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#### Lesson Plan

**Handout 1:** Exploring Source Types

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### LEARNING GOALS

At the close of the workshop, students will be able to:

- Define four types of sources used in academic writing (sources that provide Background, Exhibits, Arguments, and Methods).
- Describe the rhetorical moves enabled by a writer's use of each source type.
- Accurately identify the use of each of these source types in context.
- Distinguish between sources that directly support a writer's argument and those that complicate it.

### OVERVIEW

This workshop introduces students to a utility-based meta-language for sources, facilitating their understanding via four primary activities:

- The facilitator defines each kind of source, in order to allow students to identify the moves enabled by each.
- Together, students read published scholarship whose citations have been pre-coded by source type; close reading and discussion follow.
- On a second essay, students perform the same coding independently before sharing out findings and discussing in order to achieve common understanding.
- Students conclude by mapping any sources used in a current assignment into a graphic organizer that distinguishes sources along two axes—the kind of use they are put to and whether they directly support or complicate the writer's argument.

**LESSON PLAN**

**Part One: Describing Source Types**

1. **Begin by eliciting the meta-language most students will already know—that of “primary” and “secondary” sources.** Ask them to define these terms and generate examples of each. When the group has demonstrated familiarity, point out that these terms assume a source has an intrinsic, absolute character:

*A primary source seems to be born into the world a primary source, and will always stay a primary source. But what if I want to write about a secondary source as if it were a primary source? Let’s say I’m writing a history paper about 20<sup>th</sup> century science education in the South. If I include passages from a science textbook used in Mississippi in the 1920s, am I using a secondary source or a primary source?*

Segue the discussion toward a more flexible, utility-based model for typing sources.

2. **Use the whiteboard to reproduce the chart below.** For each source type, first introduce and define, then elicit students’ expectations for the moves enabled by these sources. Assist them in achieving a comprehensive list in the second column.

What it is	What it does
A <b>background source</b> generates context by providing factual, generally undebatable information like dates and definitions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows writers to narrate/describe context or background</li> <li>• Lends concrete, specific evidence</li> <li>• Two competing background sources might raise a question or paradox</li> </ul>
An <b>exhibit</b> , much like a traditional primary source, receives direct analysis from the writer. Most exhibits are texts of some kind—works of literature, letters, pamphlets, transcripts, manifestos, etc. But exhibits can also take other forms; when an art historian scrutinizes a painting or a sociologist analyzes survey data, the painting and the dataset serve as exhibits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides an object for close reading/analysis, thereby generating evidence for claims</li> <li>• Isolates specific examples or instances of wide phenomena, thereby enabling the investigation of those trends</li> <li>• Enables independent analysis by a student</li> </ul>
A writer includes an <b>argument source</b> in order to present—and interact with—the arguments of another thinker on a similar subject. Those thinkers (usually scholars) may support or conflict with the writer’s own argument.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garners authority by offering expert support of the writer’s argument</li> <li>• Introduces counterargument</li> <li>• Garners authority by demonstrating the writer’s knowledge of scholarly conversations</li> </ul>
A <b>method source</b> lends a framework—in the form of a theory, concept, or methodology/procedure—for the analysis of exhibits. In the humanities and social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structures analysis by defining its focus</li> <li>• Lends analytical rigor to analysis</li> <li>• Reinvigorates stale conversations by supplying new frameworks</li> </ul>

<p>sciences, method sources might be used for their theoretical framework. In the natural sciences, they're more likely to lend an actual methodology or experimental procedure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By situating a writer in a theoretical school, helps demonstrate the writer's knowledge of scholarly conversations</li> </ul>
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**Part Two: Identifying Source Types**

1. **Distribute Handout 1, "Exploring Source Types."** Briefly introduce the sample text:
  - *This is a work of sociology that analyzes the portrayal of gender in the sitcom King of Queens. (I've excerpted sections of it to show you how these writers use background and argument sources and how they use a method source to frame their analysis of an exhibit.)*
  - Explain that all the sources have been typed in advance.
2. **Read the text aloud, a paragraph at a time.** Pause periodically to frame upcoming citations; to reflect on those just read; and to compare, contrast, and synthesize the various roles played by sources. Consider such questions as:
  - *What kinds of framing language tends to appear around the argument sources in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4?*
  - *What's the most important difference between the method source and the argument sources?*
  - *How does the method source affect the writers' understanding of the exhibit?*
  - *What work are the background sources enabling?*
3. **Distribute Handout 2, "Identifying Source Types."** Briefly introduce the sample text:
  - *These passages come from an essay of environmental history. The environmentalist writer argues that "wilderness" and the ways we value it are more complicated (and problematic) than they look.*
  - Explain that the sources/citations have been bolded, as with the first text, but not typed.
4. **Provide students time to read the sample independently, asking them to categorize each source Cronon uses.**
  - Emphasize that they may need to look at Cronon's footnotes.
  - Review the **Reference Sheet** as they work.
5. **Ask students to share their findings.** Facilitate consensus as you record on the whiteboard:

Source	Type	Allows Cronon to...
Muir	E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present a specific example of a wide cultural phenomenon</li> <li>• Generate evidence</li> </ul>
...	...	...
McKibbin	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain authority by introducing a counterargument he will acknowledge and rebut</li> </ul>

6. Elicit understanding of "supporting" sources and "complicating" ones. Note, for example, how Cronon challenges his argument source in ways the writers of Handout 1 do not.

## Part Three: Planning Research-based Writing

1. **Distribute Handout 3, “Planning Research-based Writing.”** Review it as a full group, observing that complicating sources tend to be exhibits or arguments, not methods or background. (Though these last are not unheard of.)
2. **Ask students to map any sources they’ve obtained.**
3. **Wrap-up.** Invite students to discuss their plans, utilizing the group to articulate necessary next research steps, roles that remain unfilled, etc.

EXPLORING SOURCE TYPES

from “Beauty and the Patriarchal Beast”\*

...A number of recent situation comedies depict smart, witty, and attractive women who are married to inept, overweight, and immature men. As *New York Times* critic Richard Marin observes, “[A]ll family sitcoms—virtually all sitcoms now—are about a fat guy with a hot wife” (2)...Marin leaves an important question unanswered—“Whose fantasy of the American family is this: men’s, women’s or both?” (2). Here is where this analysis begins. What gender ideology is presented in these sitcoms? Why do we find these gender constellations funny?

This study takes a closer look at the gender portrayals in *The King of Queens* (1998–2007) and *According to Jim* (2001–07), two typical examples of this genre. While the apparent role reversal suggests that the wives on the shows represent liberated women, a detailed analysis renders a more problematic reading: this type of sitcom actually reinforces the same patriarchal ideology reflected by *I Love Lucy* more than fifty years ago....

...Several scholars have pointed out the unique gender constellations in U.S. sitcoms. Patricia Mellencamp examines how the situation comedy genre historically served to “contain women” (70). Focusing on two shows from the 1950s, Mellencamp explains how both Gracie (Gracie Allen) on *The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show* and Lucy on *I Love Lucy* seem to rebel against male dominance, pointing out that Gracie often ignores George (George Burns) and that Lucy is always disobeying Ricky. Women often succeed in the narratives of each episode, as when it is discovered that one of Gracie’s improbable stories is true or when Lucy humiliates Ricky during one of his performances. Despite this, however, Mellencamp finds that “shifts between narrative and comic spectacle,” central characteristics of the sitcom genre, serve to downplay the issue of the “repressive conditions of the 1950s” (73). Thus, the humor in these shows functions to replace female “anger, if not rage, with pleasure” (73).

Despite this discursive containment of women in early sitcoms, it is striking that over time the genre seems to have worked out a peculiar representation of men. Fathers and husbands in situation comedies often play by different rules than men on other kinds of television shows. For example, Muriel Cantor writes, “The dominating, authoritative male, so common in other genres, is rarely found in domestic comedies” (276). According to her, domestic comedies do not feature “macho men” because the major theme of domestic comedies since the 1950s has been “the myth of female dominance and breakdown of male authority” (283). The central reason for this story line might be that women are the target audience of domestic comedies (Cantor 275).

Richard Butsch adds the important category of class to this analysis when he compares the portrayal of working-class fathers and middle-class fathers in situation comedies. He notes that from the 1950s to the 1990s, the common sitcom working-class father is often an “inept bumbler and even a buffoon” (391). In most working-class sitcoms from this time frame, it is commonplace that the stereotypically stupid and immature protagonist gets himself into a predicament, which his wife helps him solve. Working-class wives are “typically portrayed as more intelligent, rational, sensible, responsible, and mature than their husbands or fathers” (Butsch 391). However, middle-

Marin, p. 2:  
**Argument**

Mellencamp, p. 70 and 73:  
**Argument**

Cantor, p. 275-6 and 283:  
**Argument**

Butsch, p. 391 and 394:  
**Argument**

\* Walsh, K., E. Fürsich, and B. Jefferson. “Beauty and the Patriarchal Beast: Gender Role Portrayals in Sitcoms Featuring Mismatched Couples.” *Journal of Popular Film & Television* 36.3 (2008): 123-132.

class sitcoms tend to portray successful and mature fathers. If any character on the show becomes the target of humor, it is the wife (Butsch 394)...

...New episodes of *The King of Queens* aired on CBS from September 1998 through May 2007. The show, which was co-created by Michael Weithorn and David Litt, currently runs in off-network syndication on several channels including TBS. Weithorn recalls having trouble selling the show to writers and executives, who expressed concern that if Doug was just a truck driver, “people [would] find him a loser” (qtd. in “With Blue Collar” 8). Weithorn disagreed, claiming, “[F]or a couple to have their own house, for [the husband] to have a union job, he’s living the American dream” (qtd. in “With Blue Collar” 8)...Completing nine successful seasons in 2007, *The King of Queens* was a hit with prime-time audiences and has consistently performed well in off-network syndication (Frankel A2)...

...In a typical *King of Queens* episode, what Seymour Chatman calls the “satellite narratives” or minor events of the plot (qtd. in Rybacki and Rybacki 113) portray Carrie as dominant: she orders Doug around, threatens him, corrects his mistakes, and makes fun of his obesity. Conversely, the “kernel narratives” or major plot events (Rybacki and Rybacki 118) reveal that Doug is in charge. Doug routinely goes against what Carrie asks of him, and then he lies or tricks her, not respecting her enough to tell her the truth. In the end, Carrie feels guilty, admits she is wrong, or easily forgives Doug so that he never has to feel bad about his behavior.

In the “Bun Dummy” episode, several satellite narratives demonstrate Carrie’s dominance over Doug. Carrie’s superior looks are often emphasized by the jokes that she makes about Doug’s laziness and weight. In one scene, she tells him that she must not have seen a movie he is talking about because, unlike him, she does not watch “112 hours of TV a week.” Seconds later, after he makes fun of her hairstyle, she points out that he might like her bun better if it “had powdered sugar on it.”...

...Although Carrie appears dominant in these minor plot events, the kernel narratives within the “Bun Dummy” episode show that Doug tricks Carrie, that she submits to his requests, and that he is correct about the whole situation.

“With Blue Collar,” p. 8:

**Background**

Frankel, p. A2:

**Background**

Rybacki and Rybacki, p. 113:

**Method**

Rybacki and Rybacki, p. 118:

**Method**

“Bun Dummy” episode:

**Exhibit**

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IDENTIFYING SOURCE TYPES

from “The Trouble with Wilderness”\*

The time has come to rethink wilderness.

This will seem a heretical claim to many environmentalists, since the idea of wilderness has for decades been a fundamental tenet—indeed, a passion—of the environmental movement, especially in the United States. For many Americans wilderness stands as the last remaining place where civilization, that all too human disease, has not fully infected the earth....

But is it? The more one knows of its peculiar history, the more one realizes that wilderness is not quite what it seems. Far from being the one place on earth that stands apart from humanity, it is quite profoundly a human creation—indeed, the creation of very particular human cultures at very particular moments in human history....

As late as the eighteenth century, the most common usage of the word “wilderness” in the English language referred to landscapes that generally carried adjectives far different from the ones they attract today. **To be a wilderness then was to be “deserted,” “savage,” “desolate,” “barren”—in short, a “waste,” the word’s nearest synonym.**<sup>1</sup>...But by the end of the nineteenth century, all this had changed. The wastelands that had once seemed worthless had for some people come to seem almost beyond price....**When John Muir arrived in the Sierra Nevada in 1869, he would declare, “No description of Heaven that I have ever heard or read of seems half so fine.”**<sup>2</sup>...The sources of this rather astonishing transformation were many, but for the purposes of this essay they can be gathered under two broad headings: the sublime and the frontier. Of the two, the sublime is the older and more pervasive cultural construct, being one of the most important expressions of that broad transatlantic movement we today label as romanticism...

**In the theories of Edmund Burke, Immanuel Kant, William Gilpin, and others, sublime landscapes were those rare places on earth where one had more chance than elsewhere to glimpse the face of God.**<sup>3</sup> Romantics had a clear notion of where one could be most sure of having this experience. Although God might, of course, choose to show Himself anywhere, He would most often be found in those vast, powerful landscapes where one could not help feeling insignificant and being reminded of one’s own mortality. Where were these sublime places? The eighteenth century catalog of their locations feels very familiar, for we still see and value landscapes as it taught us to do. God was on the mountaintop, in the chasm, in the waterfall, in the thundercloud, in the rainbow, in the sunset. One has only to think of the sites that Americans chose for their first national parks—Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Rainier, Zion—to realize that virtually all of them fit one or more of these categories. Less sublime landscapes simply did not appear worthy of such protection; **not until the 1940s, for instance, would the first swamp be honored, in Everglades National Park, and to this day there is no national park in the grasslands.**<sup>4</sup>

Among the best proofs that one had entered a sublime landscape was the emotion it evoked. For the early romantic writers and artists who first

1	_____
2	_____
3	_____
4	_____

\* Cronon, William. “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature.” *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. Ed. William Cronon. New York: W.W. Norton, 1996. 69-90.



began to celebrate it, the sublime was far from being a pleasurable experience. The classic description is that of William Wordsworth as he recounted climbing the Alps and crossing the Simplon Pass in his autobiographical poem “The Prelude.” There, surrounded by crags and waterfalls, the poet felt himself literally to be in the presence of the divine—and experienced an emotion remarkably close to terror:

The immeasurable height  
 Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,  
 The stationary blasts of waterfalls,  
 And in the narrow rent at every turn  
 Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,  
 The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,  
 The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,  
 Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side  
 As if a voice were in them, the sick sight  
 And giddy prospect of the raving stream,  
 The unfettered clouds and region of the Heavens,  
 Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light  
 Were all like workings of one mind, the features  
 Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;  
 Characters of the great Apocalypse,  
 The types and symbols of Eternity,  
 Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.<sup>5</sup>

5

This was no casual stroll in the mountains, no simple sojourn in the gentle lap of nonhuman nature. What Wordsworth described was nothing less than a religious experience, akin to that of the Old Testament prophets as they conversed with their wrathful God. The symbols he detected in this wilderness landscape were more supernatural than natural, and they inspired more awe and dismay than joy or pleasure. No mere mortal was meant to linger long in such a place, so it was with considerable relief that Wordsworth and his companion made their way back down from the peaks to the sheltering valleys...

...Perhaps the most suggestive example of the way that wilderness thinking can underpin other environmental concerns has emerged in the recent debate about “global change.” In 1989 the journalist Bill McKibben published a book entitled *The End of Nature*, in which **he argued that the prospect of global climate change as a result of unintentional human manipulation of the atmosphere means that nature as we once knew it no longer exists.**<sup>6</sup>

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Whereas earlier generations inhabited a natural world that remained more or less unaffected by their actions, our own generation is uniquely different. We and our children will henceforth live in a biosphere completely altered by our own activity, a planet in which the human and the natural can no longer be distinguished, because the one has overwhelmed the other. **In McKibben’s view, nature has died, and we are responsible for killing it. “The planet,” he declares, “is utterly different now.”**<sup>7</sup>

But such a perspective is possible only if we accept the wilderness premise that nature, to be natural, must also be pristine—remote from humanity and untouched by our common past. In fact, everything we know about environmental history suggests [the opposite—that] people have been manipulating the natural world on various scales for as long as we have a record of their passing.

<sup>1</sup> “Wilderness.” *Oxford English Dictionary*.



<sup>2</sup> John Muir, *My First Summer in the Sierra* (1911), reprinted in *John Muir: The Eight Wilderness Discovery Books* (London, England: Diadem; Seattle, Washington: Mountaineers, 1992), p. 211.

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<sup>4</sup> See Ann Vileisis, "From Wastelands to Wetlands" (unpublished senior essay, Yale Univ., 1989); Route, *National Parks*.

<sup>5</sup> William Wordsworth, "The Prelude," bk. 6, in Thomas Hutchinson, ed., *The Poetical Works of Wordsworth* (London, England: Oxford Univ. Press, 1936), p. 536.

<sup>6</sup> Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature* (New York: Random House, 1989).

<sup>7</sup> McKibben, *The End of Nature*, p. 49.

**USING SOURCES STRATEGICALLY WORKSHOP**

**PLANNING RESEARCH-BASED WRITING**

	Supporting Sources	Complicating Sources
Background		
Exhibit		
Argument		
Method		

IDENTIFYING SOURCE TYPES  
REFERENCE SHEET

from “The Trouble with Wilderness”\*

The time has come to rethink wilderness.

This will seem a heretical claim to many environmentalists, since the idea of wilderness has for decades been a fundamental tenet—indeed, a passion—of the environmental movement, especially in the United States. For many Americans wilderness stands as the last remaining place where civilization, that all too human disease, has not fully infected the earth...

But is it? The more one knows of its peculiar history, the more one realizes that wilderness is not quite what it seems. Far from being the one place on earth that stands apart from humanity, it is quite profoundly a human creation—indeed, the creation of very particular human cultures at very particular moments in human history...

As late as the eighteenth century, the most common usage of the word “wilderness” in the English language referred to landscapes that generally carried adjectives far different from the ones they attract today. **To be a wilderness then was to be “deserted,” “savage,” “desolate,” “barren”—in short, a “waste,” the word’s nearest synonym.**<sup>1</sup>...But by the end of the nineteenth century, all this had changed. The wastelands that had once seemed worthless had for some people come to seem almost beyond price....**When John Muir arrived in the Sierra Nevada in 1869, he would declare, “No description of Heaven that I have ever heard or read of seems half so fine.”**<sup>2</sup>...The sources of this rather astonishing transformation were many, but for the purposes of this essay they can be gathered under two broad headings: the sublime and the frontier. Of the two, the sublime is the older and more pervasive cultural construct, being one of the most important expressions of that broad transatlantic movement we today label as romanticism...

**In the theories of Edmund Burke, Immanuel Kant, William Gilpin, and others, sublime landscapes were those rare places on earth where one had more chance than elsewhere to glimpse the face of God.**<sup>3</sup> Romantics had a clear notion of where one could be most sure of having this experience. Although God might, of course, choose to show Himself anywhere, He would most often be found in those vast, powerful landscapes where one could not help feeling insignificant and being reminded of one’s own mortality. Where were these sublime places? The eighteenth century catalog of their locations feels very familiar, for we still see and value landscapes as it taught us to do. God was on the mountaintop, in the chasm, in the waterfall, in the thundercloud, in the rainbow, in the sunset. One has only to think of the sites that Americans chose for their first national parks—Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Rainier, Zion—to realize that virtually all of them fit one or more of these categories. Less sublime landscapes simply did not appear worthy of such protection; **not until the 1940s, for instance, would the first swamp be honored, in Everglades National Park, and to this day there is no national park in the grasslands.**<sup>4</sup>

**1** | **Background**  
The OED is a generally undebated source of historical fact, used here to establish a definition in context.

**2** | **Exhibit**  
Cronon cites Muir as an example or instance of seeing wilderness as “almost beyond price.”

**3** | **Method**  
Burke, Kant, and Gilpin have “theories” of the sublime that Cronon uses to lend structure to his analysis of exhibits to come.

**4** | **Background**  
The source offers indisputable fact about historical events, i.e., when Everglades was dedicated.

\* Cronon, William. “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature.” *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. Ed. William Cronon. New York: W.W. Norton, 1996. 69-90.

Among the best proofs that one had entered a sublime landscape was the emotion it evoked. For the early romantic writers and artists who first began to celebrate it, the sublime was far from being a pleasurable experience. The classic description is that of William Wordsworth as he recounted climbing the Alps and crossing the Simplon Pass in his autobiographical poem “The Prelude.” There, surrounded by crags and waterfalls, the poet felt himself literally to be in the presence of the divine—and experienced an emotion remarkably close to terror:

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 As if a voice were in them, the sick sight  
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 Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light  
 Were all like workings of one mind, the features  
 Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;  
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 Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.<sup>5</sup>

This was no casual stroll in the mountains, no simple sojourn in the gentle lap of nonhuman nature. What Wordsworth described was nothing less than a religious experience, akin to that of the Old Testament prophets as they conversed with their wrathful God. The symbols he detected in this wilderness landscape were more supernatural than natural, and they inspired more awe and dismay than joy or pleasure. No mere mortal was meant to linger long in such a place, so it was with considerable relief that Wordsworth and his companion made their way back down from the peaks to the sheltering valleys....

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But such a perspective is possible only if we accept the wilderness premise that nature, to be natural, must also be pristine—remote from humanity and untouched by our common past. In fact, everything we know about environmental history suggests [the opposite—]that people have been manipulating the natural world on various scales for as long as we have a record of their passing.

5

**Exhibit**

A classic exhibit—even down to the block-quoting—presented so Cronon can close-read it through the lens of his method texts’ theory of the sublime.

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**Argument**

As the final paragraph of the excerpt makes clear, Cronon presents McKibbin’s argument in order to rebut it with his own analytical claims.

<sup>1</sup> “Wilderness.” *Oxford English Dictionary*.

<sup>2</sup> John Muir, *My First Summer in the Sierra* (1911), reprinted in *John Muir: The Eight Wilderness Discovery Books* (London, England: Diadem; Seattle, Washington: Mountaineers, 1992), p. 211.

<sup>3</sup> The classic works are Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764), trans. John T. Goldthwait (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1960); Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. James T. Boulton (1958; Notre Dame, Indiana: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1968); William Gilpin, *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape* (London, England, 1803).

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<sup>6</sup> Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature* (New York: Random House, 1989).

<sup>7</sup> McKibben, *The End of Nature*, p. 49.