýzou hlavních postav knižní série. Práce se postavám románů věnuje zejména proto, že se bezvýhradně nacházejí v každém z příběhů. Kapitola analyzuje povahu hlavní protagonistky knižní série a analyzuje její vztah k přírodě a její hodnoty. Analýza mimo jiné studuje, jak se postava napříč romány mění a co jí ovlivňuje, což následně ilustruje na výňatcích ze primárních textů. Kapitola dále rozebírá role dvou vedlejších postav, které osobně v žádném z příběhů nefigurují. Jednou z nich je starší sestra protagonistky, se kterou v knihách komunikuje pouze telefonicky. Druhou zmiňovanou postavou

je zesnulý manžel protagonistky, jehož smrt hrdinku motivuje utéct do přírody za prací do národních parků.

Čtvrtá kapitola práce se zaměřuje na vyobrazení životního prostředí v románech *Track of the Cat* a *Ill Wind*. Účelem kapitoly je analýza jak realistického popisu jednotlivých národních parků, kde se každý z románů odehrává, tak i způsob, kterým se zaměstnanci každého z parků o přírodní rezervace starají. Důvodem k analýze realistického vyobrazení je fakt, že všechna romány, které jsou kategorizovány jako environmentální literatura, by měly životní prostředí vyobrazovat pravdivě a realisticky. Hlavním důvodem pro toto kritérium je komentář, který nadměrná většina děl této kategorie vyjadřuje, skrz který se snaží upozorňovat na environmentální hrozby dnešní doby. Dynamický vztah mezi zaměstnanci parku a přírodou je nezaměnitelný aspekt tvorby Nevady Barr. V obou románech autorka podrobně popisuje způsoby, jakými komunita zaměstnanců parku zasahuje do přírodního ekosystému s cílem ochrany či údržby prostředí. Ke konci je pak zřejmé, že oba romány zastávají myšlenku, že divočina je místo pro člověka, kam se může uchýlit v momentech kdy chce utéct ruchu moderní doby a že se tyto oblasti musí kultivovat a chránit pro budoucí generace.

Poslední kapitola se zabývá spojením detektivní fikce a environmentální literatury románech autorky Nevady Barr. Kapitola prvně kategorizuje tvorbu autorky a poté plynule naváže na první bod analýzy, jejímž je přítomnost přírody a životního prostředí v průběhu detektivní zápletky románu. V obou románech lze vyzorovat velmi podobný fenomén a sice nález prvních důkazů za nepřímé pomoci přírody. V *Track of the Cat* lze sledovat, jak Annu dovede neobvyklé hejno supů na místo činu či jak je v knize *Ill Wind* nálezce těla na místo činu doveden během pozorování malé rodiny střízlíků. Práce dále analyzuje způsob, jakým autorka upozorňuje na novodobé environmentální hrozby. Skrze analýzu lze zjistit, že autorka stylizuje životní prostředí do role oběti podobně jak lidi.

Bibliography

Barr, Nevada. *Ill Wind*. New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2004

Barr, Nevada. *Track of The Cat*. New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2003

Bertens, Hans and Theo D'haen. *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2001.

Bubíková, Šárka. "Wilderness in Dana Stabenow's and Nevada Barr's Crime Fiction Series." In *Places and Spaces of Crime in Popular Imagination*. edited by Bubíková, Šárka and Olga Roebuck. 95–108. Krakow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2021.

Bubíková, Šárka and Olga Roebuck. *The Place It Was Done. Location and Community in Contemporary American and British Crime Fiction*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2023.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*. Malden, USA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

Dean, John. "The Uses of Wilderness in American Science Fiction," *Science Fiction Studies* 9, no. 1 (March 1982): 68–81.

Geherin, David. *Scene of the Crime: The Importance of Place in Crime and Mystery Fiction*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2008.

Horsley, Lee. *Twentieth-century Crime Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 53

Glotfelty, Cheryll. "Introduction." In *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, 15–32. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996.

Kantor, Isaac. "Ethnic Cleansing and America's Creation of National Parks" *Public Land & Resources Law Review* 28, no. 5 (June 2007): 42–62.

Mississippi Writers & Musicians. "Nevada Barr." Mississippi Writers. Last modified 2015. <https://www.mswritersandmusicians.com/mississippi-writers/nevada-barr?cn-reloaded=1>.

Nash, Roderick Frazier. *Wilderness and the American Mind*. 5th edition. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

National Park Service. "Organic Act of 1916." Laws & Policies. Last modified April 22, 2021. <https://www.nps.gov/grba/learn/management/organic-act-of-1916.htm>.

Nevada Barr. "Biography." Accessed May 26, 2025, <https://www.nevadabarr.com/biography.html>.

Phillips, Bill. "Crime Fiction: A Global Phenomenon." *IAFOR. Journal of Literature & Librarianship* 5, no. 1 (November 2016): 5–16.

Scaggs, John. *Crime Fiction: The New Critical Idiom*. London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2005.

Silko, Leslie Marmon. "Landscape, History, and the Pueblo Imagination." In *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, 264–275. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996.

Wilderness Connect. "The Wilderness Act." Accessed May 25, 2025, <https://wilderness.net/learn-about-wilderness/key-laws/wilderness-act/>.