

How to Communicate Global Warming? Tracking Narrative Streams in Ilija Trojanow's *EisTau*

by

Tanya Hagman

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### Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

## Abstract

Global warming is an extremely complex environmental issue with academic research published on the topic in a wide variety of fields. Because the multifaceted aspects of climate change traverse across so many disciplines, using literature as a means to explore the difficulties that exist in translating and communicating the implications of climate change across these borders is essential to understanding why this disconnect exists, and what can be done to possibly eliminate it. I argue that literature, in its ability to critically express the social and individual elements of global warming, can add to a deeper understanding of climate change in today's society.

This thesis examines how Ilija Trojanow's novel *EisTau* (2011) interweaves distinct narrative streams about global warming and, in so doing, addresses the urgency of communication about it, as well as acts as a vessel to vent emotions of anger and despair about the willed ignorance of human contributions to climate change. Referencing the burgeoning, interdisciplinary field of ecocriticism as the theoretical framework of this thesis, the following pages examine how *EisTau*, as a global warming narrative, critically engages with issues of personally responding to and communicating global warming. The analysis demonstrates how Trojanow's employment of first-person narrative to express the protagonist, Zeno Hintermeier's, personal relationships to an Alpine glacier, the Antarctic, and his reaction to the passive and ignorant individuals around him results in a valuable literary addition to the discussion about global climate change by mirroring the current shortcomings of society's engagement with and communication about global warming. In addition, this thesis analyzes the novel's representation of the bombardment of media and conflicting information regarding climate change found in the short inserts placed between each chapter.

To conclude, the novel embodies an individual account of what is currently lacking in society's response to global climate change: a personal and emotional connection to nature, subjective experience to facilitate and expand knowledge, and successful communication in our globalized and mediated world.

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## 1. Introduction: What Does Literature Have to do With Global Warming?

For quite some time now, global warming and climate change have been widely discussed topics in the news and politics.<sup>1</sup> There has been a substantial amount of academic research published on these topics in the fields of biology, ecology, geography, social sciences, political science, and law, just to name a few. Ever increasingly, artistic exhibitions and literary works address the complicated issues of representing nature, society's relationships to it, and social as well as individual responsibility regarding global warming and climate change. However, there remains a vast disconnect between this information and an active response to it. As is the case with most scientific lines of inquiry, many political and social factors need to be addressed in addition to scientific data in order for the public to grasp the dangers more fully. Researchers from the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society in Munich claim that, "Until now, our understanding of climate change has been shaped by abstract climate prediction models and discussions conducted by scientific experts. [...] It is only recently that aesthetic and cultural forms of interpretation, which illustrate the personal and social impacts of a climatically changed future, have become increasingly important" (Mehnert & Andersen 2013). Because the multifaceted aspects of climate change traverse across so many disciplines, using literature as a means to explore the difficulties that exist in translating and communicating the implications of climate change across these borders is essential to understanding why this disconnect exists, and what can be done to possibly eliminate it.

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<sup>1</sup> Mass media currently prefer "climate change" to "global warming," sticking to the more general term while avoiding the fear-mongering communication strategy associated with the latter term. In scientific literature, climate change and global warming are actually two different physical phenomena, and both terms are used frequently. Global warming refers to the long-term trend of global temperatures rising, while climate change refers to the changes in global climate (for example, precipitation patterns, increased prevalence of drought, heat waves, or other extreme weather etc.) resulting from rising global temperatures.

The idea for this project arose out of the observation that, as a conservation biology undergraduate student, there was virtually no discussion about the complexity of the social and political dimensions that contribute to global warming and the public perception of environmental problems. Out of an interest in German language and culture, I also completed a Major in German that exposed me to a different way of thinking and engaging with the world around me than what I was used to in my objective, data-driven science classes. In my upper year German Literature and Culture courses, I began to take an interest in how nature is represented in literature and how, through the study of literature, examinations of individual and societal relationships to the environment throughout history can be undertaken. I also began to wonder how contemporary literature addressing the current environmental crises of climate change could add a subjective and social dimension to the study of global warming. In response to these inquiries, in this thesis, I would like to examine how Ilija Trojanow's novel *EisTau* (2011) interweaves three distinct narrative streams about global warming and, in so doing, addresses the urgency of communication about it, as well as acts as a vessel to vent emotions of anger and despair about the willed ignorance of human contributions to climate change. Furthermore, I would like to determine how *EisTau*, as a global warming narrative, contributes to current discourses on climate change and fills a gap that science alone is unable to account for.

Before I move on, I will now give a short synopsis of the novel. Trojanow's *EisTau* takes the form of protagonist and retired glaciologist Zeno Hintermeier's *Notizbuch* while he works as an *Expeditionsleiter* on the Antarctic cruise ship *MS Hansen*. Here he writes out his thoughts on and releases his anger towards the ignorant and passive attitudes of those around him regarding their destructive behaviour towards the environment. The *Notizbuch* also acts as a cathartic vessel for Zeno to express his personal emotions of grief, despair, and hopelessness as he mourns



the loss of the Alpine glacier he spent his career studying and came to love deeply. Through the reflections on his past as a scientist and the descriptions of his relationship to the Alpine glacier, Zeno critiques the ability of science alone to fully know, appreciate, and understand natural phenomena and highlights the necessity of a personal and intimate relationship to nature to do so. In his recordings of his failed attempts at communicating the urgency and destructiveness of global warming to those around him – his former students, his ex-wife, the passengers on the cruise ship, and his Filipino lover Paulina – he recognizes that simply talking about global warming is not enough to awaken others' awareness and concern for its consequences. While a famous artist, Dan Quentin, prepares to stage an exhibition on the ice, getting the passengers to form an SOS as a symbol for the distress that the Antarctic environment is experiencing in light of global warming, Zeno decides to hijack the ship, leaving all of the passengers and crew of the ship stranded. After Zeno mourns the loss of his beloved glacial environment and is unsuccessful in communicating his personal relationship to nature and warning against future damage caused by climate change, he realizes that there is nothing more that he can do. Zeno jumps overboard, committing suicide and escaping further living out the nightmare he has already experienced.

In the section of their website reserved for a comprehensive review of contemporary German authors and genres, the Goethe-Institut published an article giving a list of current trends in literature's approach to addressing issues of climate change. The list includes the following literary themes: science fiction and nature fighting back (Frank Schätzing's *Der Schwarm* [2011]), conspiracy (Nele Neuhaus's *Wer Wind Sät* [2011] and Sven Böttcher's *Prophezeiung* [2011] where an exaggeration of climate change effects a criticism of the renewable energy market's hunger for profits and is preferred to a true representation of the dangers of climate change), and call to action (Drik C. Fleck's *Maeva!* [2011]). The final theme identified in this

review of German climate change literature is elegy. Here the example given is the novel under investigation in this thesis, Ilija Trojanow's *EisTau* (Mehnert & Andersen 2013). There are also a number of English-speaking authors who have contributed to the collection of contemporary literary texts concerning climate change. Examples include British author Saci Lloyd's *The Carbon Diaries: 2015* (2009), American authors Clive and Dirk Cussler's *Arctic Drift* (2008) and Michael Crichton's *State of Fear* (2004), and Canada's own Margaret Atwood's dystopian trilogy *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam* (2013). Of course, this is not an exhaustive list of literature, but what is noteworthy is the range of literary expression employed to represent, imagine, and critique both the scientific and social dimensions of global climate change. Due to the complicated nature of environmental issues and society's problematic understanding of and response to them, I argue that literature, in its ability to critically express the social and individual elements of global warming, can add to a deeper understanding of climate change in today's society.

It is clear that there is no shortage of contemporary Western literature addressing issues of global climate change, so why focus specifically on Ilija Trojanow's *EisTau*? The answer to that question lies in the novel's elegiac engagement with the human response to global warming as well as in its use of the imagery and symbolism of climate change. The genre of elegy is not unique to the field of environmental literature. Scientists, scholars, environmentalists, artists, and writers recognize that humans are currently in a moment in time where both past and present actions on Earth are resulting in increasingly evident negative consequences for the environment (Morton 252). One way in which literature can engage with these consequences is by writing elegies to actively mourn the loss of nature and habitat caused by destructive human actions. In an article discussing elegy and ecological writing, Timothy Morton writes, "In elegy, the person

departs and the environment echoes our woe. In ecological thinking, the fear is that we will go on living, while the environment disappears around us” (253). This fear of experiencing the loss of the environment, the thing *EisTau*’s main protagonist Zeno Hintermeier loves more than anything else, and his inability to do anything about it is exactly what he expresses in the opening sentence of the novel: “Es gibt keinen schlimmeren Alptraum, als sich nicht mehr ins Wachsein retten zu können” (9). In response to the prospect of living out his worst nightmare, Zeno begins to keep a notebook recording his emotional and physical responses to the effects of global warming, his process of mourning the “death” of an Alpine glacier, as well as his futile attempts at communicating the urgency and destruction of global warming to others: “Deswegen dieses Notizbuch, deswegen mein Beschluß, aufzuzeichnen, was geschehen ist, was geschehen wird. Ich werde zum Worthalter des eigenen Gewissens. Etwas muß geschehen. Es ist höchste Zeit” (18).

Using elegy to mourn the loss of environment due to the fairly new environmental crisis of global warming creates an interesting effect. The traditional understanding of elegy is a literary expression of mourning for something that is already gone. However, “ecological elegy weeps for that which *will have passed* given a continuation of the current state of affairs” (Morton 254). Therefore, as global warming is a process that is currently taking form and its consequences are only beginning to be realized, *EisTau* fuses elegy with prophecy to simultaneously warn of global warming’s destructiveness as well as express mourning for the losses it has already caused. Zeno’s role is both environmental historian and prophet. Throughout the novel he records the loss he has already experienced due to global warming in his mourning of the Alpine glacier, as well as warns of the future by expressing his anger towards the

sickening ignorance and passivity of others regarding the destruction of nature due to the human actions that contribute to climate change.

The second reason for choosing *EisTau* as the subject of this thesis goes back to the winter of 2007 when an image of two polar bears floating on a shrinking iceberg began virally circulating the internet, first appearing on the Canadian Ice Service's website before it made it to print media in the London *Daily Mail* on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 (Ziser & Sze 387). The following is an excerpt from the text that accompanied the photo in the *Daily Mail*: "They cling precariously to the top of what is left of the ice floe, their fragile grip the perfect symbol of the tragedy of global warming" (Daily Mail 2007). Although this image was taken out of context – the photo was originally taken by graduate researcher Amanda Byrd during a scientific expedition to monitor the effects of warming in the Beaufort Sea in August 2004, and the polar bears were neither stranded nor starved – it quickly became the image for the public case for the global warming crises in the twenty-first century. This was in large part due to the fact that "the bears spoke to a host of sentiments clustered around common Western tropes of wilderness, human dominion, and animal welfare" (Ziser & Sze 388). Running with the sentiments of this image, the National Resource Defense Council ran a fundraising advertisement featuring a polar bear standing on an iceberg as it breaks apart to form the letters SOS, the internationally recognized call of distress. These early campaigns to raise public awareness for the climate change crises use the image of melting icebergs to communicate the urgency of global warming, thereby making melting ice a key symbol in the discourse about global warming.

Author Ilija Trojanow takes advantage of this symbol in his novel, *EisTau*, beginning already with the title. Translated into English as "Melting Ice" the title of this novel directly appeals to the imagery and urgency of the current discussion on climate change and global

warming. Furthermore, although it is written together as one word, the German title is partitioned by the capitalization of both “*Eis*” and “*Tau*.” In my opinion, this manipulation distinguishes the environmental destruction described in the novel as caused by humans, and separates them from the natural processes of melting ice. To add to that, the words are printed in different colours with “*Eis*” in blue, and “*Tau*” in dark grey. The colour blue suggests purity and is consistent with the natural colour of water, whereas grey implies interference and destruction. This creative and artistic depiction of the title highlights the anthropogenic contribution to the negative effects of global warming. The content of the novel is also consistent with this symbolism, providing a narrative of glaciologist Zeno Hintermeier’s personal and highly emotional reaction to the melting and ultimate death of the Alpine glacier he spent a lifetime admiring, revering, measuring, and mourning. Zeno’s passion for ice takes him to Antarctica as a lecturer and expedition leader on the cruise ship *MS Hansen*, where he is further confronted with melting ice, this time on a much larger scale. In addition, he witnesses society’s ignorant and passive response to the evidence of global warming. In short, the campaigns outlined above successfully use the trope of melting ice to draw public attention to global warming, as too has *EisTau* become, in the words of Axel Goodbody (one of Britain’s current leading scholars on ecocritical theory with a focus on German literature) “probably the best-known German novel to date focused explicitly on global warming” (96). This novel moves the focus of global warming from the Alps all the way down to the opposite end of the earth in Antarctica, emphasizing that no one, and nowhere, is immune to its devastating effects and consequences.

### 1.1 Objectives

In his novel, *EisTau*, Trojanow artfully addresses the complex and interconnected issues of global warming, nature, science, art, teaching, tourism, media, and politics. The novel

highlights the difficulties of successfully communicating the urgency of global warming to a broader public through the personal account of a passionate and angry retired glaciologist, Zeno Hintermeier, who is now working as an *Expeditionsleiter* on an eco-cruise ship to the Antarctic. Through Zeno's first-person account in the form of a *Notizbuch* where he records his experiences on the ship, his failed marriage, his affair, and his career as a glaciologist, *EisTau* mirrors society's inability to effectively communicate the urgency of global warming as well as portrays emotions of anger and despair at the ignorant and hostile reactions of society.

In response to this apparent lack of communication, Trojanow utilizes a first-person narrative to criticize the current situation of society's ignorance and passivity to climate change. In addition, Zeno's process of mourning the death of the glacier he got to know as a child and studied over the course of his academic career represents the current and critical environmental crises at a very personal level. In an analysis of *EisTau*, it is my hope to show that a literary response to pending environmental catastrophe is an essential component in the understanding of global climate change because it allows for knowledge about global warming to be expressed at a personal level rather than solely at the scientific, objective level. In the novel, the preference for a personal and emotional response to climate change over a scientific and objective one is embodied in Zeno's departure from his career as a glaciologist after the Alpine glacier he spent his career studying no longer exists. His scientific career has failed him in gaining knowledge to protect the glacier against the advances of global warming as well as in providing him with the tools to communicate its dangers to others. No longer relying on scientific method, Zeno turns to informally teaching others on a cruise ship in Antarctica, where he emotionally processes his personal experiences with global warming through the act of keeping a *Notizbuch*. Engaging with climate change at all levels – personal, in writing, as well as in social interaction – is

necessary for Zeno to understand the issue more fully. More broadly speaking, literature has the ability to critically combine these factors to document human relationships and responses to climate change. By placing emphasis on the subjective response to climate change, *EisTau* provides essential information to the current discourse on climate change that is dominated by scientific knowledge, understanding, and communication, or the lack thereof.

## 1.2 Outline

Referencing the burgeoning, interdisciplinary field of ecocriticism as the theoretical framework of this thesis, the following chapters will examine how *EisTau*, as a global warming narrative, critically engages with issues of personally responding to and communicating global warming. The bulk of this thesis will consist of an analysis of the text showing how its employment of a first-person narrative to express Zeno's personal relationship to the Alpine glacier, the Antarctic and scientific, objective knowledge, and finally, the passive and ignorant individuals around him results in a valuable literary addition to the discussion about global climate change. In addition, this thesis will analyze the novel's representation of and response to the bombardment of media and conflicting information regarding climate change. I will begin by introducing the context of the current discourse on global warming and situate my research within this discourse by stating that a study of narratives on global warming is required to fully comprehend the issue at a scientific as well as social, political, cultural, and literary level. I will then give an overview of the relevant research already conducted in the field of ecocriticism as it pertains to this thesis. The analysis of Zeno's chronicle consists of three parts, each section dealing with a particular stream of narrative: Zeno's personal relationship to the glacier, an exploration of the scientific and literary representations of the Antarctic, and the depiction of media overwhelming information and dulling the senses to environmental concerns. The final

section of analysis will tackle the short chapter inserts that are placed between each chapter. Finally, a conclusion will summarize how each of these narratives contribute to the personal expression of global warming and how that is necessary to the discourse on climate change.



## 2. Reading Global Warming: Theory and Methodology

Because the novel illustrates global warming and the communication of its effects on multiple levels – individual, scientific, ecological, and media – insight into the theoretical perspectives outlining literature’s influence on these spheres is required. Using the theoretical framework of ecocriticism as well as employing tools from culture and media studies, an analysis will be undertaken to determine how *EisTau*’s multifaceted literary representation of global warming portrays postmodern society’s difficulties in communicating climate change. To begin, an overview of the current global warming discourse will reveal a lack of understanding and communication about environmental issues, and suggest that a more subjective and personal representation of global warming is required to appreciate the urgency and seriousness of the problem. Then, a review of the development of ecocritical theory will be given to situate this project in terms of what literature, and *EisTau* in particular, can contribute to society’s understanding of and engagement with the environment. Finally, and more specifically, a section on narrative will provide a theoretical basis for the claim that narrative is a critical component in more fully comprehending climate change.

### 2.1 Knowledge Problem – A Human Geography Approach

Human geography is an intriguing branch of the discipline of geography. It is a branch in the field of social science that investigates the relationships between human societies and the environment. Human geographer Karen O’Brien claims that “global environmental change” is a “hyper-complex” problem (589). She cites Otto Scharmer’s description of hyper-complex issues as problems “that exhibit: (1) dynamic complexity, where cause and effect are distant in space and time; (2) social complexity, where conflicting interests, cultures, and worldviews exist among diverse stakeholders; and (3) emergent complexity, defined by ‘disruptive patterns of

innovation and change in situations in which the future cannot be predicted and addressed by the pattern of the past” (O’Brien 589). In her article examining a possible reason for the apparent gap between knowledge and action pertaining to global climate change, she emphasizes that our current understanding of the concept of *change* itself, and how humans go about implementing it, is lacking. Confirming that our knowledge of global warming is highly motivated by objective and scientific studies, O’Brien states that change focuses largely on the “objective, measurable indicators of processes and outcomes that typically form the basis for monitoring and assessment programs” (589). She argues, however, that change “also includes subjective elements, such as the conscious and unconscious assumptions, beliefs, values, identities, and emotions of individuals and groups that influence perceptions, interpretations, and actions” (O’Brien 589). Overall, the subjective attitudes and approaches to problems tend to be missing in our scientifically objective knowledge seeking society. Research focused on trying to understand the interaction between subjective and objective approaches is a critical contribution to the advancement of knowledge on any subject, but especially hyper-complex problems, as these tend to be highly social problems both caused by and affecting humans across multiple nations, languages, cultures, beliefs, and values.

O’Brien concludes that we have failed to “shift the focus of the scientific discourse away from ‘the environment’ as the problem and towards an integrated understanding [...] based on critical research on space, place, politics, power, culture, identities, emotions, connections, and so on, including the geography of care” (593-94). In the pages to come, it is the goal of this thesis to contribute to a slight shift towards this “integrated understanding” that O’Brien describes. Trojanow’s *EisTau* is a rich text critically engaging with many of the subjective aspects of climate change listed above. For example, the first analysis will show how Zeno

expresses his emotions about the environment through a powerful connection to an Alpine glacier. The second analysis delves into a study of space by examining how the Antarctic can be both objectively and subjectively represented through scientific information and narrative, respectively. The final analyses deal with issues of culture and power, focusing on media and difficulties in communication.

## 2.2 Literature and the Environment: Ecocritical Perspectives

Ecocriticism is an overarching term used to describe the vast interdisciplinary study of nature and the environment as related to a cultural, social, and political understanding of them. Environmental criticism, literary-environmental studies, literary ecology, literary environmentalism, or green cultural studies are all terms used to describe fields of study which ecocriticism covers (Buell, “Future of Environmental Criticism” 11-12). The most cited definition of ecocriticism comes from Cheryll Glotfelty in her introduction to the *Ecocriticism Reader*, and is very broadly put as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (xviii). Ecocriticism as a literary theoretical practice is fairly new, having begun around 1990 and, as Lawrence Buell – one of the movement’s leading scholars – explains, it “became especially identified with the project of reorienting literary-critical thinking toward more serious engagement with nonhuman nature” (“Ecocriticism” 89). This engagement with nature can be followed through three distinct waves of ecocritical theory practice. Each wave has given way to new developments in the study of literature and the environment based on tensions that arise in our understanding of and interaction with the two. This thesis will show how *EisTau* illustrates Western society’s current struggles with global warming as the novel portrays the difficulty of communicating environmental concerns and humans’ relationship to nature by

addressing areas of strain in each wave of ecocriticism. In doing so, the novel acts as a medium to represent and communicate society's inability to communicate.

The first wave of ecocriticism began largely with British and American scholarship pertaining to deep ecology (Buell, "Ecocriticism" 90) as well as conservation- and sustainability-oriented environmentalism (Oppermann 15). Ecocritical scholar Ursula Heise writes that "deep ecology foregrounds the value of the nature in and of itself, the equal rights of other species, and the importance of small communities" (507). Furthermore, she explains that deep ecology is "associated often with a valuation of wild and rural spaces, self-sufficiency, a sense of place, and local knowledge and sometimes with an alternative spirituality" (Heise 507). In addition, efforts can be found in first-wave ecocriticism to incorporate knowledge from the fields of ecology, environmental biology, geology, and geography into literary theory and criticism in an attempt to make it more scientifically informed (Buell, "Ecocriticism" 90). This first wave of ecocriticism had a large focus on Romantic poetry texts, and was a romanticization of nature to the extent that it cast the ideal environment as a revered, pristine, untouched habitat. Casting this ideal on the environment is problematic because it sets nature completely apart from humans and human interaction. Deep ecology, with its assumptions about nature and the disconnected human relationship to it, began to be largely criticized in the late 1990s.

Buell describes the tension that arose out of first-wave ecocriticism, pushing it forward to the second wave, which began around 2000 with a turn towards social and cultural investigations: "the meaning of existential contact with environment today now tends to be more self-consciously framed as socially mediated, and the value set upon subjective individual experience of environment tends to be framed accordingly as a product of historical circumstance and acculturation" ("Ecocriticism" 90). The second wave moved ecocriticism away

from the ecocentric standpoint of exploring nature and environment as separate from humans towards a more sociocentric standpoint, thereby incorporating both environmental ethics and politics (Buell, "Ecocriticism" 94). Buell describes the change as a "shift of priorities toward a fusion of cultural constructionism and social justice concerns" and attributes to second wave ecocriticism "a spirit of sober toned moral and political conviction" ("Ecocriticism" 96).

So far, both streams of ecocritical analysis can be applied to Trojanow's novel *EisTau*. In response to the tensions found in Western society and culture in relating to nature and understanding and engaging in discussion about climate change, Trojanow utilizes narration to represent the current situation of society's passivity to climate change. *EisTau*'s ability to set scientific knowledge as well as individual experience and relationship to nature against the problematic situation of society's lack of dialogue about climate change exemplifies the dispute causing the push from first to second wave ecocriticism. Situating the novel in this way raises questions such as: What is the best way to investigate human relationships to natural environments? How can narrative voice aid in the communication of global warming? And how can communication about environmental issues such as global warming successfully occur at an individual as well as at social, cultural, and political levels?

The third, and most current, wave of ecocriticism propels studies of literature and the environment towards postcolonial studies (Buell, "Ecocriticism" 99). This wave of ecocriticism is characterized by an emphasis on urban spaces, which is quite the opposite from the pristine, untouched, natural landscapes that were held as the ideal in first-wave, deep-ecology ecocriticism. In addition, this current wave of study focuses on "issues of social inequality that environmental problems often overlap" (Heise 508). This area of interest originally arose out of the acknowledgement that ecocritical work to date is mostly Anglophone and comes from either

European or North American origins. Although *EisTau* is written by a European author and is meant for primarily German-speaking audiences, the novel still addresses many areas of concern in this current wave of ecocritical theory. By incorporating Zeno's relationship to his Filipino lover, Paulina, and by giving the tourists on the ship as well as the crew members a broad range of nationalities, Trojanow attempts a critique of humanity's relationship to nature and response to global warming. This small investigation of universal guilt "offer[s] new perspectives on human/nonhuman dynamics in this and other parts of the world, revealing the challenges facing any number of rapidly globalizing societies" (Buell et al. 427). Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, global tourism itself is a form a post-colonialism. Tourism, even to remote and hostile environments such as Antarctica, exemplifies how we are currently living in a globalized, shrinking world – quite literally, in reference to the melting icecaps!

Now that an overview of the development of ecocriticism and its wide branching streams of influence has been given, a more specific description of how the framework of ecocritical theory is useful for the analysis of the novel will be provided. It has been briefly indicated that Ilija Trojanow's novel *EisTau* engages with ecocritical theory at multiple stages by acknowledging problems related to the communication of individual relationships to nature and environmental catastrophes, and raises questions in regards to how literature can enhance our understanding of these issues. In an article published the same year as *EisTau* by some of the leading scholars in the field, the following additional insight into the genesis of ecocriticism is given: "Ecocriticism begins from the conviction that the arts of the imagination and the study thereof – by virtue of their grasp of the power of word, story, and image to reinforce, enliven, and direct environmental concern – can contribute significantly to the understanding of environmental problems" (Buell et al. 418). In other words, literature, in addition to other forms

or artistic expression, can function as a necessary component to our understanding of global warming. Scientific knowledge is not sufficient for a full comprehension of environmental and natural phenomena. These scholars go on to say that “today’s burgeoning array of environmental concerns must be addressed qualitatively as well as quantitatively” (Buell et al. 418). Ecocriticism provides the framework for the qualitative assessment of the expression, interpretation, and understanding of environmental concerns.

Furthermore, Finis Dunaway argues that artistic endeavors have the ability to combine science, aesthetics, and politics to represent the humanistic dimensions of climate change (13). It is therefore the conviction of this thesis that a literary contribution to the discourse on global warming and climate change is an essential constituent in the process of developing society’s ability to understand and communicate climate change. *EisTau* not only combines individual, cultural, and societal elements of narrative, science, aesthetics, and politics, it also demonstrates the tensions that exist between them. In this way, the novel acts as a representation of postmodern society’s current obstacles pertaining to the relationship between human and nature and our understanding of environmental crises. Another group of scholars go a bit further in their claim that “ecocriticism arose out of the desire to better understand how literature could make a difference in our environmental predicament” (Lynch et al. 14). It is the goal of this thesis to prove that *EisTau* has the ability to not only add to our understanding of environmental issues, but show how it, as an elegy, functions as both a warning call about the destructiveness of Western society’s current actions and relationship to nature, as well as a vessel to express the deeply personal and emotional fears associated with global warming.

### 2.3 (Global Warming) Narratives

Thus far, ecocriticism has shed light upon the complex nature of environmental issues insofar as that they include both biological and anthropogenic cause and effect. Due to the various levels of knowledge required to observe, understand, communicate, and engage with multifaceted environmental issues, ecocritical literary theory provides the possibility to investigate literature's ability to simultaneously encompass multiple aspects of environmental crises, and, therefore, to offer an arguably more sustained and accessible explanation through narrative expression. Buell et al. write that "The fusion of [these] epistemologies may be precarious and temporary for the moment [...] but ultimately necessary for an altered relationship between humans and their environments in an increasingly globalized world" (424). This thesis responds to the problems that ecocriticism points out regarding the general public's lack of understanding concerning environmental issues as well as the absence of an urgency in the need to communicate global warming. To do so, an examination of "how particular templates of storytelling [...] shape humans' real-life interactions with the natural world in ways that are historically and culturally distinctive" will be undertaken (Buell et al. 419).

Greta Gaard outlines some of the problems of communicating climate change by stating that global warming narratives can create doubt about scientific findings, but they also have the ability to ask real questions regarding the implications of scientific predictions (44). *EisTau* evaluates the effect of isolating scientific research and communicating scientific fact apart from social and political issues. It also portrays the apparent ignorant attitude of society. By providing a narrative that acts as an outlet for the protagonist to express feelings of mourning, anger, and despair, as well as to document his personal observations and experiences on the cruise ship, the



novel contributes to the discourse on climate change at the level of the individual – a dimension that science alone cannot address.

In addition, Lejano et al. have distinguished between the dissemination of traditional versus scientific knowledge and its reception in modern society. They argue that although modernity is understood as having progressed beyond traditional narration as a means to comprehend and distribute knowledge to objective, scientific knowing, modern individuals still understand complex phenomena by translating them into narrative knowledge (Lejano et al. 62). Lejano et al. go on to emphasize the ability of narrative knowledge to integrate complex issues comprehensibly into everyday life by relating to individuals on a personal level through concepts such as identity, belief, and experience (62). Building on these comments, I shall now move on to the analysis section where I will isolate a couple of specific theoretical tools to help analyze *EisTau*'s distinct narratives and how they can contribute to communicating and expressing climate change in today's world.

### 3. Analysis

#### 3.1 Analysis 1 – Who is the Glacier?

“An artist’s imagination and sensitivity towards human attitudes, values, and perceptions, as well as his ability to filter the essence of our relations with nature help us understand our interactions with the landscape, its cultural value, and our deep roots in the environment” (Lando 6).

A look at any public forum discussing global climate change will likely result in confusion for the reader. Despite large quantities of scientific research indicating that global warming is a current environmental crisis that is in large part caused by human actions, heated disagreements continue regarding the claim that global warming is a real phenomenon, and even hotter still are the arguments as to whether or not humans are responsible for it.<sup>2</sup> Studies about climate change span many disciplines – biology, sociology, politics, and media studies, just to name a few. Because of the complicated nature of environmental concerns, difficulties in articulating what global climate change is, who is responsible for it, and how it affects our physical, social, political, and personal surroundings arise regularly. In response to these difficulties, literature as well as other artistic endeavors attempting to represent climate change are gaining in both number and popularity. In particular, literary responses to climate change are becoming a necessary component in society’s understanding of its responsibility to the earth because they allow for expression at a personal level. Ilija Trojanow’s novel *EisTau* is one such global warming narrative that utilizes various first-person narratives to express climate change at the level of the individual.

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<sup>2</sup> For evidence of the urgency of the negative consequences of global warming as well as proof of anthropogenic contributions to climate change see: IPCC, 2007; Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2003; and UNISDR, 2011. For evidence of anthropogenic contributions specifically to global glacier loss, refer to Marzolon et al. 2014.

How does an individual form and express a personal relationship with nature? What does an emotional response to climate change look like? What are the difficulties in communicating environmental issues? How does one experience the urgency of global warming? These questions are considered through an analysis of the first-person narrative of the main character Zeno Hintermeier's relationship to an Alpine glacier and his mourning of its demise. Furthermore, an analysis of this narrative will show how *EisTau* voices anger and despair regarding climate change and society's current inability to recognize the urgency of the situation.

In the following pages, I shall cover several dimensions of a first-person voice that justify Trojanow's decision to choose such a form. One of the prime aspects of the first-person account is Zeno's use of dialect to recount his first meeting with the glacier. It binds him to the glacier by creating ties to his childhood memories, emotions, and family. Additionally, by reflecting one of the most intimate forms of human interaction – the representation of the relationship between Zeno and the glacier as a romantic one, including the sensualization of the glacier – act as a means to emphasize the development of a personal relationship to nature, as well as its necessity. Finally, as the glacier begins to melt due to the effects of global warming, Zeno conveys his feelings of personal loss and mourning of the glacier. The novel, in the form of Zeno's personal *Notizbuch*, acts as a cathartic vessel for him to vent his emotions of anger, despair, and mourning. Zeno's relationship to the glacier is represented in three separate stages: his encounter with it as a child, his infatuation and growing desire for it as a student as well as professor of glaciology, and his mourning for it as it melts away. Throughout each period of the relationship, Zeno exhibits a strong need to communicate his unique bond with the glacier, but is repeatedly unsuccessful in doing so. His emotions towards the glacier and global warming mirror those experienced by a few members of society passionate about nature and environmental issues, for

example environmental activists and scientists. Although his *Notizbuch* acts as a means of private expression, Zeno is still unable to share his feelings with those on the cruise ship. Overall, as this analysis will show, Zeno's need to communicate his relationship with the glacier and his inability to do so in the novel embody society's inability to form relationships to nature and relate to and engage in discussion about climate change. Through this narrative stream, the novel embarks on the task of capturing our society's failures at communication regarding issues of environmental crises.

To enhance the description of his experience of initial contact with a glacier as a child, Zeno incorporates his native dialect into the text of his *Notizbuch*. The German Anglicist Paul Goetsch describes why the use of dialect may be included in literature: "Wichtig sind [...] innerliterarische Gesichtspunkte. So streben manche Schriftsteller durch die Einbeziehung von Dialekt oder Fremdsprache eine größere Wirklichkeitsnähe an oder versuchen, mit Hilfe des Dialekts oder der Fremdsprache ihre Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten zu erweitern" (7). Zeno switches from the use of standard German to dialect to record the interaction between his father and himself as they prepare to make their way from their hometown to the site of a nearby Alpine glacier:

- Kim auffe, rief mein Vater, ohne sich aus dem Fenster zu beugen. Jetzt fahr ma in di Berg.
- Ich ging sofort hinauf.
- Was host jetzt du a kurze Hosn o?
- Draußn is hoäß, sackrisch hoäß.

- Frian werds di.
- Gwiß net, Voda, glab mas, mi friats net.
- Na, nacha sehng ma’s scho ... (34-35)

Through this switch, Zeno transports the narrative to a different time and place, thereby enhancing his personal experience in encountering the glacier. The dialect usage in his *Notizbuch* transforms this typical exchange between parent and child into an individual and specific memory for Zeno.

While the dialect used in this passage refers to a familiar childhood interaction between Zeno and his father, this passage also refers to Zeno’s ignorance of the foreign glacial environment. As a child, he is unaware of the physical effect that the glacier will have on his surroundings, but will soon learn. Switching back to standard German, adult Zeno reflects on his experience as a child: “Weit hatten wir es nicht, drei Stunden, vielleicht dreieinhalb, wir parken das Auto und wandern einen Pfad hoch, und auf einmal sehe ich eine Wand und spüre eine für den Hochsommer ungewohnte Kälte” (35). Emphasis is placed on the intimate and lifelong connection Zeno has with the glacial environment as he moves between standard German to reflect on his initial childhood encounter with a glacier and his native dialect to record dialogue between himself and his parents.

Thereafter, Zeno includes a short passage narrating his recollection of his first encounter with the glacier to his mother:

Ois is wia umdraht, erzählte ich nachher Matter, wia wenn a Dracha eiskoid schnaufa dad. Doliegn duad er, Eis spuckt er, gibt koa Rua. Du glabst es net, wos do ois gibt, Wassafälle, die san zuagfrojene Höhln, des san gar koane Höhln net, des san Kapelln, blau is drin, blau wia dei Lieblingskleid, und glatt. Kaum host di

aufm Hosnbodn gsetzt, bist scho obi grutscht. Woaßt was Voda erzählt hat: Wenn oana stirbt aufm Gletscha, werd sei Leich verschluckt und erst wieda ausgespuckt, wenn eam seine Enkel suacha. In dem Eis gibt's lauter eigfrorene Gfriesa, hat Voda gsogt. (36)

As this passage is also written in dialect, it likewise emphasizes Zeno's individual connection to the glacier in space (close to his childhood home) and time (as a child).

This passage illuminates further ways in which Zeno originally established an affinity for glacial environments as a child. By describing the glacier as a backwards dragon who spits ice instead of fire, Zeno emphasizes how nature and landscapes are an integral part of a child's imagination. The experience of seeing the glacier for the first time was an important event for Zeno in that it connected his imagination to the reality of a natural environment, thus creating in him a sense of wonder and admiration. Also in this passage, Zeno makes reference to the private elements of religion and family, as when he calls the indentations in the ice not caves, "Höhle", but blue capellas, "Kapelln". This religious intertextuality highlights a connection to Zeno's Bavarian, Catholic roots, which further emphasizes a depth in his relationship to the glacier due to the multifaceted way in which the bond was formed. Furthermore, Zeno links the colour of the ice to one of his mother's favourite dresses creating a familial association. Another way in which Zeno establishes a personal connection to the glacier is by interacting with it on a physical level. In addition to describing the way he would slide on the ice when he sat down, Zeno refers to the way in which the environment was altered by the glacier and the effect that it had on him, "und auf einmal sehe ich ein Wand und spüre eine für den Hochsommer ungewohnte Kälte. Als wir Stunden später zurückfahren, reibe ich meine Hände über die Gänsehaut auf meinen Oberschenkeln" (35-36). Finally, this passage shows a temporal connection to the glacier. Zeno

writes that his father told him that if someone was swallowed by the glacier, he would not be found until his grandchildren went looking for him. The notion of the time it would take to acquire grandchildren must seem like an eternity to a child, implying that Zeno's first ideas about the glacier and how long it would exist would have been based on a much longer time frame than what he is now facing. The fact that Zeno is dealing with the glacier melting during his lifetime while he had expected it to last much longer can account for some of the feelings of anger and despair that he is currently trying to process by keeping his *Notizbuch*.

A second feature of the first-person narrative is Zeno's description of the maturation of his relationship with the glacier by calling it a unique, living, and bodily entity. The glacier has the ability to express itself and be known: "Bei jedem Innehalten berührte ich ihn, legte meine Hände an seine Flanken und strich mir dann mit den Händen über das Gesicht. Sein eisiger Atem, seine belebende Kälte. Vertraut war mir ein jedes seiner Geräusche, das Knarzen und das Scheppern, das Krachen und das Platzen, jeder Gletscher hat eine eigene Stimme" (51). The ice distinctly expresses itself through its geographic, physical, and biological characteristics, such as its location and appearance, the noises it makes, and the cold air it creates. These traits alone are, however, insufficient in creating and sustaining a relationship between Zeno and the glacier. Zeno illustrates how the glacier becomes known to him through the physical effects it has on him and his ability to perceive it and interact with it with his own body through his different senses: "Ja, wir sammelten blaue Flecken, wir lernten den Gletscher kennen, wir steckten unsere Nase in jede Spalte, wir vermeinten zu hören, wie das Eisgeheuer auf eigenem Wasser ins Tal rutschte" (89). As previously mentioned, the process of getting to know the glacier began as a child for Zeno, but continues on into his adulthood: "Ich tastete ihn jedesmal aufs neue ab, mit meinen Augen, mit meinen Füßen" (51). He describes feeling the glacier with his body, sometimes

forcefully resulting in bruises. He describes hearing the glacier shifting and moving. He describes seeing the glacier with his eyes and navigating its territory with his feet, revealing that one must continuously and consistently come into physical contact with and experience an environment in order to really know it. For him, this physical interaction and intimacy with the glacier results in an emotional reaction and an increased knowledge of and appreciation for the environment: “[wir] staunten über die Farbenpracht in dem scheinbar monochromen Universum” (89).

In his role as a guide on the cruise ship in Antarctica, Zeno draws on his past knowledge, experience, and interaction with glaciers to stress that there is a difference, and possibly a danger, between simply observing the ice, and actually coming to know it: “Ach ja, der erste Eisberg, [...] in zwei Wochen werden Sie so viele Eisberge gesehen haben, Sie werden nicht einmal den Kopf wenden, wenn einer auftaucht” (55). Here, he expresses how quickly society becomes bored with natural phenomena without being able to physically experience it. The culture of the tourist liner is that of distant observation rather than tactile interaction, which is clearly exhibited in Zeno’s explanation of the rules to the journalists on board: “Verlassen Sie niemals die mit roten Fahnen markierten Wege, reißen Sie nichts aus, nehmen Sie nichts mit [...]. Sie müssen unter allen Umständen einen Abstand von fünf Metern zu den Tieren wahren, auch zu den Pinguinen [...]. Wie alle anderen Passagiere dürfen Sie sich höchstens zwei Stunden an Land aufhalten” (54). The effect of not being able or willing to physically interact with elements of nature results in the failure to connect to and form a relationship with it, thus leading to an apathetic attitude regarding the environment and environmental concerns.

Contrastingly, giving the Alpine glacier a body as well as acknowledging its unique identity allows Zeno to understand it and relate to it on an even deeper personal level. He begins



calling the glacier “his” glacier and describes his desire to talk about it with anyone who would listen (36). Not only does Zeno portray the glacier as a figure with corporeal characteristics, he begins to describe his relationship in romantic terms:

Jeden Mai und jeden September reiste ich einige Tage vor den Studenten an, um mich ungestört meinen Sinneseindrücken zu überlassen, um den Gletscher ungestört zu erföhlen, ehe wir ihn erfaßten, diesen Gletscher, den mir mein Doktorvater in Obhut gab, eine arrangierte Ehe, die sich über die Jahre in Leidenschaft verwandelte, als sei jede Messung eine Bestätigung seiner Einzigartigkeit. (50-51)

Describing the relationship as an “arrangierte Ehe” implies that Zeno’s attachment and passion for the glacier are beyond his control, but an important and necessary part of his life. He further expresses a sense of responsibility and obligation to the glacier by using an analogy of custody (Obhut) to describe his connection to the glacier. This observation of Zeno’s associations and feelings towards the glacier lends insight into why he later reacts so personally when the glacier begins to melt. Although Zeno is not personally responsible for the effects of global warming, he feels responsible. It is also made evident here that Zeno’s career as a glaciologist and the time he spent observing, measuring, and studying the glacier have encouraged the way in which he relates to it on a physical level. His technical dealings with the glacier can therefore contribute to an aesthetic dimension, as scientific knowledge of the glacier was acquired through personal involvement and interaction with the environment.

Additionally, Zeno describes his relationship to the glacier as that of “ein altes Liebespaar” (51), which allows for the glacier to be considered as an object of long sustained

love and passion for him. In his *Notizbuch*, Zeno writes about a lack of intimacy and eroticism in his failed marriage. He reminisces about the days shortly after his divorce:

Ich habe [...] mich auf den Fußboden gesetzt und mir vorgenommen, erst wieder aufzustehen, wenn ich mir ein halbes Dutzend sexueller Beglückungen vergegenwärtigt habe. Genau sollten sie sein, mehr als seine verblaßte Erinnerung daran, wie eine Brise über unsere Körper glitt oder ihre Haut sich wie Samt anfühlte. Es ist mir auch nach Stunden biographischer Ausgrabungen nicht gelungen. (103)

He is unable to recall vivid memories of satisfied sexual experiences with his wife, however his physical encounters with his Alpine glacier remain fresh in his mind. For instance, he recalls turning around in his seat as a child to keep the ice in his sights for as long as possible: “ich will nicht loslassen, ich sehe den Gletscher durch zwei Scheiben, ein Feldstecherblick in meine Zukunft, ich habe nicht losgelassen” (36). As he then matured, his physical intimacy with the glacier grew as he studied it. As he later recalls, “als Student verkündete ich mit der Arroganz des Eingeweihten, keine Bildhauerei könne es mit den Eisskulpturen aufnehmen, ein Tag am Gletscher sei mehr wert als hundert Jahre in der Pinakothek” (36). He reiterates the importance of being physically present with the glacier, rather than merely observing it, in maintaining his intimate relationship with it. In contrast to this Zeno describes how physical contact is often inferior and taken for granted in his human relationships: “Beim Kennenlernen ist der andere eine uneinnehmbare Festung, drei Rendezvous weiter, bei entsprechendem Begehrt, ein wenig Händchenhalten später, nach einigen Küssen und etwas mittelmäßigem Sex, den beide Seiten sich schönreden, werden all Hängebrücken runtergelassen” (103). Because Zeno is unable to maintain a loving physical relationship with his wife, their marriage breaks down. Zeno narrates

the events of his wife leaving him: “Helene sollte ausmisten, während ich in den Bergen noch einige Tage die Messungen meiner Studenten beaufsichtigte [..., aber] Helene hatte alles ausgeräumt und nichts ausgemistet und war verschwunden” (69-70). While Zeno was away being present and physically engaging with the glacial environment he felt so passionately about, – in the relationship he referred to as “*Ehe*” – his wife decided their marriage was over.

Zeno narrates another female relationship of his throughout the novel as well, often describing his inability to personally connect with his lover, Paulina, despite their sexual connection. Their complicated relationship is elucidated in one of Zeno’s accounts of their time spent privately together in their shared cabin on the cruise ship. They are lying in bed together, as Zeno reads the reports from previous Antarctic explorers aloud to Paulina. Paulina says that Zeno is similar to the explorers in that he wants to dominate Antarctica, but Zeno disagrees with her. He responds, “Ja, sage ich mit aufbrausender Stimme, ich will keine Menschen und kein Treiböl in der Antarktis, aber ich will sie nicht besitzen, das ist der Unterschied, kein Teil von ihr soll nach mir benannt sein, ich will, daß sie in Ruhe gelassen wird, nichts weiter” (68). Zeno senses that Paulina does not understand his intentions and expresses his frustrations, “dieses Mich-nicht-erklären-Können, selbst ihr gegenüber, was ich wahrnehme und fürchte und verabscheue, ist mit den Händen zu fassen, unsere hochdotierte Verkommenheit, wieso fällt es mir so schwer, das Offenkundige denen zu erklären, die es nicht erkennen können?” (68). While they are unable to understand one another on an intellectual level, they attempt to communicate and connect physically, as demonstrated by their reaction to this situation: “Ich kann mir nicht vorstellen, es könnte sich Streit zwischen uns einnisten, in der Enge unserer Kabine, sie erkennt intuitiv, wo ich versöhnbar bin, das erste Mal geschah es unerwartet, ich erschrak, sie nahm meine Rage in ihren Mund und kühlte sie, so daß wir beide verstumten” (69). Highlighting

either the intimate, physical, and intellectual deficits in Zeno's relationships with the women in his life sheds insight into how the Alpine glacier fills a need for intimacy in his life. Taken to a broader context, this relationship implies that a strong, personal connection to nature is an important and necessary element of human experience. Altogether, Zeno's descriptions of the transitory sexual fulfillment with the women in his life contrasted with the interesting way in which he narrates the sensual and loving characteristics of his relationship with the glacier emphasize his need and longing for a personal relationship with nature.

A third feature of the first-person global warming narrative is the linking of human to glacial timelines. Throughout the novel, Zeno narrates the slow death of the Alpine glacier due to the effects of global warming, but he also expresses the passage of time as it is directly related to him, and explains how he was blinded to the fact that the glacier was dying for a long time, even though he had been studying it: "Solch eine Zerstörung hatte ich trotz alledem nicht vorhergesehen, nicht, als das Gletschertor verschwand (ich feierte meinen Fünfzigsten), nicht, als die Zunge bei einem Eissturz abriß und in der Folge rasch schmolz (ich feierte meinen Sechzigsten), und nun dieser Anschlag aus dem toten Winkel unseres Zweckoptimismus" (88). By linking signs of the glacier's death with markers of his life, he connects the death of the glacier to himself personally. In addition, Zeno's emphasis on the passage of time in the narration of his relationship with the glacier embodies an urgency in the progression of the effects of global warming. In another example, Zeno writes: "Es war nicht mehr möglich, die Verluste zu kompensieren. Wir alterten gemeinsam, doch der Gletscher ging mir im Sterben voraus" (52). Here, Zeno is referring to the efforts that he took as a glaciologist to preserve the glacier. However, he recognizes that restorative measures are no longer possible, and acknowledges that the death of the glacier is inevitable. While it is natural for both the glacier

and Zeno to age together in time, this quotation points out Zeno's awareness that it is not natural and premature for the glacier to die before him. He thereby illustrates the astonishing speed with which global warming is occurring by accelerating the death of an Alpine glacier to occur within a single human lifespan.

In order to deal with the glacier's "death" Zeno expresses a need to communicate his personal relationship with the glacier: "Eis erklären zu dürfen, [...] versöhnt mich, vorübergehend, mit dem Sterben meines Gletschers" (37). This desire to communicate contributes to Zeno's elegiac response to the loss of his glacier as it is his way of both warning others of the dangers of global warming as well as commemorating the existence of the Alpine glacier he adored. It is also Zeno's main motivation behind his decision to go on a cruise ship to the Antarctic and give lectures to the passengers about glaciers. In contrast to what he has experienced in the past when trying to communicate with his loved ones, students, and peers, he has hopes that the passengers will be interested in what he has to say: "Geredet habe ich, mich heißgeredet, nun höre ich mich wieder reden, nach einer Talfahrt des Schweigens, jetzt erst recht, da mir aufmerksam zugehört wird, die Passagiere sitzen aufgereiht da" (36). However, just as the general public reacted to Zeno's talks with ignorance and dismissal, the passengers on the cruise ship display equal amounts of irritation and passivity to the urgency and truth that Zeno is trying to communicate: "Du bist immer so negativ, höre ich die anderen monieren, das verdirbt einem die Laune. Laß doch mal gut sein. In dieser Tonart plätschert es um mich herum von früh bis spät, nimm es dir nicht so zu Herzen, laß fünfe gerade sein, drück ein Auge zu, wird schon nicht so schlimm sein, nichts wird so heiß gegessen, wie's gekocht wird" (83). Zeno's multiple attempts to communicate his relationship to the glacier as well as the glacier's death to others,

only to be confronted by their responses of hostility and passivity, highlight society's current struggle to participate in discussion about environmental issues.

The novel takes the form of a *Notizbuch*, however, providing Zeno with an outlet to process his emotions, mourn the death of the glacier, and express his despair and anger at the ignorance and passivity displayed by those around him. Zeno writes about when he went to visit his dying glacier, and how it affected him: "Ich legte mich auf das Geröll. Zusammengekrümmt lag ich da, ein Häufchen Elend, jedes Gefühl, das nicht auf mir lastete wie ein positiver Befund, wäre mir willkommen gewesen. Ich verharrte in dieser Position, ohne zu wissen, was ich noch tun könnte, bis ein Wanderer seine Hand auf meine Schulter legte" (87). Zeno's description of his mourning – him curled up on the ground, not knowing what to do – could be identical to how one mourns another human being. Eventually a hiker crosses Zeno's path and the following conversation takes place:

- Eine wunderbare Gegend, nicht wahr, und was für ein schöne Spätsommertag.
- Sehen Sie das nicht?
- Na ja, ein bißchen wenig Schnee dieses Jahr.
- Dieser Gletscher ist tot, und Sie schlendern fröhlich vorbei. Verschwinden Sie, hauen Sie ab. Sie ekeln mich an. (87)

The anger Zeno expresses here is an outward expression of the grief that he is experiencing, and is part of the elegiac response to the loss of environment caused by global warming.

Zeno's reiterated descriptions of his experiences of loss, anger, frustration, and despair create an elegiac narration of his personal relationship to the glacier and its death. In addition, Zeno depicts an urgency in his need to communicate this relationship and his emotions regarding global warming as a means to cope and mourn the death of the glacier. His intense personal

connection to the glacier and his reaction to the glacier's death mirror the urgency of global climate change issues, and his inability to successfully communicate this relationship and his emotions to others reflects society's inability to engage in communication about them. Zeno's personal relationship to the glacier and his process of mourning as depicted in the novel contribute to a deeper understanding of global warming by exemplifying the need for a personal connection to nature: this personal connection is missing in others around him – his wife, this hiker, Paulina, and the cruise ship tourists.

In response to his feelings of desperation, Zeno decides to take action. At the close, Zeno, alone on the ship, hopelessly navigates out to open sea while all of the other passengers are stranded on the icy shore of an island in the Antarctic genuinely forming the SOS call that they originally meant to artistically create. Zeno jumps from the ship, leaving his *Notizbuch* behind as his only lasting form of communication and the only piece evidence of what happened. After he makes this suicidal decision, Zeno finally expresses a peace about his experience of global warming: “Seit Jahren zum ersten Mal, seit dem heißesten aller Sommer, der auf andere heiße Sommer folgte, seit dem Sommer, als der Klimabericht, den wir im Juni publizierten, im August schon überholt war, zum ersten Mal, seit mein verlogener Alltag aus mir herausoperiert wurde und mein Gletscher verendete, dräute letzte Nacht kein Alptraum” (161). This peace comes from the knowledge that he no longer has to mourn the irrevocable loss of nature that has already occurred, and will not live to further experience the inevitable deterioration of the environment and the melting ice that he so passionately loves. Again, he reiterates the importance of time in his relationship with the glacier and the swiftness of the progression of global warming which is enhanced every year as opposed to the mundane “verlogenen Alltage” that the human being experiences, and that Zeno finally excises from his life. After his failed attempts at warning

others of the dangers of global warming and communicating his personal and emotional relationship to the ice, Zeno realizes that there is nothing more that he can do. Just as his decision to commit suicide is final, so is the obsolescence of the Alpine glacier.

### 3.2 Analysis 2 – Representations of Antarctic Space and a Critique of Science

It is possible to trace the development of ecocritical perspectives in terms of concentric, growing spheres of influence. To be precise, the beginnings of the first wave of ecocritical thought begun in the 1990s was marked by “human attachment to place at a local-communitarian or bioregional level” (Buell et al. 419). In the last decade, the second wave of scholarship has worked to relocate the concept of attachment to place to a more global or transnational view. Even further still, current ecocriticism is now considering all of Western history and placing increased focus on work about and from the non-Anglophone world (Buell et al. 419). The transition from concentrating on local attachments and investigating the health of bioregional systems to developing a more globally minded outlook has not been smooth. Attempts to draw the public’s attention away from their local communities and towards global environmental issues has resulted in confusion about where one’s efforts and concerns should lie, which has contributed to the passivity and ignorance exhibited by many in society today. The concept of space and the investigation of individual and collective attachment to place and what that means for the representation, investigation, and understanding of nature and environmental concerns has played a major role in the developments of ecocritical theory. Shifting concepts of space and one’s relationship to place throughout history and between cultures can be argued to be a source of the public’s misperception in their understanding of environmental issues.

To gain insight into how literature plays a role in representing notions of space, an analysis of the second stream of narrative in *EisTau* pertaining to the representation of the



Antarctic as a place contrastingly defined by both scientific information as well as personal narrative will be undertaken. Current preference is to rely on scientific method to provide knowledge about the biology, ecology, and geology of a particular place or environment. By doing so, Jonathan Bate argues, our quest to understand nature has, in fact, separated us from nature (54). He argues that in order to understand a place, it is necessary to yoke the scientific to the aesthetic (Bate 55). In addition, scholars Rebecca Raglon and Marion Scholtmeijer acknowledge the restrictive nature of scientific language (250). *EisTau*'s narrative stream about the Antarctic allows for a closer examination of Trojanow's critique of scientific shortcomings in communicating environmental issues. *EisTau* elucidates the deficiencies latent in using scientific language, method, and knowledge alone to communicate global warming by juxtaposing evidence of Zeno's failed career as a glaciologist against narratives of his personal emotions, experiences, and motivations for being on an Antarctic cruise ship.

To be sure, in line with today's ever increasingly complex, global, postmodern society, there have been claims made about the incapability of language, including narrative, to successfully capture a true representation of the natural world. For example, Raglon and Scholtmeijer write about nature's power to resist our narratives and the meanings that we impose on the natural world (253). Therefore, the claim here is not that the narrative in *EisTau* is successful in fully capturing and communicating global warming per se, but, rather, by showing the struggle of scientific and narrative means of representation, the novel lends insight into environmental issues by illustrating their need for multiple modes of representation, understanding, and communication. Literature is an essential component to this process as it functions as a means of social communication (Lando 5). As Lando, in his summary of how literature aids in the scientific study of geography, states, "The strength of literature resides not

so much in connecting artistic subjectivity and scientific objectivity, but, in juxtaposing [...] factual descriptions and the writer's flights of imagination" (7).

William Horne describes the genre of Arctic literature as "a genre whose most notable texts embody a conflict between the actualities of the arctic environment and human dreams, between the harsh compulsions of nature and the escapist fantasies or artistic visions that the exotic, mysterious, and primitive in the Arctic evoke from visitors who write about it" (78). This description captures the ability of a particular place to incite human relationships with the environment and, furthermore, challenges human ideas about that place. Turning to *EisTau*, Ilija Trojanow often describes the Antarctic in dramatic terms such as "im tiefsten Süden" (27), "am Ende der Welt" (96), "im Ewigen Eis" (26). Trojanow emphasizes the portrayal of the Antarctic as a place of extremes – distant and isolated location, dangerous and thrilling environment, altogether difficult to relate to and be understood. Horne goes on to say that authors may "use the Arctic as a forum for social, environmental, or philosophical commentary" (77). In other words, literary representations of human interaction with a certain place can provoke new understandings of the social, environmental, and philosophical questions that arise due to this relationship. After the waves of scientific findings, media reports, and literary and artistic representations of the effects of climate change on the Arctic have become old news, *EisTau* turns to the opposite end of the earth, Antarctica, to comment on human/environment relationships, science's ability to communicate man's role in global warming and its destructive effects on Antarctica, as well as media and tourism's manipulative effects.

The novel begins with GPS coordinates in the form of a chapter title, giving a very geographically specific indication of setting. The coordinates immediately specify that the place where the events at the opening occur is significant, but most readers will be unable to decipher

the location without outside help. Latitudinal and longitudinal global positioning system coordinates belong to the scientific genre of reporting place and, although most readers will be familiar with the format to some extent, namely in recognizing that it represents a geographic location, they will be exposed to an area of illiteracy in their ability to fully comprehend information. Each chapter begins in this way, mapping out the route of the Antarctic cruise, and reminding the reader of the importance of setting for this novel as well as reinforcing the possible distance created between individual and place due to the failure to understand it in certain terms. This regular reminder of the importance of setting in the novel and the reader's inability to fully understand the scientific depiction of this place is beneficial because it repeatedly enforces the need of other forms of representation in order to fully understand the concept of place.

The main vehicle or voice for the critique of scientific discourse is, of course, the protagonist and also narrator of the novel, Zeno Hintermeier. Zeno realizes the possible shortcomings of a purely technical approach to gaining knowledge about the glacier: "Ein Leben lang habe ich ihn beobachtet, sorgfältig aus Leidenschaft und mit präzisen Instrumenten. Wenn meine Beobachtungen keine Dellen in dem Selbstverständnis meiner Wissenschaft hinterlassen haben sollten, war mein akademisches Leben eine Verschwendung" (50). Here, Zeno places emphasis on the fact that he uses both scientific instruments and methods to monitor and measure the glacier, but it is also his passion, *Leidenschaft*, that drives him to painstakingly, *sorgfältig*, observe the glacier.

As he goes on to describe how he interacts with the glacier on a more personal, rather than merely a scientific level, Zeno stresses the need for interest in natural phenomena to involve both subjective as well as objective elements in order to gain meaningful knowledge about

them. Although his academic career had provided him with information to correctly ascertain what is happening to his melting glacier, Zeno recognizes the areas in which science fails him:

Es gab nur unzulängliche Begriffe für unsere Beziehung, Begriffe wie  
>>Gegenstand der Untersuchung<<, wie >>Massenbilanzmessung<<, keine  
>>Zahlenreihe<< wurde meiner Hingabe gerecht, inadäquat wie die  
>>Buchführung<<, mit der wir am Ende des Winters den Altschnee ausloteten,  
quasi als Einnahmeseite, und am Ende des Sommer die Schmelze berechneten,  
quasi als Ausgabenseite. Dieses Kreditieren und Debitieren ließ mich zunehmend  
verzweifeln. (51-52)

His academic findings about the state of the glacier were not sufficient for him to fully grasp and come to terms with what was happening. Only on a personal trip to the glacier does he realize that it is dead: “Es gab an diesem Berg nichts mehr zu messen. [...] Ich legte mein Notizbuch ab” (87). Zeno is referring to his technical log book here, indicating that scientific study, observation, and understanding of natural phenomena alone is ultimately useless.

Zeno’s descriptions of his experiences and shortcomings in being able to understand the effects of global warming on his Alpine glacier by use of scientific inquiry and method can be interpreted as a critique of science:

Was hatten wir nicht alles gemessen und gewogen, wie viele Bilanzen hatten wir  
erstellt, wie viele Modelle, wie viele Mahnrufe wissenschaftlich formatiert. Voller  
guter Absichten sind die Seiten der Vergeblichkeit, sie müssen zerrissen werden,  
jede einzelne, unsere Methode habe versagt. Wir hatten gewarnt, vergeblich, es  
war von Jahr zu Jahr schlimmer gekommen. Unsere Epoche löst kassandrische  
Prophezeiungen strebsam ein, selbst die Zuversichtlichen melden sich mit

Unkenrufen zu Wort. Solche Zerstörung hatte ich trotz alledem nicht  
vorhergesehen. (87-88)

This passage highlights the dual problem of the inaccuracy of scientific information collected as well as the inability to communicate it. Despite their best efforts and intentions, Zeno and his team were unable to predict the death of the glacier through their scientific measurements and models. Zeno acknowledges that his scientific methods are wrong, and declares the results must be destroyed.

Zeno's failure as a glaciologist in the novel reflects a current dilemma in the way scientists interpret data and disseminate information to the public. Brysse et al. report that, "Restraint is a community norm in science, and it tends to lead many scientists [...] to be cautious rather than alarmist, dispassionate rather than emotional, understated rather than overstated, restrained rather than excessive, and above all, moderate rather than dramatic" (328). Although their measurements were ultimately inaccurate in reflecting the complete melting of the glacier due to global warming, they were still correct in observing a trend of destruction occurring over time. Trojanow's account of Zeno's experience as a glaciologist mirrors the present-day inadequacies of scientists accurately reporting on the destruction of global warming. For example, scientist James Hansen suggests that "scientific reticence" is hindering scientists from communicating the actual dangers of the disintegration of the Greenland and West Antarctic ice sheets (4). Hansen acknowledges that "the nonlinearity of the ice sheet problem makes it impossible to accurately predict the sea level change on a specific date" (4). Therefore, it is extremely difficult for scientists to accurately predict the full effects of global warming, specifically referring to measurements of ice, but they need to do a better job of relaying the urgency of the situation to the public – and even to themselves.

Trojanow uses, moreover, reference to the Cassandra complex in this passage to draw attention to why Zeno has such trouble communicating his findings. Our society is bombarded with threats and calamities on a daily basis. James Berger writes: “Modernity is often said to be preoccupied by a sense of crises, viewing as imminent, perhaps even longing for, some conclusive catastrophe” (xiii). Prophecies of environmental destruction have become commonplace. Society at large chooses to dismiss them because they often fall short of the mark. Yet, when warnings of destruction do come to fruition, there is often a sense that it is already too late and there is little to be done in way of improvement, and society remains passive. Now that the Alpine glacier ceases to exist and all hope of successfully reaching out to the public about the deterioration of that particular glacier is lost, Zeno no longer has the need to keep his scientific records. The destruction of his records symbolizes the destruction of his faith in science to give him information about and connect him to his beloved glacier as well as communicate to others the dangers of global warming.

Why, then, does Zeno use the *Notizbuch* to document his experiences on the cruise ship? What makes this *Notizbuch* different from his scientific one? Readers are informed early on that the novel takes the form of Zeno’s personal *Notizbuch* in which he plans to document what happens during his time as an *Expeditionsleiter* on the cruise ship (18). Brysse et al. point out that “the norms of scientific communication are different from the norms of popular communication. In the latter, drama is entirely acceptable; indeed, it may be necessary in order to get on the evening news or maintain the attention of your undergraduates” (330). While science failed Zeno in his ability to better know, understand, and predict the outcomes of global warming on his glacier as well as harmed his ability to communicate his knowledge and passion for it to others, Zeno turns to a personal diary to voice dramatically his emotional reactions to global

warming and the ignorance of others. Although his *Notizbuch* is a personal account rather than the “popular communication” that Brysse et al. speak of, Zeno plans for his writings to be publicly read after he commits suicide. That is why, at the end of the novel, Zeno leaves the diary out in the open by the control panel of the ship to be found by others. Then, the *Notizbuch* will become a form of popular communication and the dramatic narrative will grab the attention of those who read it.

To do so, Zeno uses the metaphor of a nightmare. The novel begins with the following sentence: “Es gibt keinen schlimmeren Alptraum, als sich nicht mehr ins Wachsein retten zu können” (9). Although it is unclear what nightmare is being referred to here, Zeno soon divulges that his personal connection to a glacier’s demise is the topic of his personal nightmares: “Als wäre ich mit einer Moräne verwachsen. So alpträumt es mich durch jede Nacht” (17). A moraine is the glacially accumulated soil and rock debris found either on the surface of a glacier or deposited as piles or sheets of debris where the glacier has melted. As Zeno’s Alpine glacier melts, the moraine grows along with Zeno’s realization of the destruction. Moreover, Zeno articulates the powerlessness that he feels over the reality he is facing in regard to the fate of his glacier: “Heute verhöhnt mich die Phantomzunge des Geschmolzenen, machtlos bin ich gegen die Untertanen des Alptraums” (18). Zeno narrates the progression of this nightmare as it moves from personal to metaphorical, and finally to a broader reality, and in so doing, portrays the development of his perception of global warming as an overpowering nightmare that has come to life.

In response to the realization that his recurring nightmare is now a reality, he expresses the defeat he feels: “Es steht geschrieben” (18). Until now, Zeno’s individual efforts to understand and warn others of the effects of global warming have been unsuccessful. The

representation of global warming as a powerful force over which we have no control implies that there is nothing to be done to combat it and that there is no hope in trying to better understand it and communicate its effects with others. But Zeno also protests this mindset by continuing: “Wir lassen uns trösten von erniedrigenden Sätzen wie diesem. Nichts steht geschrieben; es wird geschrieben. Von einem jeden von uns. So wie ein jeder sein Scherflein beiträgt zu all den vergifteten Ruinen auf Erden” (18). This quotation illustrates how Zeno finds consolation in transposing his personal nightmare and guilt to the collective by placing the responsibility for global warming and the destruction of the environment on every individual, rather than internalizing it personally. For example, Zeno states that everyone contributes to the “poisoned ruins of the earth”, which is precisely what he and the other members of the cruise are currently doing by participating in an excursion to Antarctica. Researchers Kariminia et al. report that “large vessels are the highest potential risk [to the environment] as they might have a crash or accident, ground on uncharted rocks, break the ice lands or pollute the water” (785). Additionally, they claim that “the annual sulfur emissions by ships can be even higher than that from land” and “the amount of garbage [...] produced by a cruise ship carrying 2700 passengers can exceed a tonne per day” (785). By participating in these cruises to the Antarctic for the past several years, Zeno himself is explicitly contributing to the destruction of the environment he wishes to preserve. Zeno deals with his feelings of personal culpability by spreading the guilt across humanity and claiming that just as we are all responsible for global warming and environmental destruction, so too can we take action against it in some way.

Another way Zeno transfers his personal responsibility and guilt to the collective in the novel is by demonstrating how no one is immune to contributing to global warming and the destruction of the environment. On the way to visit the Alpine glacier when Zeno witnesses its



death for the first time, he encounters three young girls on the train. Here he describes his thoughts about these girls on his way home after experiencing immense mourning at the ruin of his glacier and anger at society's ignorance towards it:

im Schmerz fielen mir die Mädchen aus dem Zug ein, diese drei schwer am Kaugummi des Lebens kauenden Mädchen, die gemeinhin als unschuldig gelten. Was für einen Wert hat solch eine Unschuld, da wir wissen, sie werden schuldig werden, es steht ihnen und uns bevor, sie werden diese Verwüstung fortsetzen, sie werden weiterhin unsere Lebensgrundlagen zerstören. Sie pfeifen sich nichts, wie die meisten von uns, sie werden nicht ruhen, bis sie alles verbraucht verdreckt verschwendet vernichtet haben. (88)

Here, Zeno realizes that society is built in a way that makes it impossible for anyone to function without contributing in some way to the destruction of the environment. For him, the innocence of the youth is an illusion because he knows that this blamelessness cannot last. Furthermore, he emphasizes that the amount of demolition is increasing while the amount of worry or care, symbolized here as "*pfeifen*" is decreasing from generation to generation. While this realization is painful for him, Zeno uses it to deflect individualistic accountability for the effects of global warming. Instead, he highlights that the current problem is less about determining who is responsible about global warming, and more about why we are unable to express the urgency and danger of environmental crises.

The shift in perspective from personal to collective responsibility allows Zeno to use his notebook as an expression of shared consciousness: "Deswegen dieses Notizbuch, deswegen mein Beschluß, aufzuzeichnen, was geschehen ist, was geschehen wird. Ich werde zum Worthalter des eigenen Gewissens. Etwas muß geschehen. Es ist höchste Zeit" (18). He wants to

personalize his nightmare – that is now a reality – for everyone. Describing his motivation for writing *EisTau*, Ilija Trojanow reveals that one of his main goals was to capture society's problematic relationship to global warming issues as they currently are – a nightmare (Trojanow, "Requiem auf die Zukunft"). Later, Zeno writes: "Ändern sich die Alpträume, unsere kollektiven Alpträume? Das Destillat unsere trunkenen Dispute? Sind die Alpträume einer Epoche ihr ehrlichster Ausdruck?" (43). By creating an account to express the personalization of global warming and the difficulties of understanding and communicating it, Trojanow captures society's present nightmarish situation battling the destruction caused by global warming.

In an age where scientific knowledge and education are highly valued, *EisTau* deals with the shortcomings of using scientific vocabulary for an ignorant audience. Zeno writes, "Meine Studenten wußten nicht, was eine Aue ist. Sie konnten mit diesen drei weichen Vokalen nichts anderes verbinden als ein vages >>So etwas wie ein Bach?<< oder >>Ist das nicht eine natürliche Grünfläche?<< Sie waren nicht einmal peinlich berührt ob ihrer Ignoranz, als stünde ihnen das Grundrecht zu, Vernichtetes zu vergessen" (56). This quotation, likewise, draws attention to the increasing ignorance of the younger generations when it comes to the current state and magnitude of environmental destruction. Zeno mocks his students' inability to recognize "diesen drei weichen Vokalen" and is disgusted at their attitude regarding their ignorance about "Vernichtetes." His sarcasm accentuates his intense criticism of post-modern society's complacency and stupidity, especially among the younger generations.

In response to his students' ignorance, Zeno describes how he utilized personal experience as well as narration to aid in some of his students' development of a deeper understanding of environmental issues. He explains how he tried to incorporate both subjective as well as objective learning methods to benefit of his students. He writes, "Nachdem wir einen

letzten Gletschergang absolviert hatten, schlug ich den Studenten vor, das erste Teilstück unserer Heimreise zu Fuß zu gehen. Wieso? fragten sie. Weil man nur so die Landschaft lesen kann, antwortete ich” (56). For Zeno it is natural to use a personal connection and familiarity with nature as a means to learn about it, but, as he highlights by pointing out the lack of interest from his students, employing subjective experience and curiosity is not commonplace, specifically in the field of science. Zeno’s recollection of this experience with his students demonstrates society’s tendency to value objective, scientific knowledge over subjective, personal experience when learning about natural environments. Furthermore, this interaction highlights the gap that exists in the understanding of the implications of environmental issues when one does not possess a personal investment in the problem.

In order to fill this void, Zeno gives his students a lecture in the form of a story,

einen kurzen Vortrag über die Auen von einst, die den Menschen irgendwann als wertloses Land galten, als zu zähmende Fremde inmitten ihrer anthropometrischen Ordnung, weswegen das heutige Auge auf trockengelegtes, gerodetes Land blickt, auf Nutzland, auf dem Apfelkulturen das Erde der Auen angetreten haben. Zuerst wurde die Natur aufgeräumt, dann der Anbau rationalisiert. Unter Hunderten von Apfelsorten konnten nur wenige den Normen entsprechen, den Normen, die so bestimmt waren, daß der Wildwuchs an ihnen scheitern mußte. Für Geschmack und Farbe sollte künftig Chemie sorgen. Wir haben die Vielfalt der Natur erfolgreich durch das Gitter unserer Einfalt gepreßt. (56-57)

Although it is short, this lecture contains many elements of a good story that work to tie the past to the present and illustrate how the very environment the students stand in, once seemingly

removed and impersonal to them, directly affects their everyday lives: “Als wir etwas später auf einer Alm jausten, zogen einige der Studenten glänzend polierte Granny Smiths aus ihren Rucksäcken, schauten auf ihre normierten Äpfel und warfen sich befangene Blicke zu. Sie bissen hinein, und während sie kauten, fragten sie sich vielleicht, wie ein richtiger Apfel wohl schmecke” (57). By sharing information with his students in the form of a history narrative rather than by providing them with measurements, facts, and figures, Zeno demonstrates his hope at being successful in communicating the effects of human actions on nature to them by reaching them at a personal level: “Bei dem einen oder anderen könnte sich diese Frage in eine beharrliche Sehnsucht verwandeln – mehr zu hoffen wäre vermessen” (57). The narrative quality of Zeno’s teaching demonstrates the possibility of contributing to a deeper, more personal understanding of nature and the negative effects that anthropocentric actions can have. Nevertheless, it is clear that Zeno expresses only a hope of impact through narration, not proof thereof.

In sum, in the novel *EisTau*, Trojanow juxtaposes scientific fact with literary narration to represent the Antarctic as a place that is characterized both quantitatively, through the inclusion of GPS markers at the beginning of each chapter, as well as qualitatively, through descriptive narrative. The novel exemplifies how scientific portrayals of a place alone can be indecipherable and meaningless to the general public. The novel goes on to critique the current knowledge system that is customary to represent and communicate information about a natural environment. Trojanow intimates that this very discourse may contribute to the passivity that is displayed by society toward global climate change. Literary narrative may foster a deeper concern for environmental issues via a more subjective understanding of and personal connection to nature.

### 3.3 Analysis 3 – SOS: Do you read me? Media and Tourism's Dangerous Effect on Human Relationships with the Environment

The cruise is meant to be an educational experience for its passengers, as they attend lectures from scientists in various fields of study who are eager to impart their knowledge about the unique characteristics of Antarctica. After working three previous years as one of the *Lektoren* on the cruise ship, Zeno has agreed to work this season as an *Expeditionsleiter* (12). As it has been shown in the previous analyses, Zeno is a glaciologist who cares deeply for the subject of his studies and has an increased awareness of the vulnerabilities that Antarctica is exposed to due to global warming. He expresses his desire to use the cruise as an opportunity to communicate his knowledge, passion, frustration, and desperation. However, as indicated by the repeated blasé responses of irritation, ignorance, and passivity that Zeno encounters from the passengers on the ship, he is unsuccessful in reaching them. Instead, Zeno frequently acknowledges the irony of his role on the ship and attacks Western tourism. Although the passengers are on a cruise to a remote, pristine habitat, the ship itself is a cause of massive pollution and destruction to the unspoiled environment its passengers wish to behold.

Early in the novel, Zeno proclaims unease about his position:

Von nun an werde ich viel zuviel Zeit am Funkgerät und PA-System verbringen, um die Passagiere in Kenntnis zu setzen über das Wetter, die Route, das nächste Ziel. Ein jeder von uns Lektoren besitzt hochspezialisierte Kenntnisse der Ozeanographie, Biologie, Klimatologie oder Geologie, ein jeder von uns versteht es, unterhaltsam und lehrreich von Tieren Wolken Felsen zu erzählen, ein jeder von uns ist Flüchtling auf seine verquere Weise. (12-13)

Here, Zeno makes reference to the role of the PA system to facilitate communication between himself and the passengers about nature and the cruise, signaling how it hinders the direct, personal contact with nature and face-to-face communication. He expresses apprehension at the interests of the passengers and points out the disconnect that exists between the knowledge that the scientists possess and are willing to communicate and what they are expected to discuss in order to appease the passengers. By describing himself and the other scientists as refugees, or *Flüchtlinge*, Zeno illustrates their need to escape their professions for a chance at discovering a new avenue of pursuing, understanding, and communicating their passion. The definition for “refugee” can include a person who has been forced to leave his or her country in order to escape natural disaster. Zeno’s reference to himself and the other scientists as refugees can then be interpreted to reference their attempt at escape from natural disaster as well as from society. As their academic professions have failed to provide a suitable course of action to prevent the effects of global warming, they must turn to other means of trying to do so. But *EisTau* also illustrates the hindering and manipulative effects of technology and media on the scientist’s ability to interact and connect with nature as well as on the general public’s capability to navigate and willingness to discuss global warming. In this sense, the novel again expresses the despair of the scientist at his professional shortcomings.

Throughout the novel Zeno critiques two separate forms of media – technology and journalism. Just as Zeno emphasized his need to interact physically with nature in order to come to know it and build a personal relationship with it, he also articulates a distaste for anything that inhibits interaction between an individual and nature. Early in the novel Zeno describes how he observes the passengers interacting with nature through technological media: “Schaut mal rüber, ruft ein Passagier, der Felsen dort, wie wenn der Berg einen *Sixpack* hätte. Die Gruppe trommelt

ihr Lachen in die Dämmerung. Es geht wieder los, die Verkleinerung der Natur vor laufenden Camcordern. Ich ziehe mich zurück, an die Backbordseite” (22). He makes it clear that this is not a new observation and that the use of camcorders in an attempt to capture nature has become a normal and pervasive behaviour. By using technology to witness and interact with nature, we are losing what it has to offer. Later in the novel, Zeno references the dangers of minimalizing nature’s full potential to suit our needs or desires: “Wir haben die Vielfalt der Natur erfolgreich durch das Gitter unserer Einfalt gepreßt” (57). Zeno expresses his wish to distance himself from the practice of looking at nature through a lens by physically stepping back and removing himself from the group.

In another instance, Zeno recalls frustration at watching television with his now ex-wife after an argument:

Wir entkamen einander vor dem Fernseher, mit grimmiger Beharrlichkeit starteten wir stumm auf den Bildschirm, verfolgten Natursendungen wie ein Jäger die Spur eines angeschossenen Tieres, saßen auf zwei Sesseln, auf dem großen braunen Sofa zwischen uns machte sich eine Verachtung breit, die alles verschlang, was uns je geeint hatte, als wir uns selber noch genügten, in klaren Nächten mit einer Handvoll Sterne. Nichts konnte mich besänftigen, jedes digital reproduzierte Tier erschien mir als gefangene Kreatur. (118)

This example of Zeno’s contempt towards technological media to represent nature functions on two levels. First, he writes about their use of the television to distract themselves from their failing relationship and from each another. He describes the physical distance created between them as they now sit in separate chairs, and he associates the former closeness in their relationship to a more intimate, unmediated connection to nature. In this way, Zeno references

the role of the television in the deterioration of his marriage. To bring it to the next level, he draws attention to his perception of the digitally mediated depiction of nature being transmitted on the television screen. For Zeno, the television symbolizes a distraction from as well as a false representation of reality. To some extent, he places blame on technological mediators, such as the television and camcorder, with the distance created between humans and nature as well as the separation created between him and his wife, ultimately leading to their divorce. Just as he took action to disengage himself from the crowd on the cruise ship, Zeno reacts physically to the manipulation of the television by throwing it away: “Ich warf den Fernseher auf den Sondermüll, zu selten gab es solch erhabene Momente im Programm” (119).

Zeno additionally writes, “So durchlitten wir einen Abend nach dem anderen, bis es zu dem Wunder jener Auslandsreportage kam, in der Schneemassen zu Tal stürzten, dem Kommentator war der Schreck operettenhaft in die Stimme gefahren, obwohl er nicht live von dem Unglück berichtete, und während er um seine Fassungslosigkeit abgerissene Sätze drapierte, wurde ich hellwach” (118). Here, he moves from a criticism of technological media’s destructive inability to facilitate relationships, and begins to criticize mass media in the form of journalism and reporting. This passage exemplifies the potential distance and inauthenticity that journalism generates by highlighting the various degrees of separation between viewer and event as well as the staged reaction of the reporter. Zeno describes how the reporter communicates feelings of fear and bewilderment to the viewer through his voice, yet Zeno is aware that the reporter is not actually at the scene of the avalanche. These observations hint at Zeno’s disdain for the manipulative and sensationalist characteristics of mass media.

Further evidence of Zeno’s contempt for mass media reporting on environmental issues lies in Zeno’s interaction with members of media on the cruise ship as part of his responsibilities



as *Expeditionsleiter*, although he would prefer not to: “Die Presseleute anzuweisen gehört zu den unangenehmeren unter meinen neuen Aufgaben” (52). Zeno gives multiple reasons for his dislike of reporters and their presence on the ship. First, he describes the privilege to which members of the media often feel entitled in their disregard for rules and the dangers that their negligence can cause. Although he feels uncomfortable in enforcing regulations, Zeno writes about the necessity of rules to set boundaries and protect: “Regeln, Regeln, weitere Regeln. Ohne strenge Vorgaben würden die Menschen alles niedertrampeln, das sehe ich ein, zugleich erniedrigt es mich, ihnen Regeln aufzuzwingen” (52). Without a set of firm boundaries, he refers to humans’ tendencies to wreak havoc on their environments and one another. A poignant example is the story he tells about Mrs. Morgenthau being bitten by the penguin. One of the rules he gives is: “Sie müssen unter allen Umständen einen Abstand von fünf Metern zu den Tieren wahren, auch zu den Pinguinen” (54). However, later on in the novel, he describes what happens when this rule is broken by the well-meaning tourist in her attempt to retrieve a penguin egg from a skua and return it to the penguin’s nest (143-144). The penguin, trying to protect his other eggs, acts instinctively and defensively and bites Mrs. Morgenthau as she approaches his nest, resulting in a deep and bloody cut in the flesh between her thumb and forefinger (144). This cut is potentially very dangerous to Mrs. Morgenthau because of the special biological characteristics of the Antarctic environment: “der Schnabel eines Pinguins sei stark kontaminiert, die Bakterien für Menschen gefährlich (die Viren und Bakterien in der Antarktis sind aufgrund der extremen Verhältnisse in höherem Maße resistent, wie ich nachher vom Arzt erfahren habe)”

(145-46). This story is effective at demonstrating the need for humans to respect natural environments and create appropriate boundaries in their interactions with them.<sup>3</sup>

Zeno also describes the manipulative nature of the different forms of promotional media involved with the cruise and eco-tourism itself. For example, he writes about an excursion he took with his lover Paulina to explore the beaches in national park in the Falklands. They notice that the beautiful beaches are completely empty, and when they ask a park ranger about it, his answer is: “Antipersonenminen” (49). These mines are left over from the Falklands War between Argentina and the United Kingdom in which Argentina claimed sovereignty over the Falkland Islands as well as South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands in 1982. In the following excerpt, Zeno describes the incongruity between what he has just witnessed at the beach and what is advertised to tourists about the beach:

Auf dem Rückweg halten wir vor einem der Zaunpfähle, an den ein kleines rotes Schild genagelt ist, aus der Nähe erkennbar als Totenkopf über zwei gekreuzten Knochen, überschrieben mit *Danger Mines*.

Auf der Theke der Rezeption hat jemand einen Prospekt liegengelassen, den ich beiläufig aufschlage: >>Die Falklands gehören zu den wenigen unberührten Naturwundern der modernen Welt.<< Vermintes Gelände als unberührte Landschaft? (49-50)

While danger signs reminding visitors of humans’ violent misuse of nature can be found at the physical location of the beach, the brochure used to advertise the Falklands claims that this area

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<sup>3</sup> As it will be described in detail later, in order to carry out the artistic demonstration that is to take place on the cruise, the artist, Dan Quentin, and his PR Manager are given permission from the captain of the ship to ignore the regulations. When Zeno asks: “ – Ich gehe davon aus, daß er über die Restriktionen informiert ist?” the captain responds, “Da drücken wir ein Auge zu” (75). The indication of their intent to stray from the rules foreshadows the dangers of the art project.

belongs to one of the last untouched areas of the earth. This example illustrates how media takes advantage of the widespread ignorance of society and the separation between tourist and environment, because until the tourist personally encounters the setting, he is prone to believe what the brochure has to say about it. The fact that someone left the brochure behind is an indication that they no longer had use of it, and have abandoned their mediated experience of the area. The last sentence reveals, again, Zeno's method of using sarcasm to express his criticism of society's ignorance and the false claims of tourism promotion.

Part of the draw of the cruise is to visit untouched, pristine Antarctic habitat, yet their method of reaching this environment by means of cruise ship alone renders this claim fallacious. Zeno gives another example of the deceptiveness of the cruise:

Es befinden sich momentan acht Schiffe in der Gegend der antarktischen Halbinsel, wir teilen die Anlegeplätze auf, die vor Monaten schon gebucht worden sind, aber wir handeln untereinander, wir tauschen, wir helfen uns gegenseitig, wetterbedingte Ausfälle auszugleichen. Und wir meiden uns, wir wollen ja nicht, daß die Illusion, wir seien allein in der Antarktis, einsam am Ende der Welt, weitab von regulierten Verkehr, durch den Anblick eines anderes Schiffes zerstört wird. (96)

By stating that there are eight ships anchored and that they have reserved their places there months in advance, Zeno references the popularity of cruise ships in the Antarctic. However, he also indicates how they deceive their passengers by staying out of sight from one another to aid in the illusion that they are the only ones out there. This gives the tourists a false sense of appeasement for their conscience because they are not aware of the true contamination and destruction that their tour is costing the Antarctic environment. Zeno is aware of the extent of the

damage and tries to communicate it with the passengers: “Weil wir alles zerstören, was sich auf die Seite der Natur stellt” (15). Still, the passengers, even Zeno’s fellow scientists, are irritated at his attempts to reach them and prefer to remain either passive about or ignorant to the unpleasant consequences of global warming and the part they have to play in it: “Ein Stöhnen hebt an unter den Lektoren, *here he goes again*, sie erwarten einen meiner Ausfälle, sie haben meine Wutlawinen schon mehrmals ertragen müssen, sie wissen aus Erfahrung, wenn Mr. Iceberger apodiktisch losgeht, endet es apokalyptisch” (15).

Although the cruise is masked as ecologically friendly, it is really a business and the consumerist attitudes of the passengers are displayed in the novel: “zum nächsten Vortrag, zum nächsten Film, zum Kaffee oder Tee am Nachmittag. Und jene, die besonders viel bezahlt haben, die Suitengäste, dürfen auf gar keinen Fall enttäuscht werden” (99). The interests of the passengers are actually quite simple, and have nothing to do with engaging with the Antarctic environment: “alles dreht sich um das Essen, Anlandungen können mißlingen, die ganze Antarktis im Nebel verschwinden, undenkbar aber, daß eine Mahlzeit ausfällt” (38). The novel provides further evidence for a critique of Western society’s disinterested sentiment towards nature and environmental issues: “Die Reichen, das habe ich in den letzten Jahren auf hoher See begriffen, sind bereit, beachtliche Summen für kleine Privilegien zu zahlen” (11). However, it also claims that other cultures are guilty of similar opportunistic attitudes regarding the exploitation of nature for monetary gain. Zeno describes how a South American working on the ship, in this example the Argentinian cook, takes advantage of the North American tourists:

das nährt Ricardos Zuversicht und finanziert den Ausbau seiner Pension in Romblon. Seeleoparden, Robben und Pinguine interessieren ihn genausowenig wie Gletscher oder Eisberge, er packt jeden günstigen Ausblick beim Schopfe,

*what a view, fantastic, fantastic, take your seats*, er grinst breit, seine Zähne paradieren, er würde ebenso viele *fantastics* einsetzen, wenn es Zahlungswillige gäbe für einen Tribünenplatz bei einer Mülldeponie, unser Restaurantleiter bevorzugt allein nach Kriterien der Verkäuflichkeit. (11)

Ricardo does not work on the ship out of a shared passion for nature and the Antarctic environment like Zeno does; rather, he is willing to say anything to tempt the tourists into paying for the exceptional views.

The success of the cruise ship as a business and Zeno's failings at communicating his knowledge, passion, and warnings about global warming can be explained further by Zeno's illustrations of the willingly oblivious and passive attitudes of society, both on and off ship. Off ship, Zeno describes the reactions of people when he talks about the negative effects of global warming on his Alpine glacier: "berichtete ich von einem vernichteten Gletscher, das irritierte die guten Leut, beim Weggehen schüttelten sie den Kopf, sie fällten ihr abschätziges Urteil über mich, noch ehe sie in ihr Fahrzeug stiegen, über schnurgerade Straßen in ihre fernbediente Garage fahren und von dort mit dem leise gleitenden Aufzug in ihre Tapetengruft" (104). This passage highlights Westerners' willingness to ignore bad news and return to their daily lives. Zeno hints at the dangers of turning a blind eye to the realities of global warming by referring to their homes as "*Tapetengruft*" – their desire for comfort will ultimately be their downfall. Zeno writes about society's crimes against nature, and includes himself as a guilty party: "der Wind watscht mich ab, er hat jedes Recht, mich zu strafen, für meine Bequemlichkeit, für unsere zivilisatorische Todsünde, die das Prinzip des Lebens negiert, denn nur was einen energetischen Gradienten hinaufstrebt, lebt" (64). Zeno thought he could perhaps make a difference during his previous years on the cruise ship as a *Lektor*, talking to and teaching others about Alpine glaciers

and the effects of global warming on the Antarctic environment; however, the attitudes of the passengers on the ship are no different than those back home. Zeno writes, “ich weiß aus Erfahrung, sie werden durch die Einblicke der nächsten Tage andächtiger gestimmt werden, aber soll ich deswegen ignorieren, daß sie auch nach der Heimkehr auf ihre zerstörerische Bequemlichkeit nicht verzichten werden?” (38).

Zeno again uses sarcasm and cynicism to express his deep criticism of the oblivious and unreceptive demeanor of others when confronted with the consequences of environmental problems. He mentions the use of drugs to illustrate that there is a sickness in society’s response to global warming. For example, during his opening lecture on the cruise ship, Zeno is talking about the differences between the Arctic and Antarctica when he sardonically thinks to himself, “Keine Sorge, selbst wenn es die Arktis nicht mehr geben sollte [...] und das werden Sie alle, die Sie hier sitzen, noch erleben, wenn Sie weiterhin brav Ihre Betablocker und Ihr Marcumar einnehmen” (33). For Zeno, the consequences of global warming are real and are happening within our lifetimes, but the passengers are willing to take their medicine to prolong their lives in order to buy more time to give in to their selfish desires while remaining numb to the warning signs and urgency of the situation as well as living complacently into the senility of old age. The reference to the passengers’ need for heart medication is a sarcastic allusion to their diseased longings.

Zeno does not just accuse the passengers of being sick, but all of society, even those who are in a position to take action:

Delegierte auf der globalen Konferenz, eingeschlafen im Plenarsaal, Hostessen in unbekannter Tracht ziehen durch die Reihen und legen Bonbons (oder sind es Pillen?) in die offenen Münder, die Delegierten mampfen im Schlaf, und als sich

ihre Mäuler wieder öffnen, entweicht ihnen ein Wort, das so zerkaut ist wie jedes unentwegt wiederholte Wort, reihum erheben sich die Delegierten, schlafwandeln zum Podium und spucken das zermanschte Wort in einen bereitgestellten Napf, der am Ende des Tages einer geduldig wartenden Öffentlichkeit präsentiert wird, man spricht vom besten aller Kompromisse. (116)

Here, Zeno references taking pills to sedate oneself against having to deal with global warming. This passage highlights the delegates' lethargic and rehearsed demeanor in their dealings with the public about environmental crises. Zeno uses a metaphor of society being drugged into ignorance and passivity – a sedation against the realization of an unpleasant reality and bearing the full consequences of global warming.

Furthermore, the compromise that the delegates are making can denote the action of censorship in order to remain in good public opinion. Zeno himself has demonstrated his difficulty in speaking freely about the demise of his glacier and his concerns about the environment: “Je stärker ich opponierte, desto beharrlicher ignoriert man mich, lud mich immer seltener zu den in unserem Viertel beliebten Grillpartys ein” (116). In order to avoid being seen as unpopular and completely ruin his chances of speaking out against environmental crises, he makes an effort to censor himself whilst on the cruise ship. During a discussion with some of the passengers about the exploitation of whales, Zeno quickly excuses himself to avoid having to give further information about the full extent of animal exploitation that has occurred over time in the Antarctic:

Ich verabschiede mich höflich, sonst hätte ich noch ausführen müssen, daß zuerst die Pelzrobben gehäutet wurden, bis die Robben ausgingen, dann die See-Elefanten zur Ölgewinnung erschlagen und die Kochöfen mangels Brennstoff mit

Pinguinen geheizt wurden, und als die See-Elefanten ausgingen, verkochte man die Pinguine zu Öl. Alles wurde verwertet – dem tatkräftigen Menschen gelingt es immerzu, der Natur ihren verschwenderisch nichtsnutzigen Umgang mit den einigen Ressourcen vorzuführen. (83)

Rather than speaking out publicly, Zeno turns to his *Notizbuch* as an outlet to record the truth about humans' misuse of nature as well as express his anger and despair.

Returning to the discussion of the destructive and deceptive characteristics of the members of media on the cruise ship, Zeno explains that the only value of journalists, cameramen, and photographers lies in their ability to create cheap advertisements about the cruise in their reports: “Auf jeder Reise sind einige Journalisten an Bord, von der Reederei geschätzt wegen der kostengünstigen Werbung in ihren Artikeln, entspannte Redakteure und aufdringliche Fotografen” (52). He specifically refers to the PR Manager of the artist, Dan Quentin, who is on board to execute an art project in the form of an aerial photograph of the passengers standing in the shape of an SOS on the coast of one of the Antarctic islands they wish to visit during the cruise. Zeno writes, “Der Mann wird offensichtlich dafür bezahlt, sich durch die richtige Wortwahl in eine privilegierte Position zu manövrieren” (54). He gives an example of the PR Manager's use of words to convince others of the worth of the project in representing the vulnerabilities of the Antarctic: “die künstlerische Vision sei explosiv, ganz und gar am Puls der Zeit, die Antarktis inzwischen das Herzensprojekt der Menschheit, Dan Quentin werde ein Zeichen setzen, eine weltweit sichtbare Emotionsflagge hissen, ein Symbol für Bedrohung und Bedrohtheit schaffen, eine originäre visuelle Währung prägen” (55). Providing promises of effectiveness, this type of emotionally charged language is typical of mass media communications. To Zeno's surprise, it is successful at influencing the tourists to participate in



the project and they buy into the cheap offer that they will be participating in an act of artistic activism: “Zu meinem Erstaunen fühlten sich die Passagiere von der Losung >>Die Kunst braucht Sie<< keineswegs belästigt, sondern eher gebauchpinselt. Sie entdeckten ihre engagierte Seele. Wenn ich dazu aufgerufen werde, bin ich bereit, etwas für die Umwelt zu tun, gab ein Unternehmer aus St. Louis den Ton an” (123). He, by contrast, is not convinced, and is enraged at the artificial and deceptive nature of the installation. Zeno writes down the contents of a confrontation he has with the captain of the ship about the art project during which he declares: “ein SOS ohne konkreten SOS-Grund, das ist lächerlich” (134). As a result of his anger about the ignorance of the passengers, his failure of fulfilling his goal of communicating with them, and the dishonest nature of the project, Zeno decides to take action. He plans to sail the cruise ship away alone, leaving the passengers behind in their SOS formation ultimately creating, “Der Augenblick, in dem Kunst zu Wahrheit wird” (138). In a final act of defiance, Zeno throws himself overboard: “Ich werde hinausgehen, wenn es dunkelt, ich werde fliegen, umgeben von Weißblutfischen und Seescheiden, die unter mir schweben, von Rochen, die über mich hinweggleiten, ich werde fliegen, bis mein Blut zu Eis geronnen ist” (167). In doing so, as he becomes one with his beloved ice, Zeno frees himself from his anger and despair and finally takes action after his attempts at verbal communication have failed him on numerous occasions.

So far, this section of the analysis has brought attention to the effects that technology, media, and tourism have on contributing to the detachment, ignorance, and passivity that society exhibits towards nature and environmental issues such as climate change. Thinking back to the previous analyses, Zeno’s drastic response to the art project at the end of the novel stems from his grief about the loss of his Alpine glacier, his shortcomings as a glaciologist, his frustration and inability to communicate his knowledge about and relationship to nature as well as global

warming, and, finally, the delusional reactions from society. For Zeno, there is nothing worse than not taking action when action is required. He writes, “Die Einsicht, die späte, viel zu späte Einsicht, man habe nichts getan, als man etwas hätte tun können, als man etwas hätte tun müssen, das ist die Hölle” (162-63). He is tired and hopeless that his efforts will achieve something: “Ich bin es müde, Mensch zu sein” (154), and resorts to the only option he has left.

#### 3.4 Analysis 4 – Information Overload: Interpreting the Chapter Inserts

Between the chapters recording Zeno’s thoughts and feelings, Ilija Trojanow includes short sections of jumbled text. In an interview with the author, the Austrian online news website *Der Standard* describes these sections as “hybriden Zwischenkapiteln, die einerseits boulevardesk-sensationslüstern erzählen, was auf der MS Hansen passiert, andererseits mit verschiedensten Gesprächsfetzen, Funksprüchen und kalauernden Redewendungen angereichert sind” (Trojanow, *Der Standard*). At first glance, it is virtually impossible to understand what these sections are trying to convey, and this difficulty of interpreting the text is precisely what Trojanow is trying to achieve. In response to *Der Standard*, Trojanow says: “Diese Kakophonien sollen verstören, so wie das ganze mediale Getöse und der dauerhafte Lärm um uns herum einen wort- und tonsensiblen Menschen verstören kann” (*Der Standard* 2011). These chapters represent chaotic outside communication on the events that Zeno privately describes in his *Notizbuch*. The way in which Trojanow combines various forms of language and syntax, including incomplete thoughts and conversations, and references the complex way in which information is conveyed in Western society results in a “cacophony” of information mirroring the possibly disruptive, confusing, and overwhelming real-life response to the events that transpire in the fictitious novel.

In the first half of the sections, radio signals and messages that are broken up and dispersed between other forms of expression provide communication about the initial realization of the stranded passengers and Zeno's abduction of the cruise ship. Specific and technical language indicates that information about the event is being shared and accessed over radio signals: "Sir, Alarmsignal, auf 406 MHz" (19). The passengers use an Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon to technically relay information about their distress and location, and the coast guard translates this data into GPS coordinates to communicate where the signal is coming from and therefore determine which ship is in trouble (19). After receiving the distress signal from the passengers, the coast guard technicians try to make more personal radio contact with the ship but are unsuccessful: "Etwas stimmt nicht, Sir, wir haben keinen Funkverkehr mehr mit der HANSEN. Was ist mit dem Funkoffizier? Meldet sich nicht, Sir" (19). It is then that they use a further form of technology, radar, to gather additional information about the situation. It becomes clear, however, that this technology is insufficient in providing a full report on what is happening: "Radar? Das Schiff bewegt sich in nordwest-nördlicher Richtung. Sie haben es auf allen Frequenzen versucht? Ja, Sir. Versuchen Sie es weiter, ich kontaktiere die argentinische Seewacht" (19-20). Because the coast guard is not receiving any personal feedback from anyone on the ship, these radio signals illustrate a difficulty in communicating about the event, namely the lack of perspective and breadth of knowledge that is provided by relying solely on third-party sources of information: "Ich kann bestätigen, die MS HANSEN fährt mit voller Geschwindigkeit in nordwestliche Richtung, auf falschem Kurs, ja, weiterhin kein Funkkontakt, wir haben keine Erklärung dafür, wir müssen auf jeden möglichen Notfall vorbereitet sein" (28). This quotation demonstrates that the radio signals and radar are only successful in providing a small portion of the whole story. Just as Zeno's technical and scientific measurements of his Alpine glacier were

inadequate in predicting its demise, the technology used to monitor the ship's activity is unsuccessful in foreseeing what has caused its break in contact. In addition, by showing only one side of the conversation, the previous quote exhibits how Trojanow uses these sections to represent a lack of information and perception concerning the events that take place in the novel. These excerpts act as foreshadowing devices in the novel, ultimately lending insight about the consequences and after-effects of Zeno's hijacking of the ship and his suicide; however, without any context, these disordered and jumbled messages confuse the reader rather than aid him or her in their interpretation of Zeno's musings in his *Notizbuch*.

Another way in which Trojanow uses these chapters to represent issues in communication about complex events is in his portrayal of the media's handling of Zeno's actions and their consequences. At the end of each insert Trojanow includes a newspaper or tabloid article title recognizable by the use of all capital letters and typical sensationalist language. These titles indicate the progression of the event and can be interpreted as a cumulative summary of all of the snippets of information that have been provided in the short chapters. For example, in the sixth section, the title reads: "BREAKING NEWS RETTUNGSAKTION LÄUFT AN BREAKING NEWS RETTUNGSAKTION LÄUFT AN" (94), which is followed by: "BREAKING NEWS GESTRANDETE VOM EIS GERETTET BREAKING NEWS GESTRANDETE VOM EIS GERETTET" (110) at the end of the seventh section. By including "BREAKING NEWS" at the beginning of each title, Trojanow stresses how mass media reporters emphasize the novelty and sensationalism of the information that is to be shared. It is also noteworthy that the titles are always repeated a second time. The repetition stirs notions of urgency and importance – that what is being said cannot be missed. The title at the end of the first section provides a good example of sensationalist media tactics. In addition to the phrase "breaking news", this title also

explicitly states that this event is new and different than other similar events in the past:

“BREAKING NEWS ERNEUTE HAVARIE IN DER ANTARKTIS? BREAKING NEWS ERNEUTE HAVARIE IN DER ANTARKTIS?” (20). Furthermore, as indicated by the question mark and lack of specific information, this title is reporting on the event without having complete knowledge of what is taking place. All of these features work together to evoke emotion and draw readers in to the story, while at the same time hindering the possibility of relaying sound, accurate information.

By reading these titles one after the other, one is able to follow the highlights of the discovery, investigation, and recovery of the hijacked ship and the stranded passengers. However, relying solely on these titles, and therefore what the media chooses to report about the event, can be very misleading as they often only report a very small fraction of the matter. The novel embodies this ellipsis in the speed with which the articles propel the story forward and the fact that all but two of the titles report solely on the current action that is taking place, rather than reflecting on the reasons or consequences that might be surrounding the actions. The second title is an exception to the others in that it digs a little deeper into the possible side-effects of Zeno’s actions, as well as provides insight into the central issue that has provoked the action to begin with: “BREAKING NEWS NATUR NICHT IN GEFAHR, MENSCHEN ALLE TOT? BREAKING NEWS NATUR NICHT IN GEFAHR, MENSCHEN ALLE TOT?” (29). This title contemplates the destructive effect humans have on nature, and, lacking information about the status of the passengers on board the cruise ship, considers a potential outcome of the event. The media does not dwell on this topic for long, instead returning to reporting on the progress of the efforts to rescue the passengers, demonstrating how popular mass media communications prefer to remain in motion, always reporting on the next thing to happen, and tend to remain only at the

surface of the issue. The final title, again, emphasizes the faced-paced rhythm of mass media: “BREAKING NEWS HEUTE GEHEN DIE LICHTER AUS, FÜR FÜNF MINUTEN BREAKING NEWS HEUTE GEHEN DIE LICHTER AUS, FÜR FÜNF MINUTEN” (169). As the story of Zeno’s feelings, motives, and actions come to an end and converge with the media reports and other swirls of conversation and messages surrounding his actions, the novel closes with the news title informing its readers of the lights going out for five minutes. Whether this is a gesture of respect for Zeno and the lost ship or an act of activism for the destruction of nature, it is clear that there is a time-limit placed on how long the public will pay attention to the issue before moving on to the next newsworthy event.

In sum, focusing on the theme of communication, these inserts between chapters exemplify the one-sidedness and lack of perspective of the media in gathering information about an event. In addition, the inserts include reference to mass sensationalism in order to reveal the ways in which information can be overlooked and manipulated to increase its broad consumption by the general public. Trojanow thereby uses these short chapter inserts to critically address the problematic nature that is inherent in communicating and representing events in our technological and mass media obsessed post-modern society.

Another way in which these excerpts comment on Western society’s preferred mediated modes of communication is by including sms language such as “lol” (28), “lmfao” (44), “hahaha” (62), etc. In comparison to Zeno’s personal first person narrative that forms the bulk of the novel, these sections combine multiple, often indefinable voices to form a blurry picture of how the world reacts to Zeno’s actions. Linguistic researchers Hassan and Hashim remark that online communication methods such as blogs or instant messaging programs are creating a specific “online English” language that is prevalently used in “globalized tools of electronic

communication” (45). The incorporation of internet slang in these sections highlights the pervasiveness of internet language usage at an international level, and in so doing, illustrates the international response to the rogue cruise ship at sea in the Antarctic.

In fact, Zeno’s occasional use of English phrases in his *Notizbuch* illustrate how he communicates with the international passengers on the ship, exemplifying how the globalization of English is manifesting itself outside of the internet. For instance, at the end of one of his rants, Zeno concludes with “*bloody fucking hell*”, to which he records that Paulina remarks, “Hey, das verstehe ich, das da, Paulina stupst mir vergnügt ins Wort, *German is like English, no?*” (105). Although Zeno writes his *Notizbuch* in his native German, he periodically incorporates English expressions to describe his emotions. He also makes it clear that communication with Paulina is in English by using the word “hey” at the beginning of his translated recount of her response to reading over his shoulder before resorting to directly quoting her words in German as she spoke them. Furthermore, Zeno asserts the effects that regular international communication in English has on him: “Mir fallen die englischen Einsprengsel kaum mehr auf, sie schleichen sich ein, den Umständen geschuldet (*communication on board*), untereinander unterhalten wir uns fast nur auf englisch, selten sind deutsche Muttersprachler unter sich, mein Deutsch verenglischt, *step by step*” (105). Zeno claims that regular communication with the passengers on board has begun to subconsciously manifest the English language into his thoughts, as he no longer recognizes when he uses English phrases in his everyday speech. He also states that communication on board has altered his native German, and therefore his ability to accurately and wholeheartedly express himself. He goes on to express concern, “Damit es mir nicht so ergeht wie dem Expeditionsleiter aus meiner ersten Saison, der Deutsch und Englisch zu einem Kauderwelsch verwurstelte, um mich der kristallreinen Sprache zu vergewissern, murmele ich wie zur Meditation auf dem

Außendeck Gedichte aus Jugendtagen” (105). Here, Zeno describes how mixing languages – and therefore histories, ideologies, attitudes, and identities – can result in incomprehensible attempts at communication. He also illustrates his need and desire to preserve his native tongue, therefore retaining his ability to express himself clearly and accurately.

As Zeno’s concerns reveal, to continually rely solely on English to express oneself has cultural, political, social, and environmental implications at an international level. Ursula Heise writes, “Monolingualism is currently one of ecocriticism’s most serious intellectual limitations. The environmentalist ambition is to think globally, but doing so in terms of a single language is inconceivable – even and especially when that language is a hegemonic one” (513). The novel embodies this limitation in Zeno’s attempts to communicate at an international and intercultural level: “wenn sich Menschen in Zweit- oder Drittsprachen unterhalten, reden sie unter einer verschärften Gefahr des Mißverständnisses” (55). Zeno makes this remark after he records his attempt to communicate important information about the rules on the cruise ship to the international collection of journalists and passengers. To summarize, Trojanow’s inclusion of English slang and phrases throughout the novel, as well as what is becoming known as universal internet language in the chapter inserts, illustrates the globalization and internationalization of communicative practices. Nevertheless, through the problems that arise due to international and intercultural misunderstandings, the novel also exemplifies how the communication of global issues, such as climate change, is increasingly challenging in today’s society.

While Zeno refers more generally to the international backgrounds of the passengers on the ship, the chapter inserts illustrate this diversity to a more fuller extent: “Insgesamt handelt es sich um 220 Passagiere, Engländer, Deutsche, Amerikaner, Holländer, Schweizer [...] Noweger, Brasilianer, Kanadier, Neuseeländer, Österreicher” (93). After Zeno hijacks the ship, leaving



these passengers stranded while he commits suicide, other cruise ships – from different countries, also carrying large amounts of international passengers – must intervene: “Ein Notfall mit internationalen Verwicklungen, alle Schiffe im Umkreis, es handelt sich um die URD, die WERDANDI und die SKULD” (79). With such a mixing of nationalities and languages, miscommunication is bound to occur. An example of this is given in one of the inserts by means of a witness report of one of the passengers on the *Hansen*. In his account, he describes the difficulties that the passengers faced in trying to form the SOS signal on the ice:

Wir hätten auch ein kleineres SOS machen können, alle formten gleich das >>O<<, fragen Sie mich nicht, warum, ohne sich abzusprechen formten sie das >>O<<. [...] Das >>O<< war bald geschafft, ein viel zu großes >>O<<, gemessen an unsere Zahl, ich hörte jemanden rufen, hierher, hier wird das >>S<< gemacht, ich hörte Schreie, aber die waren in anderen Sprachen, [...] Ich bin schnell rüber, um beim >>S<< zu helfen, ein >>S<<, dachte ich mir, das wird doch zu schaffen sein, keine Ahnung, wie unser >>S<< aussah, auf jeden Fall war es viel kleiner als das >>O<<, das war es dann auch, mehr haben wir nicht hingekriegt. (109-110)

This passage shows the lack of effective communication that occurred while the passengers tried to build the SOS signal. All of the passengers rushed to build the >>O<<, probably because it is much easier to form than an >>S<<. While the passengers recall that attempts were made to call the other passengers to create an >>S<<, the message is lost in the multitude of languages being spoken simultaneously. In this person’s account, the passengers managed to create one >>S<< and a giant >>O<< before a helicopter arrived to signal that they

had been found. In the end, they were unsuccessful in completing the SOS signal, and were therefore unsuccessful in the completion of the art project led by artist Dan Quentin.

Because of the international nature of this event, various individuals are calling on a number of sources to gather, analyze, and disseminate information, resulting in the spreading of speculated information, rumours, inaccurate facts, and uncertainty. For example, the third insert reports: “Unbedingt klarstellen, daß wir noch nicht wissen, ob es sich um einen Unfall oder um ein Verbrechen handelt, vergessen Sie nicht zu erwähnen, daß ein terroristischer Anschlag zu diesem Zeitpunkt nicht ausgeschlossen werden kann” (44). The opening words “unbedingt klarstellen” are very ironic because this excerpt does not make anything clear. It can be argued that it, in fact, makes the situation more unclear by suggesting possibilities for which no evidence has yet been provided. By spreading this information, alternate issues, such as terrorism, are opened up for discussion at an international level, and the real issue – Zeno’s attempt to bring awareness to the dangerous effects of our society’s response to global warming – ,when it is discovered, will be buried beneath several layers of ideas and discussion.

When Zeno’s *Notizbuch* is found, it is emphasized that it is not a German speaker who finds it: “wir haben etwas gefunden, eine Art Lebenszeichen, neben der Steuerkonsole auf der Brücke, ein Notizbuch, es ist vollgeschrieben, auf deutsch, wenn ich mich nicht täusche, vielleicht gibt es uns Aufschluß über die Tat” (168). This means that whoever found it will be reading it through the lens of a different language, culture, and nationality, which may result in Zeno’s message being construed in ways altogether different than he intended. Furthermore, as previously noted, the media has run its course covering the news for this event, coming to a close with the lights going out for five minutes. Combining these factors together – the layers of speculative and incorrect information shared at an international level, the possible

misinterpretation of Zeno's *Notizbuch*, as well as the possibility of the media completely skipping over the real issue – shows how the chapter inserts portray the complexity of collecting, investigating, and sharing information in our globalized world. Moreover, the chapter inserts, in their bombardment of the reader with snippets of information, function as a critique of Western society's value on large amounts of mediated knowledge. As Trojanow eloquently writes in one of the inserts, "Wir wissen genug, wir verstehen wenig" (93). Axel Goodbody, in his article on *EisTau*, summarizes how this critique pertains specifically to our shortcomings in understanding global warming: "We know so much about climate change but fail so miserably to draw practical consequences and change our way of life" (98). Trojanow responds to Western society's inadequate dealings with the effects of global warming by creating Zeno's voice, which Goodbody describes as, "the voice of his own and our collective guilty conscience" (98). This novel, then, becomes an artifact representing some of Western society's current struggles and "nightmares," to steal Zeno's word.

#### 4. Apocalypse Now, Later, Never? Concluding Remarks

At the beginning of this thesis, it was determined that the current preference for objective, scientifically based discourse on global warming is lacking in its ability to successfully communicate and offer a complete understanding of the complexity of climate change. Leaning on the central claim of ecocritical theory that literature has something to offer in terms of better understanding the environment and humans' relationships to it, this thesis set out to prove that Ilija Trojanow's novel, *EisTau*, as a global warming narrative, has the ability to lend insight to the discourse on climate change by contributing a subjective representation of global warming through the personal, first-person narrative of Zeno Hintermeier. As he recalls his emotional relationship to nature, his shortcomings as a scientist throughout his career as a glaciologist, his inability to express himself and communicate with others, and his frustrations with the ignorance and passivity of those around him in his *Notizbuch*, he offers various streams of narrative that contribute to a personal engagement with climate change. In an extensive analysis of the novel, this thesis shows how each of Zeno's narratives function as a mirror to reflect specific problems in society's understanding and engagement with global climate change, and offer a personal, emotional, and subjective response to global warming, thereby lending further insight into the problem that science is not able to account for.

The first analysis focuses on how Zeno narrates his personal connection to nature through a description of his emotional relationship to an Alpine glacier that he came to know as a child and spent most of his adult life studying as a glaciologist. This analysis examined Zeno's use of dialect to recall childhood memories and his first encounter with the glacier to understand how one may begin to form a deeply personal connection to nature based on one's own language, identity, and beliefs. It went on to explore how Zeno sensualized the glacier to relate to it more

passionately, thereby showing how a personal connection to nature becomes a necessity to the human experience. In turn, Zeno's *Notizbuch* acts as an elegiac outlet where he can freely express his feelings and mourn the extinction of the Alpine glacier. By directly linking the milestones of his life to the death of the glacier, Zeno depicts the speed of global warming and warns against its destructiveness. Furthermore, this analysis shows Zeno's need to communicate his relationship to nature and his emotional response to climate change with others in response to the urgency he has witnessed. His inability to do so, despite multiple attempts, imitates society's current state of relative ignorance and passivity in engaging with climate change.

The second analysis looks at the representation of space within *EisTau*. The interpretation of the text focuses on how different representations of the Antarctic, where the novel takes place, lend insight into how one understands, interacts with, and communicates about the environment. For example, GPS coordinates are used as an exclusive scientific communication about location that the average reader would not be able to accurately decipher on his or her own without outside help. Contrasting this with Zeno's descriptive narrative, it becomes clear that a subjective, literary representation of place can be valuable to a more complete comprehension of environment rather than relying solely on scientific data recordings. To the same purpose, in teaching his students historical narrative, Zeno often used subjective experience to expand their knowledge of the glacier. Objective, scientific representations of space are not sufficient to portray an environment, but subjective, literary devices can aid in communicating aspects about nature in its fullness.

Trojanow, however, is also critical of even subjective representations of nature, and demonstrates the ignorance and passivity of a younger generation in the reactions of Zeno's students. Trojanow references the Cassandra complex to demonstrate how society is

unresponsive to the bombardment of information about the negative effects of global warming – regardless of how we are receiving the information. In light of society’s apparent inability to relate to global warming, Zeno’s individual experience of it and his emotional response expressed in his *Notizbuch* exhibit a need for one to personally experience the nightmare of global warming in order to comprehend its magnitudes and respond accordingly.

The final analysis of Zeno’s narratives delves deeper into the issues of interacting with and communicating about nature by looking at technology, media, and tourism. This section draws out Zeno’s cynicism and sarcasm as an attack on how technology and media hinder one’s ability to form a personal connection to nature. Beginning with technology’s ability to create distance between the individual and the environment as well as between individuals, the analysis moves on to discuss the manipulative and damaging effects of journalistic media and tourism in Western society. Zeno provides examples of how journalists and advertisers inaccurately portray the Antarctic environment in the quest of growing the tourist industry by describing the Falklands as pristine and untouched, when it has indeed been tampered with and damaged by human activities. The ability of the media to so easily attract tourists represents society’s ignorance and lack of connection to nature. After all, cruise ships themselves cause extreme air and water pollution. Society’s superficial relationship to the environment is further expressed by artist Dan Quentin’s live installation, in which he wants to use the passengers on the ship to create an SOS signal on the ice to embody a call of help for the melting ice caps. Zeno is outraged by the artificial and hypocritical project and decides to turn their staged SOS signal into a genuine one by hijacking the ship and leaving the passengers stranded on the ice. To escape his own hypocrisy and the prospect of facing further environmental destruction, Zeno jumps overboard, drastically responding not only to the art project but his overpowering emotions of

grief, disappointment in his shortcomings as a scientist, frustration in not being able to communicate, and anger at the delusions of society.

Zeno's emotional narratives of mourning and anger concerning the loss of his Alpine glacier, as well as his attempts to warn others of the destructiveness of global warming in the Antarctic, work together to form a unique elegiac response to climate change. Realizing that his abilities as a glaciologist have failed him in saving the glacier and understanding that its loss is final, Zeno memorializes the Alpine glacier in his descriptive accounts of its existence and his relationship to it. There is nothing left to do but mourn its death and warn others of further destruction and death that will occur due to the effects of global warming. However, when Zeno sees that his attempts at expressing these warnings are unsuccessful, his only option he sees left available to him to communicate his message is to commit suicide, reflecting the ultimate loss of nature.

The fourth and final analysis turns to the short chapter inserts that differ drastically from Zeno's clear and logical narrative in their haphazard relaying of information. These inserts are a collection of external communications regarding the aftermath of Zeno's actions and provide insight into how the novel will end long before the reader is able to discern the function of this information. Expanding on the theme of communicating climate change, these inserts illustrate the complexity of gathering, interpreting, and spreading information about events and issues in our current science and media-obsessed post-modern society. Technological modes of communication lack the ability to provide complete information due to their limitations of perspective and direct access to an event. Also, the analysis illustrates how sensationalist media tactics hinder the dissemination of accurate information due to their fast-paced nature and tendency toward new and superficial information. In addition, the novel utilizes internet slang

and English to demonstrate how the globalization of society can hinder authentic self-expression as well as advance global climate change.

So where does this leave us now? Does *EisTau* offer us any hope in dealing with the urgent and threatening effects of global warming, or are we too late to make any changes? Are we living in a post-apocalyptic state? It can be argued that *EisTau* embodies a post-apocalyptic representation of climate change. Erik Swyngedow specifically indicates melting ice to be a current trend in apocalyptic imagery that is commonly used to represent environmental problems (217). Swyngedow examines the contradiction between how present communications of global climate change, in their preferred portrayals of urgent danger to global populations, require political action to stabilize the negative consequences of climate change and how the current emergence of a post-political society asserts that political action is useless and unavailable in fighting against the progression of global warming. On the one hand, the representation of climate change as urgent and dangerous demands political action, while, on the other, our society is increasingly ruled by technocratic management and consensual policy making. Swyngedow argues that “sustaining and nurturing apocalyptic imageries is an integral and vital part of the new cultural politics of capitalism for which the management of fear is a central leitmotif” (219). In a world where CO<sub>2</sub> has become a commodity, and “stabilizing the climate seems to be a condition for capitalist life as we know it to continue” (Swyngedow 222), the post-apocalyptic representation of climate change becomes, then, a political advocate for capitalism.

In the introduction of this thesis, it was established that one of the functions of *EisTau*, as a literary elegy, is to mourn what has already been lost due to the effects of global warming, while at the same time warning of what is to come. Trojanow’s use of narrative to engage with global warming on a very personal and subjective level, as well as his critique of society’s ability



to engage with climate change in this way, does not result in a call to action. In the analysis, it was shown that there are doubts about whether Zeno's protests can be properly interpreted and reported, thereby reflecting the novel's critical stance on taking action against global warming. Instead, the novel embodies a single individual's account of what is currently lacking in society's discussion and engagement with global climate change: a personal and emotional connection to nature, subjective experience to facilitate and expand knowledge, and successful communication in our globalized and mediated world. By reflecting on these issues, *EisTau* mirrors the current shortcomings of society's engagement with global warming and neither offers hope for improvement nor gives in to the complete despair of apocalyptic narrative.

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