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"The Orchid in the Land of Garbage: an Ecocritique of Terrence Malick's Film *Badlands* (1973)"

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Through a figural analysis of Terrence Malick's *Badlands* (1973), this paper seeks to contribute to a more defined role of film criticism in contemporary environmental thought. The analysis focuses on the relation between humans and nature in *Badlands* and revolves around the ontological question of what it means to be free human beings in the world of nature, intended as a finite, temporal world. From an ecocritical perspective, *Badlands'* 1950s setting lends itself to a retrospective illumination of the forces that have contributed to the present problematic human-nature relation within "free" capitalist systems of thought and consumption. However, a figural analysis reveals that Malick's insistence on images of waste and death assumes a far more existential value, opening up possible deeper reflections beyond economic, social and political critiques. (Text from author's abstract)

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