

# Order and Chaos: The Pastoral Ideal and the Chaotic Wild in Kesar- the Son of god

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## Abstract

The paper studies the Balti epic Kesar – The Son of God from an ecocritical perspective using the conceptual tropes of the Pastoral and the Wilderness proposed by Greg Garrard (2004). Despite the vast literature devoted to this epic in terms of its folklore and historical aspects, this paper seeks to fill the current knowledge gap concerning its ecological imagination. Through the textual analysis of the epic collected by Abbas Kazmi, the paper demonstrates how the “Old World” wilderness is represented as an unruly and monstrous place of test that needs to be mastered for ensuring collective existence. On the other hand, the pastoral world is shown to be not an innocent and harmonious nature but a precarious socio-political order sustained by ethical management and work. Thus, by bringing Balti indigenous mythology into dialogue with modern environmental thought, the paper emphasizes the timeless wisdom contained in the epic about human-land relations.

**Keywords:** Kesar Epic, Ecological Imagination, Ecocriticism, Pastoral, Wilderness

## Introduction

**T**he Balti epic, Kesar- the Son of god, compiled by Abbas Kazmi, is one of the foundational texts of Baltistan’s cultural heritage. It narrates the adventures of a divine king in a world where humans, spirits, and the natural landscape are interconnected. This narrative tradition is deeply embedded in the region. In *Baltistan ka Tehzibi va Saqafati Warsa*, Hussain (2017) writes that storytelling has long been a cherished tradition in Baltistan, where the narration of epics serves as a "favourite pastime" for the people, especially during the long winter nights (p. 177).

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While Persian epics held some influence, it was the indigenous mythological epic, the *Dastaan Balafo Kesar*, that truly captured the imagination of the common people.

Exploring the historical perspective of *Kesar*, scholars like Lobsang (1997) note that the epic reflects Tibet's ancient past and should be seen as an important historical source about an early Tibetan political system, which he calls "Kesarism" (p. 44). In this view, *Kesar* was not a mythical hero but a real political founder. After gaining power, *Kesar's* primary role was strengthening his control by "restoring order, enforcing laws, and reforming his society." Lobsang (1997) notes that *Kesar's* conquest of "thirty nations" (p. 57) demonstrates his ambition to unite disparate, and presumably chaotic, regions into a "Greater Tibet" (p. 62). This political drive to tame the "wild" and impose order aligns with the epic's narrative of a divine king sent to earth to free people from tyranny (Ali, 2004; Hasrat, 2022).

This struggle between order (the pastoral) and chaos (the wilderness) is a recurring theme. The epic's most compelling aspect is its poetic dialogue, which expresses a complete view of life, covering war, tradition, philosophy, nature, and the enduring struggle of human existence (Ali, 2004; Hasrat, 2022).

Historically, scholarly engagement with the epic has focused on its folkloric origins, structural patterns, and historical significance. However, a significant research gap exists: the epic's rich and complex portrayal of the environment has remained largely unexplored. As climate change intensifies, it's becoming more important than ever to understand how different cultures see and connect with the natural world. Ecocriticism, a field of literary study that examines the relationship between literature and the physical environment, offers a vital framework for uncovering these perspectives. This study addresses this gap by applying an ecocritical lens to *Kesar*- the Son of god. Garrard's (2004) central idea is that human relationships with the environment are shaped by the recurring stories, or "tropes," they use to understand nature. This study will adopt two of these tropes, Pastoral and Wilderness, as its framework. These analytical tools will allow for an analysis of how the text constructs an ecological imagination where the survival of the ordered pastoral landscape is dependent on taming the chaotic wilderness.

This research makes a significant contribution to both literary studies and cultural heritage. It applies a new ecocritical lens to the Kesar epic, addressing a gap in a field dominated by folkloric approaches. By placing a non-Western epic in conversation with mainstream ecocritical frameworks, it also broadens the discipline's comparative reach and helps highlight the unique cultural wisdom of Baltistan, showing how ancient narratives can offer meaningful guidance for human-land relationships.

## **Review of the Literature**

Ecocritical research has grown rapidly over the past decades, reflecting its importance due to climate change. This literature review aims to analyze the Balti epic Kesar- the Son of god, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Balti view of nature, specifically the landscape.

### **❖ Different Analysis of the Kesar Epic**

To situate this ecocritical study, it is first necessary to survey the existing body of scholarship on the Kesar epic, which has predominantly focused on its folkloric, structural, and historical dimensions. For instance, Naseem et al. (2023) have explored the Balti folktale Kesar using the structuralist frameworks of Northrop Frye and Vladimir Propp, "through the examination of characterization, plot, functions, and dramatis personae" (p. 26). In their study, they explain that, despite the many similarities between Kesar and the genre's characterization and structure, it often deviates from the criteria defined by these theorists. Additionally, the mythic characteristics proposed by Frye are evident in the story, which makes it a myth as well. Therefore, the key finding of the researchers is that this folktale does not fall in any genre given by Frye, rather "it is a mixture of myth and romance, so we call this new genre Romyth" (p. 35).

Focusing on Buddhism and the Gesar epic, FitzHerbert (2017) has found that "Much of the Gesar/Geser epic's milieu and ethos suggests a pastoralist/warrior culture in which institutional/monastic Buddhism is not well established" (p. 2). He has analysed that the epic is not originally a Buddhist text, rather it has been influenced by Buddhist elements over time and has turned Gesar into a Buddhist hero. This influence varies in different versions of the epic.

Conversely, some scholars have tried to find the historical truth of the epic. Lianrong (2001) believes the past historical research on Gesar has been “under the assumption that King Gesar and his deeds could have existed” (p.317), and the scholars have “treated Gesar as historical fiction” (p. 319) rather than literature. But he argues that later on, scholars like Jiangbian have called the epic “as folk art characterised by inheritance and variation” (p. 331). Instead of being a direct record of history, the epic reflects the dynamics of the past people and culture, which continues to evolve to date. Li concludes that even if the epic has been a part of history, “historical figures in an epic no longer belong to history, but to art and culture” (p. 334), and therefore it should be treated as a literary work.

Finally, Gylatsho (2001) says that the heroic epic of Gesar has passed down the generations “through oral song and through handwritten copies and woodcuts” (p. 280), but the main reason for its survival is the oral transmission, and therefore the singers and storytellers have a key role in “continuity and development of Tibetan culture” (p.280). He explains how environmental factors like high altitude, where oral traditions are part of daily life, being surrounded by other chanters since childhood, scientific suggestion of resurfacing of subconscious memory recordings, which are traditionally called ‘dreams’, the epic’s consistent pattern of war, characters, and repetition have been reasons for the successful oral transmission of the epic.

#### ❖ **Ecocritical Studies**

To refine the analytical approach, this section reviews studies that have employed ecocriticism and then, specifically, Greg Garrard’s framework, demonstrating the utility of his tropes across diverse literary contexts. Retnowati et al. (2018) explore the Indonesian folktale Timun Mas (Golden Cucumber) through the lens of ecocriticism using Glotfelty’s theory of ecocriticism and anthropocentrism. They explain how the folktale represents Indonesian cultural values while teaching to respect nature and to refrain from greediness, which can destroy nature. They conclude that the Indonesian folktale is not only a cultural heritage but also environmental wisdom.

Akçeşme and Ağlar (2023) have also focused on fantasy literature in which they believe nature is not just a background; rather, it “sometimes appears as a character whose agency may direct the course of events” (p. 1). Since “the physical distance between human and nature has a devastating impact on our mind and soul” (p.14),

he has explored fantastic literature using ecopsychological literary analysis, specifically “Jungian ecopsychology”. He emphasizes that “our estrangement from nature” is “the reason for our distorted mind and uneasy soul” (p.14).

Likewise, Supian et al. (2022) study an Indonesian novel and reflect on “how Hirata reveals the tin exploitation in Belitung Island through his debut novel, *Laskar Pelangi*” (p. 229). They explain, despite the use of both traditional and modern tools along with the illegal means of exploitation, how the social status of islanders is “below the poverty line on average” (p. 230). The researchers analyse that the novel contains “ethics of anthropocentrism which considers nature as an inanimate object to be owned, enhanced, consumed, and disposed of” (p.242).

Kishor (2017) also applies this framework to *When the River Sleeps* (2014) by Easterine Kire. In her analysis, Kishor finds two important elements of Gerrard's ecocriticism, which are Classical Pastoral and New World Wilderness, present in the novel. She explains that the story presents “the rural life which is untouched by modernity and unadulterated by technology” (p. 134), which is an “ideal life reminiscent of the Classical Pastoral” (p. 134). Also, the story shows wilderness not as a threat but rather “a place of retreat,” which Gerrard calls it New World wilderness (p. 130).

Finally, in “Wilderness as Katniss’ Savior in Suzanne Collins’s *The Hunger Games*,” Sufi Ikrima Sa’adah et al. (2021) compellingly argue that the wilderness is the primary force behind Katniss Everdeen's survival. The article breaks this down into a dual function. First, the natural woods surrounding District 12 act as a literal “survival resource” (p. 42), providing the food Katniss hunts and gathers to save her family from the starvation deliberately enforced by the Capitol. This hands-on experience then encourages a crucial “wilderness literacy” (p. 44) in Katniss, which becomes her greatest weapon in the artificial arena of the Games.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This heading explains the theoretical framework for this paper. First, it defines ecocriticism and its history. The main focus is Greg Garrard's book, *Ecocriticism* (2004), which provides the core ideas for this research. Garrard argues that our understanding of the environment is shaped by recurring stories, or “tropes.”

### ❖ **Ecocriticism**

Ecocriticism studies literature from a non-human-centered view. It explores how texts discuss the non-human world and how literature is shaped by places, animals, and environmental ideas. The *Ecocriticism Reader* defines it as the study of “the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996, p. xviii). At its core, ecocriticism studies the link between culture and science from an “earth-centred perspective” (Gerrard, 2004, p. 3). It is not neutral; it is a political form of “green” criticism. It judges texts not just for their art, but for how well they address environmental problems (Kerridge & Sammells, 1998).

### ❖ **Greg Garrard and his Tropes**

In *Ecocriticism* (2004), Greg Garrard explains the field's basic terms. He argues that ecocritics must understand science and also study how science is used in culture. Garrard's work is useful because he insists that our thinking about ecology is shaped by language, metaphors, and “tropes.” These tropes are recurring narrative patterns that shape how “nature” is represented and understood. He identifies eight main tropes: Pollution, Positions, Pastoral, Wilderness, Apocalypse, Dwelling, Animals, and the Earth. These tropes are not strict boxes but are conceptual tools for reading texts and seeing how they shape our environmental attitudes. While this paper focuses on Pastoral and Wilderness, Garrard (2004) identifies other key tropes: Pollution, Positions, Apocalypse, Dwelling, Animals and The Earth

### ❖ **Core Analytical Tropes: Pastoral and Wilderness**

This study is built on these two specific tropes, which are central to the epic's conflict.

#### • **Pastoral**

According to Garrard (2004), the pastoral is not the real countryside, but an idealized vision of it. It is imagined by city cultures as a place of simplicity and peace, a retreat from urban corruption. He notes “the growth in towns had led to a new longing for the countryside” (p. 40). Pastoral has different forms: Classical pastoral set up the simple country against the corrupt city. Romantic pastoral saw nature as a source of spiritual renewal against industrialization. American Pastoral was a “middle landscape” between an ideal Eden and the violent reality of colonial expansion (Garrard, 2004, p. 49). This idea even influenced science in what Garrard calls Pastoral Ecology, which (wrongly) projected ideas of harmony onto natural

systems. Modern ecology now knows that nature is not stable but is always changing (Garrard, 2004, p. 58).

From an ecocritical view, pastoral is complicated. It can be good for critiquing industrial life, but it also romanticizes the countryside. This romantic view often hides the real ecological and social problems of rural places, erases Indigenous peoples, and ignores the hard work that makes rural life possible.

- **Wilderness**

According to Greg Garrard (2004), wilderness is also a cultural idea, not just a real place. He calls it "the most potent construction of nature available to New World environmentalism" (p. 59). Its meaning changes depending on the culture. The Old World (European) view, from Judaeo-Christian history, saw wilderness as a "threatening, chaotic place" that needed to be "tamed" (Garrard, 2004, p. 61). In contrast, the New World (American) view re-imagined wilderness as a sacred, pure place for spiritual renewal. However, Garrard notes this idea of an "uninhabited wilderness" is a harmful myth, because it was created by erasing the Indigenous peoples who already lived there (Garrard, 2004, p. 70). Both the "fearful" and "sacred" views of wilderness are cultural ideas, not natural facts.

The tropes of Pastoral and Wilderness provide a clear framework for this paper. They allow an analysis that sees the epic's landscape as more than just a backdrop. This framework will be used to show how the Kesar epic builds its world, creating a moral map where the "pastoral" ideal is defined against a chaotic "wilderness," and the hero's main job is to defend the borders of that ordered world.

## **Analysis and Discussion**

The Pastoral scenes reveal ideals and tensions around rural life and stewardship; the Wilderness passages expose moments of risk, moral testing, and transformation; reflections on Dwelling bring questions of home, belonging, and ethical responsibility into focus; and the representation of Animals shows them as active participants in the narrative's moral conversations.

- ❖ **The Pastoral Trope: An Ecology of Morality and Labour**

Greg Garrard (2004) treats the pastoral not just as stories about the countryside, but as a cultural way of imagining the rural world, often idealized in contrast to the

corrupt city or court. Traditional pastoral paints a calm, timeless picture of shepherds, green meadows, and a natural balance between people and nature. Gerrard warns that this pleasant image can hide the hard realities of farming: the daily labour, environmental risks, unequal access to resources, and political struggles needed to keep rural life going. Pastoral ecology questions those idylls more critically.

### ❖ **The Foundational Myth: Pastoral as a Moral Test**

The epic's moral and ecological framework is established in its opening chapter through a powerful pastoral cautionary tale. The narrative begins not with humble shepherds, but with a wealthy landlord, Khangchik Michik, whose name ironically means "a lonely man in a lonely house" (Chapter 1, p. 35, footnote 2), highlighting his isolation despite his riches. His problem is one of land management, a practical concern that immediately grounds the story in the realities of agrarian life. The local lama, acting as the voice of wisdom, provides a solution rooted in both social and ecological ethics: instead of exploiting the villagers' land, the landlord should cultivate his own barren fields, hiring the villagers on a daily wage. The lama's advice is explicit in its purpose: "In this way, the barren land would be cultivated and the villagers would be able to support their families" (Chapter 1, p. 29). This establishes the epic's main idea that the people should restore the land together for common benefit, not selfishly extract from it.

The story moves from realistic detail into myth when, after a failed harvest, a single giant wheat plant grows up by divine means and fills the fields with enormous grains. At first, this miracle embodies the pastoral ideal of endless plenty, but it quickly becomes a moral trial: Khangchik Michik responds not with thankfulness but with pride and greed, admitting to the lama that his goal was to flaunt how much grain he owned. His desire backfires spectacularly; the very abundance he sought overwhelms him, burying him up to his head. This episode teaches an ethical truth: nature's generosity depends on human humility and responsible care; when people pursue wealth for its own sake, abundance becomes destructive. In the epic, real wealth is measured by the community's balanced guardianship of the land, not private ownership.

### ❖ **Pastoral as a vulnerable livelihood**

Across the epic, pastoral elements, meadows, herds, and water are repeatedly shown as the material foundations of community life, essential yet fragile. These features

are not decorative scenery but vital infrastructure that supports food production and livelihoods. This is vividly shown in the song of Khipho Khirgod as he confronts the monster Rgod Byolthsong, who threatens the pastoral commons:

In these my father's meadows  
there are grasses within  
the area of an arrow ...  
In these my father's meadows  
there is water enough  
to operate a flour mill  
O wild beast! O wild animal!  
It pains me more  
when I see you  
put your mouth to it. (Chapter 8, pp. 211-212)

This song is not a sentimental ode to nature; it is an expression of practical concern. The meadows are valued for the "grasses" that sustain the herds, and the water is valued for its power to run the "flour mill." What makes the beast's consumption damaging isn't that it ruins scenery, but that it threatens the material systems of food production. The epic repeatedly emphasizes this connection between landscape and livelihood. The monster Rgod Byolthsong is a menace precisely because he "used to eat all the cattle taken into the mountains by the cow herds of Ling-yul" (Chapter 8, p. 211), representing a direct assault on the community's economic foundation.

The pastoral landscape is presented not as natural or automatic, but rather as produced through an act of arranging and organizing the land. After Habu Dongbu slays the ogre Srinpo Dre Rogha, the monster's body parts are ritually transformed into the key elements of Ling's geography. His skin becomes "the fertile land," his eyes become "lakes," his intestines become "the irrigation channels," and his ribs become "the pasture" (Chapter 2, p. 44). This creation myth makes clear that the pastoral world is not a pristine paradise but something made. The fields and waterways are produced through struggle and sacrifice: they come into being only after a destructive force is overcome, and they must be actively defended against a return to chaos. That view supports Gerrard's point that pastoral ecology depends on ongoing labour and conflict to keep the world livable.

### ❖ Leadership, conflict, and pastoral legitimacy

The pastoral setting in the epic is also political: it is where social ranks are formed and leadership is tested. The countryside is not a peaceful egalitarian haven but a place of rivalry, demands, and power. Kesar's rise from among shepherds to ruler depends less on idyllic harmony than on decisive, material acts: he wins authority by sacrificing for others as he "would offer his horn-less goat" (Chapter 3, p. 58) and butchers a goat of Mame Gogbzang to feed his peers. He then consolidates his authority by demanding labour (being carried on a palanquin) and controlling resources (snatching the best food). This episode demonstrates that even in a seemingly simple pastoral community, social order is negotiated through resources, labour, and assertions of dominance. Throughout the narrative, Kesar's right to rule is repeatedly affirmed through his role as the protector of the pastoral world. He battles beasts that eat herds, repels invaders, and makes costly ritual sacrifices such as ordering the killing of "one hundred ibexes" as a ritual payment to pacify divine forces and find a princess (Chapter 11, p. 279). They represent a significant economic cost to the community, reinforcing the idea that maintaining the pastoral order requires material sacrifice.

In the end, the pastoral world in the Kesar epic is both a dream and a duty. It represents an ideal life of balance, plenty, and peace, but it also demands protection and hard work. The epic turns the pastoral landscape into a test of true political authority. Leadership is defined not by conquest but also by care. Kesar's power is justified because he protects the meadows, safeguards the water, and secures the herds that sustain his people; the health of the land and the authority of rulers are inseparable. This practical view pushes the epic away from nostalgic escape and firmly into the realm of pastoral ecology, where social order and environmental care are mutually necessary.

### ❖ The Wilderness Trope: Taming the Old World Wild

Greg Garrard's *Ecocriticism* (2004) provides a foundational framework for analyzing literary landscapes, drawing a crucial distinction between the 'New World' wilderness, often depicted as a pure place for spiritual escape, and the 'Old World' wilderness. The latter, which aligns closely with pre-modern epics like Kesar, the son of god, is portrayed as a place of terror, chaos, and supernatural forces, a world outside of human control that the hero must conquer and tame. In this epic, the wilderness is consistently depicted as an Old-World threat.

### ❖ **The Wilderness as a Realm of Chaos and Opposition**

The wild's chaotic and deadly nature is embodied by the monsters who live there. Figures such as the nine-horned ogre Srinpo Dre Rogha, the beast Rgod Byolthsong, and the powerful Dre Shima rGyal are more than just enemies; they represent the wild's aggression toward human civilization. They live on the fringes of society, and their actions like eating people, hoarding resources, and draining rivers, are the very opposite of an ordered life. Kesar's journey to the land of Dre Shima rGyal leads him through a landscape that captures the horror of the Old World wild: a huge desert littered with the skeletons of the ogre's victims, placed there "to frighten whoever approaches his country" (Chapter 5, p. 97). Here, the wilderness is a boneyard, symbolizing its deadly power.

This theme is taken even further, as the land itself is often presented as a living, monstrous enemy. The Bragzgo Jiringmo, or the clashing mountain gates, are a direct mythological symbol of a hostile landscape. These gates, which "used to open and close its rock entrance very rapidly" (Chapter 7, p. 160), could crush anyone attempting to pass. The epic portrays the land not as a neutral backdrop but as an aggressive force that requires supernatural skill and sacrifice to defeat. In another example, a fire-breathing dragon blocks Kesar's path, with its upper lip reaching "way up to the sky while her lower lip touched the ground" (Chapter 7, p. 159). The dragon represents the wild land itself, acting as a living barrier that consumes anyone who tries to pass through. Kesar is forced to enter the poisonous stomach of dragon, showing the wild as a place of physical and spiritual trial.

### ❖ **The Hero's Trial and Transformation Within the Wild**

The idea of the wilderness as an adversary appears early in the story when Mira rDob puts a test of courage to Lha Yugpon's sons. They are offered a choice between two paths: a short one where they "could encounter wild animals and demons," and a longer, "quite peaceful" one (Chapter 3, p. 49). While six of the sons prove they aren't heroes by choosing the safe route, Kesar confronts the danger directly, stating, "The demons and animals might be strong, but we have the power to face them. Together we can fight them, so we had better choose the shorter way" (Chapter 3, p. 50). This decision sets up the epic's main theme: the hero, representing the human world (Ling Yul), must face the untamed wild to prove his worth and achieve his destiny. This shows the wilderness not as a peaceful refuge, but as something to be conquered.

Although dangerous, the wilderness also serves as the essential place where the hero's character is shaped and tested. This reflects a point made that Old-World stories often use the wild as a stage for moral and ethical challenges, stated in Ecocriticism as "the Judaeo-Christian conception of wilderness, then, combines connotations of trial and danger with freedom, redemption and purity, meanings that, in varying degrees, it still has" (Gerrard, 2004, p. 61). The epic constantly sends Kesar through "hundreds of mountains, hundreds of deserts, hundreds of rivers, hundreds of forests, hundreds of gorges, hundreds of streams" (Chapter 11, p. 295). This repeated phrase emphasizes the wild as a harsh environment that tests him both physically and morally. In these isolated places, Kesar is forced to learn humility, cunning, and patience. His fear is clear when he sees whistling reeds and jumping goat droppings, and he cries out to his guardian spirit for assistance.

There was a clump of reeds growing nearby, and when the wind blew, the reeds made a whistling sound. Already fearful of the whistling sound of the reeds. Kesar also observed that the wind carried the droppings of goats, scattering them hither and thither. The droppings jumped and ran along the ground, and seeing this, Kesar's fear became intensified. In this frightened state, Kesar addressed his protective deity. (Chapter 5, pp. 95-96).

This moment of weakness reveals the wild's ability to humble even a hero like Kesar, forcing him to adapt. In this way, the wilderness is a special place that is both dangerous and educational, shaping him into a true leader.

### ❖ **Taming the Wild and Restoring Civilization**

However, the epic does not present a simple story of 'civilization versus evil wilderness. As Garrard (2004) notes, the idea of wilderness can be surprisingly complex. In this story, the wild is shown as a place with its own set of rules and morally diverse beings. Its nonhuman residents have their own motivations; some are enemies, but others become crucial allies. For instance, the bird pair Bya-gongpho and Bya-gongmo hold a secret Kesar needs and eventually become his guides (Chapter 11, p. 282). Even more surprising is the short-tailed wolf that guards a bridge. After a duel fought with mutual respect, this fearsome opponent becomes a friend and offers Kesar vital advice on his journey (Chapter 7, p. 162). These interactions challenge the notion that the wild is simply a single, unified enemy. Kesar must learn to understand this complex world and deal with its inhabitants using a combination of strength, respect, and diplomacy.

Ultimately, the role of the wilderness in the epic of Kesar is to be overcome for the restoration of human society. Kesar ventures into these dangerous lands not to escape the world, but to save it by rescuing a stolen queen, recovering lost hearts, and defeating monsters. His actions serve as a powerful metaphor for the story's core message: the chaos of the wild must be conquered so that its power can be used to support and strengthen civilization. Kesar's journey is one of taming the wilderness, pushing back its chaotic influence to make the human world safe. This perfectly matches Garrard's concept of the Old-World wilderness where a feared and foreign realm that must be tamed before human society can be truly safe and stable. In short, the wilderness is where morals are tested and order is restored, not just a scary "other."

### **Conclusion**

In examining the Kesar epic through ecocritical lens, it becomes clear that the landscape of Baltistan is not just a stage upon which great feats are performed, but also plays a significant role in creating the order of the society. Using the tropes presented in Garrard's book, it is possible to say that the Pastoral in the epic depicts the harmony achieved only through the virtue of humbleness and joint efforts of people, whereas the Wilderness acts as the space in which the hero proves his legitimacy amidst chaos. Indeed, Kesar's transition from pastures of Ling-yul to the frightening deserts and clashing rocks of the wilderness reflects an "Old World" ecological philosophy, according to which civilized existence must protect itself from environmental uncertainties. Finally, one can claim that true leadership is the ability to keep intact the "commons" water, livestock, arable land. These ancient stories can provide valuable lessons for the modern world, as they illustrate how important the proper conception of the environment is.

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